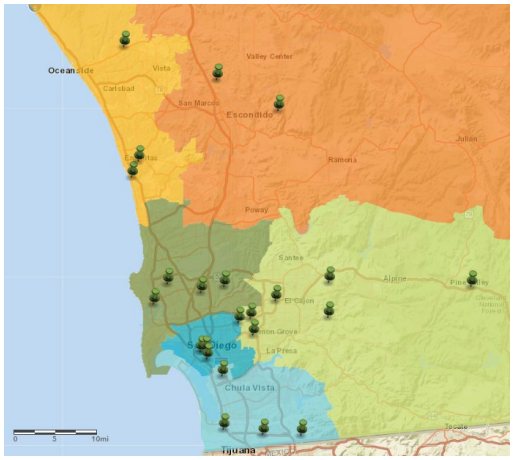
County of San Diego

Youth Emergency Readiness Ambassadors (YERA) Program

Overview:

Through the State's CA For All CERT & Listos Grant ($245K), local Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) programs have partnered with the County's Office of Emergency Services (OES), Health and Human Services Agency and Fire Authority to provide a summer paid internship to 22 youth between the ages of 16-21. Child Welfare Services, Behavioral Health Services, Animal Services and other local stakeholders will provide presentations throughout the program to educate the ambassadors on the various components of disaster response and recovery, including a focus on fires, earthquakes and the COVID-19 pandemic. These Youth Emergency Readiness Ambassadors (YERAs) will learn about emergency preparedness from all the above-mentioned departments/programs, and then will work with their team to develop an outreach plan and create materials to educate hard-to-reach youth in the region. The YERA piece of the grant is $28,000.



The YERA program is the first component of the newly proposed Youth Sector, which will be integrated into the *Live Well San Diego* framework. YERAs represent all five districts of the Board of Supervisors and have been grouped into five regional teams to focus their outreach and education efforts on the areas where they live. The teams are mentored and guided by CERT Program Managers from across the region. The teams are being supervised by OES and Fire Authority staff while the overall program is being managed and overseen by the *Live Well San Diego* Support Team and OES.

Goals:

1) Increase the number of hard-to-reach youth in San Diego County who are prepared to respond in an emergency by having age and culturally appropriate peers conduct outreach.

2) Youth Ambassadors will learn about natural and public health disasters, the social effects of disasters on communities, and utilize this knowledge to create an outreach campaign and develop resources that deliver key preparedness messaging and education to youth in their area.

Outcomes:

- Phase 1: Youth ambassadors will design, plan, and develop emergency preparedness outreach and education for their hard-to-reach peers.
- Phase 2: Youth ambassador teams will complete six separate deliverables or outreach events throughout the program.
- Phase 3: Youth ambassador teams will develop an after-action report upon completing their outreach.

Purpose:

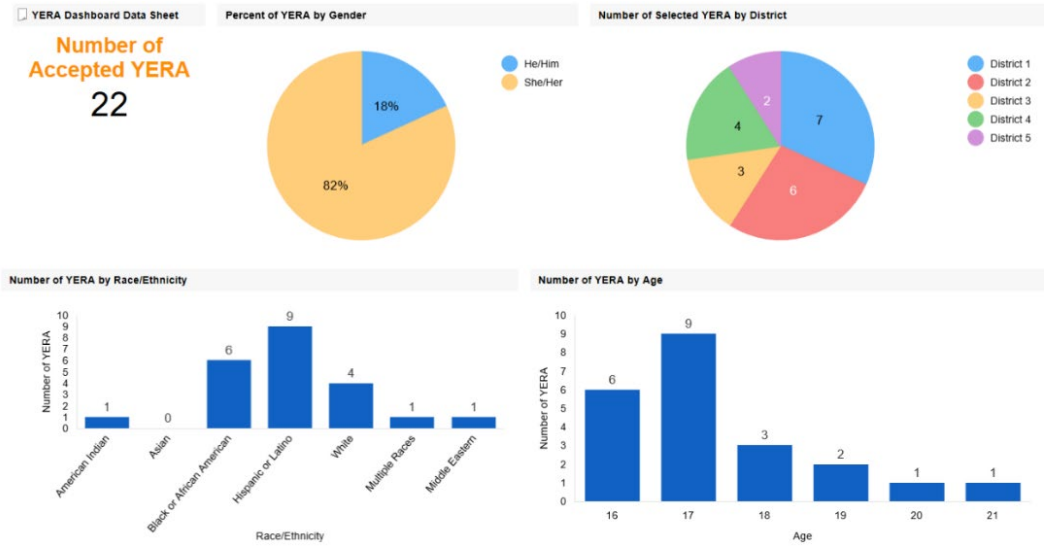
In the understanding that there are generational differences in receiving information, allow youth to share vetted emergency preparedness messaging to their peers in formats and methods best received by youth.

Recruitment:

Organizations throughout the county that have youth leadership programs, particularly in underserved populations, were identified. Those organizations were asked to share the recruitment with youth leaders that they work with. The youth leadership organizations then shared the recruitment broadly across the region.

Youth Selection:

From 58 youth who applied, 37 were interviewed, and 24 were offered the opportunity; 22 youth are participating in the program.



Roles and Responsibilities:

- **Executive Leadership –**
  Carey Riccitelli, Director, Office of Strategy and Innovation
  - Vision development, guidance, and policy approvals
- **Project Coordinators –**
  Sharon Hughes, *Live Well San Diego* Support Team
  Tara Beeston, Public Health Services
  Dan Vasquez, Office of Emergency Services
  - Goals and objectives development, timelines and resource coordination, approval of documents and materials
- **Project Leads –**
  Teresa Greenhalgh, San Diego County Fire Authority
  Candace Hadley, Office of Emergency Services
  - Project planning, oversight of deliverable development, mentorship, and supervision of years

More information about YERA and their outreach materials can be found at:
readysandiego.org/get_involved/YERA