

# Disaster Preparedness

## The Situation

Hawai'i is susceptible to many significant hazards, such as tsunami, hurricanes, windstorms, flash flooding, mud slides, wildfires, and earthquakes. Community-based disaster preparedness, especially for youth in middle and high school, is inadequate to meet the need.

## Cooperative Extension's Response

The 25-hour "My PI Hawai'i Disaster Preparedness" program trains youths in fire safety and suppression, light search-and-rescue, CPR, weather awareness, disaster psychology, and other subjects to complete the national



Search and rescue

Federal Emergency Management Agency's Teen Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) program. In addition, youths work with family and friends to develop emergency kits and plans for their community.

For the final simulation, the youths demonstrate knowledge and skills in several areas, including first aid, triage, communications, and damage assessment. Youths are coached by MyPI instructors and adult CERT volunteers.

## Program Outcomes

A two-year grant through Mississippi State University from the U.S. Department of Agriculture provided funding to pilot the program throughout Hawai'i, and deliver it through the Hawai'i 4-H youth development program, schools, and other youth organizations. In its first year, two schools, three community groups, and three 4-H programs

on Maui, Kaua'i, and Hawai'i Island participated, with a total of 94 trained students and 56 completing the community service.

The program was added to additional classrooms, and the participation rate increased to 195 trained youths, while community service completion increased to 152 students during the 2018-19 school year. The project is continuing to be implemented through multiple delivery methods and will be expanded to other islands, with the intent to sustain a statewide program.



Teen CERT class

## Measured Outcomes from Initial Deliveries

- In its first two years, 289 youth were trained under the teen CERT program. A total of 208 youths completed the community service requirement.
- The percentage of students knowledgeable about emergency management, disaster preparedness, and emergency response has nearly doubled, with a 92% increase in scores from pre-test to post-test.
- Youths were able to competently demonstrate skills in fire suppression, first aid, triage, and damage assessment as part of a final simulation exercise.
- Each youth who completed the community service project worked with seven families to develop emergency plans and kits. During the 2-year period, the number of families reached translates to 1,456 and an average of 4,368 informed family members.
- In addition to disaster preparedness and response knowledge and skills, the youths responded with a nearly

## Disaster Preparedness - continued

3% higher confidence after the program on questions related to their ability to help their community.

### Take-Home Message

Being prepared for a disaster not only requires gathering the right supplies but also having the right frame of mind to be ready when an incident happens. Important skills such as first aid, CPR, and search-and-rescue prepare youths to respond in an emergency.



**Fire extinguisher training**

Through the MyPI Hawai'i program, youths in Hawai'i have gained the skills and knowledge to allow them to take a leadership role in an emergency and to help their families, their neighbors, and the community.

### For more information, please contact:

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**First Aid training**

### Resources

[MyPi Hawaii Youth Preparedness Initiative](http://manoa.hawaii.edu/mypihawaii)

<http://manoa.hawaii.edu/mypihawaii>

[Ready.gov Teen Cert](https://www.ready.gov/teen-cert)

<https://www.ready.gov/teen-cert>

[Hawaii Emergency Management Agency](https://dod.hawaii.gov/hiema/public-resources/preparedness-information)

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