

NEIGHBORHOOD EMERGENCY RESPONSE TEAM, SAN FRANCISCO FIRE DEPARTMENT



The City and County of San Francisco's Fire Department found a way to leverage a powerful and passionate group of citizens interested in neighborhood responses to emergencies. The fire department's Neighborhood Emergency Response Team (NERT) has trained tens of thousands of local volunteers on emergency response and community involvement. The diverse neighborhoods needed a way to communicate with this huge network of neighbors, and also a way to customize specific messages for each neighborhood team. The NERT program used Regroup Mass Notification to do just that.

San Francisco's innovative Neighborhood Emergency Response Team was established in 1989, after an earthquake with a magnitude of 6.9 on the Richter scale rocked the city for 15 seconds, killing more than 60 people and causing more than \$5 billion in damages.

San Franciscans wanted to mobilize to help in future disasters: Neighborhood Emergency Response Teams were the answer.

NERT connects volunteers with their communities, training them to be volunteer first responders who can help the fire department and others save lives. The training program consists of 20 hours of comprehensive training by professional firefighters. Ongoing training and communication keeps the active residents informed, and connected with their fellow NERT volunteers.

With a complex public-private partnership and such a vast network of compassionate San Franciscans who want to help their own neighborhoods, the program needed a way to communicate that was easy-to-use, seamless, affordable and available on any device.

Regroup Mass Notification is the platform NERT uses to empower neighbors to assist first responders when it matters most.

MAXIMIZING EMERGENCY SERVICES BY ENGAGING PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

More than 25,000 residents have been trained by the NERT program to date, learning how to help their neighbors to be self-reliant during and after a major disaster, from earthquakes to wildfires. It adds around 1,000 new volunteers a year in 50 different neighborhoods. The program is city and county-wide, and also includes sub-groups divided by distinct neighborhoods.

The fact that a single fire department, even one so large as the San Francisco Fire Department, is able to leverage the power of thousands of local resident volunteers is inspiring. It takes a robust communications network to keep everyone informed.

The NERT program uses Regroup to keep the entire organization informed about necessary information from the fire department's program office. With unlimited admins at no extra cost from Regroup, the individual neighborhood groups are also able to customize their messaging to engage their volunteers.



REGROUP READY
AWARD

The program is so inspiring, the organization was awarded the first-ever Regroup Ready Award. California's state government leaders are also looking to San Francisco's NERT as a model they would like to expand state-wide in response to weather, environmental and other emergencies.

AMPLIFYING EMERGENCY RESPONSE THROUGH MASS NOTIFICATION

The NERT program's core mission is training volunteers for an emergency response in case of disaster – weather-related, environmental, geographic or man-made. It uses mass notification to text alerts to the mobile devices of volunteers during an emergency. It also sends an associated email that includes more details about the emergency and how to respond.

"We have used the text message function on several occasions to alert volunteers for deployment," says San Francisco Fire Captain Erica Arteseros, who coordinates the NERT initiative.

"We send a custom short text with full details in the correlated email, and have had great success with the response. This allowed us to send volunteers to support residents in the counties north of San Francisco after devastating fires."

REGROUP IN DAY-TO-DAY COMMUNICATION

Notably, NERT is able to use Regroup for day-to-day communication as well. Organizations large and small know that it's crucial to keep people engaged – particularly volunteers who have other pressing obligations – with steady and impactful communication.

How does NERT communicate regularly?

- ✓ Scheduled HTML newsletters emailed from the home office
- ✓ Team leaders are empowered to share information specific to that neighborhood
- ✓ Information about upcoming training and volunteer events

“For example our West Portal team regularly announces meetings and training through Regroup,” Arteseros says.

“Our Sunset team scheduled a weekly message reminder for their emergency radio practice. This is very helpful for the team, and Regroup allows us to easily change administrators when the neighborhood leader changes.”



REGROUP AND GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

Speed up your communication.

Unlike manual calling or texting emergency communication procedures, you can send important information to hundreds of thousands of recipients in seconds.

Cut costs on hardware purchases.

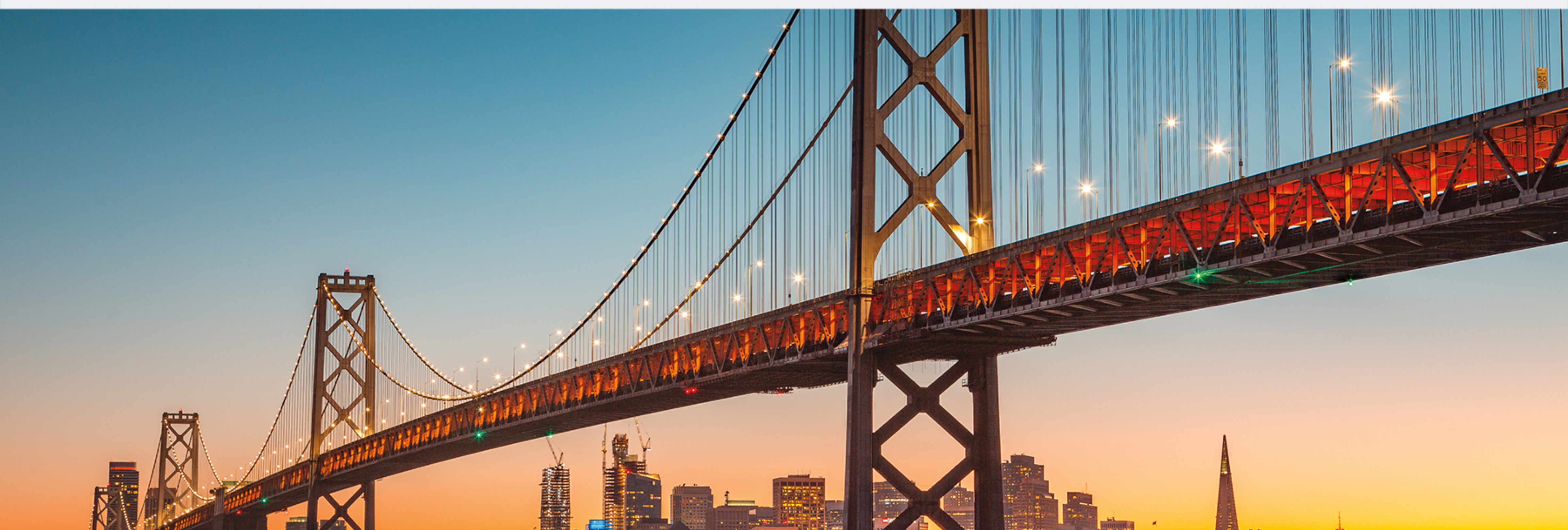
Don't spend money on costly public alerting speakers and other hardware that needs maintenance. Our cloud-based system and 24/7 support is all you need to run a smart communications strategy that reaches everyone on the devices they use every day.

Set up virtual perimeters to communicate.

When location matters, you can notify people in specific areas with GeoFence messaging. Keep people from entering a danger zone, or inform staff of something before they leave a location by sending a GeoFence message to their devices.

Unlimited Admins at no extra cost.

If you have neighborhood-specific groups, you can have any number of local coordinators send neighborhood, precinct, parish, ward or town-level information at no extra cost.



Learn More

Can your government agency, volunteer organization or public-private partnership benefit from an easy-to-use mass notification platform for day-to-day communication and emergency alerts? Regroup's team can give you a customized demo of how we can serve you.

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