

# *Social Capital Research Report*

*Western Panhandle, Florida  
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# Executive Summary

## Social Capital Analysis

### Western Panhandle

Social capital is defined as collaboration and cooperation to build partnerships and networks between the public and private sectors in order to achieve a common goal. Two social capital surveys were administered to public and private sector representatives from the Western Panhandle, Florida who participated in the community facilitation program to enhance partnerships for joint critical incident preparedness. The survey was designed to assess the extent of social capital within communities as related to public/private partnerships and critical incident preparedness.

Representatives from the Santa Rosa County Emergency Management Office, Santa Rosa County Chamber of Commerce, U.S. Naval Air Station Whiting Field, Escambia County, and Okaloosa County elected to “champion” the Critical Incident Protocol (CIP)—Community Facilitation Program, which builds partnerships between the sectors. This program is administered through the School of Criminal Justice at Michigan State University (MSU) and is grant funded by Training and Exercise Integration/Training Operations, Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

The following analysis contains the results of the social capital surveys from respondents who attended the orientation/planning session on March 19, 2008 as well as the tabletop exercise on July 29, 2009, and is compared to other communities, respectively. It is important to note that this analysis has limitations in regard to generalizability and should be considered when interpreting the findings. Nevertheless, this report illustrates partnership trends and notes several key areas where the Western Panhandle may benefit from further development of joint critical incident planning activities.

#### **Sector**

##### ***Pre-test***

- 63% of Western Panhandle participants represent the public sector and 37% of participants represent the private sector.
- 48% of participants from other communities represent public sector whereas 52% of participants represent the private sector.

##### ***Post-test***

- 80% of Western Panhandle participants represent the public sector whereas 20% of participants represent the private sector.
- 55% of participants from other communities represent public sector whereas 45% of participants represent the private sector.

Overall, participants of the Western Panhandle:

- Clearly understood the value of implementing critical incident response plans.
- Recognized the need for joint efforts to effectively train employees.
- Noted that preventative measures, such as mitigation of risk, are essential elements for a community's preparedness.

Attitudes of Western Panhandle Participants toward Community Representatives:

- In general, participants expressed favorable attitudes toward police and fire services (including HazMat).
- Attitudes toward spokespersons/media and mental health professionals were less favorable.

We briefly highlighted several points in the executive summary but note that not all aspects are included. For specific observations and recommendations, please see the attached report.

**Social Capital Survey  
Critical Incident Protocol  
Community Facilitation  
A Public and Private Partnership  
Western Panhandle, Florida**

**Purpose**

A social capital survey was administered to public and private sector representatives from Western Panhandle, Florida, who participated in a community facilitation program to foster partnerships in critical incident planning. Social capital is defined as strengthening existing networks and relationships between public and private sector participants. The survey was designed as a research instrument in order to assess public/private partnerships. Further, it seeks to measure the perceptions of respondents in regard to critical incident preparedness and response.

The Critical Incident Protocol—Community Facilitation Program is funded by a Training and Exercise Integration/Training Operations (formerly the Office of Grants and Training), Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), U.S. Department of Homeland Security grant awarded to Michigan State University (MSU) and is conducted at no cost to participating communities. The goal of the community facilitation process is to promote and address security and safety, by bringing together members of the private sector (businesses and non-profit organizations) and the public sector (government and regulatory services). Throughout the program, each sector exchanges information regarding the effectiveness of risk and threat assessment, levels of preparedness and response, and maximizes the sharing of available resources in the Western Panhandle when responding to manmade or natural disasters, including acts of terrorism. Two social capital surveys were administered during the facilitation process in the Western Panhandle—one during the orientation/planning session on March 19, 2008 (pre-survey) and one at the final meeting on July 29, 2009 (post-survey). Thirty-three other communities which participated in the community facilitation program from different regions throughout the United States were selected for comparison.

The Critical Incident Protocol—Community Facilitation process included:

- An initial one day facilitation meeting on March 19, 2008, where representatives from public and private sectors discussed joint critical incident planning and response initiatives and participated in the exchange of joint risk and threat assessment.
- A table-top exercise on July 29, 2009 between representatives of public and private sectors, which concluded the final meeting in the Western Panhandle.

The facilitation meetings serve to not only enhance community relationships between public and private sectors, but to increase the involvement of business management teams in the critical incident process.

This report describes the effects and impact of the community facilitation program upon public and private sector relationships in the Western Panhandle. It also illustrates several key areas where critical incident planning and preparedness partnerships may need further development.

### **Participating Businesses and Agencies\***

Santa Rosa County Emergency Management Office	Escambia County
Santa Rosa County Chamber of Commerce	Taminco, Inc.
U.S. Naval Air Station Whiting Field	Okaloosa County
Tom Thumb Food Stores	Escambia Sheriff's Office
Gulf Power Company	Venture Technology
Okaloosa County Sheriff's Office	Indever, LLC
West Florida Regional Planning Council	American Red Cross
Christ United Methodist Church	Boise Cascade
Santa Rosa Health & Rehabilitation Center	WalMart
Florida Department of Health	Clearwire
Escambia County Emergency Management	Volunteer Florida
Pensacola Fire Department	Tybrin Corporation
E2E Serwiz Solutions	Sacred Heart Hospital
Florida Department of Law Enforcement/RDSTF	Baptist Healthcare
Santa Rosa Medical Center	Milton Fire Department
Florida Department of Transportation	University of West Florida
Environmental Risk Analysis & Reduction	Auburn Water System
Fort Walton Beach Fire Department	Civil Air Patrol
Florida Fisheries & Wildlife Conservation Commission	BRACE
Navarre Chamber of Commerce	Santa Rosa School District
Santa Rosa Sheriff's Office	The Salvation Army
Florida Department of Community Affairs	

### **Selection of Participants**

The lead private sector organization, the Santa Rosa County Chamber of Commerce elected to “champion” the project and initiated contact with other local businesses to participate in the community facilitation program.

The Santa Rosa County Emergency Management Office, U.S. Naval Air Station Whiting Field, Escambia County and Okaloosa County championed the program on behalf of the public sector during the tabletop exercise, due to the expressed commitment to the existing partnerships of government organizations, as well as joint critical incident planning.

\*Participating businesses and agencies above may not reflect all attendants in the community facilitation program.

## **Methodology**

Two social capitals surveys, featuring a quasi-experimental Time 1, Time 2 series research design (and convenience sample), were self-administered to all attending participants during the facilitation process in the Western Panhandle. All respondents were notified that participation in the survey was completely voluntary; that they could terminate survey participation at any time without consequence; refuse to answer any or all questions, and subsequently signed a consent form, indicating their willingness to complete the survey. It should also be noted that participants who completed the pre and/or post survey may not have attended both meetings (orientation/planning session and tabletop exercise) and therefore, some limitations may exist. However, the participation rates in all phases during the community facilitation process likely have a minimal effect on the findings, as it is deemed that they reflect the culture of their respective organizations.

The MSU facilitators administered both surveys on site in order to maximize response rates and alleviate any inconsistencies regarding the interpretation of the social capital instrument. The University Committee on Research Involving Human Subjects (UCRIHS) conducted a review and provided written approval of the survey, ensuring that human rights of respondents in this study were upheld.

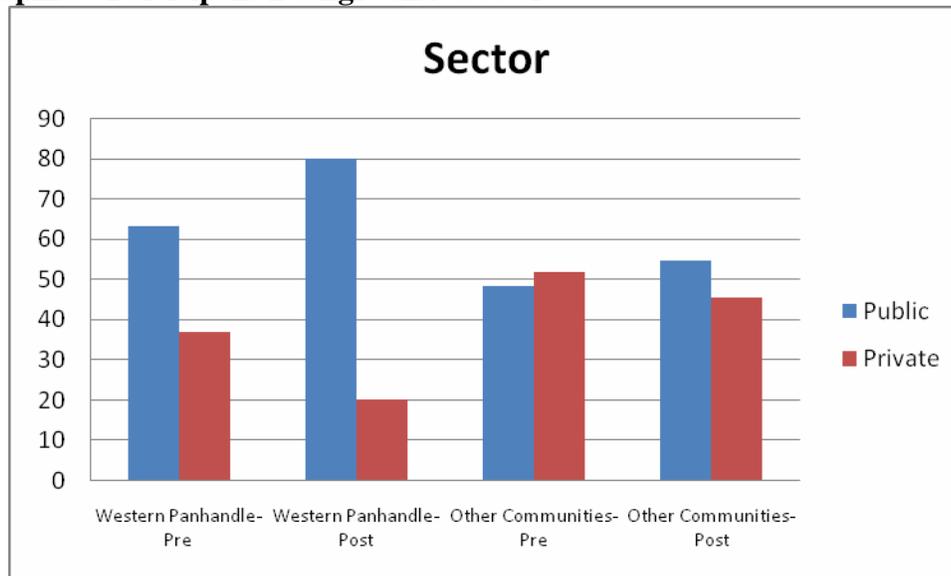
## **Research Objective**

The objective of this survey is to measure and assess the value and strength of social capital amongst the representatives of both the public and private sectors. Further, it examines the existence of public/private partnerships of community members in the Western Panhandle who, by extension, represent their respective agencies/businesses.

The findings are illustrated below and are categorized in the following manner:

- Demographics of the Participants
- Participation in Joint Critical Incident Preparedness Initiatives
- Perceptions of Critical Incident Planning and Preparedness
- Attitudes toward Relationships with Other Community Groups

## Demographics--Participant Background--Sector\*



\*Note: Western Panhandle-Pre (N=57) & Post (N=20); Other Communities-Pre (N=1197) & Post (N=701); missing cases not reported.

### *Western Panhandle-Pre*

- 63.2% of participants represent the public sector
- 36.8% of participants represent the private sector

### *Western Panhandle-Post*

- 80.0% of participants represent the public sector
- 20.0% of participants represent the private sector

### *Other Communities-Pre*

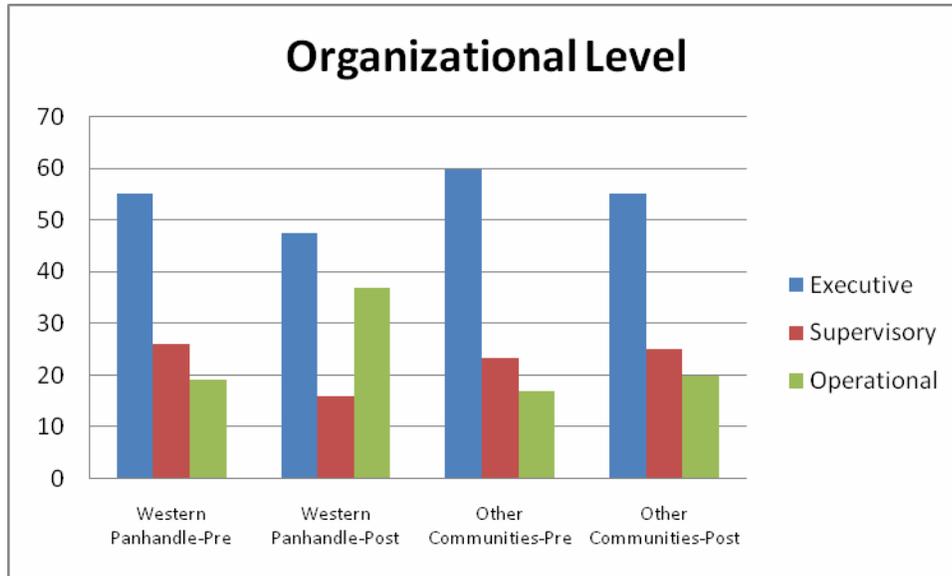
- 48.3% of participants represent the public sector
- 51.7% of participants represent the private sector

### *Other Communities-Post*

- 54.6% of participants represent the public sector
- 45.4% of participants represent the private sector

In the post-test, the number of private sector participants from the Western Panhandle decreased, and is lower compared to other communities. Members of private sector management teams are encouraged to participate in the tabletop exercise because their involvement in information sharing and decision-making processes is essential in the event of a real critical incident or disaster.

**Organizational Level\***



\*Note: Western Panhandle-Pre (N=58) & Post (N=19); Other Communities-Pre (N=1193) & Post (N=697); missing cases not reported.

*Western Panhandle-Pre\**

- 55.2% of participants perform executive/management duties
- 25.9% of participants occupy supervisory positions
- 19.0% of participants represent operational positions

*Western Panhandle-Post*

- 47.4% of participants perform executive/management duties
- 15.8% of participants occupy supervisory positions
- 36.8% of participants represent operational positions

*Other Communities-Pre\**

- 59.9% of participants perform executive/management duties
- 23.2% of participants occupy supervisory positions
- 16.8% of participants represent operational positions

*Other Communities-Post*

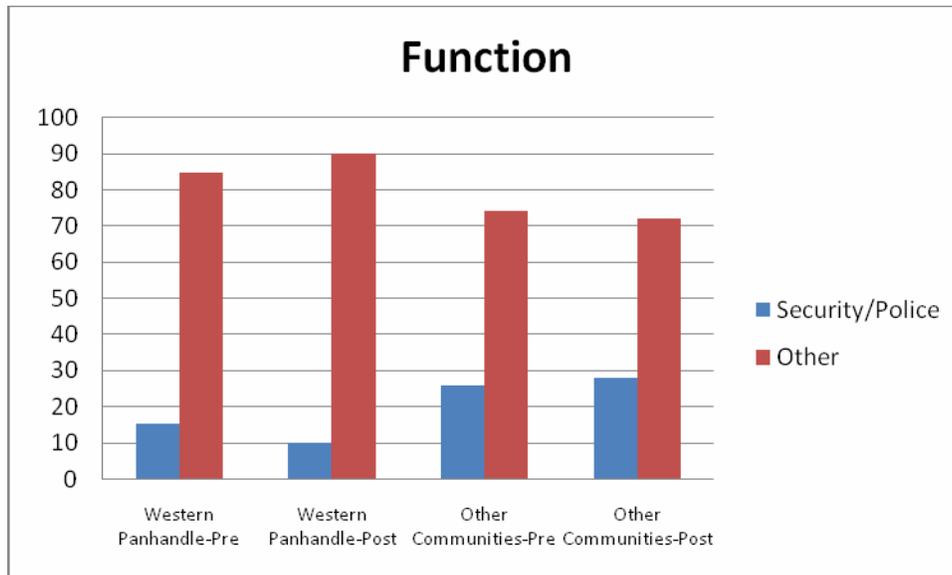
- 55.1% of participants perform executive/management duties
- 25.0% of participants occupy supervisory positions
- 19.9% of participants represent operational positions

The number of participants at the executive/management level decreased at the post-test in the Western Panhandle. The focus of the community facilitation process is on higher levels of management who occupy positions of authority and thus, are able to both influence organizational behavior to enhance the public/private partnership, and cascade this philosophy to lower level employees. The level of work experience of the participants in Western Panhandle is lower (post-test only) than other communities (graph not shown).

\*Rounding error.

- 20.3% of participants in Western Panhandle have worked 15 years or more in their respective organizations (pre-test)
- 15.0% of participants in Western Panhandle have worked 15 years or more in their respective organizations (post-test)
- 39.5% of participants from other communities have worked 15 years or more in their respective organizations (pre-test)
- 40.5% of participants from other communities have worked 15 years or more in their respective organizations (post-test)

**Function\***



\*Note: Western Panhandle-Pre (N=59) & Post (N=20); Other Communities-Pre (N=1193) & Post (N=701); missing cases not reported. *Other* occupations include spokesperson/media, risk management, business operations, fire protection/services (including HazMat), emergency management, business management and elected officials.

The Western Panhandle had fewer representatives from security/police than other communities. Typically, law enforcement and security personnel represent approximately twenty-five to thirty percent of participants in the community facilitation program.

**Participation in Joint Critical Incident Preparedness Initiatives**

Respondents answered twelve questions which illustrate their participation in joint critical incident planning and preparedness initiatives. The following table reflects the percentage of participants from the Western Panhandle and other communities who answered “yes” to the questions listed below.

**Table 1. Participation in Joint Critical Incident Preparedness Initiatives**

Question	Western Panhandle (%)*		Other Communities (%)*	
	Pre-test N=63	Post-test N=20	Pre-test N=1262	Post-test N=719
Does your organization have a critical incident response plan?	85	88	84	93
Did you participate in joint public/private sector meetings during the development of your organization's response plan?	39	40	36	47
Did you participate in agreements authorizing private sector resources under specified conditions in public sector emergency response?	43	28	30	33
At your present place of employment, have you participated in joint public/private acquisition of equipment for critical incident response?	37	37	23	25
Have you participated in the transfer of technology from your sector to the other sector to improve critical incident capabilities?	27	32	20	24
Was a common incident command system adopted by public/private sectors in your community?	90	93	75	89
During a critical incident, or exercise, have you participated in a joint incident command post?	53	63	39	49
During the past year, have you participated in joint public/private sector meetings focusing on the reduction of risk?	57	65	45	61
Is there a joint public/private sector taskforce in your community focusing on security or anti-terrorism?	75	93	74	83
Have you received training on your organization's critical incident response plan?	68	83	68	79
Have you participated in critical incident exercises within your present organization during the past two years?***	63	79	63	71
Have you participated in joint public/private sector exercises within your present organization during the past two years?***	55	78	44	57

\*Percentage of respondents who answered "yes" to question; missing cases not reported. \*\*Note: The last two questions have been modified so all questions share the same response set.

The above table displays the percentages of participation in joint critical incident preparedness initiatives. Increases were reflected in most areas at the post-test. In regard to joint acquisition of equipment, a common incident command system, participation in a joint incident command post, participation in meetings focusing on reduction of risk, joint sector taskforce focusing on security or anti-terrorism, training on the organization's response plan, participation in critical incident exercises, and participation in joint public/private sector exercises, Western Panhandle exhibits higher percentages than other communities at the post-test.

### Perceptions of Critical Incident Planning and Preparedness

Respondents answered nine questions regarding their perceptions on the value of effective critical incident planning and preparedness activities. The following table illustrates the mean scores of participants from both the Western Panhandle and other communities.

**Table 2. Perceptions of Critical Incident Planning and Preparedness**  
**Mean scores based upon 1=Strongly disagree to 5=Strongly agree**

Variable	Western Panhandle		Other Communities	
	Pre-test	Post-test	Pre-test	Post-test
It is important for organizations to develop critical incident response plans.	4.50	4.25	4.60	4.68
It is important for public/private sector organizations to jointly develop critical incident response plans.	4.33	4.05	4.42	4.54
It is important for organizations to train employees on critical incident response plans.	4.45	4.25	4.54	4.61
It is important for public/private sector organizations to jointly train employees on critical incident response plans.	4.27	4.30	4.28	4.41
It is necessary to ensure the most efficient/effective response to a critical incident that affected public/private sector organizations.	4.35	4.20	4.43	4.53
Exercises are an important element of an organization's critical incident preparedness	4.40	4.25	4.44	4.53
Joint public/private sector exercises are an important element of a community's critical incident preparedness.	4.28	4.20	4.34	4.44
Mitigation of risks, or prevention, is an important element of an organization's critical incident preparedness.	4.33	4.25	4.48	4.57
Mitigation of risks, or prevention, is an important element of a community's critical incident preparedness.	4.37	4.25	4.47	4.54

Respondents' perceptions of critical incident and preparedness initiatives decreased in all areas at the post-test in the Western Panhandle. This is likely due to a decrease in the number as well as a change in composition of the participants at the post-test. However, overall the mean scores illustrate favorable perceptions of respondents regarding the value of planning and preparedness initiatives.

## Attitudes toward Relationships with Community Representatives

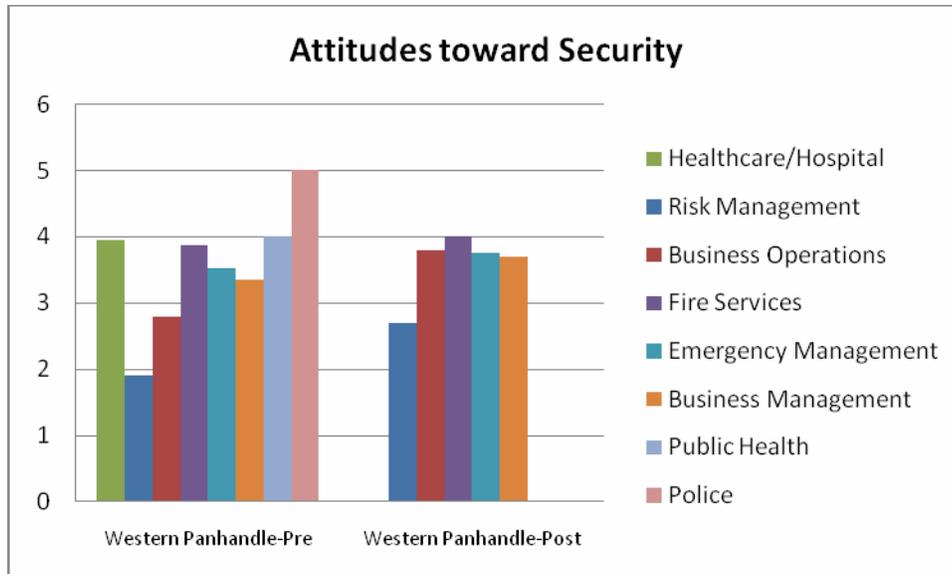
In order to assess respondents' attitudes toward other community representatives, participants rated on a Likert-type scale (1=low to 5=high) each relationship on the following dimensions: Contact, trust, understanding, cooperation, and empathy.

The following groups were evaluated by participants on the attitudinal scale:

Private/Corporate Security	Police
Business/Corporate Fire Protection	Fire Services (including HazMat)
Corporate/Business Spokesperson	Media
Business/Corporate Risk Management	Business/Corporate Management
Elected Community Officials	Hospitals/Medical Centers
Emergency Medical Services	Public Health Officials
Local Emergency Management Coordinator	Mental Health Professionals

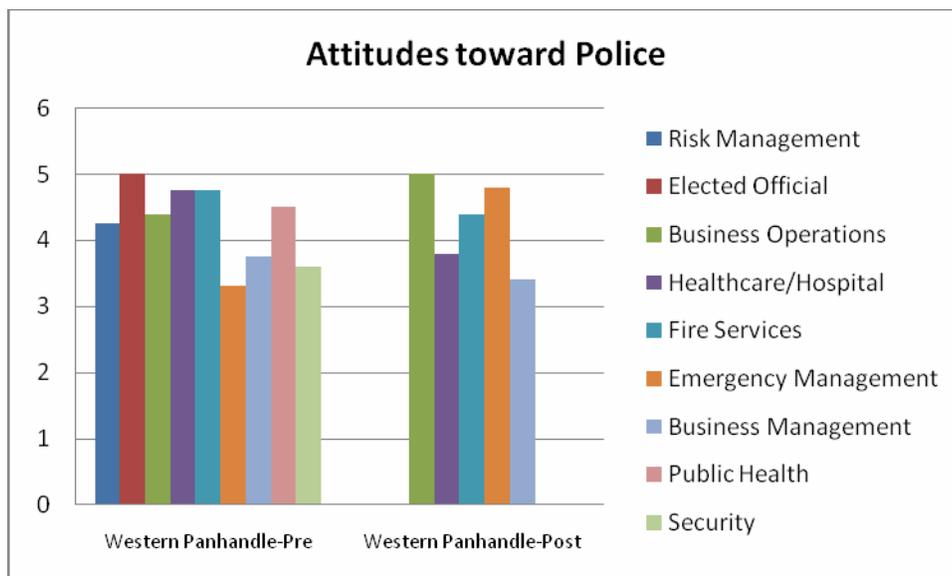
Due to the number of items rated by participants in the survey, factor analysis was conducted upon the aggregate to extract items that measure similar constructs. Reliability analysis was subsequently conducted to determine the consistency of the scales illustrated below. Both the factor loadings and reliability tests exceeded all acceptable standards for reliability and validity.

To create new variables, items were summed and divided by four. The scores of the new scales also range from the lowest (1) to the highest (5). Groups with higher scores illustrate that participants view their relationships with those representatives more positively. Essentially, the items listed below are reflective of participants' perspectives based upon their contact, trust, understanding, cooperation, and empathy of a particular unit. Due to the relative sample size in both pre and post phases, some categories (function) represented below may contain few representatives and therefore, should be considered when interpreting the findings. However, as previously stated, rates of individual participation likely have a minimal effect upon the overall results since it is presumed that they reflect the culture of their respective organizations. The following graphs illustrate the mean differences of individuals from the Western Panhandle upon various community groups according to their job function. Due to the levels of participation from various representatives, not all groups are noted below.



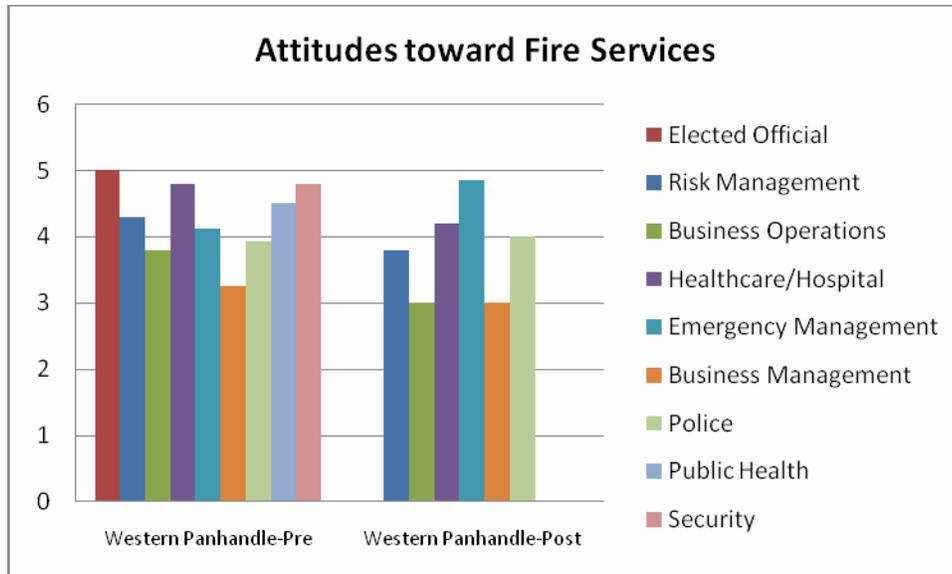
\*Note: Some representatives included in the pre-facilitation program were not present in the post-facilitation. Western Panhandle-Pre (N=34) & Post (N=11).

- Security was viewed most favorably by fire services during the post-test.
- Perceptions of risk management, business operations, emergency management, fire services, and business management increased slightly.



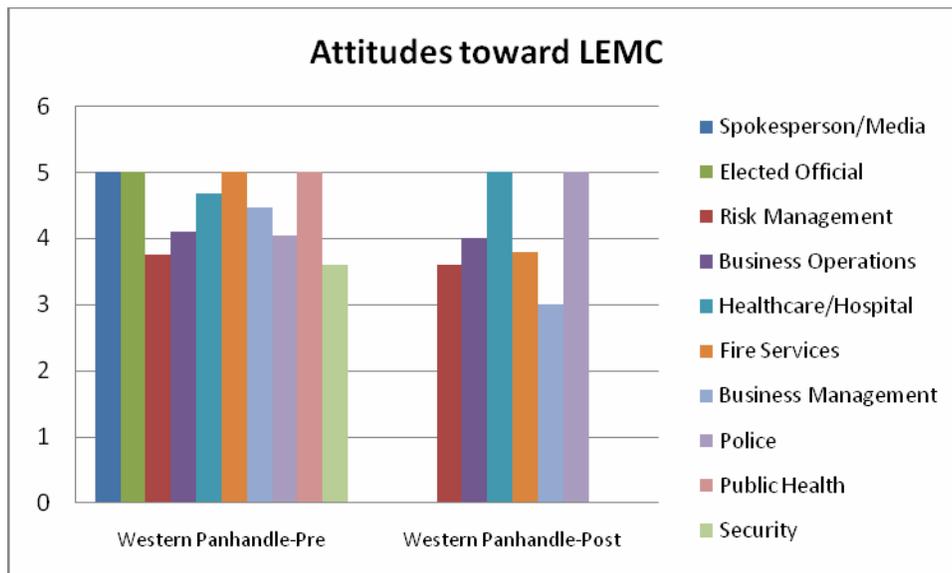
\*Note: Some representatives included in the pre-facilitation program were not present in the post-facilitation. Western Panhandle-Pre (N=45) & Post (N=14).

- Police were rated highest by business operations at the post-test.
- Perceptions of business operations and emergency management increased slightly during the post-test.



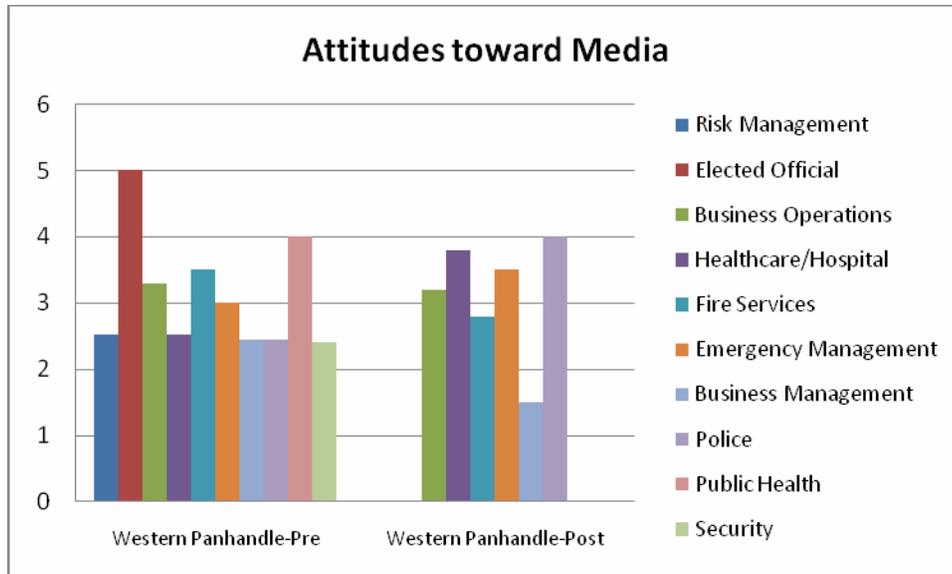
\*Note: Some representatives included in the pre-facilitation program were not present in the post-facilitation. Western Panhandle-Pre (N=43) & Post (N=15).

- In general, attitudes toward relationships with fire services are favorable.
- Perceptions of risk management, healthcare/hospital, business operations, and business management decreased slightly.



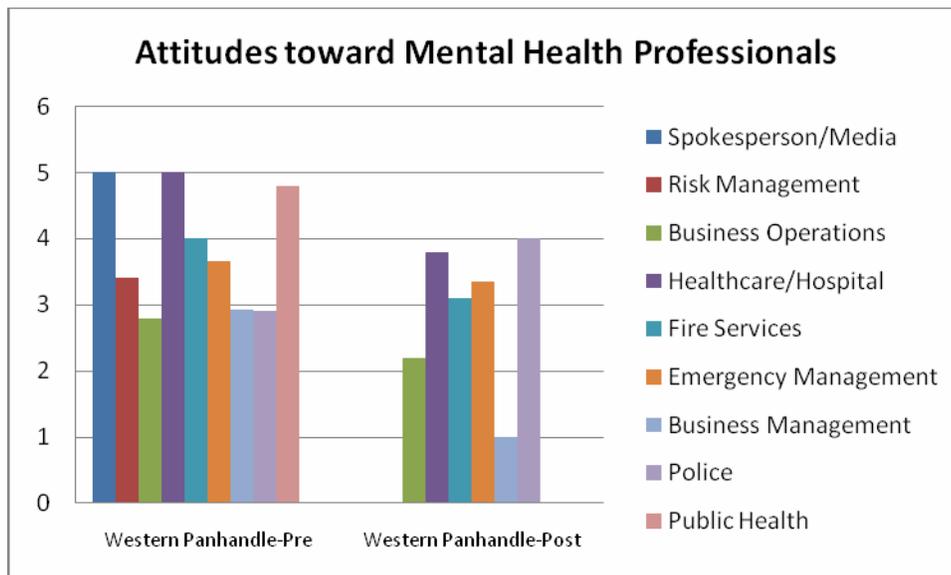
\*Note: Some representatives included in the pre-facilitation program were not present in the post-facilitation. Western Panhandle-Pre (N=42) & Post (N=15).

- The Local Emergency Management Coordinator (LEMC) was rated highest by healthcare/hospital and police at the post-test.
- Perceptions of risk management, business operations, fire services, and business management decreased slightly at the post-test.



\*Note: Some representatives included in the pre-facilitation program were not present in the post-facilitation. Western Panhandle-Pre (N=41) & Post (N=12).

- Media was viewed most favorably by police in the post-test.
- Overall, perceptions of media tend to be less favorable.



\*Note: Some representatives included in the pre-facilitation program were not present in the post-facilitation. Western Panhandle-Pre (N=33) & Post (N=10).

- Mental health professionals are viewed with mixed results.
- Perceptions of business operations, fire services, emergency management, and business management decreased at the post-test.

## **Results and Recommendations—Western Panhandle**

Overall, the participants from the Western Panhandle clearly understood the value of implementing critical incident response plans. Further, they also recognized the need for joint efforts to effectively train employees, in order to ensure the most efficient response in the event of a critical incident. Lastly, the representatives also noted that preventative measures, such as mitigation of risks, are essential elements for a community's preparedness.

The number of private sector participants from the Western Panhandle decreased in the post-phase of the facilitation program. There has been a growing interest in the private sector population to refine and update critical incident planning initiatives, due to the effects disasters have upon business continuity. The community facilitation process encourages increased private sector management as well as participation in risk assessment and the decision making process, which occurs during the tabletop exercise segment. Successful community facilitation projects should exhibit an increase in private sector participation at the management level and also from non-traditional public sector emergency responders.

The number representatives at the executive/management level also decreased. As previously mentioned, the focus of the community facilitation process is on upper management, since they influence both corporate culture and behavior, and cascade the partnership philosophy throughout the organization.

Table 1 reports the findings of participation in joint critical incident preparedness initiatives in the Western Panhandle and other communities and is inclusive of both pre-test/post-test results. The following percentages reflect the results for the Western Panhandle post-test only (see Table 1 for comparison to pre-test). In the Western Panhandle, 88% of respondents noted that their organizations have a critical incident response plan, compared to 93% from other communities. In addition, 93% of respondents from the Western Panhandle indicated that a common incident command system had been adopted, compared to 89% of respondents from other communities. Sixty-three percent of Western Panhandle participants indicated they had participated in a joint incident command post, compared to 49% of respondents from other communities. Finally, 83% of participants from the Western Panhandle indicated they had received training on their organization's critical incident response plan, compared to 79% from other communities.

Table 2 illustrates the mean scores of participants from the Western Panhandle and other communities regarding their perceptions of critical incident planning and preparedness. Despite the decreases, the mean scores were favorable, which illustrate that participants clearly recognize the value of active engagement in joint critical incident training exercises as well as planning and preparedness.

In the Western Panhandle, security was viewed with mixed results. The Western Panhandle should consider including additional members from security in future meetings and partnership initiatives to further the level of collaboration between security and public sector entities.

In general, attitudes toward police were favorable. Perceptions of business operations and emergency management increased at the post-test.

Despite some slight decreases at the post-test, fire services (including HazMat) yields favorable results, which is consistent with other communities. Perceptions of risk management, healthcare/hospital, business operations, and business management decreased during the post-test.

The Local Emergency Management Coordinator (LEMC) was rated highest by healthcare/hospital and police in the post-test. Emergency managers have a vital role in the partnership process for community-level critical incident response as well as planning and preparedness. In addition, their involvement increases public sector interagency cooperation as well as coordination with private sector entities for business continuity and disaster recovery.

Police viewed the media most favorably post-test. In general, perceptions of the media tend to be less favorable in participating communities. This may be due the relatively low number of participants in this area, which may have affected results. However, the Western Panhandle should consider the opportunity to invite spokespersons/media for future critical incident planning exercises. In turn, members of law enforcement as well as businesses can work to build relationships with spokespersons and media to strengthen information networks.

Attitudes toward mental health professionals vary among groups. Mental health professionals can provide invaluable assistance and crisis intervention at the time of a critical incident. In addition, mental health professionals should also be sought when conducting proactive, preventative measures for critical incident planning. Joint understanding of the capabilities and restrictions will enhance the level of community preparedness and response.

Contact with community representatives is an important element of building social capital and public-private partnerships. For example, participants who noted higher levels of contact with other community representatives also reported higher levels of trust, understanding, cooperation, and empathy. Therefore, participants should initiate and/or maintain frequent contact with members of the other sector to further the partnership in the Western Panhandle.

## **Conclusion**

The social capital survey was designed to provide communities with an assessment of how participants view the value of their relationships with members from both the public and private sectors. It is only a brief “snapshot” into the dynamics of the public/private partnership. As previously stated, in regard to the analysis, some limitations may exist. For example, the above analysis contains primarily univariate statistics, which does not include statistical significance of the mean differences. Nevertheless, this analysis remains a useful tool when assessing the value of social capital in the Western Panhandle.

Future research is warranted in the area of public/private partnerships and social capital, in order to adequately measure the effectiveness of program objectives upon continued partnership trends.

Overall, participants from the Western Panhandle demonstrated active involvement in the program and indicated commitment to the value of joint critical incident planning and preparedness. Each participant provided his/her own unique knowledge regarding the level of progress in the organization/agency, which enhanced overall contributions to the understanding of the roles and involvement from opposite sectors.

The goal of the community facilitation program is to not only increase awareness regarding effective critical incident planning and preparedness, but to strengthen existing relationships and networks between the public and private sectors. Often, there may be substantial resources that remain underutilized when entities develop or maintain existing critical incident response plans. The above recommendations outlined in this analysis should be considered by the community participants in order to further develop the level of partnership in the Western Panhandle.

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