

Increasing Social Resilience in Midcoast Maine to Plan and Recover from Coastal Hazards

Pilot Meeting May 20, 2019, 10:30am-1:30pm, Roux Center, Bowdoin College

Participants

Melissa Condon, American Red Cross
Laurie Saunders, Richmond Senior Center
Stacy Frizzle, People Plus (also representing Spectrum Generations)
Melissa Fochesato, Midcoast Public Health
Gayle Hays, Harpswell Aging at Home
Pat Pinto, AARP
Mary Turner, Good Sheppard Food Bank
Chris Szalay, Catholic Charities SEARCH Program
Victoria Boundy, Casco Bay Estuary Partnership
Ruth Indrick, Kennebec Estuary Land Trust
Kristen Grant, Maine Sea Grant
Eileen Johnson, Bowdoin College
Annie Cox, Wells Reserve

Overall Project Goal: build a socially diverse regional network of practitioners working on resilience issues and identify the highest priority actions the region can take together with and without funding to increase the resilience of those identified as the region's populations most vulnerable to storm impacts.

Pilot Meeting Goal: convene a small group of local and regional practitioners who represent the field of social service organizations that work with populations vulnerable to storm impacts. Use this pilot meeting as an opportunity to work as a group to clarify how best to partner and scale-up to increase social resilience work in the region.

Objectives for the Pilot Meeting:

1. Increase understanding of the partnerships, communication systems, and priorities of the Sagadahoc social service network servicing populations vulnerable to storm impacts.
2. Increase understanding of the concept of community resilience as it relates to services for vulnerable populations.
3. Demonstrate how the Social Vulnerability Index can be applied locally, using communities represented at the meeting as examples.
4. Identify the resources and tools used by the Sagadahoc social service network during emergency events. Identify related gaps in knowledge and needs for data.

5. Identify an approach and invitees for scaling-up this workshop model to develop a more comprehensive understanding of gaps and barriers to strategies for increasing the social resilience of the region.

AGENDA

Welcome, Introductions, and one Resource you find valuable when addressing the needs of vulnerable populations during storm events:

- Eileen Johnson: Bowdoin College
- Melissa Fochesato: Midcoast Hospital; Sagadahoc Co. Board of Health; Midcoast Public Health Council. Resource: Hospital Emergency Plans.
- Gayle Hays: Retired nurse; Health and Wellness person for Harpswell Aging at Home; Member, Merrymeeting Bay Triad. Resource: Meals in a Pinch (part of food committee); Seniors Connecting (people calling elderly people on a weekly basis).
- Chris Szalay: SEARCH Catholic Charities Volunteer Program, matches volunteers with Seniors; works with Aging in Place organizations; active on Merrymeeting Bay Triad. Resource: Sends out email blast asking volunteers to check in with seniors; checks CMP outing page; most volunteers didn't have internet access during March 2018 storm (challenge – getting information out); getting down peninsular roads to check on people; Bath Resource Coalition – member (social service providers – meet every other month at Sweetser)
- Ruth Indrick, KELT: Working with communities to be more resilient. Resource: uses maps as tools.
- Melissa Condon, American Red Cross: Disaster Program manager for York, Knox and Cumberland Co (?). Provides shelters, warming and cooling shelters, smoke detector installation program (free), hazard response, mental health services. Resource: Network of volunteers. Word of mouth is still the fastest way things happen.
- Mary Turner, Good Shepard Food Bank: Helps support food pantries (5 in Sagadahoc); strong network within each community. Resource: Merrymeeting Food Council, where a lot of food for Good Shepherd comes from.
- Pat Pinto, AARP: State President (2 yr. role), Has 230,000 members (\$16/yr.) in Maine, has a wealth of material. VOAD (FEMA connected for disaster relief). Providing AARP materials. Resource: AARP “Prepare, Respond and Recover” Guidebook, printed resources instead of online resources.
- Stacy Frizzle, People Plus (and also representing Spectrum Generations): People Plus is the senior area community center and focuses on Aging in Place. Stacy knows everyone around this table. 75% of people she services are female, mostly living at home. Provides free transport – has over 500 riders signed up. Provided over 26,000 miles of rides last year. Partners with Midcoast Hunger, Good Shepherd, Merrymeeting Gleaners (Mary also referenced). Also daily check-in (Good morning call). Power outages and phone lines are down because part of cable (biggest

challenge). Resource: water and battery deliveries, grocery delivery/rides, mm gleaners, good morning call, dispatch police, phone- cable-xfinity bundle (need education)

- Laurie Saunders, Richmond Senior Center: The Senior Center also services Bowdoin, B'ham, Richmond, and Dresden. It provides social activities, a resource center, open 4 days/week. Laurie started the "Senior Summit" in 2016, which includes several communities; Aging in Place programs and Senior Center Directors. How to get info to people in emergencies = biggest issue. Richmond Rides program just going into effect with volunteer drivers (5 drivers now – newly retired people). Offered their third senior Health and Wellness Fair: not well attended so that will be their last. Also challenges in engaging communities with emergency planning and having them commit to plans. Resource: magnet that says, go here during an emergency.
- Victoria, Casco Bay EP
- Annie, Wells Reserve

How does the Sagadahoc social service network operate to service populations vulnerable to storm impacts? Discussions in groups of three.

Using the October, 2018 storms as your reference point, describe:

Who did you cooperate with, at both local and regional levels? How did you communicate with your partners? What were your priorities to address in that series of storms?

Melissa F., Gayle, Chris:

- Who do you cooperate with? Midcoast Hospital Command Center – getting updates from EMA about closures. Lincoln County – EMA., road closures, Bath Y offered showers but nobody knew it. Curtis Library. Triad: Gives contact list for storms and provide sand bags. New Shelter in Brunswick at Parks & Rec. Lack of electricity for people who use oxygen. Beds located in the arena where it wasn't cold and not flu(?). Opportunity to do an assessment for who has land lines, cell phones, internet phone.
- Question about emergency plan: Who does these?
- Harpswell: Looking at Boy Scouts to help with communications plan by going door to door. Harpswell hardest hit in storm. Bailey Island lost electricity for 2 ½ days; telephone poles ended up in water. Town and CMP are putting electricity under the bridge. Triad communication plan.

Ruth, Melissa C., Mary:

- Melissa mentioned Coast Guard could be an important part of conversation with their focus on waterways. Mary: Food pantries and lack of power so people could not call. Local pantries did not have guidance about who they could connect with. Having a plan or structure would be helpful. Red Cross works with municipalities, hospital. Resources are at state level but work locally, e.g. Ham radio volunteers. Not first responders; come in after events happen, but can pull resources from around country. County level: Red Cross attends. Local level: Connected with fire depts. 211 resource – another one they work with (they were updating on where the shelters

are). 211 is a social service hotline, available 24/7, live person – you tell them what zip code you are in and they give you list of resources.

- Melissa F: Sagadahoc has reverse 911 as well. (Melissa C – most counties do). But is it reaching people we need to reach? That is the challenge.

Pat, Stacy, Laurie:

- Laurie: Connect mostly with emergency managers (Police, Fire). And Food Bank. Hannaford in Brunswick. Folks needed place to go. People Plus had charging station and water fill-up. How communicate? In Richmond, many people are not interested in internet so people look in on people (same in Brunswick). Brunswick Pantry truck – took food out to residents. Stacy: People Plus encourages people to charge phones at night. Chris S. – “go bags” (things you should have in case of emergency: canned food, list of meds, canned items that don’t have to be heated up.). Pat from AARP – will give presentations at Brunswick and Richmond re. emergency preparedness. What do you do with no hot water? Melissa C - Challenge: Mainers are stubborn and want to stay in place. But shelters can provide services like getting new dentures, new oxygen, etc.) So, getting resources to people *on the ground* is the challenge.
- Some way of identifying vulnerable people (Chris S.) – there is no mechanism for doing that. And there is a confidentiality policy. Laurie: If you come more than one time to Senior Center, you fill out contact/emergency info (they sign off agreeing that this info can be shared in the event of an emergency). There should be some registration bank somewhere.

What is community resilience? And how can the Social Vulnerability Index tool help improve community resilience?

What is community resilience in the context of services to populations vulnerable to storm impacts? What is social vulnerability? How could the SoVi tool be used?

- Working with TNC – broadening the conversation to include social vulnerability. How do we make sure these conversations are happening across groups?
- What is social vulnerability and social resilience? Physical vulnerabilities – e.g. tree is down; flooding; adaptation planning like increasing culverts. But what is important is social fabric and vulnerable populations.
- Challenges for rural communities – limited evacuation routes, etc.
- What is resilience? This group: not having landlines; community capital (volunteers)
- Maine Social Vulnerability Index: Socioeconomic status; household composition and disability; minority status and language; housing and transportation (source: CDC Social Vulnerability Index). Eileen: We want to give data to towns. With limited resources, this tool helps communities make decisions about how to reach out to vulnerable populations (e.g. if town has higher percent of seniors, would reach out in a different way than if town has high percentage of young families), map of the most vulnerable populations (confidential policy)
- This tool needs ground-truthing at the local level.

- Big challenge: Stubbornness. People may have the info but they don't want to leave their homes.
- Get water from Poland Spring to hand out in shelters
- Create local networks, liaisons, there needs to be people on the ground ready to open pantries to get food out
- Rich. Senior Center has emergency contact (paper vs electronic)

What resources/tools do you rely on?

What are the resources and tools you rely on to provide services to populations vulnerable to storm impacts? Are there barriers to using resources or tools? Are there data or knowledge gaps?

- Need to know where shelters are – getting information out (this info is not on fridge magnets, in file of life, etc.). Often this type of info is only accessible during a storm event but not in between events.
- Shelters often change (because sometimes shelters are impacted, or only accessible during storm) so people are often reluctant to codify this info.
- This info is often only available during a storm
- Packet of papers will sit in a drawer. Fridge magnets, etc. work well. Or something small and can stick in “File of Life” (meds, photo, family members, doctor’s name, etc.) – usually on fridge. Yellow dot – critical info that you keep in your car in the glovebox and yellow dot on rear window, including photo. This is voluntary so it’s hit or miss.
- 211 – Info needs to get out more about this.
- Non-perishable storm packs
- Local emergency operation center – every town should have one. People should be directed to these to get info.
- Ruth: Georgetown concom made a flyer listing emergency resources in the town, where you can find other people and other resources. For Georgetown this works; a local resource.
- Pat: Check VOAD and what tools are available from there. It’s being used actively all over the country and FEMA is the driving force with this.
- Mary: Most vulnerable people are not going to have access to these resources. Have to work where people are.
- Stacy: Understanding volunteer central collections (e.g. People Plus – volunteer drivers; food banks for volunteer prep and delivery). A collective resource for where all the volunteers. And understanding who needs help and when. (Melissa C. – if all of us have the info about each other, we can provide)
- Barrier: vulnerable populations. Use our local networks to get info out.
- People Plus: Senior Health Expo (opportunity for this network to provide info)

- Melissa F: Our network is not well connected to the EMA network. How can this be made available? (Stacy: 211 has that info)
- Participants asked about how to get better information and predictions on storm surge events. With 24-48 hours, social service providers can mobilize resources as they are well networked and connected but need better information/understanding on when storm surge and flooding events might occur. This raises the issue of how to link different emergency planners and providers

Is there a role for Bowdoin students addressing these needs?

- Eileen: Bowdoin students who might be able to offer assistance, e.g, a flowchart/venn diagram/resource map/online database of Emergency Management aging resources. Bowdoin also has a summer fellowship with McKeen Center. Last summer, students worked with local resource orgs to put together an online resource with emergency services.
- Pat: Age-Friendly Communities – connecting students to particular age-friendly communities (maybe their hometowns). Matching student interests with projects.
- Potential student projects:
 - Bowdoin students collaborate with network of professionals to guide communities through the resilience planning process.
 - Cataloging cultural/historical areas/documents that towns want to protect
 - Eileen’s “Building Resilient Communities” course – these students could be a resource

Next steps for developing a regional network for increasing social resilience to storm impacts

Do we need to adjust the project goal or objectives? Whom to invite?

- Mary: SOVI tool – climate change is still not universally accepted. People are very today-focused. Framing it around highest local priorities. Also reframing it around storm impacts rather than climate change and sea level rise.
- People feel the goals are still on track.
- Who should be involved?
 - Childcare providers (Family Focus; Head Start, in this area, YMCA)
 - Disability integration (e.g. hearing loss). Those aging in place with disabilities are even more vulnerable. Elmhurst – group home for elderly and disabled). Independence Plus in Topsham.
 - Other healthcare providers. In-home health care
 - Senior developments like Thornton Oaks, Sunnybrook
 - Homeless population, esp. youth homeless, 200 in Brunswick (Teen Center at People Plus serves them) – e.g. Tedford, TEAN, Homeless Resources for Youth (Jane Scese)

- o No school= no food, host-to-home program
- EMA needs to know about social service connections, does 211 know?
- Sr. help day- good day to get info out to 700+ people

How would you connect all of these practitioners? E.g. annual conference...?

- Midcoast Parkview Health – Melissa F. – annual forum, every summer, could do this as a topic. All these providers are already pulled together. Maybe a sub-forum or topic on agenda.
- Maine Prepares Conference once a year (Melissa Condon)
- Jess Maurer – breakout session and table at her Aging Summit
- Director of Emergency Preparedness for state – Suzanne Krauss (Victoria knows her and will reach out to her)
- Suzanne Kraus- State level EM
- Have an open email list with everyone on it.
- Pat would like to use the SOVI tool in combination with Age Friendly community projects they will be working on (note: She talked with Liz after our meeting to get a more in-depth orientation to the tool and has plans to use it for some of their planning)