The Importance of Cultural Consideration in Disaster Planning

November 16, 2023 10:30am - 12:30pm
Housekeeping

- ACCESS Coordinator for today - AccessMarsha
- Zoom basics and etiquette
- Put your name, organization and email in the chat
- Otter A.I. and Zoom captioning are turned on
- Ask questions at any time in the chat
- This webinar will be recorded and available at CADRESV.org/Preparedness
Wildfire Safety

Mini Videos
Wildfire Alerts
Evacuations
What to Expect
Immigrant Support
Access and Functional Needs

Translations
English
Chinese
Hindi
Japanese
Korean
Spanish
Tagalog
Tamil
Vietnamese
Wildfire Air Quality

School Air Quality Activity Recommendations

PROTECT STUDENT HEALTH DURING POOR AIR QUALITY
Air quality is an important consideration for schools when planning student activities. The Bay Area Air Quality Management District is available to assist schools with understanding local air quality and actions to take to protect student health. To find out more, visit www.BAAQMD.gov or call 415-746-4000.

The following school activity recommendations are based on consultation with health researchers and several important principles drawn from recent studies.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>LEVEL 1</th>
<th>LEVEL 2</th>
<th>LEVEL 3</th>
<th>LEVEL 4</th>
<th>LEVEL 5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>AQI 0-50</td>
<td>AQI 51-100</td>
<td>AQI 101-150</td>
<td>AQI 151-200</td>
<td>AQI 201 or higher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>PM2.5 ≤ 10 μg/m³</td>
<td>PM2.5 11-35 μg/m³</td>
<td>PM2.5 36-55 μg/m³</td>
<td>PM2.5 56-150 μg/m³</td>
<td>PM2.5 &gt; 150 μg/m³</td>
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<tr>
<td>Recess (15min)</td>
<td>No restrictions</td>
<td>Ensure that sensitive individuals are medically managing their condition.*</td>
<td>Sensitive individuals should exercise indoors or avoid vigorous outdoor activities.*</td>
<td>Exercise indoors or avoid vigorous outdoor activities.</td>
<td>No outdoor activity. All activities should be moved indoors.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P.E. (1hr)</td>
<td>No restrictions</td>
<td>Ensure that sensitive individuals are medically managing their condition.*</td>
<td>Sensitive individuals should exercise indoors or avoid vigorous outdoor activities.*</td>
<td>Exercise indoors or limit vigorous outdoor activities to a maximum of 15 minutes.</td>
<td>No outdoor activity. All activities should be moved indoors.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

DIY Air Filter

✓ BAAQMD
✓ EPA
✓ CA Air Resources
Objectives

Present updated information on changing demographics

Explore various ethnic and cultural barriers to access of information and resources

Share lessons learned and discuss potential collaboration to improve inclusion, trust, equity

Raise public awareness of immigrant rights and protections in emergency situations.
Agenda

Santa Clara County Diversity is changing

Planning for Climate Change

Integrating immigrant rights into disaster planning & training
Who are we talking about?

Culture can be interpreted as any group of people who

- feel safer or more comfortable with each other,
- have their own sources of information,
- have likely experienced discrimination,
- may have trust issues outside of their own group.

While this webinar is focused on immigrants, this might also include LGBTQ, unhoused, people with a disability, people with a criminal record, survivors of domestic violence, etc.
Who are we talking about?

**Immigrants** can be defined as any non-citizens or naturalized US citizens.

This includes
- Naturalized citizens
- Green card holders,
- Temporary visa holders
- Refugees
- Asylees, and
- Undocumented immigrants
Speakers

Araceli Gonzalez, Division Director of Emergency Programs & Housing Services Catholic Charities of Santa Clara County

Meera Kymal, Managing Editor, India Currents Magazine

MyLinh Pham, Executive Director, Asian American Center of SCC

Syed Hussaini, Regional Disaster Response Coordinator, Islamic Relief USA

Teresa Castellanos, Immigrant Services Coordinator, Santa Clara County Office of Immigrant Relations
134,100 undocumented immigrants lived in SCC in 2021. Many undocumented immigrants came here “the right way”

- Students whose visa expired
- H1B worker visas that expire (USCIS has 2 year backlog)
- Asylee applicants and Special Immigrant Visas (SIV) who are unable to apply for legal status in time (lack of understanding, lack of funds, lack of legal assistance)
- TPS (Temporary Protected Status) expires or revoked but still unsafe to return home
- Married but spouse did not apply for green card
New Americans in SCC

Teresa Castellanos, Office of Immigrant Relations

REFUGEE DAY 2023
Demographics and Economic Contributions of Immigrants in SCC

**Population**

We define “immigrant” as any non-citizen or any naturalized U.S. citizen. They include naturalized citizens, green card holders, temporary visa holders, refugees, asylees, and undocumented immigrants, among others.
The total population of Santa Clara County in 2021 was 1,886,350.

765,800
the number of immigrants living in Santa Clara County in 2021

Immigrants made up 40.6% of the total population of the county in 2021.

If we include the children of immigrants, we are talking about 60% of the population being made up of immigrant families.
Demographics

THE NUMBERS

55.9% of households in Santa Clara County had at least one immigrant person living there.

22.2% of immigrants in Santa Clara County were recent arrivals, with five years in the United States or less.

77.8% of immigrants in the county had lived in the United States for more than five years.

GENDER

U.S.-born residents in the county self-identified as 47.5% female and 52.5% male.

Immigrant residents in the county self-identified as 51.0% female and 49.0% male.
Race Comparison  US born Vs Immigrant

Share of the U.S.-born population in the county by race:
- White (38.8%)
- Hispanic (28.5%)
- Asian American/Pacific Islander (22.2%)
- Mixed/Other Race (7.3%)
- Black/African American (3.0%)
- Native American (0.2%)

Share of the immigrant population in the county by race:
- Asian American/Pacific Islander (64.6%)
- Hispanic (19.8%)
- White (12.6%)
- Black/African American (1.3%)
- Mixed/Other Race (1.7%)
Top Regions & Countries for immigrants in SCC

The top regions of origin for immigrants living in the county:

- East Asia: 23.4%
- Southeast Asia: 21.7%
- India/Southwest Asia: 21.3%
- Mexico, Central America, and Caribbean: 18.3%
- Baltic States and other former USSR: 2.1%

The top countries of origin for immigrants living in the county:

- India: 18.1%
- Mexico: 15.7%
- Vietnam: 13.0%
- China: 12.1%
- Philippines: 6.9%

1.03 million people worked in the county in 2021. Of these, 48.0% or 494,800 workers, were immigrants.
Language in SCC

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All immigrants

The top languages spoken at home other than English among immigrants:
- Spanish (19.1%)
- Vietnamese (11.4%)
- Chinese (10.5%)
- Hindi (5.5%)
- Filipino/Tagalog (5.5%)
- Other (48.0%)

Language in SCC

Immigrants with Limited English Language Proficiency

158,200 immigrants living in the county had limited English language proficiency, making up 20.8% of the immigrant population.

Among those, the top languages spoken at home other than English were:
- Spanish 39.6%
- Vietnamese 23.6%
- Chinese 9.5%
- Mandarin 5.4%
- Filipino, Tagalog 3.5%

In 2021, 87.1% of immigrants speak a language other than English at home.

Educational attainment was as follows:
- Less than a high-school diploma (45.2%)
- A high-school diploma or some college (37.5%)
- Bachelor’s Degree (13.8%)
- Advanced Degree (3.5%)
What's the problem?

*It’s easy to underestimate or discount the impact of obstacles that we have not experienced.*

**Physical Obstacles**

- **Language** - Over 100 languages spoken in SCC homes and official information is translated into maximum of 5. 158,200 immigrants living in SCC have limited English language proficiency.

- **Literacy** - Unable to read or understand instructions or complete applications for assistance.

- **Transportation** - No vehicle, public transportation disrupted, expensive. Most resources located in San Jose area and people in North and South County could not access.

- **Time** - Cannot take time off of work to access help.

- **Documentation** - Cannot produce required documentation to prove eligibility.
Mental or Emotional Obstacles

Immigration concerns
• 55.9% of SCC households have at least one immigrant member
• Fear of impact of accepting help on status for self or family member
• Emergency shelters or services feel unsafe if they are located in or near government facilities, particularly law enforcement.

Lack of information or misinformation
• Language and cultural differences can cause confusion on where to get help, eligibility and resources available to immigrants.
• Immigrants from some countries have a deep distrust of mainstream media and need to receive information from a source they trust.
• Unsure of how to be safe, immigrants are particularly vulnerable to misinformation and scams
• Conflicting or evolving information and mandates with no explanation, create lack of confidence in government competence
Changing Demographics

There are 148,000 Indians residing in Santa Clara County

Languages Spoken
- Assamese
- Bengali
- Gujarati
- Hindi
- Kannada
- Malayalam
- Marathi
- Nepali
- Punjabi
- Tamil
- Telugu
- Urdu

Additional Obstacles to Disaster Relief
- lack of interpreters/bilingual /bicultural staff
- lack of culturally acceptable food (Indian vegetarian options, for example)
- lack of CBOs/service providers informing about emergency preparedness/disaster relief
Santa Clara County has the 2nd largest Vietnamese community in the country

Obstacles

• Many elderly Vietnamese have limited English and no transportation.

• Reluctant to leave East San Jose comfort zone of Little Vietnam.

• Would not report COVID for fear of being separated from family with no Interpreter and left “at the mercy of doctors and nurses.” Tried many herbal or home treatments.

• Did not want to report personal information required to be vaccinated.

• Mis-information and anti-vax campaigns caused some people reluctant to give any vaccinations to newborns and children.

• Unreported increase in domestic violence and mental health issues.

• Took months for SCC to support ethnic service providers in their efforts.
Additional challenges that immigrants might experience in a disaster

Beyond emergency assistance (based on disaster related need), individual disaster relief is based on quantifiable personal losses. The less you started with, the less relief.

- Poverty tends to be higher among immigrants than US-born Californians, partly due to limited eligibility and access to safety net programs. Typically, disaster relief funds cannot be spent to address pre-disaster poverty.

- Climate change will produce little monetary loss for many individuals - only suffering. Lost wages by undocumented workers is not currently eligible for any benefits.

- Emergency Responders are tasked to do the greatest good for the greatest number. Those with the most need can be the most difficult to serve, and may be left behind as we try to serve the majority.

- Addressing challenges pre-disaster is necessary.
Develop Trust Before Disaster

Distrust of government or authority
• By definition, **refugees** and **asylees** cannot return to their country of origin because they were persecuted by their government or persecuted by others and not protected by their government.

• **Undocumented immigrants** do not feel safe sharing personal information or calling attention to themselves. The disaster may seem less dangerous than deportation.

Mental Health Issues, PTSD
• Immigrants (in particular refugees and asylees) have likely had multiple traumatic experiences in just getting here. **PTSD** may cause extreme reactions to perceived threats.

• Cultural stigma around mental health issues makes these issues difficult to address and may cause exclusion from the disaster relief process.

• People who have already lost everything once may be prone to depression or lack of ability to participate in recovery efforts.
Community Health Partnership 2023
Focus Groups on COVID Experience

Challenges

• **Economic Hardship** – Most were Latinos or Asians, working age, living in poverty, and Medi-Cal beneficiaries

• **Mental Health** – $\frac{3}{4}$ of focus groups mentioned Mental Health, half of interviewees said it was most challenging, and a significant portion reported they continue to face. Low expectations, distrust, lack of resilience

• **Access to Care** – Telehealth visits: prefer communication in person, problems hearing/understanding; unfamiliar with virtual platforms, Uninsured or underinsured, Untreated chronic diseases, pain, lack of energy, mobility

• **Children’s Education & Online Learning** -
Immigrants find it harder to obtain aid or get clear information.  

Nearly 1/3 of applicants for the CA Emergency Rental Assistance Program were denied. 93% of denials met low-income eligibility and 83% of applicants failed to respond, or provided “inconsistent or unverifiable” information.

**Inability to Obtain Aid –**

- Unaware of resources or eligibility requirements,
- Confusing process,
- No assistance with on-line applications,
- Shame or fear of public charge rule.
- Some landlords were uncooperative or intimidated residents who tried to apply for Rental Aid.
- No agency follow-up or assistance.
CHP Focus Group Findings / Recommendations

- Simplify application processes and remove application barriers.
- Ensure crisis communication is timely and targeted, and take steps to combat misinformation.
- Increase assistance with health coverage enrollment.
- Increase community-based workshops and trainings in emergency planning and response.
- Provide services in accessible locations throughout the County.
- Prepare the community for future disasters through community-building activities.
- Extend long-term recovery period.
- Build and maintaining partnerships with community leaders.
- Support and maximize the expertise of CBOs.
- Create opportunities for community members to get involved.
Possible barriers to disaster services for the Muslim Communities

**Uneasy with Law enforcement**
Federal vs local

**Gender Customs**
Intergender relations
Dress code

**Food laws**
Muslim dietary laws
Halal food
Fasting

**Prayer Accommodations**
5 prayers a day
Need a quiet space
Cleansing Ritual

**Language Barriers**
And literacy

**Concern over hate crimes or harassment**
DHS warned of more attacks in U.S.

**Distrust of Healthcare Services**
Skepticism towards the system

**Observing Ramadan**
Fasting during daylight hours
Shelter challenges
Immigrant Rights in Disaster

National Protected Areas Policy

Immigration enforcement agents should not arrest or intimidate people at or near places where disaster relief is being provided.

It’s safe for immigrants to seek help.

Everyone is eligible for emergency disaster relief. Accepting disaster assistance will not affect status.

Everyone has rights – Report Concerns.

* Immigrant Rights Handout available on CADRE website in English, Spanish, Vietnamese, Russian, Tamil, Hindi, Amharic, Dari, Arabic and Simplified Chinese.
Obstacles to Access for the Unhoused

Free transportation to shelters but...

- Busses and taxi’s would not allow pets or belongings
- Only to shelters or medical appointments
- Physical disabilities made it impossible to access public transportation
- Limited bus passes for specific agencies or programs
Thank You!

We appreciate your partnership!

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