Major Response Activities

Working with 3rd Parties
Flint Drinking Water Response
1/20/16 – Present

RRT Region 5
April 5, 2017
Basic History

- Switch Drinking Water Sources 4/2014
- No Corrosion Control
- Water Chemistry
- High level of Cl used
- Dissolved scale – 70-80% lead
- Corroding the pipes
- 80%+ of Main-Curb are Lead
- Federal agencies hit the ground on 1/20/16
FEMA / State Commodity Mission
Federal Response

• Major issues related to water quality
  – Lead
  – Chlorine
  – “Rashes”
  – Filters
  – Bacteria
Initial Community Outreach

Reach out to local government
• Health Department
• Medical Society
• Key citizens
• Water treatment plant
• County Emergency Operations Center
• Mayor’s office
Initial Community Feedback

- No trust in Government
- Strong emotions about State Government
- Where to get information
  - 211 system
  - Points of distribution (PODs)
  - Community Centers / Churches
- Unique demographic challenges
  - Economically challenged
  - Low tech (need for door-to-door canvassing)
  - Undocumented residents
Community Perception

HELPFUL INFORMATION FROM TRUSTED SOURCES

- Helpful but Not Trusted
  - City Officials
  - Federal Officials
  - Outside NGOs
  - Federal Scientists
- Helpful and Trusted
  - Church
  - Community
  - University Scientists
  - Friends and Neighbors
  - Local NGOs
  - Co-workers
  - Family
- Not Helpful and Not Trusted
  - State Officials
  - State Scientists
- Trusted but Not Helpful

Voices of Flint Project: Research Summary
Community Foundation of Greater Flint
Michigan State University, Department of Community Sustainability and Office of Outreach and Engagement
Local Recovery Plan
Non-profit organization leadership

FLINT MI: Water Crisis – Destination Recovery Points / Dimensions / Models

Dimensions
- Water Resource
- Physical
- Education
- Control & Coordination

Point Models
- R Water Resource
- E Education
- C Communication
- P Physical Health
- M Mental Health
- CC Coordination

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Virginia Tech First draw lead data

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Below the action level

45 Sites that Participated in all 8 MDEQ Sentinel Monitoring Rounds

Lead levels have been decreasing

Round ES 1, Round ES 2, Round ES 3
More Community Feedback

- “Well never trust this water again”
- Lead service line replacement: metaphor for justice
- Water is causing skin rashes
- Inconsistency in information being provided
- Intimidating presence at residents door
- 3rd party sampling **
- Help for adults (as well as children)
- Eroding trust in water filters
- Bacteria concerns
3rd Party Sampling

- Who?
  - Universities
  - City contractors
  - Residents
  - NGO’s
    - Water Defense

- Challenges
  - Coordination
  - Communications
  - Trust

Use of the word “SAFE”
Lessons Learned – Government Perspective

- Recognize and engage all work by 3rd parties
- Establish meaningful communication strategy early in the process
- Openly describe where you are on common ground
- Clearly and openly describe where professional differences exist
  - Don’t embellish
  - Don’t offer opinions
  - Stick with facts and action items moving forward
Forward

- Medical & Health programs to continue
- Federal WIIN provides $100 Million (plus $20M match)
  - Lead service line replacement
  - Water plant and distribution system improvements
  - System optimization (disinfection/corrosion control)
- City leadership with State/Federal/NGO support
- Continued system assessment work (WQ & biological)
- Fast Start projection = 3-4 Years / 20,000 homes
- EPA’s Emergency Order & transition to long term source.