Program Report Card: Urban Area Security Initiative (Department of Emergency Management and Homeland Security)

Quality of Life Result:

The Urban Area Security Initiative (UASI) provides the means for enhancing the preparedness and response capabilities of the two designated urban areas in Connecticut. Since 2008 the Bridgeport and Hartford metropolitan areas have been deemed by the Federal Government as at a high risk for a terrorist attack. This grant program provides funding for the areas to plan, collaborate, and equip their emergency response agencies with the tools necessary to mitigate such attacks and to reduce vulnerabilities within the communities. The UASI grant helps to enhance the preparedness of nearly 1.75 Million Connecticut residents living within those communities.

Contribution to Result:

This UASI grant program provides funding to participating jurisdictions to assist them in maintaining regional, collaborative approaches to terrorism response, prevention, protection, and recovery. The program guidelines allow for utilizing the funds to address the unique planning, equipment, training, and exercise needs of the urban areas in regards to acts of terrorism. The program results in the municipalities being better prepared to combat terrorist activities as well as being able to meet the unique challenges associated with them.

Partners:

- State Government Agencies
  - i.e. – Department of Emergency Management & Homeland Security, Department of Public Safety, Department of Public Health, Department of Transportation, Department of Environmental Protection
- Municipal Government
  - All Municipal governments that are located within the two designated urban areas and their first responder agencies
- Nonprofit Organizations
  - i.e. American Red Cross, Connecticut Volunteer Organizations After Disaster, Hospitals, Universities
- The Private Sector
  - Both large and small businesses located within the two designated areas
- Community Groups
  - Civic groups, faith based organizations, Community Emergency Response Teams
- Local Citizens and Visitors

Performance Measures:

The Urban Areas (Hartford and Bridgeport), as grant recipients, will identify appropriate metrics, based on their unique initiatives and regional projects, to measure the success of their services.

The following five areas provide both the goals and performance measures of this program.

Planning:

- The goal of planning will be to review and update, write, and publish operational and strategic plans for emergency response within the two designated areas. This performance area will be measured by the successful production of the documents that the funds were established for. In the Bridgeport area this will be the creation of common operating procedures for an regional interoperable communications system while in the Hartford area this will be[h1]

Organizing:

- The goal of organization is to establish and maintain collaborative groups who share the common goal of preventing, preparing for, response to, and recovery from terrorism. DEMHS recently established five regional emergency planning teams throughout the state, two of which encompass the entire UASI areas. Performance will be measured by at minimum quarterly meetings of these groups (with smaller committees meeting more frequently) and regular representation at these meetings by all partner agencies.

Equipping:

- The funding provided by this grant allows for the procurement of equipment to enhance the capabilities of the urban areas. In the Bridgeport area this will be equipment to establish a regional interoperable communications system and in the Hartford area it will be… The successful performance will be measured by the procurement of this equipment as well as the putting these items into operation by the end of the grant program period.

Training:

- An important component of planning, equipping, and organization is training all end users on these products. Therefore, training will be provided on the plan documents and equipment that will be developed through this program. In addition training will be provided on general terrorism education and response. This performance will be measured by the successful occurrence of training and good attendance at these sessions throughout the program period. The Hartford area has requested funding for training for…

Exercising:

- The final portion of this program will be exercising the plan documents and utilizing the equipment that is purchased. This goal will be measured by the successful completion of exercises that this funding will provide for within the grant program period.

In addition, the Urban Areas will use the Biannual Strategy Implementation Reports or comparable resources to inform the DEMHS and FEMA of program expenditures and progress for their review and analysis. In addition to the quantifiable assessment of the Urban Area's progress toward meeting objectives and attaining goals, the DEMHS will review quarterly Progress Reports to ensure that projects remain compliant with time and budget constraints.

Story Behind the Baseline:

The five DEMHS regions have been meeting regularly for three years. These groups for the Bridgeport and Hartford areas also serve as the Urban Area Working Group. These groups have all met to discuss this grant program and came to a consensus that the projects that were applied for would provide the most benefit to the urban areas. Both groups continue to meet to oversee the projects related to this grant program. At this time both urban area projects are on track and

no weaknesses have been identified. Subsequent grant funding years of this program have allowed these projects to continue and to be built upon.

Proposed Actions to Turn the Curve:

As with all federal grant programs, DEMHS will continue to pursue UASI funding. Prior to the recent designation of the two DEMHS Regions as UASIs, DEMHS had initiated its Regional Collaboration Initiative. Over the past three years, emergency preparedness in Connecticut has migrated from a municipally-based system, through broadened mutual aid and increased regional planning participation, to the current REPT model that serves all municipalities in the State in a coordinated, efficient emergency management system. The UASI program has supported both the concept and the implementation of the Regional Collaboration Initiative. However, regional collaboration has become an embedded policy in the State and is not dependent on continued funding through the UASI program. DEMHS will continue to work cooperatively and collaboratively with its partner REPTs and their constituent municipalities to protect the life and property of the citizens of Connecticut. In regards to the performance measures, the following will be done to complete these goals:

- Planning – Planning continues to be a priority for both urban areas. The groups are leveraging other grant programs to continue these initiatives. Examples of these include the regional Homeland Security grant and Interoperable Emergency Communications which will provide additional funding to complete or enhance the UASI projects.
- Organization – As stated previously, the regional groups were established prior to the UASI designations and will continue this regional approach beyond UASI funding. Executive level support for these groups has been shown in both areas and these groups will continue to devote time and resources to these endeavors even without federal grant funding.
- Equipment – As with planning, the urban areas are leveraging other grant programs to continue to procure and maintain equipment. The purchased assets will benefit the entire regional areas, not just a single municipality therefore providing for the best use of the funding. Properly equipping response agencies is a high priority and will continue to be as new threats evolve. In addition, the equipment that is being procured will benefit these agencies for a wide variety of uses, not just those related to terrorism.
- Training – Proper training is the backbone to a coordinated response. There are numerous no-cost training courses that are available to all partners and are being utilized throughout the regions. Due to the ongoing regional collaboration, local municipalities and regional organizations are setting up trainings that are available to all partners, not just a single municipality. The DEMHS training unit continues to provide no-cost courses to all of the first response community throughout the state.
- Exercises – The urban areas have built regional exercises into their plans and grant programs so a good training and exercise program can be established. This will continue to happen without UASI funding. Due to federal assistance, there are many programs available that will assist in providing funding for exercises and in fact many are requirements. Both urban areas have established multi-year exercise programs to continue this effort throughout the regions for many years.