

To: Yolo County Board of Supervisors

From: Elaine Roberts Musser, Chair YCCAAS Emergency Preparedness Subcommittee

Re: Progress on 13 recommendations to improve county emergency preparedness for those with access and functional needs

Date: Feb. 8, 2021

RECOMMENDATION 1: Emergency notification to those with access and functional needs in unincorporated areas

The Office of Emergency Services started initial work, for emergency notification to those with access and functional needs in the unincorporated areas, with the city of Winters. Deputy County Administrator Jill Cook will explore how to involve rural fire departments, with quarterly check-ins with OES on progress made. The YCCAAS Emergency Preparedness Subcommittee will follow up with cities on this issue via the appropriate YCCAAS commissioners appointed from those cities. It will be necessary to clarify language as to what "Special Needs Alert Program (SNAP)" means or perhaps use an alternative name (so it is not confused with the SNAP nutrition program). How to disseminate information on a specific city's SNAP to appropriate individuals is an issue that needs to be addressed. It should also be noted there are county lists from IHSS & other agencies (APS, Public Guardian, Behavioral Health, etc.) cross-referenced and mapped by PG&E that OES can access during an emergency.

RECOMMENDATION 2: Assisted living facility protocols, responses & training

County staff will develop a specialized emergency preparedness training for assisted living facilities to ensure a more collaborative approach. It was agreed the county would have it finished by December, 2022. Because of the COVID pandemic, relationships and protocols have been and continue to be created between county and assisted living facilities that can be incorporated into the training.

RECOMMENDATION 3: Power outage notifications & information

The County now has an easily identifiable and accessible power outage webpage that is constantly updated. It gives excellent instructions on what to do for those with access and functional needs who may use electrically powered assistive technology and medical devices. See: [power outage](https://www.yolocounty.org/government/general-government-departments/office-of-emergency-services/emergency-preparedness-resources/power-outage) (<https://www.yolocounty.org/government/general-government-departments/office-of-emergency-services/emergency-preparedness-resources/power-outage>)

RECOMMENDATION 4: Legislation for Mandatory Alzheimer's/dementia training for first responders

Legislation to make Alzheimer's/dementia training mandatory for first responders was not approved at the state level. Nevertheless county staff will work with Cindi Unger (who is very knowledgeable on this subject) to develop this training, so that it is brief and useful for first responders, and will be folded into already existing training. The training material should be completed by June, 2022.

RECOMMENDATION 5: Improve accessibility and navigability of county website

The YCCAAS Emergency Preparedness Subcommittee has worked closely with County Staff and the County's Office of Emergency Services to improve the accessibility and navigability of the county website, which is considerably better. It is now much more

user friendly, with the appropriate information prominent, much better labeled and easier to access. This iterative process will be ongoing. See: [OES webpage \(https://www.yolocounty.org/government/general-government-departments/office-of-emergency-services\)](https://www.yolocounty.org/government/general-government-departments/office-of-emergency-services)

RECOMMENDATION 6: Rural Community Emergency Response Team (CERT)

A rural CERT (Community Emergency Response Team) has been formed in the Capay Valley by the Capay Valley Fire Protection District. It may evolve into a NERT (Neighborhood Emergency Response Team) if enough volunteers cannot be found to complete the more extensive training required of a CERT. Neighborhood associations or neighborhood watches could be additional resources to find volunteers. There are also a number of other emergency response teams that OES can tap into when an emergency arises, listed on the county's website. See: [emergency response teams \(https://www.yolocounty.org/government/general-government-departments/office-of-emergency-services/how-can-i-help\)](https://www.yolocounty.org/government/general-government-departments/office-of-emergency-services/how-can-i-help)

RECOMMENDATION 7: Go Kits for IHSS consumers

All current Yolo County IHSS consumers will receive emergency go kits. This was a collaborative project:

- The In-Home Supportive Services Advisory Committee applied for and received a \$1,000 donation from Partnership Healthplan in 2020 and Yolo Healthy Aging Alliance acted as the fiscal agent managing the donation.
- In 2021, Resources for Independent Living of Sacramento and Yolo donated 511 PG&E-funded go kits.
- Yolo County IHSS and Health and Human Services Agency used \$121,500 to purchase the remaining 2,500 go kits.

The bags are drawstring backpacks, which IHSS consumers can carry or attach to wheelchairs or walkers, and are easier to manipulate than bags with intricate closures. Distribution started in the western, wildfire-prone part of the County in 2021; IHSS staff are distributing the remaining go kits as pandemic conditions allow. This project may be a model for other counties to follow.

Although go kits for current consumers are purchased, it will become necessary to identify funds for go kits for future IHSS consumers.

RECOMMENDATION 8: Legislation for additional county OES funding

Potential legislation for additional OES funding is being followed closely, and the county has made this item a legislative priority.

RECOMMENDATION 9: County and City communication & coordination

County and city communication & coordination throughout the county, e.g. city/ county 2x2 meetings, has been successfully completed, and will be closely monitored.

RECOMMENDATION 10: Notification tools (Yolo Alert) for power outages

Dual notification is sent out using YoloAlert and social media, including Facebook, Twitter and Nextdoor. At one point, a survey was being developed to determine how much and what type of information the public might want within a YoloAlert as well as the frequency of YoloAlerts desired. It was noted if it is determined more information is needed in the YoloAlert, or greater frequency, there would have to be an agreed upon change in dispatch protocols.

This issue was subsumed by a more important matter. OES notified the YCCAAS Emergency Preparedness Subcommittee that the vendor of the software that puts out the alerts will begin charging a fee per alert. This was of grave concern to the Subcommittee as it would seem to be antithetical to the purpose of alerts, giving an incentive to the county to send out fewer alerts to save money. The YCCAAS sent a letter of concern to elected officials.

Since then, the vendor granted to Yolo County the previous contract of unlimited alerts without a fee per alert, which will be effective through October, 2022. Meanwhile the state has purchased the Everbridge software, in anticipation of attempting to encourage all counties in California to adopt its use. Yolo County has been chosen to be one of the consultants on the state's implementation of Everbridge. If the state fully adopts Everbridge, then Cal OES will pay for any pricing changes.

RECOMMENDATION 11: Robust Infectious Disease Team & identified staff contact

Currently, County Public Health Director Brian Vaughn is doing the important and difficult work of building a public health team, despite the problems created by the COVID pandemic. Public health is earmarked to receive additional funding for non-COVID workforce development in the FY22-23 State Budget. As part of this funding, County Public Health will consider additional staffing as needed on the Infection Control Team to fill the function of answering inquiries from the public.

RECOMMENDATION 12: Long Term Care Facility infectious disease outbreak notification & education

There is a need for consistent public messaging about the reasons for health protocols for long-term care facilities and any acceptable alternatives to in-person visitation. Particularly because of the COVID pandemic, the County has developed stronger ties and working relationships with the long term care and assisted living facilities and will be doing an after-action review when appropriate. As their licensing body, the state has taken a more active role in overseeing these facilities, ensuring they are complying with the newer guidelines. The county is now much better situated to play a supportive role vis-a-vis these facilities than a regulatory or oversight role.

RECOMMENDATION 13: Policy to release name of Skilled Nursing Facility or Assisted Living Facility with infectious disease outbreak

The County will be doing an after-action review which will inform the development of a policy in regard to releasing to the media the name of a skilled nursing facility or assisted living facility with an infectious disease outbreak.

IN ADDITION:**Six emergency preparedness modules with handouts have been created.**

The 6 emergency preparedness modules have been posted to the county's website for public viewing at any time convenient and for review. On Sept. 13 & 20, 2021, the modules were presented to the public via Zoom in a trial run. Approximately 15 people attended, and had the opportunity to ask questions. Dana Carey of OES was present to respond to the various inquiries. The plan is to again present the modules either via Zoom/in person, depending on the situation at the time. See: [modules \(https://www.yolocounty.org/government/general-government-departments/office-of-emergency-services/emergency-preparedness-resources/preparedness-for-older-americans\)](https://www.yolocounty.org/government/general-government-departments/office-of-emergency-services/emergency-preparedness-resources/preparedness-for-older-americans)

YHAA American Rescue Plan funds designated for emergency preparedness.

The YCCAAS Emergency Preparedness Subcommittee will assist in determining how Yolo Healthy Aging Alliance should spend American Rescue Plan funds designated for emergency preparedness.

SUMMARY: In conclusion, considerable progress has been made to effectuate the original 13 recommendations made by the YCCAAS, but certainly there is still more to do.

- The county's website has been vastly improved, with a special, constantly updated power outage web page.
- A rural CERT has been formed.
- Every IHSS recipient will receive a free go-kit for emergencies.
- The city and county are carefully collaborating on emergency preparedness.
- The county will be a consultant for implementing Everbridge statewide.
- The county is in the process of building a public health team.
- The YCCAAS has created and posted to the county website 6 emergency preparedness modules with handouts, and presented them to the public.

THANKS: For their steadfast support in implementing these recommendations, a special thanks to:

- YCCAAS Emergency Preparedness Subcommittee;
- Supervisor Jim Provenza and Supervisor Gary Sandy, Ad Hoc Emergency Preparedness Subcommittee of the Yolo County Board of Supervisors;
- Dana Carey, Yolo Office of Emergency Services;
- Kristin Weivoda, Yolo County EMS Administrator;
- Jill Cook, Deputy County Administrator and many others too numerous to mention.