



Creating a city AED program: Inglewood, California

Inglewood, California (pop. 117,000), just east of L.A. International Airport, is creating a comprehensive AED program, deploying 43 AEDs for city hall, public safety buildings, parks and recreation facilities, and police cruisers.

Making it work: AEDs as a priority

Most cities have automated external defibrillators on their wish lists, and Inglewood was no exception. What sets Inglewood apart is they recognized AEDs are a priority – not a matter of budget. City officials were determined to find a source for the funding.

Credit goes to Inglewood Deputy City Administrator and Chief Information Officer Michael Falkow. He attended a Red Cross/Cardiac Science meeting with the city's safety committee and learned how having a defibrillator nearby makes it possible to revive a person whose heart has stopped beating.

A city or town can deploy defibrillators in community centers, schools, and public buildings to create a network of protection. Had one been available, perhaps the Inglewood city employee, a man in his 30s who died a sudden cardiac death while playing basketball on his lunch break, might still be alive today.

Ambulances are often delayed by traffic or distance, but if police responders or public buildings are equipped with AEDs, a sudden cardiac arrest victim can get help right away – in the critical first few minutes after the heart has stopped.

Falkow, who works with police and emergency services on preparedness and disaster planning, was immediately impressed. “I realized a defibrillator is the only way to save someone who goes into cardiac arrest. Without it, you call 911, do CPR, and you just wait.”



*Michael Falkow
Deputy City Administrator and Chief Information Officer
City of Inglewood, CA*

Finding the budget for AEDs

Like any city contemplating an AED program, Inglewood had to determine the scope and budget for the program.

Together with Inglewood's employee health manager and a Cardiac Science AED expert, Falkow determined AEDs were most needed in buildings where city employees work, the police department, the

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jail, public works, and city hall. He included areas where the public gathers including parks and recreation facilities, libraries, senior centers, and child activity programs. And, he added six mobile units for police cars, often the first vehicles at the scene of an emergency.

At the same time, Falkow began looking for places in the city budget that could fund the purchase of these life-saving devices.

“Purchasing AEDs using only the employee health budget would have been very difficult,” he said, “but the city's IT budget is in the millions. In this light, the amount of money required to purchase AEDs is negligible. It's less than the amount you spend on the contract to keep photocopier machines maintained.

Falkow was able to find the necessary budget and won City Council approval for the expenditure shortly thereafter. (See sidebar on the right for other sources of municipal funding.)

Managing the deployment; maintenance

“Having never done an AED program before, we had a few concerns,” Falkow said. “Who would keep track of the devices? What were the legal requirements? (We were concerned about liability.)”

“Cardiac Science has an online tracking system and a dedicated team to make sure the program runs seamlessly. That’s two of the reasons we chose them.”

Using MasterTrak™, an easy-to-use online tracking system that documents AED training and equipment maintenance, Inglewood Acting Human Resources Director and Employee Health Manager Randy Abram keeps tabs on the 43 AEDs deployed throughout the city. MasterTrak sends automatic monthly “Eminders” to the employees responsible for checking the AEDs in their facilities.

Cardiac Science is also providing medical direction services for the Inglewood AED program. This simplifies the process of complying with state and local requirements for AED programs, including ongoing medical oversight by a California-licensed physician.

Ready for anything

As a community in an earthquake zone, Inglewood is keenly aware of the importance of emergency preparedness.

In the event of a region-wide disaster, city employees would be on the front lines. As a result, a goal of Inglewood’s emergency preparedness and disaster planning program is to get all of the city’s employees trained in First Aid, CPR, and AED use.

“We are ‘all in’ with this program,” Falkow said. “We’ll have 1,000 people prepared for emergencies, whether they’re earthquakes or sudden cardiac arrest.”

Why Inglewood chose Cardiac Science

“Cardiac Science was highly professional and knowledgeable throughout the evaluation stage and, I later learned, they have a dedicated team of AED specialists certified in all aspects of heart safety and current/pending legislation,” Falkow said. “They were also highly responsive to what turned out to be a fast-paced purchase at the close of a budget year.”

The device itself, the Powerheart G3 AED, also impressed Falkow.

“The Powerheart’s ease of use is very important to us,” he said.

“We needed to be sure that the defibrillators we purchased would be ones that any of our employees would be able to use in a true emergency.”



City of Inglewood AED deployment

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Safety was an important consideration, as well.

“We felt completely confident with the Powerheart AEDs. The comprehensive daily self-tests assured us the AEDs would be ready in an emergency.”

Finding the money

Michael Falkow tapped into his IT budget to fund the city’s AED program. Here are some other sources you may consider when building a heartsafe community:

- Hospitals and corporations charitable foundations
- General funds including employee match programs
- Tax revenue from tobacco / liquor sales
- Public Safety asset forfeiture money
- Rural and Community Access to Emergency Devices Grant
- Urban Areas Security Initiative (UASI) Grant
- Untapped funds from other internal sources (general funds, employee health budget; others)

And remember: Engage in these conversations early in the budget cycles for optimal results. It’s also best if you can engage someone high in administration to be a champion of the project.

Protect your community. Call Cardiac Science at 866.469.3800 or email care@cardiacscience.com.