ASPR
Administration for Strategic
Preparedness & Response

HHS EMPOWER PROGRAM

WILDFIRES IN LOS ANGELES COUNTY, CALIFORNIA

⚠ Why was the HHS emPOWER Program Needed?

Los Angeles (LA) County, the largest county in the nation, includes 88 cities, a diverse population of over 10 million people, and faces many hazards including earthquakes, wildfires, mudslides, severe heat, and high winds that have all led to severe power outages. Since 2017, LA County Department of Public Health (LACDPH) has leveraged HHS emPOWER Program data and tools to inform preparedness, response, and recovery activities, including conducting multi-modal county and city integrated lifesaving outreach and response activities. This work has transformed into a formal multi-agency LA County-City of LA protocol that rapidly operationalizes data and supports integrated situational awareness, decision-making and action prior to, during, and after an emergency or disaster.

🚑 How were the HHS emPOWER Program Tools Used?

Wildfires: In 2017, LACDPH used emPOWER data to rapidly conduct outreach to nearly 40 durable medical equipment (DME) and oxygen suppliers to provide recovery assistance to more than 600 individuals impacted by the historic wildfires. In the 2018 Woolsey Fire, LACDPH partnered with LA County Emergency Medical Services (EMS) and City of LA's Fire and Police to provide access to the emPOWER individual data, informing evacuation pre-planning activities with more than 100 law enforcement and accessible transportation providers. In 2019, the partnership with the City of LA was expanded to include additional response agencies, and formalized with trainings and exercises conducted in 2019 to ensure emPOWER data could be obtained rapidly by response partners. This capability has been consistently used for many other emergencies, including public safety power shut-off (PSPS) events, and is being offered to other cities in high-risk areas.

Power Outages: LACDPH conducted rapid robo-dial outreach to over 2,000 DME suppliers and home health and hospice providers, during extreme heat events in 2018 and 2019, to alert them of predicted power outages, excessive heat risks, and resources for their clients, and recommended they contact their clients to encourage them to plan for and implement personal preparedness measures.

Flooding and Mudslides: Following the 2018 wildfires, LACDPH provided data and expertise to the City of LA to support evacuation and shelter planning for 100 residents that resided in a high-risk flood and mudslide zone and predicted to have severe rainstorms.

Water Quality Emergency: In 2018, LACDPH partnered with the LA County Fire and LACDPH Environmental Health and Community Field Services to quickly conduct outreach, education, and provided water to over 60 at-risk individuals, including a home dialysis patient.

Partners 🤝	• LA County Department of Health Services EMS Agency • City of LA and LA County Fire Departments	• LA Police and LA County Sheriff Departments • DME and Oxygen Suppliers • Home Health Providers	• Hospice Agencies • City of LA Emergency Management Department • LA County Office of Emergency Management

Quick Facts

Date: Dec. 2017 – Sep. 2020

Location: LA County, California

Tools used:
✓ emPOWER Emergency Planning De-identified Dataset
✓ emPOWER Emergency Response Outreach Individual Dataset

Stages of the Emergency Management Cycle:
✓ Preparedness
✓ Response
✓ Recovery
✓ Mitigation

"The emPOWER Program has been an invaluable tool for Los Angeles County. It has helped us work with our partners to protect those most vulnerable across a range of emergencies."

Stella Fogleman, Los Angeles County Department of Public Health

🔊 What was the Impact?

LA County's innovative use of emPOWER data and tools has informed multi-agency training and exercises, and the development of a formal, forward-thinking protocol and network of agency leadership and staff from public health, emergency management, EMS, fire, and law enforcement, dedicated to protecting the health of over 100,000 at-risk community members. LA County's integrated partnership with the City of LA is now being offered to other cities in the county. LA County is currently expanding knowledge and use of its protocols by providing education and peer-to-peer training to other counties throughout the State of California.

LACDPH has also led technological innovation, using emPOWER data to support optimized geospatial mapping, data analytics, and targeted planning capabilities to rapidly identify and address the needs of at-risk individuals in densely populated areas. LACDPH has continued to strengthen its partnerships with DME and oxygen providers and leverage, where possible, robo-dial outreach activities for PSPS and other emergencies. LACDPH is currently exploring power resilience concepts to enhance opportunities for DME battery recharging capabilities in shelters and other locations to assist at-risk individuals in higher risk areas for fire and PSPS events.

Best Practices:
- Developed a formal county-city integrated protocol, network and tools, and conducted trainings to help partners become familiar with emPOWER data and readily integrate standard practices into their public health activities across the emergency management cycle.
- Built a framework of in-house technical expertise, capabilities, and resources that other interested public health authorities can replicate or deploy to assist others across the country in need of real-time technical assistance.

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