



Neighborhood Gathering Site/Command Post Pilot Duffle Bag Supply Program

Overview

The Menlo Park City Council approved a \$4K grant to MPC (Menlo Park Community) Ready for the purposes of establishing a pilot program for post-disaster neighborhood gathering sites with supplies.

The pilot program is intended for the “most in need” and “ready” Block Coordinator who live on blocks with a mix of neighbors representing a range of population characteristics.

MPC Ready plans to use the \$4K to purchase duffle bags and supplies to help a Block Coordinator, following a disaster, to establish a Neighborhood Command Post. The supplies will enable neighbors to help one another, in the immediate aftermath of a disaster, without having to scramble for what’s needed to set up a Neighborhood Command Post.

Each duffle bag kit will be worth approximately \$650.00. Kits will be considered property of MPC Ready and on loan to Block Coordinators based on an application process. We aim to prepare and distribute approximately eight (8) duffle bags.

Neighborhoods are responsible for safeguarding and maintaining their duffle bags. Each year, a responsible party on the block will complete a Location Tracker form confirming the stored location. Storage should address weather conditions and ease of access. An annual duffle bag review, using the Inventory Checklist, will identify any expired or missing items.

Distribution

The initial distribution will go to those Block Coordinators with a track record of successfully organizing neighbors with a roster, annual social traditions and perhaps more. The Block Coordinators should also engage in disaster preparedness activities and training, including MPC Ready monthly community meetings, and first aid training.

Process

To receive a free duffle bag, we invite block coordinators to apply.

If awarded a duffle bag, the Block Coordinator will identify a safe storage location. This could be at the Block Coordinator’s residence or at another neighbor’s residence. At least 2-4 neighbors should be aware of the location and be able to access it should the Block Coordinator or “bag custodian” be out of town when disaster strikes.

Getting Neighbors Interested in Neighborhood Preparedness

To Begin...Ask at least 1-2 neighbors to....

Walk your “block” to identify potential hazards, ranging from natural ones to human caused. Note any block-specific concerns such as creeks, heavy overhead tree canopies, industrial sites, train lines. Note the address of 1-2 potential safe meeting locations along with a brief description of why.

Invite neighbors to a meeting to discuss the idea of a neighborhood post-disaster plan. Don't be discouraged if only a few initially respond. Interest will likely grow over time.

At the meeting, discuss...

- Establishing a **Neighborhood Gathering Site** where able neighbors can gather after a disaster. The Site will then become the Neighborhood Command Post. Choose a visible, accessible, secure and covered space that's away from hazards.
- Establishing a **Neighborhood Care Site** where children and people with special needs can be cared for, if necessary, after a disaster. Recognize that evacuation might not be possible. Individuals may need to “shelter” in place, or with a willing neighbor, with neighborhood support.
- Make a list of neighbors willing to share specialized skills, such as CPR, First Aid, plumbing, communications (Ham/radio), ability to shut off natural gas or operate a chain saw. Find out who is already “household” prepared to shelter in place for at least 72 hours. *Please see MPC Ready Household Survey.*
- Develop, distribute and practice your plan. Follow practice with a fun social activity! Our friends with the Burlingame Neighbors Network find that practice “drills” with socials following help neighbors to meet more neighbors.

Additional Ways to Help Neighbors Before and After Disasters

Some of your neighbors may need help in getting ready. You can help them prepare by running errands, securing outdoor items, clearing drains, filling and placing sandbags, or helping them to “harden” their home to protect from earthquakes and fires.

If evacuation orders are given, some of your neighbors may need a ride. Find out ahead of time if they would like transportation help. If so, please establish a process where multiple neighbors are aware of the need in case one of you is out-of-town when the disaster strikes.

If you evacuate and return home sooner than others, you can check on your neighbors' properties and relay status via pictures of the damage so they can start the process.