Communicating With Officials

2015 KAMM Regional Trainings
Floodplain 101

• Flood risk is dynamic
  – Watershed alterations (development, mining, flood control structures, etc.) may affect flood risk
  – Flood maps depict risk at the time the maps were created
Did you know…?

During the FY2014 grant cycle, Kentucky submitted $24,563,553 in mitigation project applications to the PDM and FMA programs.
Why Communicate?

Elected officials at all levels of government make decisions that affect public health and safety.

They need the valuable insight and information that you, as a local mitigation manager, can provide in order to make the most effective decisions.

There may be other programs that the official is working on that have parallel objectives which could partner with mitigation to leverage resources.
Where do I start?

Consider your audience.

• Who am I trying to inform?
  – Mayor, County Judge Executive, State Legislator, Congressional Representative

• What level of knowledge and comprehension of the issues do they currently possess?
  – If you’re not sure, assume the answer is “zero.”

• What is the best method of communicating with this particular official – email, phone, printed materials, personal presentation, all of the above?
Key Points

• Communication should be simple, concise, and to the point.
  – Avoid an “information overload” of technical terms, acronyms, etc.

• Don’t raise questions that you are not prepared to answer.

• Address the five basic “W”s: Who? What? Where? When? Why?
  – The “How?” may also be appropriate if you are garnering support for a particular mitigation effort.
Key Points

• **Who:**
  – Who you are, your position, your responsibilities
  – Who is at risk from potential hazards?

• **What:**
  – What are the risks my community faces?

• **Where:**
  – Which areas are susceptible to risk?

• **When:**
  – Which hazard events will expose people and property to danger?
Key Points

• **Why: Why is this important?**
  
  – State this right up front!
  
  – Use supporting evidence to emphasize
    
    Constituents’ complaints/requests
    Past/potential property damages
    Past/potential injuries/deaths due to health and/or safety issues
    Economic benefits
      – Savings from reduced personnel intervention such as
        emergency dispatches, road repairs, debris removal
      – Insurance savings
      – Environmental benefits
      – Consent decrees/fine
      – Potential results of inaction
Key Points

• **How?**
  – Mitigation activity that will address the risks
    Plans, designs completed and/or needed
  – Proposed project funding sources
    Exactly how much $$ we talking ‘bout here?
  – Who will apply for funding?
  – Who will manage the project?
  – How long will the entire process take?

  Application process: development, submission, review, approval

  Implementation, Completion, Reimbursement
Effective Communication

Written Communications: Letters, Emails

Consider Your Audience!

• Clear, Concise, Focused, Limited (one page if at all possible)
• Follow broad statements with convincing, accurate supporting evidence (attach additional docs if needed).
• Be polite.
• Be compelling.
• Solicit feedback and editing assistance!
  – Do NOT assume your correspondence is flawless or that Spell Check has got you covered.
Effective Communication

Be Compelling?

• Take your official on a “journey” with your communication:
  – Our local citizens are faced with this risk.
  – This hazard has caused these problems...
    Damages $$? Photos?
  – We can expect the hazard to occur again.
  – The problems can be mitigated.
  – This is how we can reduce or eliminate the risk.
  – These are the benefits of the mitigation project.
Personal Visits

• **Schedule**: Know how much time you are being allotted and prepare materials accordingly.

• **Consider your audience!**
  – Avoid technical jargon and acronyms.
  – Ask a layperson for feedback.

• **Prepare a one page summary handout/fact sheet to leave behind.**
  – Include the 5 Ws’ salient points and the “How?” proposition.
  – Remember: Concise, accurate, compelling
Communication Resources

Gathering Data

FEMA Data Visualization Tool: Declared Disasters Demographics Information [www.fema.gov/data-visualization](http://www.fema.gov/data-visualization)

Kentucky Emergency Management (KYEM) [kyem.ky.gov](http://kyem.ky.gov)

Kentucky Geological Survey (KGS) [www.uky.edu/kgs](http://www.uky.edu/kgs)

NOAA National Climatic Data Center (NCDC) [www.ncdc.noaa.gov/](http://www.ncdc.noaa.gov/)

Precipitation Data [hdsc.nws.noaa.gov/hdsc/pfds/](http://hdsc.nws.noaa.gov/hdsc/pfds/)

KY Association of Mitigation Managers (KAMM) [www.kymitigation.org](http://www.kymitigation.org)

Kentucky Division of Water (KDOW) [water.ky.gov](http://water.ky.gov)
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