

Christchurch City Council

Best Practice Guidelines for Agencies

Communication with Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) Communities in Times of Disaster

Preparing Somali food for disaster personnel. Fairfax Media.



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Best Practice Guidelines for Agencies

New Zealand's population is growing more and more culturally diverse. It is in everyone's interests that in times of disaster, agencies do their very best to engage and communicate effectively with everyone, including CALD communities.

If you want to communicate well with CALD communities following a disaster, don't wait until something really bad happens. Get to know them now – build a relationship with CALD communities based on mutual trust, respect and understanding.

» **Improve cultural competency within your organisation before disaster strikes.**

- Train staff to use, and promote the use of language interpreters (both face-to-face and telephone)
- Encourage and resource the use of interpreters
- Foster diversity within the staffing of the organisation
- Realistically resource effective communication with CALD communities

» **Develop CALD connections before disaster strikes**

- Put effort into establishing networks with CALD communities before disaster strikes- don't wait.
- Know the make-up of the community and refresh this knowledge regularly - remember that communities can change quickly
- Recognise the resilience and connectedness within CALD communities
- Know who the key contacts are (ie. credible, respected elders and democratically-elected leaders and CALD service providers) and how you can best connect with them and support them in the event of disaster
- Build trust and demonstrate respect
- Get to know the diversity within each CALD community

» **Have CALD liaison roles in place before disaster, and utilise their knowledge.**

» **Recognise key CALD community gathering places and hubs along with marae as key recovery centres and resource them as such.**

» **Coordinate the information which goes out to avoid overload, and keep messages simple and consistent.**

- » **Get information out in a timely manner, tailored to the needs of different communities.**
 - Ask the community leaders and CALD service providers what information they want translated
 - While translated information is being prepared, get the message out in plain English
 - Use radio!
 - Take meetings to CALD communities – go to where communities are already gathering
- » **Work collaboratively with other agencies, both central and local government and support service agencies.**
 - Agencies with bilingual workers are in the best position to get key messages out to communities very quickly - work together to resource these agencies to do this
 - Make key refugee and migrant support NGOs known to government and aid agencies so they are included in decision making
- » **Promote Civil Defence knowledge and preparedness to CALD communities.**
- » **Getting community radio and migrant and CALD media up and running following disaster should be a Civil Defence priority.**
- » **Additional funding support may be needed to support CALD media in times of disaster**
- » **Avoid over-reliance on web-based information. Have it available in hard copy also.**
- » **Always ensure databases of CALD leaders / community members / service customers /clients and contact details are kept updated, in hard copy, and at multiple locations to ensure accessibility of information following disaster.**

These guidelines are another project by the Community Language Information Network Group (CLING) in Christchurch.

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