

# City of Renton



Emergency Preparedness Planning



Reaching Out to  
Limited English-  
Speaking  
Communities

*A Field Report and Resource Guide*

Prepared by University of Washington School of Public Health,  
Community Oriented Public Health Practice Program

# City of Renton Emergency Preparedness: Reaching out to Limited English- Speaking Communities

Written by the 2011 Community-Oriented Public Health Practice Program  
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## Executive Summary

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Staff at the City of Renton engaged us, eight students from the University of Washington School of Public Health, to assist in assessing and improving emergency preparedness outreach to limited-English proficiency (LEP) communities in Renton. The term *limited English speakers* includes those who report speaking a non-English language at home and speaking English less than “very well.” “Limited English proficiency” (LEP) is a term that is commonly used to refer to limited English speakers. We will use the term “LEP communities” to refer to communities or groups whose members are limited English speakers.

The City of Renton posed key questions to better understand and reach LEP communities. To address these questions, we conducted a review of both peer-reviewed and “grey” literature<sup>1</sup> and interviewed a series of key informants. We aimed to identify best practices in working with LEP communities on emergency preparedness at the national level, as well as to understand the specific needs, concerns, and communication preferences of LEP communities in Renton.

Though limited by factors that include time constraints, available demographic data, and our own language abilities, we gathered valuable information from both the literature and the community. After synthesizing this information, we have identified key recommendations and action steps for building upon the City of Renton’s outreach strategies for LEP communities. Our findings have been categorized into five topic areas, and are summarized below.

### Characteristics of LEP Communities in Renton

Renton is one of Washington’s most diverse cities, and is home to a growing number of limited English speakers. Recent estimates (2005-2009) show that 33.3% of all Renton residents aged five and older speak a language at home other than English, and 17% speak English less than “very well[4].” The Renton School District reported that during the 2008-2009 school year, 85 languages were represented throughout the district, with Spanish being the most frequently spoken non-English language [5]. Many limited English speakers are immigrants, and Renton’s foreign-born population has also grown dramatically in recent decades, increasing from 7.8% in 1990 to 19.2% in 2000 to 25.6% today [For more information on demographic data, see Appendix D and E][4].

Great diversity exists not only between, but within LEP communities in Renton. However, during our field work, language barriers were commonly cited across different communities

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<sup>1</sup> Grey literature is information which has not been published or which, although published, cannot be found through readily accessible sources. Grey literature can take many forms across multiple disciplines, including conference proceedings, theses and dissertations, research and technical reports, census information, and ongoing research.

as one of the biggest obstacles for limited English speakers in accessing emergency preparedness information. Another barrier identified during our fieldwork was mistrust of government, especially in the Latino community. For example, one interviewee from the Hispanic community told us that actions of other local governments can inform people's perceptions of the City of Renton: "in some cities, there is a sense that it's dangerous to be Hispanic . . . even if the [Renton] government is talking about bridging the gap, the actions of other governments, treating Hispanics like that are worthless." Finally, competing concerns in LEP communities were also highlighted as a key barrier to accessing information. Informants frequently told us that people in their communities were not aware of being at risk, and would not know what to do in an emergency. More immediate economic pressures and comparisons to perceived greater risks in countries of origins contributed to this.

## Best Strategies for Emergency Preparedness with LEP Communities

### *Building Resilience*

Building the resilience of a community is a valuable strategy in emergency preparedness planning to address the needs of vulnerable populations. Resilience can be defined as "the ability of an individual, community or country potentially exposed to hazards to cope with and to 'bounce back' from the effects of adversity[6]" Political, economic, and social factors can all affect a community's resilience – from levels of poverty, to access to jobs and education. Strategies to build resilience include enabling people to access information about risks and hazards, consequences, and how to be prepared[24]; fostering resource awareness and preparation[30]; strengthening coalitions[30]; working "at the grassroots level to build strong community social structures and for government and officials to earn public trust[27];" enabling citizens to participate in recovery activities[29]; and developing communication between community leaders [27, 29].

### *Best Practices for Communicating with LEP Populations*

The following best practices outline strategies that have been proven successful in improving communication with limited English speakers.

1. Before communicating with a population, define the LEP communities in the area and determine where they are located [7] [3]. Demographic information, such as we have provided in this report, is a helpful starting place.
2. Create a network of community partners to inform the planning process[2]. Community-based organizations can offer expert information about the LEP communities they serve, and in turn can be a valuable way to communicate with limited English speakers.
3. Learn about prior emergency preparedness work in the area[3]. This can help to identify existing strengths as well as gaps that need to be filled.

4. Identify unique barriers to communicating with non-English speaking communities. (CDC Workbook) Again, partnering with community-based organizations can be a valuable way to access such information.
5. Develop appropriate messages and test their effectiveness within each specific population [2, 3, 8]. As one informant told us, “it has to make sense!” Using feedback from community members helps to ensure that messages are understandable and appropriate.
6. Identify reliable and culturally preferred communication channels [8, 9]. These are likely to differ between various cultural and language groups.
7. Utilize a trusted messenger when disseminating an emergency preparedness and response message[2, 3]. Often, people from within a LEP community are more knowledgeable and trusted by community members than members of majority institutions, including local government.
8. Manage information in periodically updated databases[2, 3]. Such a database should include contact information for partners, records of communication, challenges, and successes with communities, and information about outreach efforts.

## Outreach and Emergency Preparedness Education Needs of LEP Communities in Renton

Our key informants recommended the following strategies for reaching members of LEP communities in Renton:

- *Word of mouth:* Multiple sources described word of mouth communication as highly effective or the best method for communication in their community. This was a common theme across multiple communities, most notably Hispanic, Filipino, and East African. Using word of mouth for dissemination of information can help tap into strong networks that already exist in LEP communities.
- *Internet:* Most churches and community-based organizations we contacted do use a website and email to communicate with community members, but some suggested that it was most valuable to reach families with email through web-savvy youth rather than as a technique for reaching older generations directly.
- *Media:* A majority of informants cited television news as one of their most important sources of information (in some cases, including Spanish-language TV). Ethnic media, including Chinese, Vietnamese, and Spanish newspapers, are widely read and would be good media venues to reach limited English speakers.

## Strengths and Needs of Renton’s Current Outreach Plan

Below are our recommendations to build upon and improve Renton’s current outreach to LEP communities, listed with the action steps that can be taken to implement them.

*Recommendation 1: Develop a database to track outreach activities and community partners.* This database should have two components: Tracking community contact information, and tracking outreach efforts. It should include information gathered about preferences for communication and feedback, as well as challenges and successes in outreach efforts.

*Action Step:*

1. Create a living database for outreach coordination. In the database, capture information about community partners, outreach activities, effectiveness, community input and feedback, community preferences, and challenges encountered.

*Recommendation 2: Further define the population.* Both formal sources of information, such as emerging 2010 Census data, and informal sources, such as community leaders, can be helpful in tracking constantly changing demographics.

*Action Steps:*

1. Utilize U.S. Census data to identify languages spoken and to locate and enumerate limited-English speaking communities. 2010 Census data will be available by April of 2011.
2. Utilize alternative sources for gathering demographic data each year. Such sources can include languages spoken in schools, utilization of hospital interpreters, registrants for ESL classes, etc.
3. Use informal methods to locate various populations: Conduct windshield surveys, talk with community leaders, and attend community events. For information on conducting windshield surveys, see *Appendix A*.

*Recommendation 3: Develop and sustain authentic partnerships with community-based organizations in preparedness planning and outreach.* Strong partnerships are essential to implementing several of the best practices listed above. Investing in current relationships and creating new ones can build communities' trust in the City and increase the capacity of communities.

*Action Steps:*

1. Integrate community-based organizations and other community partners into outreach strategy planning.
2. Formally account for information gleaned from community encounters. Adapt these findings and lessons into emergency preparedness communication and outreach strategies.

3. Communicate and interact regularly with community networks to foster strong relationships; for example, offer continuing education and emergency preparedness training to community partners[2].
4. Prioritize designating a permanent Outreach Coordinator to manage community-based partnerships and community outreach plans.

*Recommendation 4: Identify effective ways to communicate with communities of limited English proficiency.* By using language-specific materials and non-print materials, Renton has already adopted two very important best practices. Using additional communication channels and working with communities to test messages could improve communication even further.

*Action Steps:*

1. Talk to community leaders and groups, conduct focus groups, and review demographic information to identify preferred methods for communicating with different limited English proficiency communities[8].
2. Identify structural, language, and cultural barriers to communicating with each population - specifically address issues around documentation, refugee, or asylum status[10].
3. Increase use of images, video, pictograms, and printed materials to convey messages[3].
4. Evaluate and pilot all outreach materials with members of the various community groups. Assess for appropriateness of translation, reception, understanding, and acceptance.
5. Make all piloted disaster preparedness information available online as well as in print[11].
6. Distribute messages through channels preferred and trusted by each community. Utilize ethnic media channels such as Spanish or Vietnamese newspapers as well as radio and television, and work with key community leaders to distribute messages.

*Recommendation 5: Institutionalize community outreach in Emergency Preparedness Plan.*

The current plan could benefit from defining and identifying vulnerable populations, including LEP communities, and implementing the suggestion to create a Community Risk Reduction Committee.

*Action Steps:*

1. Add a clear and working definition of vulnerable populations and description of the changing demographic trends towards increased ethnic diversity in South King County to the Mitigation Plan.
2. Establish a Community Risk Reduction Committee to assist with community outreach and capacity building.

## Conclusion

The overarching theme of our recommendations is to continue to build community partnerships. While doing this project, it became clear to us that Renton is rich in diversity and resources, and the potential for capacity building is enormous. LEP communities are connected to each other through both formal institutions, like churches, community-based organizations, and ethnic media, and informal but powerful social networks. All of these resources can be tapped to improve emergency preparedness outreach in LEP communities. Partnering with these institutions can provide the City of Renton with information about LEP communities, opportunities to pilot materials, ways to reach LEP residents, and feedback on emergency preparedness planning.

## Introduction

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### Project Objective

To minimize the harm to vulnerable populations in emergencies, the City of Renton is actively engaged in promoting emergency preparedness among Renton’s diverse limited English proficiency (LEP) communities. In February of 2011, staff at the City of Renton’s Fire and Emergency Services Department engaged us, eight students in the University of Washington’s Community-Oriented Public Health Practice Master’s in Public Health Program, to help strengthen their existing Emergency Services outreach program.

Since the early 1990s, Renton has become home to an increasing number of families and individuals for whom English is either not a primary language or not spoken at all. Recognizing that mainstream emergency preparedness efforts often do not reach limited or non-English speakers effectively, the City of Renton asked for our assistance in both improving their current outreach strategies and identifying new ways of reaching and engaging LEP communities. This report presents our efforts to address the key questions posed by the City of Renton.

### Key Questions and Major Topics

The primary objective of this project was to answer, to the best of our ability, several key questions the City of Renton posed to us. These questions, aimed at improving emergency preparedness outreach to LEP communities, have been grouped into five topic areas and are listed below. We have used these key questions to frame our results, and to report our recommendations to the city of Renton.

<b>Topic Areas by Key Question</b>
<i>I. Characteristics of LEP communities in Renton</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ Has the City of Renton properly defined their target communities?</li><li>➤ Are there commonalities and significant differences between the various populations?</li><li>➤ What are the concerns of these communities?</li></ul>
<i>II. Best strategies for emergency preparedness with LEP communities</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ What evidence exists in the literature about working with such populations?</li></ul>
<i>III. Outreach and emergency preparedness education needs of LEP communities in Renton</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ What are the perceived outreach and education needs from the perspective of the various communities in Renton?</li><li>➤ What are their concerns? What are the characteristics of other successful outreach efforts for these target populations?</li></ul>
<i>IV. Strengths and needs of Renton’s current outreach plan</i>

- How effective is the current strategy in addressing the emergency management goals?
  - What are the strengths?
  - What are the gaps?
- How does the current outreach strategy address communities' concerns?
- What are the suggested changes to current emergency management outreach strategy?
- How does the proposed draft action plan close gaps identified in the current outreach plan?

## Context for Renton's Emergency Preparedness Plan

### *Defining Emergency Preparedness*

Emergency preparedness can be defined as: the capability of the public health, health care and emergency management systems, communities and individuals “to prevent, protect against, quickly respond to and recover from [emergencies]” and it involves “a coordinated and continuous process of planning and implementation.” [12]

Emergency preparedness has evolved a great deal since the 1950s, when it focused narrowly on the Cold War[13]. After the attacks of September 11, 2001 and the anthrax attacks that followed, “it became clear the public health system was out-of-date to face modern health threats” according to the Trust for America’s Health[14]. Investments and improvements in preparedness were made for a range of threats. Today, agencies responsible for emergency preparedness cover a wide range of emergencies, hazards, and disasters, including: [15-17][17]

- Bioterrorism
- Mass casualties (such as explosions)
- Chemical emergencies
- Radiation emergencies (such as dirty bombs and radiation emissions)
- Natural disasters and severe weather (such as earthquakes, floods and tornadoes)
- Disease outbreaks
- Human-made, and other types of emergencies (such as power outages, fires and transportation accidents)

### *Potential Emergencies in Renton*

Although the City of Renton and its residents should anticipate isolated emergency incidents such as fires, the widespread threats of primary concern include earthquakes, floods and windstorms. Renton should be prepared for the resulting impacts of these disasters such as damage, mudslides, landslides, or power outages.

### *Defining Vulnerable Populations*

In the context of emergency preparedness, a “vulnerable population” is a group of people who, for various reasons, are more affected than other groups by the same emergency. Needs of vulnerable populations are often unaddressed by traditional service providers or with access to standard resources. Vulnerable populations include people who are physically or mentally disabled, limited or non-English speaking, geographically or culturally isolated, homeless, elderly, and children[18]. Racial and ethnic minorities and people living in poverty may also be considered vulnerable populations[19]. Because these groups lack access to resources that are accessible to dominant groups, they are less able to prepare for and cope with the effects of disasters and other emergencies[20]. Therefore, they are likely to be disproportionately affected by such disasters.

### *Vulnerable Populations in King County*

Findings from a flood preparedness survey conducted in King County in 2010 demonstrate differences in emergency preparedness by English proficiency. In this survey, among those living in the Green River Basin, Spanish-speaking respondents were significantly more likely than English-speaking respondents to have heard about the need to prepare for a higher risk of flooding in the current flood season[21]. Yet, the survey also found that Spanish-speakers overall were less prepared than English-speakers: English-speaking respondents were significantly more likely to have food, water, and supplies to last several days; to have an emergency supply kit; and to have established an out-of-state contact with whom the family would communicate in the event of a flood emergency. Findings from this survey provide a local example of a vulnerable group’s heightened susceptibility to the effects of an emergency.

#### **English Proficiency Affects Emergency Preparedness**

According to the flood preparedness survey among those living in Green River Basin, while Spanish-speaking respondents were significantly more likely to have heard about the need to prepare for flood season than English-speaking respondents, they were overall less prepared than English speakers.

### *Defining Limited English Proficiency Communities*

The U.S. Census Bureau defines *non-English speakers* as people who speak a language other than English at home *and* do not speak English at all[22]. The term *limited English speakers* includes those who report speaking a non-English language at home and speaking English less than “very well.” This report will refer primarily to limited English speakers. We chose this focus because time and resource constraints prevented us from conducting extensive interviews with non-English speakers, and because U.S. Census data available for Renton only provides information about limited English speakers. “Limited English proficiency” (LEP) is a term that is commonly used to refer to limited English speakers, and this report

will use the term “LEP communities” to refer to communities or groups whose members are limited English speakers.

## Approach to Project

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Guided by the definitions above, we set out to answer the key questions posed by the City of Renton and to provide useful and relevant information for their outreach. This section outlines our approach. It includes a list of assumptions that influenced the direction of our work, a description of our methodology, and a discussion of the limitations and biases of our work.

### Assumptions

The following assumptions about LEP communities in Renton and emergency preparedness outreach strategies targeting this population implicitly guided our work.

Assumptions
➤ Renton residents who do not speak and/or read English fluently are potentially vulnerable in the event of an emergency, as existing emergency preparedness strategies may not reach them as well as they reach English speakers.
➤ English-speaking and LEP Renton residents are equally deserving of the City’s resources and attention in emergency preparedness outreach but resources for LEP residents are inadequate.
➤ Outreach to LEP communities presents a special challenge to agencies and organizations that are staffed mainly by English-speakers, and therefore requires special attention and effort.
➤ Individuals’ behaviors and beliefs about emergency preparedness are shaped by a variety of factors. These include factors that are personal (specific to the individual), interpersonal (relationships with family members and peers), community (dominant community beliefs and practices, including those in churches, neighborhoods, and cultural groups), and broader social and environmental factors ( <i>For details, see Appendix D &amp; E</i> ).
➤ Great diversity exists within and not just between communities. It is unlikely that one communication channel or outreach strategy will reach every member of a community, or that one leader speaks for every member of a community.
➤ Emergency preparedness competes with many other concerns in LEP communities.
➤ By mobilizing available resources within the City government and the communities it serves and by acting on the best practices in the field as well as on community suggestions, outreach to LEP communities can improve the level of emergency preparedness in these communities and thus improve their wellbeing in the event of an emergency.

## Methodology

We used a variety of sources to gather information to address the key questions posed by the City of Renton. These sources include reviews of peer-reviewed and grey literature, key informant interviews with people knowledgeable about Renton and its diverse communities, and key informant interviews with experts on outreach to LEP communities. By synthesizing and presenting findings gathered from these various sources, we seek to provide a well-rounded body of knowledge to support and assist with the implementation of our recommendations.

Through reviewing peer-reviewed and grey literature, we collected information about the basics of emergency preparedness, Renton's history and demographics, and best practices for outreach to LEP communities. To supplement demographic information from the literature, we contacted Public Health Seattle-King County and the Renton School District, and accessed data from the U.S. Census, and the Census Bureau's American Community Survey.

To help familiarize ourselves with Renton, we performed one guided and one unguided windshield survey. Facilitated by the City and supplemented by Internet searches, we developed an extensive list of community-based organizations (CBOs) and service providers in Renton to contact and interview. Additional contacts were identified using the "snowball method" (asking respondents who else they recommended speaking with). The list of key informants and other details about our methodology can be found in *Appendix A – Expanded Methodology*. The interviews resulting from these community contacts provided insight into preferred and established methods of communication in diverse Renton communities, as well as information about their awareness and perception of the need for emergency preparedness.

To speak directly with Renton residents who may not be associated with CBOs or service providers, we attended emergency preparedness presentations that our City contact conducted. We also dropped in on several local establishments and asked individuals a few key questions about communication and emergency preparedness.

## Limitations and Biases

This report has several limitations. The work that led to this report lasted only five weeks; this is not enough time to review fully the vast research on best practices for emergency preparedness outreach or to form a complete picture of the complexities, strengths, and needs of Renton's many LEP communities. Additionally, as mainly English speakers, we had difficulty contacting non-English speaking individuals. We collected information from service providers, community leaders, and other English-speaking Renton residents, and were not able to speak directly with non-English speakers in Renton. Although we hope that the perspective provided by our respondents is representative to some degree, we recognize that great differences exist within and between communities and that it is unlikely that the individuals we spoke with fully represent this diversity.

There are also important limitations to the demographic data that we collected. Census data is available for limited English speakers but not non-English speakers (see the above section on *Definitions* for descriptions of these groups). Additionally, since the most recently available demographic data was collected in 2000, Renton has grown significantly by annexing several adjacent areas. Renton’s total population is now well above 80,000, whereas the most recent demographic data available to us is for only 59,000 people who resided in Renton a few years ago. In March or April 2011, data from the 2010 Census will become available and will be a valuable source of information about Renton and its diverse communities.

## Findings

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The remainder of this report is organized according to the topic areas and key questions listed above. In the interest of providing information in a concisely and succinctly, in several cases we have used appendices to provide further details on topics that may be of interest but were not immediately relevant to addressing the key questions. These appendices can be referred to for further information and, in many cases, for helpful resources.

### I. Characteristics of Limited-English Speaking Communities in Renton

- Has the city of Renton properly defined the target communities?
- Are there commonalities and significant differences between the various populations?
- What are the concerns of these communities?

#### Defining Renton’s Current Population

As Renton’s population becomes increasingly diverse, new concerns arise for the City’s emergency preparedness planning and action. One source of vulnerability in an emergency is the inability to communicate in the dominant language—in this case, English. With diversity in ethnicity, race, and country of origin rising in Renton, the number of languages spoken at home other than English is also increasing.

As mentioned above, the latest estimates (2005-2009) show that 33.3% of all Renton residents over the age of five speak a language at home other than English[4]. The Renton School District reported that during the 2008-2009 school year, 85 languages were represented throughout the district[5]; this is a large increase from the 2001-2002 school year, during which 47 languages were represented[23]. Among Renton residents, 17%

speak English less than “very well[4].” This is a marked increase, as estimates were 3.7% in 1990 and 12% in 2000[23].

In Renton, 14.9% of all residents who report speaking a non-English language at home speak a language categorized as Asian or Pacific Islander. This is the largest non-English language group in the city. Of these who speak a Asian or Pacific Islander language at home, 8.1% report speaking English “less than very well.” Dialects included in this category are: Asian Indian, Chinese, Filipino, Japanese, Korean, Vietnamese, Hawaiian, Guamanian, Chamorro, Samoan or other Asian and Pacific Island language dialects[4].

Spanish is the next most frequent non-English language spoken at home, with 9.0% of the population reporting speaking Spanish at home. Of these people who speak Spanish at home, 5.3% report speaking English “less than very well[4].” In the Renton School District, the single non-English language spoken at home by the highest number of students is Spanish[5].

In Renton, 6.9% of residents speak other, non-English Indo-European Languages at home, and 2.9% report speaking English “less than very well.” Dialects spoken that fall into the Indo-European Language category include: French, French Creole, Italian, Portuguese, German, Yiddish, Other West Germanic Languages, Scandinavian Languages, Greek, Russian, Polish, Serbo-Croatian languages, Slavic Languages, Armenian, Persian, Hindi, Gujarati, Urdu or other Indic languages[4].

### *Demographic Trends*

Renton is a thriving city in South King County, with 90,067 residents[24]. Once a small community of only 4,448 in 1941, Renton’s population has increased dramatically due to growth in business and industry opportunities, as well as from features that make Renton a desirable place to live such as lower costs of living and a well-rated school system. The city’s foreign-born population increased by over 11% - from 7.8% in 1990 to 19.2% in 2000 (the US average between 1990 and 2000 was 10.1%) [23]. Newly available data show that the foreign-born population in Renton is now 25.6%[4] and of the 10 largest cities in Washington, only Renton and Kent have populations that are less than 50% non-Hispanic white. *(for more information on demographic data, see Appendix D and E)[25].* As evidenced by the growing foreign-born population in Renton, it seems that qualities of Renton attract immigrant populations.

### *Literature on Similarities and Differences between Populations*

An increasing number of foreign-born people are relocating to Renton; these groups clearly share interests that lead them to choose Renton as a home. Attempting to identify further and more specific similarities within and between communities is a valuable practice to undertake when considering appropriate and effective communication strategies. However, despite the importance of identifying similarities between and within groups, overgeneralizations about communities should be avoided. Findings from literature and our fieldwork indicate working directly with communities to identify their specific needs and preferences is a best practice for understanding unique and diverse population.

As found in our literature review, effective communication with specific communities is comprised of both utilizing the best practices of communication (which are often applicable across very diverse populations) and accounting for social-cultural variability in the “values, decision-making, behavioral tendencies, trust-building, past experiences, and life circumstances” that influence how communities may respond to messages and outreach[26]. Demographic information indicates the most prevalent non-English speaking groups in Renton are those that speak Asian/Pacific Islander languages followed by Spanish speakers and lastly those who speak Indo-European languages – with the latter group largely comprised of Ukrainians[23]. The appendices offer generalizations from the literature to help outline basic outreach practices with Asian Pacific Islander, Hispanic/Latino, and Ukrainian communities but should not be considered definitive for all people who identify as part of these groups.

## **Field Lessons about Renton’s Current Population**

### *Demographics and Characteristics*

During the five weeks we spent in Renton, church leaders, service providers, and residents all shared their perspective on Renton’s changing population through interviews and informal discussions. Their insight shed light on the communities they work with and highlighted specific unique emergency preparedness needs. While working, we learned valuable information about several, but not all, Renton communities. Many people we spoke with emphasized that significant differences exist within each community.

Below are a few basic demographic descriptions gathered through our preliminary research:

- Low literacy rates in native languages are common among immigrant communities; for this reason, even materials translated into a native language might not reach many LEP communities.
- The location of communities constantly changes in relation to shifts in the cost of living.
- While it is not unusual for recent immigrants to have stopped attending school after completing eighth grade or earlier, Filipino immigrants are more likely to speak English before emigrating to the U.S. and to have finished post-secondary school.
- The Vietnamese population is quickly growing (according to a church leader’s observation on his changing congregation).
- The most common countries of origin for Spanish-speaking community members are Mexico, El Salvador, and Guatemala.
- Service providers working primarily with Somali populations stated that many Somalis do not speak or read English.
- Many Somali immigrants live in the Sunset and Stonebrook area apartments as well as the Creston Point apartments.

### *Barriers to Communication*

CBOs, churches, and businesses all agree that language barriers have consistently prevented people from accessing emergency preparedness information, attending presentations, and approaching the City for help. Language acquisition is just one of a complex web of factors that make up an individual's and community's ability to receive and respond to messages about emergency preparedness. We gathered the following thoughts from service providers and community leaders on the process that LEP populations go through as they adjust to living in the U.S. These comments speak to the process of learning to access information in the U.S., as well as the significant barriers that come from a lack of trust of the government.

"It takes members of my community at least 3 or more years to adjust to living in the U.S. I consider people a 'newcomer' for at least that long."

**- Somali Youth Center Tutor**

"Nowadays, in some cities, there is a sense that it's dangerous to be Hispanic . . . even if the [Renton] government is talking about bridging the gap, the actions of other governments, treating Hispanics like that are worthless."

**- Member of the Hispanic community**

The current political climate might create fear and mistrust of government, especially among Hispanic people that might not have much education or permanent resident status. Outreach strategies targeting Hispanic populations might need to account for this mistrust and anticipate that people may not feel safe coming to emergency preparedness presentations or community meetings.

### *Level of Concern about Emergency Preparedness*

Most of the interviewees we contacted said members of their communities lacked basic information about the risks associated with disasters, how to prepare for emergencies, and what to do in case of emergencies. They told us the LEP populations they are a part of and work with are *not* very concerned with emergency preparedness. Some suggested that immigrants might perceive the risks in Renton to be small compared to disasters they had experienced in their countries of origin. Others said that emergency preparedness is simply not a priority. Interviewees gave isolated examples of people being concerned about and well prepared for disasters, mostly because of exposure to preparedness through the workplace or because they brought this concern and knowledge with them from their countries of origin. There was a wide spectrum of the amount of agency, or their perceived ability to protect themselves in the event of a disaster, that people felt they had; yet most people we interviewed were personally concerned about emergency preparedness. Furthermore, those who had come in contact with City of Renton outreach efforts expressed

their own personal concern about preparedness and were aware of ways they could protect themselves.

## II. Best Strategies for Emergency Preparedness with Limited-English Speakers

- What evidence exists in the literature about working with such populations?

### Building Resilience

Building the resiliency of a community serves as a valuable strategy in emergency preparedness planning to address the particular needs of vulnerable populations. “Resilience is the ability of an individual, community or country potentially exposed to hazards to cope with and to ‘bounce back’ from the effects of adversity[6].”

Several key factors influence a community’s resilience. Economic, political, social and geographic factors such as poverty, race, gender, age, and disability status may lead to unequal exposure to risk coupled with unequal access to resources. Meaningful jobs, adequate income, safe housing, good education, access to healthcare and safe neighborhoods can positively affect a community’s resilience. Finally, the overall health of a community’s population, including chronic disease levels, can serve as an indicator of its resilience[27, 28].

An effective preparedness plan should consider and account for disproportionate exposure to risk of certain communities and should actively build resilience within these vulnerable communities. Strategies to build resilience from best practices found in the literature include:

- increasing enabling people to access information about risks and hazards, consequence, and how to be prepared[29]
- fostering resource preparation and awareness[30]
- strengthening coalitions[30]
- working “at the grassroots level to build strong community social structures and for government and officials to earn public trust[27]”
- strengthening coalitions[30]
- enabling citizens to participate in recovery activities[29]
- developing communication between community leaders[27, 29]

### Best Practices for Communication with Limited-English Proficiency Populations

The following list brings together best practices for emergency preparedness communication with LEP communities from peer-reviewed literature and industry

evaluations, reports, and toolkits. It is intended to serve as a guide and reference for Renton staff. These communication strategies will help Renton effectively partner with communities, build resilience among LEP groups, and understand the unique needs of their community.

*1. Before communicating with a population, define the LEP communities in the area and determine where they are located[3, 7]. “A single cultural or ethnic group is not homogenous; subgroups are based on factors such as religious belief, length of time in U.S., age, acculturation, income, literacy level and education[31].”*

Demographic information will offer essential insight into the unique needs of a population. This information includes primary languages spoken, country of origin, size of population, and average literacy level. Locating vulnerable populations within a geographic region is also an essential step towards reaching these communities during times of crisis. The sections “Renton’s Current Population” and “Demographic Trends” provide relevant information about demographics in Renton.

*2. Create a network of community partners to inform the planning process[2]. “Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) can serve as a link to broad cultural groups. CBOs have a track record of delivering culturally appropriate services to their members and have developed trusted relationships. CBO leaders are often fluent in English and understand the majority culture. They are willing to work with government entities for the benefit of their community[31].”*

Incorporating community partners into the planning process is essential to effective emergency response planning. This collaboration promotes respect between all partners involved and leads to trust in the emergency preparedness plan that the group develops.

Community partners and members of vulnerable populations have expert knowledge of communities’ strengths, needs, traits, and concerns. These partners are critical to the development of messages and effective dissemination of messages in emergencies. CBOs also have expertise in outreach, information referral and volunteer management, and special services[12]. They have strong daily relationships with non-English speaking communities and can serve as a bridge for service provision, communication, and problems solving[12]. Furthermore, in the event of a disaster, non-English speakers are likely to seek information and assistance from CBOs first. Community networks are “lifelines” in emergency situations, especially when working with non-English speaking communities. Stay in touch with and receive feedback from your network [2].

*Example:* Philadelphia’s Department of Public Health (PDPH) and Office of Emergency Management (OEM) engages those most at risk during disasters through a vulnerable populations outreach model for emergency planning. This holistic approach to engaging community capacity seeks to build relationships and trust with key organizations and leaders in communities. The creation of a free quarterly health newsletter distributed to CBOs serving vulnerable populations facilitated bidirectional communication without overstressing the organizations’ already taxed resources. The Department also helped establish the Vulnerable Populations Workgroup, including city and nonprofit organizations and service providers such as the Philadelphia Corporation for Aging, the American Red Cross, the Pennsylvania Immigration and Citizenship Coalition, Temple University, the Philadelphia Department of Health, the Philadelphia Department of Human Services, the Philadelphia Department of Recreation, and a variety of other entities. The workgroup created trainings and an emergency preparedness handbook, and evaluated them through community focus groups. The Philadelphia model shows the needs and assets of traditionally hard to reach populations can be addressed when government agencies engage with CBOs throughout the emergency planning process[2].

*3. Learn about prior emergency preparedness work in the area. (CDC Workbook, 2011)*

Asking individuals and organizations in the community about efforts already conducted around emergency preparedness will help identify strengths among CBOs, areas of need, and pathways to support current efforts.

*4. Identify unique barriers to communicating with non-English speaking communities[3].*

Community organizations are knowledgeable about how to communicate with non-English speakers in the area. These groups can also identify specific barriers to communication such as immigration status, a unique language spoken, or cultural beliefs[10]. This information will help determine both the content and the method of message dissemination[2].

*5. Develop appropriate messages and test their effectiveness within each specific population[2, 3, 8] “Many members of non-majority cultures have a low literacy level in their native language. Therefore, translating dense English text-based materials is not an effective communications strategy. Using pictures, diagrams, and other visuals along with simple and culturally appropriate text greatly increases comprehension[31].”*

Members of vulnerable populations may have unique barriers to accessing information, such as low literacy level in their native language. Use a participatory process to develop messages to develop messages that meet the needs of these populations[3]. This involves working with community organizations and partners to develop and review materials. Feedback from community partners should ultimately shape the messages disseminated to members of the community.

*6. Identify reliable and culturally preferred communication channels [8, 31] “The most effective way to engage people in communities outside of the majority culture is to work through people and organizations known to and trusted by community members[31].”*

Identify the best communication channels to reach each non-English speaking community – these will likely be different across populations. Utilize channels that are reliable and likely to implement and adhere to the agreed upon preparedness plans.

“The inclusion of vulnerable populations in the planning process is critical for emergency management because it ensures that all issues and concerns are addressed, but it also raises the level of respect for, trust in, and acceptance of emergency plans within vulnerable population communities[2].”

**Example:** One local health department signed agreements with local businesses such as banks, churches, and grocery stores so that in the event of an emergency, information would be posted on their marquees, a very visible outlet. This tactic could be especially helpful in areas without daily local media[3].

*7. Utilize a trusted messenger when disseminating an emergency preparedness and response message[2, 3]. “The messenger and other contextual elements cannot be separated from the message. This contrasts to majority culture communication in which words (content messages) tend to be of greater importance. While messages need to be delivered in native languages, the context of the culturally-appropriate message is integral to its comprehension and credibility[31].”*

To facilitate messages being readily received, accepted, understood, convey them through trusted sources in the community. Many cultural communities feel suspicious of ‘majority culture institutions,’ because such entities have historically taken information from communities without returning anything of benefit to them[31]. Given this distrust, federal government officials are often not the best messengers when communicating with non-English speaking immigrants. Trusted messengers know how best to reach out to and communicate with the communities they serve and could include faith leaders, members of ethnic media, local business owners, or other local leaders.

*8. Manage information in periodically updated databases[2, 3]*

Track and rank the effectiveness of messages, barriers to communication, and preferred communication methods. [3] This information will change with the movement of different populations into an area – a well-managed database will ensure information is current, relevant, and usable.

### III. Outreach and Emergency Preparedness Education Needs of Limited-English Speakers in Renton

- What are the perceived outreach and education needs from the perspective of the various communities in Renton?
- What are the characteristics of other successful outreach efforts for these target populations?

To gain an understanding of the outreach needs and preferences of the LEP communities in Renton, we asked how CBOs disseminate information and how community members receive information. This section distills best practices, common communication channels, and lessons learned as seen through the eyes and the day-to-day work of CBO leaders, service providers, and community members.

#### Methods of Communication

##### *Word of mouth*

Multiple sources described word of mouth communication as highly effective or the best method for communication in their community. This was a common theme across multiple communities, most notably Hispanic, Filipino, and East African. CBOs and other key informants focus their outreach efforts around connecting with these strong informal communication channels.

Membership with faith communities is common among Renton LEP populations. In many interviews these faith communities arose as key hubs for informal word of mouth information sharing. The church or mosque serves as a strong network and is considered an effective starting point for people to access information.

- Many LEP communities have strong oral traditions. East African and Hispanic community leaders in particular identified verbal communication as being at the core of their cultures.
- Community members and CBOs said cell phone use is common across LEP communities especially in the East African and Filipino communities.

*"It's always about so-and-so said..."*

**- Service provider\* working with East African immigrants**

\*He started out with 3 clients and just two months later he was up to 20 clients solely through word-of-mouth recommendations

### *Internet*

Most CBOs found websites and email to be fairly useful methods for communication. Everyone we interviewed agreed that the younger generation is very computer literate and regularly accesses information through the internet. One church leader said email is a good way to communicate with their congregation, “if everything is working.” Others use email to make announcements, but all acknowledged there are some people for whom email is completely ineffective. Multiple sources emphasized the importance of discerning sub-populations within communities and acknowledging and addressing their differing communication needs.

### *Ethnic and Mainstream Media*

Levels of connection to mainstream and ethnic media sources vary widely between, as well as within, LEP communities. Some members of any LEP communities will obtain information from mainstream TV and print media, usually those with the most English proficiency.

- A majority of interviewees cited TV as a main source of information. This included Hispanic, Filipino, Jordanian, Chinese, Samoan, Russian, Vietnamese, and East Indian communities.
- According to one church leader, Spanish language radio and TV are popular and accessed regularly by the Hispanic population.
- There are also several ethnic print media (Chinese, Hispanic, Vietnamese newspapers) that many informants felt are highly utilized and informative.

### *Other Methods of Outreach*

- For outreach to the Latino community, working through schools has been successful for health clinic staff members. They were able to build strong relationships with school nurses and social workers.
- A Somali CBO representative and a Hispanic community leader believed strongly that the translated version of the EP DVD was effective and very well received by many in their communities.
- According to health clinic staff, many of their clients use Downtown Seattle’s screening program for refugees, and the DSHS office has been a helpful outreach partner.

## Successful Outreach Efforts: Vignettes from Communities

<b>Pounding the pavement for community outreach</b>	<b>Using ethnic media channels and networks makes a difference</b>	<b>Being creative in relationship building</b>
<p>Success in reaching LEP communities often involves concentrated and time consuming outreach measures. One successful endeavor traveled through neighborhoods, knocking on doors to reach people and explaining in person about their program. If the outreach worker in an area reached a household and was unable to communicate in a shared language, they called another worker to translate over the phone and explain their project. This particular program also reached out to CBOs for support and took great care to develop authentic relationships and craft appropriate messages.</p>	<p>Health clinic staff members believe the faster you can get an immigrant community connected, established and supporting each other, the better. For example the Vietnamese community turned out in strong numbers for the H1N1 shots because of an advertisement in a commonly read Vietnamese paper. Supporting communities in building their own networks, community centers, and publications, will make reaching those communities much easier. Word of mouth can then help fill in the gaps left by low-literacy.</p>	<p>A City of Renton employee familiar with AmeriCorps helped a CBO with their application for an AmeriCorps volunteer. While this was outside of her job description, it created a strong working relationship between the organization and the City.</p>

### **IV. Assessment of and Recommendations for Current Plan**

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The final piece of our work for Renton was to review the City’s current outreach plan, and to offer recommendations for strengthening current outreach efforts. This section of the report is a culmination of our research, interviews and experiences working with the City of Renton.

#### **Criteria for Recommendations**

In making recommendations to the City of Renton, we strive to offer suggestions that respond to the City’s questions, that are actionable based on the current availability of

resources, and that we believe, based on our literature review and findings, will be most effective. We used the criteria listed below to identify appropriate recommendations.

Recommendations should:
➤ Be feasible to implement with limited resources.
➤ Facilitate positive relationships between the City of Renton and LEP communities.
➤ Build upon the work that the City of Renton has already done in emergency preparedness outreach to LEP communities.
➤ Be based upon best practices from the literature wherever possible.
➤ Be based upon the information shared by members and leaders of LEP communities.
➤ Acknowledge and utilize existing networks of support and other resources within communities.
➤ Acknowledge, and where possible respond to, competing priorities and needs within communities.

Carrying with us the lessons gleaned from literature and interviews, our team developed an assessment of the current plan and recommendations for strengthening its work with LEP communities.

#### IV. Strengths and Needs of Renton’s Current Outreach Plan

- How effective is the current strategy in addressing the emergency management goals?
- What are the strengths and how does the current outreach strategy address concerns of community?
- What are the suggested changes to current emergency management outreach strategy?
- How does the proposed draft action plan close gaps identified in the current outreach plan?

#### Recommendation 1: Develop a Database to Track Outreach Activities and Community Partners

The work Renton has done so far in reaching out to LEP populations is impressive. It was clear to us that the department has been using a variety of approaches to reach out to LEP communities. We believe that the City could enhance this work by developing a comprehensive database or other information management system to track all outreach activities, as well as details about community contacts. Because the Outreach Coordinator position in Renton remains in flux, it is of paramount importance that the efforts undertaken by previous employees and information on current community organizations are well documented.

### *Community Contact Information Tracking*

Renton already has a developing list of community partners and key community contacts. However, taking a systematic approach to documenting and continually updating key details for current contacts is essential in creating a useful and reliable network for preparedness outreach and in the case of an emergency. A best practice emphasized in the literature is to continually update your database with current key contacts, their contact information, and the community and clients they serve or represent[3]. This process is crucial to maintain; in case of emergency, these community contacts will likely serve as the messengers of emergency information to their communities and can also relay necessary information from the community to the City. By keeping this contact information up to date and readily and easily accessible, Renton will have an established network in place in the event of an emergency and for ongoing general communication.

### *General Outreach Activity Tracking*

All activities relating to outreach to LEP communities should be systematically documented in one database. This database should document information that includes completed outreach activities (such as presentations given, materials published or distributed, community events attended, phone calls made, etc.), key impressions on the effectiveness of each outreach strategy, and any recommendations, input, or feedback received from the community. A well-designed and maintained database will facilitate the evaluation of activities and aid in determining the next steps in an outreach strategy.

### *Outcomes of Combined Database*

By successfully creating and maintaining such a database, the City of Renton will have available:

- Up-to-date information for community partners and other key community contacts; should include quantity and characteristics of communities served, lead contact, and preferred method of communication (phone, E-mail, etc.)
- Outreach activities completed and in-progress
- Perceived and/or measured effectiveness of messaging or outreach strategies used
- Recommendations and feedback from the community about outreach activities
- Any information gathered about different communities' preferences for communication
- Detailed accounts of challenges to communicating with different populations

### *Action Steps*

1. Create a living database for outreach coordination. In the database, capture information about community partners, outreach activities, effectiveness, community input and feedback, community preferences, and challenges encountered.

## **Recommendation 2: Further Define the Population**

One of the key objectives of our work was to assist in defining the LEP populations in Renton. Faced with limited time, we were unable to complete this task comprehensively, but have built upon work already completed by the City. Throughout the report and in our appendices, we have shared what we learned. However, work on defining the population is never complete, and should be viewed as an ongoing, continual process.

The current outreach plan identifies specific challenges to communicating with different non-English speaking populations and recognizes that such communities are very different in their communication preferences, values, and understanding of emergency preparedness. Recognizing the similarities and differences of LEP and non-English speaking communities is essential to an effective outreach strategy. The current outreach strategy also involves contact with several key entities – churches, service organizations, housing authorities, and community-based organizations. However, these networks could better represent the diversity of LEP communities in the Renton area. An effective communication plan begins by gathering critical demographic information about vulnerable populations and locating these populations within a geographic area. Information gathered should include primary languages spoken, country of origin, size of population, and average literacy level[16]. The City’s current understanding of vulnerable populations in Renton could be strengthened by directed discussions with community leaders and organizations.

### *Action Steps*

1. Utilize U.S. Census data to identify languages spoken and to locate and enumerate limited-English speaking communities. 2010 Census data will be available by April of 2011.
2. Utilize alternative sources for gathering demographic data each year. Such sources can include languages spoken in schools, utilization of hospital interpreters, registrants for ESL classes, etc.
3. Use informal methods to locate various populations: Conduct windshield surveys, talk with community leaders, and attend community events. For information on conducting windshield surveys, see *Appendix A*.

## **Recommendation 3: Develop and Sustain Authentic Partnerships with CBOs in Preparedness Planning and Outreach**

Building authentic partnerships between communities and agencies or institutions is a key component of generating successful, sustainable solutions to problems in a variety of contexts, including emergency preparedness. It is evident that the City of Renton has begun to build positive, working relationships with various community groups. We believe that strengthening and deepening these relationships will increase the appropriateness and effectiveness of outreach activities and overall emergency preparedness outcomes.

“Creating healthier communities and overcoming complex societal problems require collaborative solutions which bring communities and institutions together as equal partners and build upon the assets, strengths and capacities of each[1].”

To improve existing relationships and to build a strong foundation for developing new partnership, the City of Renton should identify ways in which community partners can become more involved and integrated into emergency preparedness efforts. One key approach is to involve community partners in the planning of emergency preparedness outreach strategies. City of Renton employees have primarily developed the current outreach strategy. Involving community members in planning the outreach strategy can lead to community investment in the City’s efforts and a more appropriate plan for the communities involved. The City can also build relationships by participating in community events and creating events for community members to attend, such as emergency preparedness continuing education training for key community contacts.

An additional strategy for partnership building is to establish a strong and trusted liaison between community groups and the City. In our experience working with Renton, it was clear that the current Outreach Coordinator has been this liaison. Following the Outreach Coordinator’s presentation at an LDS church, we observed the trust and rapport established between the coordinator and the primarily Spanish-speaking audience. When asked what the City can do to help the community prepare for emergencies, the audience suggested funding for necessary emergency preparedness supplies and bringing the Coordinator back for more presentations. As building trust with communities is essential for effectively conveying information before and during emergencies, having a trusted liaison from the government is a valuable asset for Renton. However, the current Outreach Coordinator is a temporary employee and likely to leave within the year. As trusting relationships are developed over time, the City would greatly benefit from establishing a permanent position to partner with community-based organizations, conduct outreach, and strengthen community relationships.

Prioritizing relationship building is essential to improving the current outreach plan. A strong community network will be invaluable in preparation for emergencies, during, and through recovery from an emergency.

#### *Action Steps*

1. Integrate community-based organizations and other community partners into outreach strategy planning.
2. Formally account for information gleaned from community encounters. Adapt these findings and lessons into emergency preparedness communication and outreach strategies.
3. Communicate and interact regularly with community networks to foster strong

relationships; for example, offer continuing education and emergency preparedness training to community partners[2].

4. Prioritize designating a permanent Outreach Coordinator to manage community-based partnerships and community outreach plans.

#### **Recommendation 4: Identify Effective Ways to Communicate with Communities of Limited English Proficiency**

Renton utilizes elements of two key best practices for communicating with LEP communities: language-specific materials and non-print messaging materials. Following the emergency preparedness presentation we observed at an LDS church, many audience members left with a Spanish-language resource guide and a Spanish DVD. The audience expressed interest in taking more emergency preparedness classes delivered in Spanish. The City of Renton also utilizes e-mail and web-based communication during times of piqued emergency awareness. While these strategies are useful, they should also account for more of the unique communication barriers encountered when working with other LEP groups. For example, reaching undocumented immigrant communities during times of emergency is particularly difficult. Because this population is largely invisible and is growing in size, the City must identify effective communication and outreach strategies for this group. Before messages are disseminated, the City should identify preferred communication methods such as television, radio, or ethnic media. It should also identify trusted members of the community to convey emergency messages such as faith leaders, health workers, and business owners.

##### *Action Steps*

1. Talk to community leaders and groups, conduct focus groups, and review demographic information to identify preferred methods for communicating with different limited English proficiency communities[8].
2. Identify structural, language, and cultural barriers to communicating with each population - specifically address issues around documentation, refugee, or asylum status[10].
3. Increase use of images, video, pictograms, and printed materials to convey messages[3].
4. Evaluate and pilot all outreach materials with members of the various community groups. Assess for appropriateness of translation, reception, understanding, and acceptance.
5. Make all piloted disaster preparedness information available online as well as in print[11].
6. Distribute messages through channels preferred and trusted by each community. Utilize ethnic media channels such as Spanish or Vietnamese newspapers as well as radio and television, and work with key community leaders to distribute messages.

## Recommendation 5: Institutionalize Community Outreach in Emergency Preparedness Plan

Upon review of the current Hazard Mitigation Plan, we found key areas in which language could be clarified to more permanently integrate community outreach into this larger plan[32]. The Mitigation Plan mentions vulnerable buildings, people or infrastructure, but does not adequately describe the nature or cause of such vulnerabilities. For example, are communities vulnerable because they live in a flood zone, because they lack resources to respond to a disaster, or both?

The diversity of the City and the vulnerability of LEP residents to emergencies should be explicitly discussed in the plan. The plan should include a discussion and definition of “vulnerable populations” in the context of social factors such as language ability and poverty that contribute to disparate outcomes in emergencies, such as the one included in the introduction to this report. Defining vulnerable populations in this way can help to justify increasing the resources and interventions committed to building resilience in LEP communities and improving outreach to these communities prior to the next disaster. Challenges facing LEP communities could be described in the Hazard Synopsis of the mitigation plan - this synopsis sets “the overall context of hazard mitigation planning.” Incorporating a working definition of vulnerable populations will both validate and establish the City’s commitment to protecting these populations and to mitigating the disproportionate effects of disaster that they may suffer.

Secondly, in section 3-1 of the Mitigation Plan, the Emergency Management Group “recommended the formation of a separate group, the ‘Community Risk Reduction Committee.’” This is a valuable suggestion - this committee could take on the task of “developing education programs aimed at mitigating the risk posed by hazards” mentioned in section 7-4 of the Mitigation Plan. Additionally, the Community Risk Reduction Committee could work on building community-based organization partnerships to support the work of the City.

### Action Steps

1. Add a clear and working definition of vulnerable populations and description of the changing demographic trends towards increased ethnic diversity in South King County to the Mitigation Plan.
2. Establish a Community Risk Reduction Committee to assist with community outreach and capacity building.

### Table of Recommendations and Action Steps

<b>Recommendation</b>	Develop a database to track outreach activities and community partners
<b>Action Steps</b>	1. Create a living database for outreach coordination. In the database, capture information about community partners, outreach activities, effectiveness, community input and feedback, community

	preferences, and challenges encountered.
<b>Recommendation</b>	Further define the LEP populations in Renton
<b>Action Steps</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Utilize U.S. Census data to identify languages spoken and to locate and enumerate limited-English speaking communities. 2010 Census data will be available by April of 2011.</li> <li>2. Utilize alternative sources for gathering demographic data each year. Such sources can include languages spoken in schools, utilization of hospital interpreters, registrants for ESL classes, etc.</li> <li>3. Use informal methods to locate various populations: Conduct windshield surveys, talk with community leaders, and attend community events. For information on conducting windshield surveys, see <i>Appendix A</i></li> </ol>
<b>Recommendation</b>	Develop and sustain authentic partnerships with community-based organizations in preparedness planning and outreach
<b>Action Steps</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Integrate community-based organizations and other community partners into outreach strategy planning.</li> <li>2. Formally account for information gleaned from community encounters. Adapt these findings and lessons into emergency preparedness communication and outreach strategies.</li> <li>3. Communicate and interact regularly with community networks to foster strong relationships; for example, offer continuing education and emergency preparedness training to community partners.</li> <li>4. Prioritize designating a permanent Outreach Coordinator to manage community-based partnerships and community outreach plans.</li> </ol>
<b>Recommendation</b>	Identify effective ways to communicate with communities of limited English proficiency
<b>Action Steps</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Talk to community leaders and groups, conduct focus groups, and review demographic information to identify preferred methods for communicating with different limited English proficiency communities.</li> <li>2. Identify structural, language, and cultural barriers to communicating with each population – specifically address issues around documentation, refugee, or asylum status.</li> <li>3. Increase use of images, video, pictograms, and printed materials to convey messages.</li> <li>4. Evaluate and pilot all outreach materials with members of the various community groups. Assess for appropriateness of translation, reception, understanding, and acceptance.</li> <li>5. Make all piloted disaster preparedness information available online as well as in print.</li> <li>6. Distribute messages through channels preferred and trusted by each community. Utilize ethnic media channels such as Spanish or Vietnamese newspapers as well as radio and television, and work with key community leaders to distribute messages.</li> </ol>

## **Conclusion:**

The overarching theme of our recommendations is to continue to build community partnerships. While doing this project, it became clear to us that Renton is rich in diversity and resources, and the potential for capacity building is enormous. LEP communities are connected to each other through both formal institutions, like churches, community-based organizations, and ethnic media, and informal but powerful social networks. All of these resources can be tapped to improve emergency preparedness outreach in LEP communities. Partnering with these institutions can provide the City of Renton with information about LEP communities, opportunities to pilot materials, ways to reach LEP residents, and feedback on emergency preparedness planning.

Building relationships with community organizations and communities is very time consuming. Tapping into the full capacity of community partners will require an investment of time in building relationships based on mutual respect and interests. However, we believe unequivocally that the time spent building such partnerships will pay off in the long term, and that the return will come in LEP communities' response to and recovery from any emergencies that may impact Renton.

Once again, we would like to express our gratitude for the opportunity to learn about Renton, its communities, and emergency preparedness. We hope the findings and recommendations included in this report are useful in continuing to build on the hard work the City has done in its emergency preparedness outreach to LEP communities.

## **Appendices**

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*Appendix A: Expanded methodology*

*Appendix B: Community Based Organization Contact List*

*Appendix C: Community-specific Strategies for Working with Limited-English Speaking Populations*

*Appendix D: Percentages -Foreign Born and Language Spoken*

*Appendix E: Data on Race, Ethnicity, and Languages Spoken in Renton*

*Appendix F: Annotated Bibliography*

## Appendix A: Expanded Methodology

### Initial Activities

#### *Background Research*

In late January 2011, our team of eight UW COPHP students began working with the City of Renton on an emergency preparedness community outreach project. Before beginning our task of assessing the City of Renton's community outreach efforts around emergency preparedness, our team prepared 11 five-page briefings on relevant topics for our fellow group members. Our initial research was based on peer-reviewed and grey literature, online sources and websites, and City of Renton and PHSKC officials who generously made time to answer our inquiries. The briefing topics included (available by request):

- Renton 101: demographics, what's the history, who has moved there?
- Disasters in Renton: past and possible future emergencies
- Available services in Renton and their outreach strategies
- Best practices and successful examples of messaging around Emergency preparedness for non-English speaking, non-reading communities
- Introduction to Emergency Preparedness – what constitutes an emergency?
- How to do community assessment
- How to get to know and start to work with a community
- Immigrant health needs and interventions in non-English speaking communities
- An assessment of Renton's current Emergency Preparedness Plan
- Factors influencing community resilience after an emergency or disaster
- Best practices in risk communication and preparedness working with non-English speaking populations

#### *Project Request and Planning*

Our initial meeting with city and county officials took place in early February where we were tasked with our project. Based on discussion from the meeting and the core questions asked in our preliminary letter of engagement, we decided to complete the following:

- Windshield surveys (one guided during a weekday with a local expert and one independent during early evening)
- Conceptual asset-mapping to solidify our group's focus on existing strengths in the community and to assist in planning
- Key informant interviews with service providers, formal and informal leaders of diverse communities, church leaders, and city contacts
- Community outreach and conversation with Renton residents with a special emphasis on non-English speaking residents
- Collection of basic demographic information about who lives in Renton
- Expanded research on best practices around Emergency Preparedness community outreach methods
- Evaluation of Renton's current plan and strategy for Emergency preparedness outreach

Our plan was designed to serve several purposes: the city had requested both that we define the population of Renton, particularly vulnerable or hard-to-reach populations, and that we identify the most effective methods to communicate information about emergency preparedness to diverse communities with different systems of information-sharing. Finally, we wanted to perform a thorough review of best practices around emergency preparedness community outreach strategies, making available additional tools and resources for future use by the City of Renton.

## Community Research Plan

### *Creating our framework*

Our first step was to streamline our process by appointing liaisons to our city contact, who we knew we would work with regularly to concentrate our efforts and minimize repetition. In this manner we kept in regular email and phone contact with the following city and county staff:

- **Rachel Myers:** Emergency Services Outreach Coordinator and AmeriCorps VISTA, City of Renton Department of Fire and Emergency Services
- **Caren Adams:** Regional Health Educator, South King County, Public Health – Seattle King County

Since much of our research would rely upon contacting community-based organizations, service providers, and Renton local leaders, and reaching out to Renton residents, we created a small task force within our larger team to facilitate community outreach efforts. We also set up private online databases so that we would all be able to easily access shared information when needed. By doing so, we avoided contacting the same stakeholders, duplicating research, and other issues that might arise when working on a team of eight.

We chose to frame our research with an assets-based approach. We utilized methods that allow community members to “identify, support, and mobilize existing community resources to create a shared vision of change[33],” building on existing assets rather than selectively identifying needs. Our goal was to assess emergency preparedness community outreach methods by partnering with stakeholders, eliciting the key issues affecting health, formulating goals and strategies, and then creating a cycle of action: plan, implement, and evaluate[33].

### *Windshield Surveys*

Windshield surveys are a common approach to introducing outsiders to a community. By driving or walking around a community and noting characteristics that can be easily seen, participants can identify assets (e.g. informal, unrecognized recreation site) and undocumented issues (e.g. potholes) in the area. Only a few people are needed to conduct windshield surveys and the process can build awareness among participants of community assets or issues that are often overlooked. However, it requires an open mind to identify

these previously unrecognized assets and issues, and it is extremely subjective. It is easy to conduct, but should only be used to support other mechanisms for information gathering.

It is important to include community members in the process, defining boundaries and participating as guides and fellow observers during the surveys. The survey can look broadly at assets, resources, and concerns, or focus on a specific environmental or social factor or a specific objective such as emergency preparedness[33].

We performed windshield surveys at two different times of day: a weekday mid-afternoon on guided tour of Renton with our contact from the city, and in the early evening on our own. We observed the physical environment, noting such characteristics as recent construction, transportation and traffic patterns, community gathering areas and green spaces, and types of residences.

### *Asset Mapping*

Asset Mapping can be thought of as mapping what is important in communities, including the capacities of individuals, civic associations, and local institutions[34, 35]. It is rooted in the philosophy that all residents, physical structures, natural resources, institutions, businesses, or organizations can play an effective role in addressing important matters[35]. An asset map is often a geographic map identifying physical assets such as such as schools, landmarks, playgrounds, public gathering places, churches, schools, airports, and recreation areas[33, 34].

The map may identify different levels of assets, including the skills and abilities of community members, citizen or community organizations; places where people come together; and names of institutions[35]. Multiple maps can be used to highlight each of these different types of assets, especially those relevant to the focus of the project, which, in our case, was emergency preparedness[33].

### *Key Informant Interviews*

A significant portion of our community research relied on one-on-one semi-structured interviews with service providers, church leaders, and other community members. Guided by CDC and PHSKC toolkits, we developed a semi-structured interview tool to use with community members [3]. We identified key informants or community leaders and asked them about their outreach strategies, experiences with Emergency Preparedness, and common barriers to communication with the communities they serve. The initial list of key informants was built from three sources: internet searches for organizations providing services to Renton residents, contacts provided by the city, and contacts identified by our team in the Renton area. Additional key informants were suggested and contacted in a snowball method by those we initially we connected with. When possible, we performed our interviews in-person, we conducted the remaining interviews over the phone. We interviewed the following 17 key informants:

- Emily Mosich, Healthpoint
- Faith Wimberley, HealthPoint
- Hamdi and Aden Hussein, Somali Youth & Family Club

- Pastor Larry Pal, Renton Church of the Nazarene
- Connie Ong, International Christian Center
- Sally Wear, Renton King County Public Health Department
- Father Gary Zender, St. Anthony's Church
- Julio Amador, DSHS
- Gilbert Loew, Chinese Information and Service Center
- Cheryl Johnson, Spiritual Miracles Food Bank
- Pastor Luke Hodges, Word of Life
- Jenna Pollack, Renton Technical College
- Cindy Arriola, La Raza Newspaper
- Seseinando Cantor
- Hamza Mohamad, Youth Resources Center
- Carol Fahrenbruch, Public Health Seattle King County
- Andy Silber, Powerful Neighborhoods Initiative, Seattle City Light
- John Loyd, Environmental Coalition of South Seattle
- Adriana Johnson, City of Renton Community & Economic Development Department, Planning Division

### *Community Members Outreach*

An important component of any community research is to speak directly with community members. When working with hard-to-reach populations, especially limited-English speaking populations, it is often challenging to find unofficial opportunities to communicate. To begin our fieldwork, we spoke informally with Somali Youth Club leaders and the Renton fire department while performing our windshield surveys.

These early conversations informed our subsequent interview tool used when speaking with community members about emergency preparedness, communication methods, and city outreach. Our city contact, having already established relationships with a few community-based organizations, invited us to events to speak with Renton residents. Events included a presentation about Emergency Preparedness at the Chinese Information Service Center and a follow-up presentation at the Latino LDS Church. Independently, several members of our field team visited to Renton sites suggested by our contacts from the city and county. Recommended sites included: a hair salon, a convenience store, a coffee shop and a restaurant. We took notes during all conversations with Renton community members.

While we hope that the information we gathered is representative, our sampling methodology was either purposive (CBOs and key-informants) or convenience (community members in limited-English proficiency groups). We only talked with those willing to speak with us, and those who wither spoke English or were accompanied by an English speaker.

### *Data Analysis*

To minimize biases during the analysis process, two team members created a qualitative codebook from two sample community surveys. Two different team members coded the interviews, checking the first group's coding system and reached consensus on disputed

categories. Analysis consisted of distilling the coded interviews into themes and extracting key insights about community characteristics and recommendations.

### *Archival Research*

To address the question of ‘who lives in Renton,’ we supplemented the collected qualitative data with any available quantitative data. Our preliminary background research offered preliminary demographics of Renton. To obtain more detailed information, we contacted PHSKC and the Renton School District, and reviewed King County census data and surveys about emergency preparedness and flooding.

The literature review and other background work served as a critical component of our research process. The preliminary work guided our community outreach plan, assessment of best practices of Emergency Preparedness community outreach methods, and evaluation of Renton’s current plan and strategy for Emergency Preparedness outreach. We also compiled useful resources on community outreach to diverse populations, especially around Emergency Preparedness.

### *Interview Guides*

These interview guides were designed to assist in conducting *semi-structured interviews*. This means that while it is not important to ask all interviewees the same questions in the same order, the conversations are not entirely free-form– there are specific topics that should be focused on. The idea is to ask open-ended questions to learn about the interviewee’s knowledge and experiences about outreach and emergency preparedness in their community or the community they work with. It is most important to touch on all of the major topics that one’s interviewee may have something to share about. Below each question are prompts that can be used to further explore a specific topic if necessary. Below are a few guidelines for conducting in-depth, semi-structured interviews:

- Interviews can be conducted face-to-face, or over the phone if face-to-face is not possible.
- The interviewer should always start by introducing him or herself, introduce the project, and thank the interviewee for their time.
- Break the ice to establish rapport – ask general questions, and bring up something in common with the interviewee.
- Take notes during the interview! Doing the interview in pairs makes this easier. (Or if the interviewee consents, the interview may be recorded.)
- Always thank the interviewee again at the conclusion of the interview! Offer them contact information if they do not already have it in case of any follow-up questions or ideas.

### *Sample Interview Guide for CBO Representative/Service provider:*

1. Can you briefly describe the work your organization does?

- What community/communities do you serve? (How do you define them?)

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How many people do you serve?</li> <li>• How has this changed over time, and how do you plan for future changes?</li> <li>• How do you find or identify community members/clients/constituents?</li> <li>• What kind of outreach do you do?</li> </ul>
2. What emergency preparedness activities (if any) have you engaged in in the past?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Positive or negative experiences with City of Renton?</li> <li>• How could city government better engage your organization or constituency in community preparedness?</li> </ul>
3. Do you think people you serve are concerned about emergency preparedness?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Why or why not?</li> <li>• What other issues are priorities?</li> <li>• What other resources do they need</li> </ul>
4. What sources do people in your community use to get news and information?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Television</li> <li>• Newspapers</li> <li>• Radio</li> <li>• Word of mouth</li> </ul>
5. What forms of communication do you think are most effective in your community?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Door-to-door (canvassing)</li> <li>• Face-to-face (meetings)</li> <li>• Written materials (flyers, etc.)</li> <li>• Telephone trees, emails, mass communications, others</li> </ul>
6. When there is an emergency, how do people in your community get information?
7. Who gives you/your community the most reliable information about health and health care?
8. In the past, what has kept people in your community from getting important information?

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Language barriers</li> <li>• Lack of access to dissemination channels</li> </ul>
<p>9. How does your organization usually disseminate information?</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local Newspapers</li> <li>• Organizational Newsletters</li> <li>• Meetings</li> <li>• Phone trees</li> <li>• Listservs</li> </ul>
<p>10. Who else in Renton do you think would be interested in talking to us about emergency preparedness?</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Other CBOs that work with your community or different communities?</li> <li>• Opportunities to speak with your constituents directly (interviews or focus groups)?</li> <li>• Recommendations for interpreters?</li> </ul>
<p>11. Would you be interested in/willing to “check” our work – look over a brief write-up to make sure that we are understood you correctly?</p>
<p>12. Is it okay with you if we quote you in our final written report and/or include your name on a list of interviewees? Would you like to see a copy of the report when we are done?</p>

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## Appendix B: Community-Based Organization Contact List

### CBOs Contacted During Fieldwork

Name	Main Contact	Population Base	Service Provided
St. Anthony's Catholic Church	Father Gary Zender; Julio Amador, <i>Hispanic Commission</i> ; Sesinado Cantor	Hispanic, Filipino, Vietnamese	The congregation consists of about 2,000 households or over 6,000 people, and is very diverse, including large numbers of Hispanic, Filipino, and Vietnamese congregants.
Chinese Information & Service Center		Russian, Chinese, Spanish, East Indian, Vietnamese	CISC has been around for 38 years. It started out with volunteers helping seniors fill out forms, write letters, etc. Now it is all over King County and has a staff of 50-60 and essentially helps people find resources. The main office has two departments: seniors (55 and older) and the International Family Center (55 and under). Because CISC does so well, cities ask them to run community services for other communities. Now they offer support in Russian, Chinese, Spanish, Vietnamese and some East Indian languages.
HealthPoint		Low-income, uninsured clients. 45% of their patients are ESL. Mostly Spanish, then Vietnamese, Tagalog, and some Russian	Health Point is a non-profit health center that receives most of its funding through fee-for-service/programming and partially through grants and donations. They focus predominantly on primary care.

Name	Main Contact	Population Base	Service Provided
La Raza, newspaper		Hispanic	This Spanish-language newspaper reaches about 25000/week, distributed to Hispanic markets, schools, targeted at low literacy communities. They increase access by keeping the newspaper free. They have articles both in English and Spanish. They also include English vocabulary words for learning English.
Church of Nazarene	Pastor Larry Pal	Hispanic, Jordanian	
Word of Life Church of God	Pastor Hodges	Works with Samoans, shares facilities with Russian and Ukrainian communities	
Youth Resource Center	Hamza Mohamed	East African Students	The Youth Resources Center tutors immigrant children, specifically East African students. Currently Hamza tutors 3rd-11th grade students in math, reading, and writing after school. His students at this time are all Somali, and have lived in the U.S. up to 9 years.
PHSKC Renton Clinic	Sally Wear, RN; Sandra Millison, RN; Aydee Arreola, Spanish interpreter; Carolina Marx, Latino community outreach		PHSKC Clinic

Name	Main Contact	Population Base	Service Provided
<p>Powerful Neighborhoods Program Implemented by Seattle City Light with consultant Environmental Coalition of South Seattle (ECOSS)</p>	<p>John Loyd</p>	<p>South Seattle, non-English speaking households and other vulnerable populations</p>	<p>The Powerful Neighborhoods project through Seattle City Light is a pilot program to reach populations that may not have taken advantage yet of Seattle City Light's programs that offer free lightbulbs, showerheads, and faucet aerators that save money and energy. One of their target populations is non-English speaking households. They work in areas south of Seattle, but not in Renton. We contacted them to find out what strategies they use for reaching out to non-English speaking households. They have a team of interpreters and can offer installation of the products they give out in 12 or so different languages.</p>
<p>Somali Youth and Family Club</p>	<p>Hamdi and Aden Hussein</p>	<p>Somalis mainly, but anyone who comes to them can get help</p>	<p>SYFC offers afterschool programs, tutoring, and soccer clubs for that reach over 1,000 youth. They recently got a grant from the State Department to do a youth leadership program. They also offer an apartment for newly arrived families to stay in and training in paying their rent and bills and a "landlord liaison program" through which they mediate between tenants and landlords to avoid evictions. They have a partnership with Renton Technical College to provide ESL. They operate an office at Crystal Point apartments as well as one in downtown Renton.</p>

## Appendix C: Community-Specific Strategies for Working with Limited-English Speaking populations

As stated in the report, significant diversity exists within and between communities. The following are generalizations to help guide outreach practices but should not be considered definitive for all people who identify as members of these communities.

### Asian/Pacific Islanders

Asian and Pacific Islanders come from a vast number of countries making generalizations about community characteristics difficult. However, according to a report from the Texas Department of Health, most Asian/Pacific Islander homes have televisions and children in the homes watch English-language programming[36]. Outside of the home, neighborhood stores and churches double as community meeting and socializing areas. Asians/Pacific Islanders generally trust mainstream media sources but are more likely to trust information “delivered in their own language before trusting it in English[36].” This may be particularly true for Vietnamese, who may have fled due to the oppressive regimen in Vietnam and may not be as trustful of authority figures.

Many Asians/Pacific Islanders have had “first hand experience with war[36].” While Asian-Americans tend to trust police and firefighters, they should come prepared with native-language print materials to facilitate communication and avoid causing panic.

### Hispanic/Latino Communities

Latinos and Hispanics come from various countries throughout Central and South America. Regardless of immigration status, assumptions cannot be made about the education or income level of Hispanic/Latino immigrants because education and class status varies broadly[37].

While Spanish is the unifying language, immigrants often retain a strong sense of their national identity. Seventy to 74 percent of all Latino/Hispanic immigrants are Catholic[37]. Community and religious leaders are “an important source of reliable information, as well as community owned and operated news media[38].” They have strong family and community ties. Because of these strong internal community connections, Latino/Hispanic people, particularly older immigrants, can insulate themselves and become less likely to learn English. Materials and presentations must be translated to Spanish, even for bilingual speakers[38].

It is likely that Latino/Hispanic adults will bring children with them to meetings and appointments. They tend to be more people-oriented than time-oriented and may be late for appointments and meetings. Communicators should be aware that nodding often means “I’m listening” rather than “I understand.” Many Hispanic/Latino people come from countries with terrorism or natural disasters.

## Ukrainian Communities

Information specific to communicating with Ukrainian population is quite limited. Most Ukrainian refugees are Pentecostals; as a persecuted religious minority in Ukraine they make up sixty percent of all refugees in the Seattle area[39]. Most Ukrainian Pentecostals who settled in the United States speak only Ukrainian but can understand Russian and Polish[39]. In general, children are usually under the care of elderly family members. Because housing is limited, Ukrainian Pentecostals often live three generations to an apartment – an important observation when attempting to locate this population for purposes of emergency preparedness.

## Appendix D: Percentages—Foreign Born and Language Spoken[23]

Population Estimates for FOREIGN BORN in Renton (2005-2009)		
	Estimate	Percentage
<b>Total Population</b>	<b>59,560</b>	<b>100%</b>
Foreign born	15,222	25.6%
Naturalized US Citizen	7,257	47.7%
Not a US Citizen	7,965	52.3%

World Region of Birth of Foreign Born		
	Estimate	Percentage
<b>Foreign-born population, excluding population born at sea</b>	<b>15,222</b>	<b>15,222</b>
Europe	2,360	15.5%
Asia	7,745	50.9%
Africa	1,539	10.1%
Oceania	59	0.4%
Latin America	3,211	21.1%
Northern America	308	2.0%

Population Estimates for LANGUAGE SPOKEN AT HOME in Renton (2005-2009)		
	Estimate	Percentage
<b>Population 5 years and over</b>	<b>54,787</b>	<b>100%</b>
English only	36,529	66.7%
Language other than English	18,258	33.3%
Speak English less than "very well"	9,332	17.0%
Spanish	4,941	9.0%
Speak English less than "very well"	2,926	5.3%
Other Indo-European languages	3,758	6.9%
Speak English less than "very well"	1,573	2.9%
Asian and Pacific Islander languages	8,163	14.9%
Speak English less than "very well"	4,452	8.1%
Other languages	1,396	2.5%
Speak English less than "very well"	381	0.7%

## Appendix E: Data on Race, Ethnicity, and Languages Spoken in Renton, 1990-2009

Population	1990[23]	2000[40]			2005-2009[4]
	Renton	Renton	King County	U.S.	Renton
Population 5 years and over speaking a language at home other than English	10.1%[41]	22.6%	18.4%	17.9%	33.3%
Population 5 years and over who speak a language other than English at home and speak English less than “very well”	3.7%	12.0%	8.4%	8.1%	17.0%
Population 5 years and over in linguistically isolated households	X	8.6%	5.3%	4.7%	X
Population reporting selves as white	83.5%	68.1%	X	X	57.4%
Population foreign-born	7.8%	19.2%	X	X	25.6%

## Appendix F: Annotated Bibliography

### Understanding Differences and Similarities among Renton's Cultural Community

1. *Building Latino Cultural Competence*. University of Georgia Center for Latino Achievement and Success in Education. Webcasts available at :  
[http://www.southerncenter.uga.edu/projectcores/public/webcast\\_files/vault.swf](http://www.southerncenter.uga.edu/projectcores/public/webcast_files/vault.swf)

*The University of Georgia created these video training modules with funds from the CDC. The modules are approximately five minutes each and include the following information regarding the Hispanic and Latino communities in the US: cultural similarities and differences, immigration trends, and issues around cross-cultural communication.*

2. *Tinker T. and Vaughan E. Risk and Crisis Communications: Best Practices for Government Agencies and Non-Profit Organizations*. Booz, Allen, Hamilton Publications, no date. Accessed from the web: <http://www.boozallen.com/media/file/Risk-and-Crisis-Communications-Guide.pdf>

*This document covers all aspects of best practices for risk communication but also has a section devoted to culturally diverse populations and vulnerable groups. In this section they list additional resources for cultural competence and communication strategies.*

3. *Michigan Department of Community Health, Office of Public Health Preparedness*. (2003) *Michigan Crisis and Emergency Risk Communication: A Guide for Developing Crisis Communication Plans*.  
[http://www.michigan.gov.offcampus.lib.washington.edu/documents/Michigan\\_Crisis\\_Emergency\\_and\\_Risk\\_Communication3\\_82364\\_7.doc](http://www.michigan.gov.offcampus.lib.washington.edu/documents/Michigan_Crisis_Emergency_and_Risk_Communication3_82364_7.doc)

*This manual conveys the principle of risk and crisis communication utilized by the Michigan Public Health community. The guide includes a summary of literature on working with and understanding the unique communication needs of various special populations.*

4. *Ethnomed Website: "Voices of the Community Series"* at  
<http://ethnomed.org/culture/other-groups>

*This series has fact sheets – many are specific to the Seattle area and can provide information regarding various ethnic groups. While the series is mostly focused around health care, they do have insights about communication and other aspects that are relevant to emergency preparedness. Fact sheets available include: Arab,*

*Cambodian, Eritrean, Ethiopian, Laotian, Mien, Oromo, Samoan, South Asia, Somali, Soviet Jewish, Ukraine.*

## Disparities Experienced by Vulnerable Populations

*5. Discovering Cultures in Your Community: developing a basic understanding of diverse communities from the literature. Voices of the Community Series. Available at, [ethnomed.org/culture/other-groups](http://ethnomed.org/culture/other-groups)*

*This resource offers several fact sheets, many Seattle-specific documents provide information regarding various ethnic groups. While factsheets focus primarily around health care, they do offer insight into communication and other aspects relevant to emergency preparedness. Fact sheets available include: Arab, Cambodian, Eritrean, Ethiopian, Laotian, Mien, Oromo, Samoan, South Asia, Somali, Soviet Jewish, and Ukraine. There are also immigrant fact sheets for Bhutan, Burma, Ethiopia & Eritrea and Iraq.*

*6. Engaging Immigrant Communities in Emergency Preparedness (2008). Yale Center for Public Health Preparedness. 3(8) Available at: [http://info.med.yale.edu/eph/ycphp/newsletters/Immigrant\\_communities\\_PH\\_Aug08.pdf](http://info.med.yale.edu/eph/ycphp/newsletters/Immigrant_communities_PH_Aug08.pdf)*

*This two-page newsletter provides the very basics of working on emergency preparedness with non-English speaking communities. It includes short descriptions of three common barriers to preparedness communication: 1) limited English proficiency; 2) cultural differences; and 3) distrust of government and its representatives. To promote preparedness, this paper suggests employing ethnic media outlets and relying on community members and organizations. It also includes additional resources for working on emergency preparedness with non-English speaking communities and ways to engage community members.*

*7. Culture Orientation Resources Center. Available at, [www.cal.org/co](http://www.cal.org/co)*

*Culture Orientation Resource Center offers resources on cultural orientation to refugees who are resettling in the US. They have a lengthy publications section with resources on major non-Caucasian populations who have immigrated to the US. For someone who is very interested in learning the basics of a particular language, they have phrasebooks that can be helpful. The Center also provides a Refugee Discussion section in which anyone can send comments or posts (as an email form) for discussion.*

*8. Michigan Department of Community Health, Office of Public Health Preparedness. (2003) Michigan Crisis and Emergency Risk Communication: A Guide for Developing Crisis Communication Plans. Available at, [http://www.michigan.gov.offcampus.lib.washington.edu/documents/Michigan\\_Crisis\\_Emergency\\_and\\_Risk\\_Communication3\\_82364\\_7.doc](http://www.michigan.gov.offcampus.lib.washington.edu/documents/Michigan_Crisis_Emergency_and_Risk_Communication3_82364_7.doc)*

*This manual conveys the principle of risk and crisis communication utilized by the Michigan Public Health community. The guide includes a summary of literature on working with and understanding the unique communication needs of various special populations.*

9. Blazer, J. & Murphy, B. (2008). *Addressing the Needs of Immigrants and Limited English Communities in Disaster Planning and Relief*. National Immigration Law Center. *Immigrants' Rights Update*. 22(8) Available at: [http://www.nilc.org/disaster\\_assistance/da007.htm#jose](http://www.nilc.org/disaster_assistance/da007.htm#jose)

*This paper informs disaster management work in state and local governments, disaster relief agencies, and CBOs with lessons from Katrina and other recent disasters. Its recommendations draw on interviews with individuals who were involved in assisting immigrant and LEP communities struggling to survive in the aftermath of disasters. It includes vignettes about specific challenges communities faced. The paper seeks to highlight the viewpoint of CBOs, strengths, as well as obstacles they and the communities they serve encounter. It describes the fear of immigration enforcement and recommendations for overcoming it in the context of disaster and outreach and preparation, including giving examples of applicable policies and how to navigate them.*

10. *Building Latino Cultural Competence*. University of Georgia Center for Latino Achievement and Success in Education. Webcasts available at: [http://www.southerncenter.uga.edu/projectcores/public/webcast\\_files/vault.swf](http://www.southerncenter.uga.edu/projectcores/public/webcast_files/vault.swf)

*The University of Georgia created these video training modules. The modules are approximately five minutes each and include the following information regarding the Hispanic and Latino communities in the US: cultural similarities and differences, immigration trends, and issues around cross-cultural communication.*

11. Tinker T.L., and E. Vaughan. *Risk and Crisis Communications: Best Practices for Government Agencies and Non-Profit Organizations*. Booz, Allen, Hamilton Publications, no date. Accessed from the web: [www.boozallen.com/media/file/Risk-and-Crisis-Communications-Guide.pdf](http://www.boozallen.com/media/file/Risk-and-Crisis-Communications-Guide.pdf)

*This document covers many aspects of best practices for risk communication and extensively discusses culturally diverse populations and vulnerable groups. Included in this section are additional resources for cultural competence and communication strategies.*

## Working with Vulnerable Populations and Building Community Based Partnerships

12. Klaiman, T., D. Knorr, et al. (2010). *Locating and Communicating with at-risk populations about emergency preparedness: The vulnerable populations outreach model.* *Disaster Medicine and Public Health Preparation* 4(3).

*This article describes the Vulnerable Population Outreach Model developed and implemented by the Philadelphia Department of Public Health and Office of Emergency Management. The model is derived from Center for Disease Control recommendations for working with vulnerable populations in emergency situations and other successful planning models. The model outlines the major components of a successful emergency preparedness plan and provides examples from PDPH's utilization of this framework.*

13. Ringel, J., A. Chandra, et al. *Enhancing Public Health Emergency Preparedness for Special Needs Populations.* Rand Public Health Preparedness, RAND Corporation.

*This toolkit distills strategies, practices, and resources from literature as well as government and trade reports on experiences from recent large-scale emergencies. It is meant to provide step-by-step guidance for identifying issues and strategies with regard to emergency preparedness for special needs communities. Chapter 4 covers race, ethnicity and LEP (why are these populations vulnerable, community capacity, issues and strategies for addressing them), while other chapters look at other special needs populations. Alongside several other programs, Public Health-Seattle King County is highlighted for their Vulnerable Populations Action Team collaborative community-based network with specific examples of the work they've done.*

14. *California's Emergency Preparedness Efforts for Culturally Diverse Communities* (2009). Status, Challenges and Directions for the Future. From [http://www.diversitypreparedness.org/Topic/Subtopic/Record-Detail/18/resourceId\\_18390/](http://www.diversitypreparedness.org/Topic/Subtopic/Record-Detail/18/resourceId_18390/)

*A review of California's programs, assessment of outreach methods, overview of resources, plus a review of published interviews with key informants and people from vulnerable populations affected by disasters in California. Identified barriers to emergency preparedness and gaps in practices and policies. Nice case study.*

15. Morrow, B. (2008). *Community Resilience: A Social Justice Perspective.* CARRI Research Report 4, Community & Regional Resilience Initiative.

*This paper presents an in-depth introduction to resiliency and social justice within the context of a social vulnerability framework.*

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3. Center for Disease Control and Prevention. *Public Health Workbook to define, locate, and reach special, vulnerable, and at-risk populations*. [cited 2011 January 29]; Available from: <http://www.bt.cdc.gov/workbook>.
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