

Meta-Leadership Summit for Preparedness

SUCCESS STORY

BLUEGRASS REGION

Meta-Leadership Leads to a Grant to address a Major Community Health Issue

Contributor: Margo Riggs

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Commander Margo Riggs, CDC Career Epidemiology Field Officer assigned to the Kentucky Department for Public Health (KDPH), has a history of involvement in the Meta-Leadership Summits for Preparedness Initiative. In June 2008, she attended her first Summit in Louisville and remembered that the Summit "helped leaders get out of silos and communicate prior to an event." In October 2009, Riggs was instrumental in bringing the Meta-Leadership Summit to Lexington, KY, to benefit the Bluegrass Region. Through networking at this Summit, Riggs formed a key partnership with another Summit attendee that would eventually prove critical to improving services for Kentucky residents.

The Benefits of a Good Seat Assignment

At the Bluegrass Region Summit, Riggs had the good fortune of being seated next to the President of the United Way Bluegrass Region Chapter, Bill Farmer. The two quickly learned that the United Way and KDPH could be valuable partners to one another. The United Way would be able to access extensive data sources from KDPH that could support United Way efforts. Similarly, KDPH was offered the support of a highly qualified grant writing staff from the United Way, thus providing a resource that KDPH previously had to obtain through costly contracts.

Meta-Leaders Connect to Take Community-Action

Shortly after the Summit and the formation of this partnership, Riggs learned of a Northern Kentucky resident struggling with potential eviction due to lead poisoning of a child that resides in the home. The resident did not have the funds to comply with local lead abatement procedures and was in search of assistance. At the time, no such services were available in northern Kentucky. Upon hearing the story, Riggs contacted Farmer and over the course of roughly a year and a half, the Department of Public Health and the United Way developed a workgroup to identify ways to assist Kentucky residents with lead abatement in their homes. Working with additional partners such as the Northern Kentucky District Health Department and a non-profit organization called the Community Action Council whose mission involves helping underserved populations with a variety of social services, KDPH successfully applied for and received grant funding through the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). The 1.1 million dollar grant, funded in November 2011, will help underserved populations with costs for lead abatement.

Riggs credits the networking made possible by the Meta-Leadership Summit for Preparedness to leading to a key connection with United Way and the grant funding opportunity to support this community health project. Riggs is encouraged that given a successful first year, the program will be eligible to apply for additional HUD funding, helping to sustain this important program.

The Meta-Leadership Summit for Preparedness empowered business, government and nonprofit leaders to act together in times of crisis. The five-year initiative connected 5,000 business, government and nonprofit leaders in 36 communities. For resources and more information about Meta-Leadership visit the [CDC Foundation Meta-Leadership Website](#).



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