

The BEST: Lessons Learned from a Locally Built Sheltering Program

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Topics

- Building A Shelter Program in Brevard
 - Historic Approach
 - Identifying Core Shelter Program Components
 - Our Methodology and Solutions
- Real Word Experiences
 - Matthew vs Irma
 - Successes and Improvements
- Transporting the Program to Martin
- Best Practices and Lessons Learned
- Questions

Brevard County's Approach





Historic Shelter Staffing

- General Population Shelters:
 - American Red Cross, Brevard Public Schools, and Parks and Recreation
- Special Needs Shelters:
 - Department of Health, Housing and Human Services, Brevard Public Schools, and Parks and Recreation
- Pet-Friendly Shelters
 - Animal Services and Parks and Recreation
- Additional volunteers were solicited from all County Departments to provide staffing support to shelters
 - Examples: Housing & Human Services, Library Services



Changing Landscape

- In late 2015/early 2016, indications emerged that traditional partners were experiencing issues with sustaining sufficient staffing numbers
 - Changes in organizational structures from past years
 - Loss of volunteers
 - Aging demographic of current volunteers
 - Changing approach by younger generations towards how they volunteer their time
 - Recruitment is increasingly difficult and engagement is evolving too slowly
 - Reduced resources and funding
- Raised concerns about their ability to meet existing expectations support and signaled the need to explore alternative options



A County Responsibility

- It is the law
 - Providing safe refuge for residents and visitors is a County responsibility
- Florida Statute 252.38 - Counties
 - Safeguarding the life and property of its citizens is an innate responsibility of the governing body of each political subdivision of the state.
 - (D) During a declared state or local emergency and upon the request of the director of a local emergency management agency, the district school board or school boards in the affected area shall participate in emergency management by providing facilities and necessary personnel to staff such facilities.



Where to Start?

- Identified the core components of a sheltering program to focus on:
 - Number of staff needed
 - Sources for staffing and number of available staff
 - Administrative policies/procedures to update/create
 - Pay
 - Shelter Selection/ Assignment Process
 - Training Program
 - Support Materials – Forms and Equipment
- Formed a team of experienced partners to broaden the perspective and offer guidance
- Determined a project management strategy



Lean Six Sigma

- Utilized the County's process improvement program, Lean Six Sigma
 - Applied those principles/processes to systematically examine all phases of the issue and create solutions
 - Identified a reliable staffing source = County and Brevard Public School employees
 - Expanded the existing County Shelter Worker Program utilized to staff Special Needs shelters
 - Not enough County employees volunteered to fill key roles
 - Activated the emergency duties clause in employee job descriptions
 - Created the Brevard Emergency Support Team (BEST) program to manage the issue
 - 1 year plus to develop

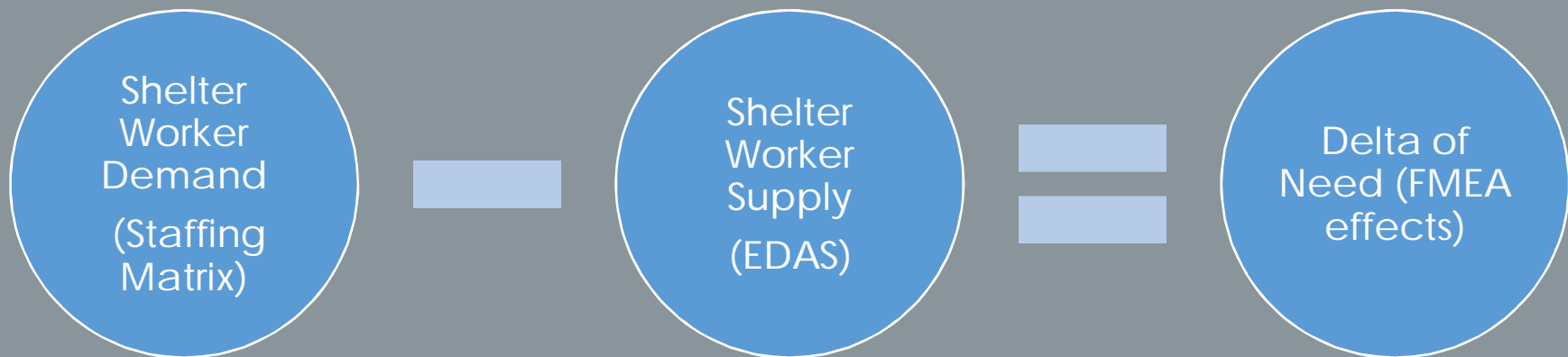


Lean Six Sigma - Define Phase

- Problem Statement:
 - Traditional staffing sources have indicated that they are no longer able to provide sufficient, trained shelter workers and managers to meet the anticipated need, and alternative solutions must be identified.
- Goal Statement:
 - To reduce/eliminate the gap of available, trained shelter workers in order to support the county's most vulnerable populations during disasters.



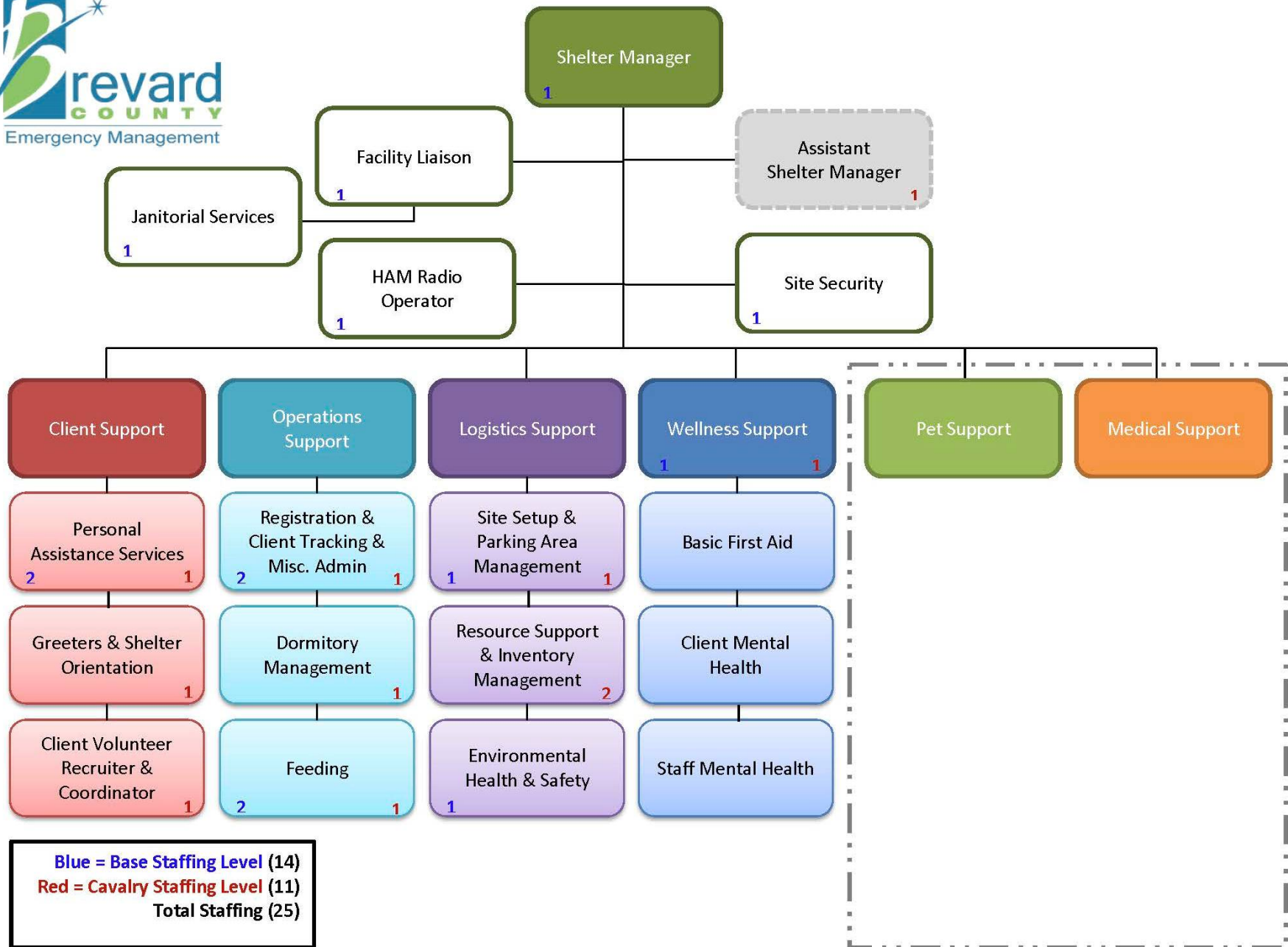
Lean Six Sigma - Measure Phase



Determining Staffing Needs Considerations



- What staffing/position model to follow?
 - Red Cross model
 - Shelter Field Operations Guide recommendations
 - Customized version for your community
- How many staff do you need per shelter?
 - Based on per person ratio
 - Facility usage approach
 - Combination
- How does that change for other shelter types?
 - Special Needs & Pet Friendly
- How do you balance all of the differences and create a uniformed approach?



Shelter Staffing Matrix (Demand)

Totals by Shelter (24-hr shift)	Shelters	Shelter Manager	Site Security	Facility Liaison	Janitorial Support	Client Support	Operations Support	Logistical Support	Wellness Support	Pet Support	Medical Staffing	Totals
Co-located	3	6	6	6	6	12	24	12	6	6	0	84
Primary Evacuation Shelters	12	46	24	4	24	94	150	82	40	0	0	464
Pet Friendly Shelters	4	8	8	8	8	16	32	16	8	16	0	120
Special Needs Shelters	5	20	10	0	10	50	70	50	20	0	30	260
Primary Backup Evacuation Shelters	9	38	18	0	18	82	124	80	34	0	0	394
Primary Backup Special Needs	1	4	2	0	2	10	14	10	4	0	6	52
Totals by Storm (24 hr shift)	Shelters	Shelter Manager	Site Security	Facility Liaison	Janitorial Support	Client Support	Operations Support	Logistical Support	Wellness Support	Pet Support	Medical Staffing	Totals
Organization Staffing	-	BoCC/ BPS	BCSO/ M-PD	BoCC/ BPS	BoCC/ BPS	BoCC/ BPS	BoCC/ BPS	BoCC/ BPS	BoCC/ BPS	N/A	FDOH	-
Tropical Storm	3	6	6	6	6	12	24	12	6	6	0	84
Category 1-2 Hurricane	21	74	42	12	42	160	252	148	68	16	30	844
Category 3+ Hurricane	31	116	62	12	62	252	390	238	106	16	36	1290



Scenario Based Staffing Totals by Agency

Totals by Storm Type per Agency	BoCC/ BPS	BCSO/ M-PD	FDOH	Pet Agency	Totals
Tropical Storm	72	6	0	6	84
Category 1-2 Hurricane	756	42	30	16	844
Category 3+ Hurricane	1176	62	36	16	1290

Determining Staffing Supply Considerations



- Keeping government operational is the first priority so departments have essential staff
 - Are those positions already identified?
 - Is that in writing or just based on history?
 - Is that position or person specific?
 - How do you handle positions that are only essential at certain times (pre, during, post)?
 - How do you create a uniformed methodology for distinguishing those differences?
 - There are going to be some employees that are just not available
- What's the best way assist the various departments in answering those questions?



Employee Group Categories

All employees are identified as essential:

- **Department Essential**

- Employees required to report to their designated work locations to ensure the operation of essential department functions

- **Available Essential**

- Employees without essential department functions and available to be assigned other emergency roles

- **Exempt Essential**

- Employees who have extenuating circumstances that meet the defined exemption criteria



Emergency Duties Assessment Survey (Supply)

- Worked with HR to get a list of all positions
- Sent a survey to all department directors with all of their positions and asked that identify the roles and responsibilities of each
- Defined Pre, During, and Post-Event timeframes and provided example duties

EDAS	Essential Pre-Event	Non-Essential Pre-Event	Essential During Event	Non-Essential During Event	Essential Post-Event	Non-Essential Post-Event
Results	1109	568	745	927	1149	525

Failure Modes and Effects Analysis (FMEA)

Process Step/ Input	Potential Failure Mode	Potential Failure Effects		Potential Causes		Current Controls		
What is the process step and input under investigation?	In what ways does the Key Input go wrong?	What is the impact on the Key Output Variables (Customer Requirements)?	S E V	What causes the Key Input to go wrong?	O C C	What are the existing controls & procedures that prevent either the cause?	D E T	R P N
Identified number of current shelter workers	Limited number of participating County employees and traditional shelter staffing partnership support	Inability to open a sufficient number of shelters to offer safe refuge to the county's most vulnerable populations	10	Loss of traditional sheltering partnership support, decreasing county staff support and national decrease in volunteerism	10	Based on the current assessment conducted by responsible agencies	10	1000
Identified number of shelter workers needed	Lack of historical data, lack of transparency with traditional shelter staffing agencies, lack of national sheltering standard	Inability to open a sufficient # of shelters to offer safe refuge to the county's most vulnerable populations	10	Loss of traditional sheltering partnership support	10	Conduct yearly staffing analysis; however, there is no enforceable process for reducing the gap	9	900
Support of department leadership	Lack of employee and director-level support for the mandatory program	County shelter worker program is not implementable	10	Comfort level with new program, fear of the unknown	10	Feedback communicated at Director's meetings	7	700
Identified availability of non-utilized emergency workers	Subjectiveness of how positions are being classified as essential or non-essential	Assessment may not provide an accurate reflection of available staff	6	Infrequency of utilizing staff for emergency duties and lack of familiarization of essential and non-	6	Historically relied on three County departments; no uniform mechanism to identify essential & non-essential	8	288



Analyze Phase

County Staff Demand vs. Supply	Demand	Supply	Delta	Supply	Delta
	Staff Needed	County Staff Available Pre-Event	Using Pre-Event Availability	County Staff Available During Event	Using During-Event Availability
Tropical Storm	72	568	496	927	855
Category 1-2 Hurricane	756	568	-188	927	171
Category 3+ Hurricane	1176	568	-608	927	-249

- Shelter Staff Need

- The above numbers do not reflect the following positions, which have traditionally been filled by the following agencies:
 - Janitorial Services – Brevard Public Schools/Outside agency
 - Site Security – Sheriff’s Office/Local Law Enforcement
 - HAM Radio Operator – Volunteer group
 - Pet Support – Sheriff’s Office
 - Medical Support – Florida Department of Health (special needs shelters)



Staffing Support Identified

- Brevard Public Schools
 - Expanded support; identified principals and deans
 - Utilized during Hurricane Matthew
 - Successful model of partnership and collaboration

County Staff Demand vs. Supply	Demand	Supply	Supply	Delta	Supply	Delta
	Staff Needed	BPS Staff Available	County Staff Available Pre-Event	Using Pre-Event Availability	County Staff Available During Event	Using During-Event Availability
Tropical Storm	72	0	568	496	927	855
Category 1-2 Hurricane	756	168	568	-20	927	339
Category 3+ Hurricane	1176	218	568	-390	927	-31



Staffing Support Identified

- Special Needs Sheltering
 - Florida Department of Health
 - Confident able to fulfill staffing responsibility
 - Relies heavily on FDOH school nurses being available
- Pet Friendly Sheltering
 - Coordinating with State Animal Response Coalition to assist with staff and training of local volunteers
 - Working with local pet volunteer groups like Brevard Humane Society for pet sheltering staff support

Implementation Plan



GOAL 1

Consult with County leadership and County Directors on the core concepts of the Brevard Emergency Support Team (BEST) initiative, and solicit their guidance and feedback.

GOAL 2

Ensure all members of the Brevard Emergency Support Team are positioned for success when staffing and operating a shelter through the development of detailed job aids, programmatic support mechanisms, and a robust training program.

GOAL 3

Refine and expand the processes and mechanisms for the Brevard Emergency Support Team members to be notified, assigned and contacted in the event of activation.

GOAL 4

Following implementation, ensure that the appropriate mechanisms are in place to continue to function as designed, has the ability to evolve and the proper safeguards are in place to meet the needs of all Brevard Emergency Support Team members.

Brevard Emergency Support Team (BEST)



Mission

To serve those in need by helping the most vulnerable safely navigate the turbulent times of emergencies





Administrative Order #62

- Emergency Preparedness Program
 - Provides a mechanism for employees designated as Essential (Department & Available) to be provided with administrative leave to secure their homes and ready their families prior to reporting to emergency assignment
 - Primarily for employees who live in evacuation zones
 - Barrier Islands
 - Mobile/Manufactured Homes
 - Low-lying or Flood-prone areas
 - Other areas specifically identified as evacuation areas
 - Doesn't excuse not preparing
 - Readyng families/homes can be complex and times will vary
 - The longer you wait the more you compete for scarce resources



Administrative Order #69

- Establishes the BEST program
 - Outlines procedures and conditions for operation
 - Designates Emergency Management as the program manager
 - Requires the participation of all County Departments
 - Specifies a Level 1 Background Check for those working at a Special Needs shelter
 - Formalizes the Exemption criteria and process
 - Creates the BEST Program Manual
 - Integrates the Shelter Worker Training into the mandatory training courses for all employees
- Emergency pay is detailed in the County's Merit Pay Policy



Exemption Procedure

- 1) Complete the Essential Duty Exemption Form, and submit it to their immediate supervisor.
 - The Exemption Form must be submitted **annually** by March 1.
 - If approved, it is valid for the calendar year it is approved.
 - If, at any time, the exemption status changes, the employee should complete the Essential Duty Exemption Form.
- 2) If not approved, the employee may appeal it to the Department Director.
- 3) All department-approved exemptions will be submitted to the Human Resources Director, who may deny a department-approved exemption to ensure organizational consistency.
- 4) Employee's personnel file will be updated to reflect approved exemption status by Human Resources.



Shelter Staffing Pay Scale

Position	General Population Shelter Worker	General Population Shelter Manager	Pet Friendly Shelter Worker	Pet Friendly Shelter Manager	Special Needs Shelter Worker	Special Needs Shelter Manager
Policy	Double Time for Pay Grade 8120 (\$17.18)	Double Time for Pay Grade 8120 (\$17.18) + 5% Lead Pay	Double Time for Pay Grade 8140 (\$20.78)	Double Time for Pay Grade 8140 (\$20.78) + 5% Lead Pay	Double Time for Pay Grade 8140 (\$20.78)	Double Time for Pay Grade 8140 (\$20.78) + 5% Lead Pay
Emergency Conditions Per Hour	\$34.36	\$36.08	\$41.56	\$43.64	\$41.56	\$43.64



Shelter Selection Form

- Allows for BEST members to request/rank their shelter assignment preferences and any personal considerations
 - BEST members will rank their top three choices
 - Special Needs Shelters require a Level 1 Background Check
 - Doesn't guarantee assignment
- Provides a north, central and south map which:
 - Identifies every shelter location and type (special needs/gen/pet)
 - Displays a color-coded structure of likelihood for shelter openings
 - **BLUE** – Tier 1: Shelters likely to open for most scenarios
 - **GREEN** – Tier 2: Shelters likely to open for extreme impacts
 - **ORANGE** – Tier 3: Shelters likely to open for catastrophic impacts
- Asks for members to identify their shift preference
- Asks for BEST members to describe any personal considerations will rank their top three shelter preferences
 - Plans to bring family/pets, allergies, specialty skills, etc.



Shelter Assignment Process

- Will occur after participating in training and Shelter Selection Form collected
 - Every effort will be made to assign one of the top three choices
 - When not possible, assignments will be made by Emergency Management based on geography and need
 - Priority at Special Needs shelters will be given to those with existing Level 1 Background Checks
 - For trained individuals who do not submit their form, Emergency Management will assign based on need
- Employees will be notified via email of assignment
 - Goal is two weeks from attending training but no later than a month
- If your assigned shelter is not opened, you may be called to work a different shelter should the situation warrant it
- Brevard Public Schools staff will follow their own process



Training Plan

- **Shelter Worker Training**

- Focused on sheltering fundamentals and BEST Program
- Required for all employees designated as Available Essential
- Incorporated into Mandatory New Employee courses

- **Shelter Manager Training**

- Focused on leadership, problem solving, and management
- Incorporated into the Employee Development courses

- **Refresher Training (Coming Soon)**

- Mandatory annual requirement (March 1)
- Basic skills overview
- Online version to be developed



BEST Supporting Products

- BEST Program Guide
- BEST Shelter Worker Pocket Guide
- Shelter Administrative Kits
- Shelter Logistics Kit
- Shelter Signage
- BEST Vests
- Shelter Registration Card
- Shelter Manager Binder
- Shelter Forms
- Guides, Tip Sheets, and Checklists

Shelter Worker Pocket Guide



- Highlights key responsibilities for each shelter position and critical information
- List of key contacts and information
- Intended as a tool to assist shelter workers with their tasks during actual shelter operations
- Provided to all assigned shelter workers
 - PDF available on the Beach, under Emergency Management
- Can serve as “Just in Time” training for those who were not able to attend training
- Evolving document, updated based on lessons learned and feedback from BEST members
- Additional copies included in the Shelter Kits



After Action Meetings & Recognition

- Held multiple in-person after action meetings and provided a sheltering-specific after action online survey
- Sought to recognize all BEST members
 - Provided all BEST members with a certificate and a Hurricane Irma pin
 - Created survey to provide opportunities for BEST members to nominate their teammates that went above and beyond, all selected individuals received a lanyard for their recognition
 - For those who were nominated multiple times, they also received County above and beyond recognition, which included paid time off
 -

Real World Experience Matthew vs Irma





Sheltering during Hurricane Matthew

- Shelters:
 - 8 General Population Shelters
 - 4 Special Needs Shelters
 - 3 Pet-Friendly Shelters
- Experienced sizable staffing shortfalls in Pet Friendly and General Population shelters
 - Requested 200 Florida National Guard to support
- Highlighted a known gap
- Traditional staffing partners were not able to provide sufficient staffing resources
 - Loss of volunteers
 - Reduced resources and funding



BEST Program “Year Zero”

- Implementation Timeline
 - April 2017 – BoCC Approves Merit Pay Policy changes
 - May 2017 – BoCC Approves AO69, BEST Program official
 - July 2017 – Shelter Worker Training begins
 - 18 sessions conducted between July and September
 - Approximately 500 County and 100 School Board staff trained
 - Sunday, September 10 – Hurricane Irma strikes Brevard
 - Presenting one of the worst-case, large sheltering need scenarios
- In development when Irma arrived:
 - Shelter assignments still in process
 - Build out of Shelter Kits (supplies)
 - Finalization of shelter forms and processes
 - 6 additional training sessions scheduled in order to reach everyone (subsequently canceled)



Sheltering during Hurricane Irma

- Shelters:
 - 12 General Population Shelters (+4 from Matthew)
 - 5 Special Needs Shelters (+1 from Matthew)
 - 4 Pet-Friendly Shelters (+1 from Matthew)
 - Opened shelters the afternoon of Friday, September 8th
 - Final Evacuation shelter closed Tuesday, September 12th
 - Final Recovery shelter closed Tuesday, September 19th
- 392 County BEST members at Shelters
 - 153 @ General Population Shelters
 - 131 @ Special Needs Shelters
 - 108 @ Pet Friendly Shelters
- Sheltered over 4,100 people and over 450 pets



Successes

- National Guard was not needed this time
- Offered better services to residents and visitors
- Received a far more positive response from those who worked Irma compared to Matthew
- Program is on the right track
 - Operational concepts worked and developed tools were successful
- Positive reception by residents and visitors, thankful for efforts of BEST members
- Positive reception by employees, thankful for opportunity to give back to community
- The amazing teamwork, dedication and perseverance through adversity displayed by BEST members



Primary Challenges & Solutions

- Primary Challenges

- Inaccurate contact information and unstable rosters
- Assignment and deployment of BEST members
- Notification and communications throughout incident
- School Board and County staff friction

- Solutions

- Implement the brand new BEST Application to collect HR verified contact info and automate assignments
 - Everyone should be assigned to a shelter prior to the start of season
- Utilize the AlertBrevard system to notify, deploy and continuously communicate with all BEST members
- Increase joint School Board/County training opportunities and further define roles/expectations

Martin Activation Program (MAP)



Quick Implementation



- **In span of two months:**
 - **Utilized BEST materials to develop Martin Activation Program, which will encompass all emergency workers (County and School District)**
 - **Completed assessment of shelter staff need demand**
 - **Began assessment of shelter staff supply**
 - **Red Cross has agreed to provide staff for dormitory functions**
 - **School Board has agreed to provide staff for management, janitorial, logistics, and feeding**
 - **County has agreed to initially recruit County staff as volunteer for remaining positions; reviewing mission essential positions and availability of remaining staff**
 - **Developed MAP training**
 - **Scheduled dates to train School District staff**



Next Steps

- Purchased shelter supplies, ordered vests, created signage, and putting together kits
- Implementing County staff volunteer program
- Completing Emergency Duties Assessment Survey of County staff
- Developing an application to track emergency worker assignment and current contact information
- Implementing training program and developing just-in-time online training
- Creating shelter worker pocket guide and management binders

Best Practices and Lessons Learned





Key Takeaways

- Impossible to do this without Leadership Support
- Don't just tell them there is a problem, show them
- Use data to quantify the problem and demonstrate the need
- Put a human face on the program
- Your communications strategy and training program will determine your success
- Working together, as a team, is essential
- Empower people to solve problems and ensure they understand they will be supported



Key Takeaways

- A culture change will be needed, embrace it
- Believe in what you are building
- Connect people to the mission
- Compensate people clearly and appropriately
- Recognize that you are pushing people out of their comfort zones
- Address their fears, don't avoid uncomfortable conversations and always speak with candor
- Take pride in the idea that this is your problem to collectively solve and instill that in your team
- Don't over promise



Key Takeaways

- Following an activation, recognition is critical
 - Share community feedback
 - Provide a way for those who were “on the ground” to highlight teammates who went above and beyond
- Face-to-face after action meetings, coupled with an online survey, fosters team ownership
- Be real about failures and be transparent about what is being done to fix them
- Accountability and consequences are important, be fair and have a forum for people to be heard
- Automating key program processes will increase overall efficiency and effectiveness
- This will always be a work in-progress
- Shelters are a life boat, not a cruise ship; the public’s expectations will not match reality



Questions

