

Partnering with Non-Profit Community to Increase Trust

Community preparedness messaging in the time of COVID-19, virtual noise combatted by partnering with our local non-profit sector to amplify our fire season preparedness messaging.

Preparedness is challenging, people often don't want to plan for disaster for a variety of reasons. This year, with months of Shelter in Place, communicating to Sonoma County about the coming fire season became even more challenging. Residents had reached their information saturation points, and adding a potential wildfire on top of Sheltering was hard to consider, let alone prepare for. We needed to get people's attention in a positive and empowering way, and make preparedness something everyone could engage in with simple actions.

The Sonoma County Department of Emergency Management (DEM) reached out to the Community Organizations Active in Disaster (COAD) to assist in messaging to the community. These trusted members of the community had access to the public in a way our department did not, and were eager to help their clients and the community be prepared for the coming fire season. We created a mechanism to provide a new message every two weeks for our non-profit partners to share across their own social media and communications' platforms. The message itself included Sonoma County residents who have taken on leadership roles in their neighborhoods and communities, a growing grassroots effort across the county. These neighborhood and community leaders are featured with simple slogans, and feature a Thank You from Sonoma County.

The community connections program has been enormously successful. Community members are seeing the message from a variety of community partners in their own social media feeds and other communications. Messages are also featured in local print media as advertisements, but the real lift comes from the community organizations amplifying the messages. The featured

community members are also recognized, through public acknowledgement of their efforts, through the campaign, as an added bonus. Ads are in both English and Spanish, with Spanish ads often out performing English.

When repetition counts, like with preparedness messaging, this program is a winner. Prior to sharing with community partners we had a few thousand views of each in the paid media. Now we have thousands more exposures and views across multiple channels in social media. Ads get unique views and shares we did not have access to prior to this campaign. To demonstrate this point, in our paid media campaigns the Spanish are always a fraction of the English, in terms of views, however in our partnership media amplification Spanish often outperforms the same message in English. This outcome markedly demonstrated the value of trusted partners.

Community partners are anxious to play a role in the emergency preparedness of their clients. Our COAD and other non-profit partners are amplifying our messages as part of their organizations' core missions, and at no additional cost to the county. The opportunity to partner with this segment of organizations is limited only by the network built by emergency management organizations.

Project or Program Contact

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Optional Submission

This link has examples of our different ads and placements within different partners' streams:

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1eEIH_qVFIDckJwYliaMxa-OJV6NvEZaF?usp=sharing