Draft Table of Recommendations for Public Emergency Communications for Arlington County, Virginia

Ranking	System Name	Alerting	Information	Passive Means?	Population Coverage	Cost to County	Cost Effectiveness	Population Considerations	Comments
	Top Five Priorities								
1	Advanced Reverse 911 with Fax Blast	✓	✓	✓	Wide	Low	High	Effectiveness for hearing impaired, non-English speakers problematic	Improved system can target tailored populations with brief message. Has modular capabilities
2	Sirens	✓	✓	✓	Wide	Medium	High	Effectiveness for hearing impaired is low	County should acquire electronic version with PA capability. Need MOA with Ft. Myer, Pentagon emergency coordinators
3	County Emergency Radio Station		✓	✓	Wide	Low	High	Hearing Impaired, Population deep in buildings	Need dedicated County station for Arlington-only advisory info. Consider Low Power FM license (100 watt) or shared station with local college school programs
4	Improved RSAN with no charge for emergency messaging	✓	✓		Narrow	Nil	High	Low utility for population without cell phones, pagers or internet. Cell phones require text messaging service	RSAN is an established program that needs stronger marketing to public. Public communications administration policy change needed to eliminate cell phone provider company charges for emergency messages.
5	Subsidized or free pagers for hearing impaired	✓	✓		Narrow (targeted)	Low - Medium	Medium	NA	Addresses PEC challenge to reach hearing impaired. Vibrating pagers only effective when worn and should compliment other systems (NOAA, RSAN, EAS, etc.)
	Medium Priority Group								
	EAS Improvements	✓	✓	✓	Wide	NA	High	Low effectiveness for Non-English speakers unless non-English channels participate	Need to expand participation by local stations for local alerts. Need multilingual EAS translations for TV banner and radio alerts on non-English or selected broadcast stations. Satellite and apartment/condo dwellers not served locally.
	Expanded Call Center (CrisisLink)		✓		NA	Medium	Medium	Needs TTY to support hearing impaired. Multi-lingual staff highly desirable.	Can relieve ECC load, provide answers to population during emergencies for non-emergency advice and referral. Staffed by trained volunteers on emergency basis. Requires assured access to office space and phones on contingency basis.
	Bulk purchased preprogrammed NOAA radio for resale to residents	✓	✓		Narrow (targeted)	Pass through cost	Medium after initial investment	Encourages use of NOAA radios for low and fixed income residences	Many NOAA radios currently sold present programming challenge (A.K.A. the "Blinking 12:00 VCR effect") to select correct SAMEs broadcast and to select desired alert types . Easier setup (preprogrammed for Arlington area) and reduced price offered through County bulk purchase would greatly increase participation by residents. Also consider bulk purchase of radios with hear disabled adaptive features
	NOAA Required in Office Buildings, new homes	✓	✓		Medium	NA	Medium	Does not address existing residences	Would require all businesses to have operating NOAA radio on premises. Change county building code to require all new buildings/residences to have NOAA capability installed.
	Follow-on Priorities								
	Subsidized or free NOAA radios	✓	✓		Narrow (targeted)	Low-Medium	Low	Targets low-income or fixed income residents	Would widen use of NOAAs. If considered, should be incorporated into bulk preprogrammed purchase.
	211		✓		NA	High	Low-Medium	Provides alternative source of information to residents when 911 is saturated	In use in Chicago. Full time staff and equipment refers callers to City services. Cost is considered high in comparison to expanded call center
	Already In Place								
	NOAA radios	✓	✓		Narrow	Established systems with nil new costs			Established system well utilized in mid-west for tornado warnings
	EAS	✓	✓		Wide				Replaced CONELRAD system
	Cable TV Channels 69/71		✓		Narrow				Limited to cable users.
	County & School Web Sites		✓		Narrow				Need to ensure links to emergency information pages clearly labeled
	Metro Signs	✓	✓	✓	Narrow				Requires ECC - Metro coordination
	Expressway signs	✓	✓	✓	Narrow				Can cause traffic slowdowns. Only helps those who are driving and see signs
	Neighborhood Watch Block Relay								Effectiveness entirely dependant on strength of neighborhood participation
	Mobile Massed Sirens	✓	✓	✓	Narrow				May divert personnel and equipment from higher priority tasks
	Future Solutions								
	Global Ring	✓		✓	Wide	NA		Would target anyone with a land-line phone	Current phone system can not handle voltage to conduct 30 second warning-alert ring. Engineering changes may be cost prohibitive, but effectiveness of system for alerting broad population (passive means) considered potentially very high -- makes concept attractive
	Selective Cell Calls	✓		✓	Targeted	NA		Would target cell users in selective geographic areas	Conceptual system could permit Emergency Managers ability to alert cell users in defined areas by activating cell phones within designated cell areas. Capacity of system to ring multiple numbers unknown.
	Considered - not adopted								
	NOAA Tax Credit	✓			Narrow Initially	Medium	Low	NA	Homeowners receive tax credit for owning NOAA -- requires legislation.
	Hand Held 2-Way Radios		✓		Specialized	Medium	NA	NA	Provided to CERT members, Civic Assn Presidents/emergency coordinators
	Many Cheap Emergency Radios (MCER)	✓	✓	✓	Targeted	Low-Medium	Medium	Bulk purchase of inexpensive AM or FM radios set to county radio station that would alert and inform for low-income, fixed income or technologically challenged	Cost may be prohibitively high. Would depend on adoption of dedicated County emergency radio station to activate

Notes - Cost Estimates
Low Cost = Less than $50k
Med Cost = $50-500K
High Cost = more than $500K

Notes - Terminology
Passive Means - Does the population need to own or operate something? If yes, then it is not "passive means"