10 Steps to Service Continuity

P. J. Grier
National Library of Medicine
Reaching Across Maryland to Come Together

P.J. Grier and Debra Berlanstein

An Express Planning and Assessment Award was received by the University of Maryland’s Health Sciences and Human Services Library from the NNLM - SE/A Region to plan and organize a conference of representatives from across Maryland to discuss the role of libraries in emergency preparedness and disaster recovery. The goal of the one-day conference was to bring together and introduce people from various types of libraries and from first responders and emergency coordinators to begin a statewide effort to define the library’s role and establish regional partnerships. Setting: Campus Center,
University of Maryland, Baltimore, Maryland. November 2010. Participants: Librarians from Health Science Libraries, Public Libraries, Academic and Special Libraries from across Maryland as well as state and county emergency personnel and state public health workers in the field. Program: Contributed agency expertise included the State Library of Louisiana, the Maryland Emergency Management Agency, the US Homeland Security Digital Library, the National Library of Medicine’s Disaster Information Management Research Center and the UMB Center for Homeland Security. Afterwards time was allowed for the expression of participants’ ideas on future collaboration, impressions from emergency personnel, followed by breakout sessions to foster regional networking and goal setting. Main Result: The one-day conference was a starting point for further planning in the event of local and/or regional disasters in Maryland. Follow-up meetings were planned to continue the process. A follow up questionnaire will be administered 9-12 months following the conference to assess continued progress across the state. Conclusion: Bringing librarians, first responders and public health workers together to discuss how libraries can contribute to the State’s Emergency Preparedness plan will foster partnerships and open discussion in advance of the need occurring, as well as highlight the role that libraries can play in providing continuity of information during a disaster. This was the first step in a new ongoing partnership with different libraries and emergency personnel across Maryland.