

Increasing the African American Youth Representation in Emergency Management

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Studies show that African Americans are disproportionately¹ affected by disasters and are underrepresented² in the Emergency Response/Management workforce. The attached research poster displays ways to increase African American youth (16-25 years of age) representation in Emergency Response/Management organizations in order to increase cultural competency and equity in disaster response and recovery.

The research investigated five examples of organizations that provided African American youth with internships, volunteer opportunities, jobs at COVID mass vaccination centers, undergraduate education, emergency medical services, fire training, and job placement. The examples were successful at increasing African American youth representation in the emergency management and response career pipelines.

Many organizations in the United States are providing emergency preparedness education and training to African American youth and preparing them for the response/management workforce. Emergency response/management organizations should establish strategic and intentional partnerships with similar programs in their counties and states and commit to hiring African American youth into their agencies.

Historically Black College and University emergency management professors expressed that their students had difficulty navigating USAJobs.com, AmeriCorps and Red Cross job portals. The students did not have success with job offers despite being in an emergency management degree program. Local, state and Federal agencies should conduct recruitment outreach, and provide assistance with resume development and job portal training to accommodate student's school and work schedules.

Emergency response/management organizations should not limit hiring to emergency management degree recipients but also include African American engineers, attorneys, human resource and communication degree professionals to fill in the essential support functions in the field and command staff.

Considerations for FEMA

Expand the recommendations to include Tribal, Hispanic, Asian and LGBT communities. Emulate DHS and Bureau of Indian Affairs diversity recruitment outreach efforts. Host regional USAJobs.com workshops for community based organizations.

¹ <https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/flooding-disproportionately-harms-black-neighborhoods/#>

² <https://www.govtech.com/em/disaster/sharpening-the-narrative.html>

