Learning Objective: *The student will be able to identify the three common elements in a successful community risk-reduction effort.*

The following are common elements that when combined create a successful risk-reduction effort:

Community support is one of the most important elements of a successful community risk reduction program.

Individual Commitment—At the center of every successful risk-reduction effort, a catalyst is found. Often these people are motivated visionaries with great enthusiasm and organizing skills. One of the greatest contributors to a dysfunctional or absent risk-reduction program is lack of support from leadership toward subordinates who are motivated toward reducing community risks. Being a practitioner of risk reduction has never been the most coveted job in our industry. Those in leadership positions must cultivate and support those who have interest in community risk reduction and are willing to step up and become involved.

Organizational Support—This means that risk reduction is valued from the chief to the newest member of the department. Members in an organization have institutionalized risk reduction as a core value. Resources in the form of attention, time, people, equipment, and funding are dedicated to support the process. Everyone in the department willingly provides support to enhance the effort. Often a stagnant organizational culture can be a major detractor to risk reduction. The peer pressure that's present in a firehouse kitchen can either enhance or destroy organizational support for risk reduction. This support must be solidified prior to asking the community for help. If an organization does not support reducing risk, how can a community be expected to exhibit buy-in? The following are questions to consider about your organization's commitment to community risk reduction:

- What support for prevention and/or mitigation is there from the executive leadership, mid-level officers, and line staff from your organization?

- Does your organization's mission statement reflect prevention as a core objective?

- What level of resources in people, time, training, and funding does your organization invest in risk reduction?

- Does your organization have a position dedicated to risk reduction and does your organization give responsibility to Company Officers to develop plans for addressing risk in their areas?

Community Support—The community must know about and understand local threats before they can get behind an effort to reduce risk. The fire service remains a credible and trusted source of advice to the local community. A community that understands what is wrong and how they play a role in solving the problem is better positioned to help reduce risks.

Source: U.S Department of Homeland Security (DHS), Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). *Leadership Strategies in Community Risk Reduction*, June 2011.