

Fact Sheet

Providing Access to Resilience-Enhancing Technologies (PARET) for Disadvantaged Communities and Vulnerable Populations Report

What is the PARET Report?

The concept of community resilience to the impact of natural or manmade disasters has become a focus at all levels of government. The PARET report is a document that provides details on a research project concerned with two questions:

- Which technologies hold the most promise for helping the vulnerable members of society best deal with disasters, and in turn increase their overall resilience to the effects of disasters?
- How can community leaders, managers and planners leverage these selected technologies to mobilize their communities to better prepare for, respond to and recover from disasters?



For the purpose of this study, how were *disadvantaged communities and populations* defined?

They are defined as groups of people who are more likely to have difficulties responding appropriately and effectively to disasters: the poor, minorities, persons with disabilities, elderly persons, those who are less educated, immigrants, migrant or seasonal workers, new residents, tourists, renters and the homeless.

What conclusions and recommendations resulted from the research?

- No one-size-fits-all technology tool or implementation strategy exists to build resilience among disadvantaged members of a community.
- Community leaders and managers must carefully assess the unique dimensions of their communities to fully understand them and then construct a tailored, collaborative approach to applying technology.
- Access to cell phones and the Internet show the greatest promise in keeping vulnerable members of the population connected during a disaster. Survey results indicate that:
 - Seventy percent of the sampled population already has access to cell phones.
 - Even among the portion of the population older than age sixty-five, 67 percent indicate that they own a cell phone.
 - Sixty percent of persons from a socioeconomically challenged situation have access to computers, most with Internet access.
- The research findings, technology assessment and survey results show that a tailored application of the following suite of technologies offers the most promise to vulnerable populations, once again emphasizing that no single technology or even small grouping of technologies are adequate for all situations:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Television ○ Radio ○ Community technology centers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 311 systems with an assisted evacuation plan ○ Telephone/cell phone notification ○ Sirens/loudspeakers
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Who performed the research?

It was performed by four Ph.D.-level researchers through a joint partnership between Oak Ridge Associated Universities and Oak Ridge National Laboratory.

For More Information

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