



# Memorandum

**TO:** EMERGENCY SERVICES  
COUNCIL

**FROM:** Raymond Riordan

**SUBJECT:** COMMUNITY EMERGENCY  
RESPONSE TEAM (CERT)  
CURRICULUM DELIVERY

**DATE:** March 26, 2024

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Approved

Date

4/9/2024

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## **RECOMMENDATION**

Approve adding an online Community Emergency Response Team training delivery program to the current hybrid and in-person formats offered by the San José CERT program.

## **OUTCOME**

Approval of the online Community Emergency Response Team training program provides an alternative format of training community members on disaster preparedness, allowing flexibility of training on their own time. This will reduce the number of those waiting for training to occur in their area and address the difficulty of having to attend training on a predetermined schedule. This alternative format will increase the number of CERT volunteers throughout the City.

## **BACKGROUND**

The City of San José currently offers the 20-hour Basic CERT Training in two formats: the traditional in-person training, where the 20-hour curriculum is spread out over three days of in-person instruction, and a hybrid format, comprised of live, Zoom-based instruction over a series of 3-4 weeks, culminating with an in-person Skills Day to ensure graduate application of what was taught during the Zoom-based instruction. The hybrid format was introduced in Fiscal Year 2020-21 as an alternative method of instruction during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The University of Utah Health created the online CERT Training in partnership with the National CERT Association, using the Merit verified identify platform. The curriculum is the same that FEMA established for CERT programs and includes disaster response skills, fire safety, search and rescue, triaging, and the like.<sup>1</sup> The online delivery program was created with

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.govtech.com/em/preparedness/online-cert-courses-allow-digital-certification-for-volunteers-.html>

accessibility in mind, allowing people whose schedules do not allow them to take the traditional in-person or virtual formats. The on-line CERT Training delivery also prioritizes those who live in rural areas or areas where CERT training may not be frequently offered.

## ANALYSIS

Approval of the addition of the Online CERT training program may allow for a higher number of interested residents to be CERT-trained. Currently, the CERT program averages 15-20 graduates per course, both traditional in-person and hybrid formats. Initially, registration numbers for the courses are high, with about 30-40 registrants; however, by Skills Day, that number will usually drop to half.

In a survey conducted by the San José Neighborhood CERT (SJNCERT) 501c3 sent to individuals on an interest list, the most consistent responses as to why they could not attend training were: Class schedule (25.4%); Family Responsibility (17.5%); and Work (14.3%) (Figure A). Additionally, 81% of respondents agreed that having a self-paced online CERT course would make it easier to graduate and 93.7% indicated that they would complete a self-paced online CERT course within 12 months (Figures B and C).

Figure A: Current CERT Schedule Challenges

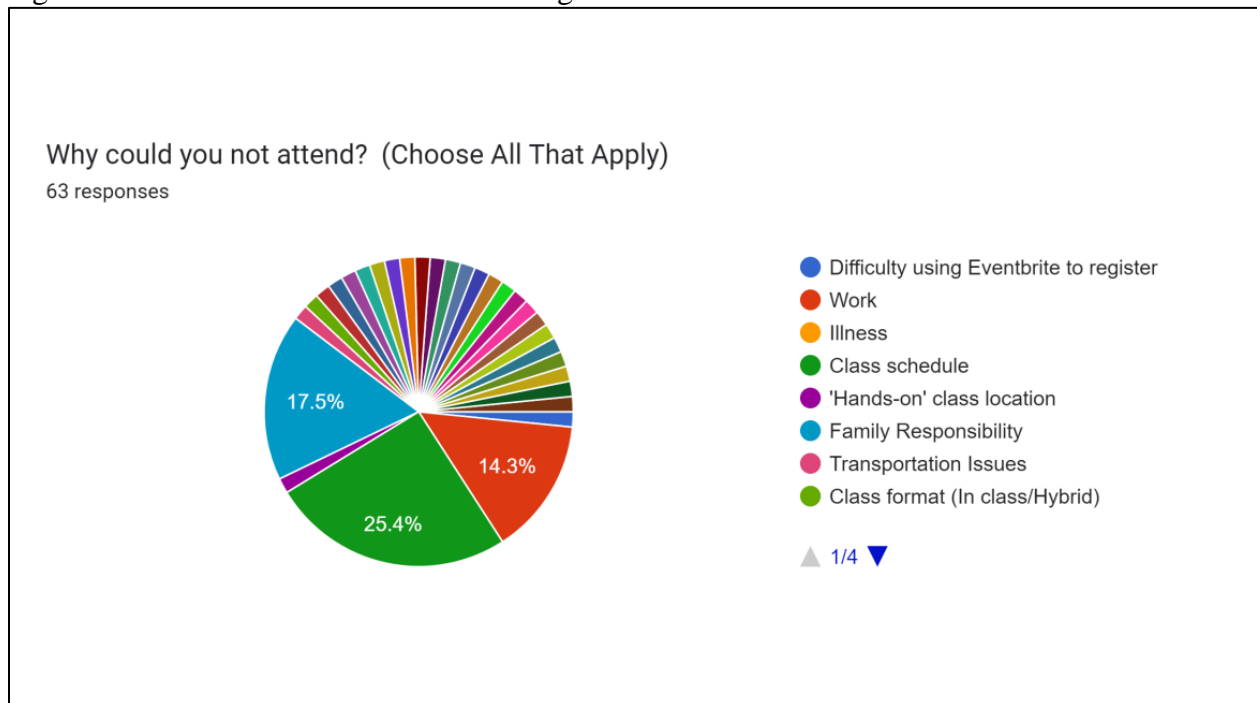


Figure B: Interest in Self-Paced CERT Course

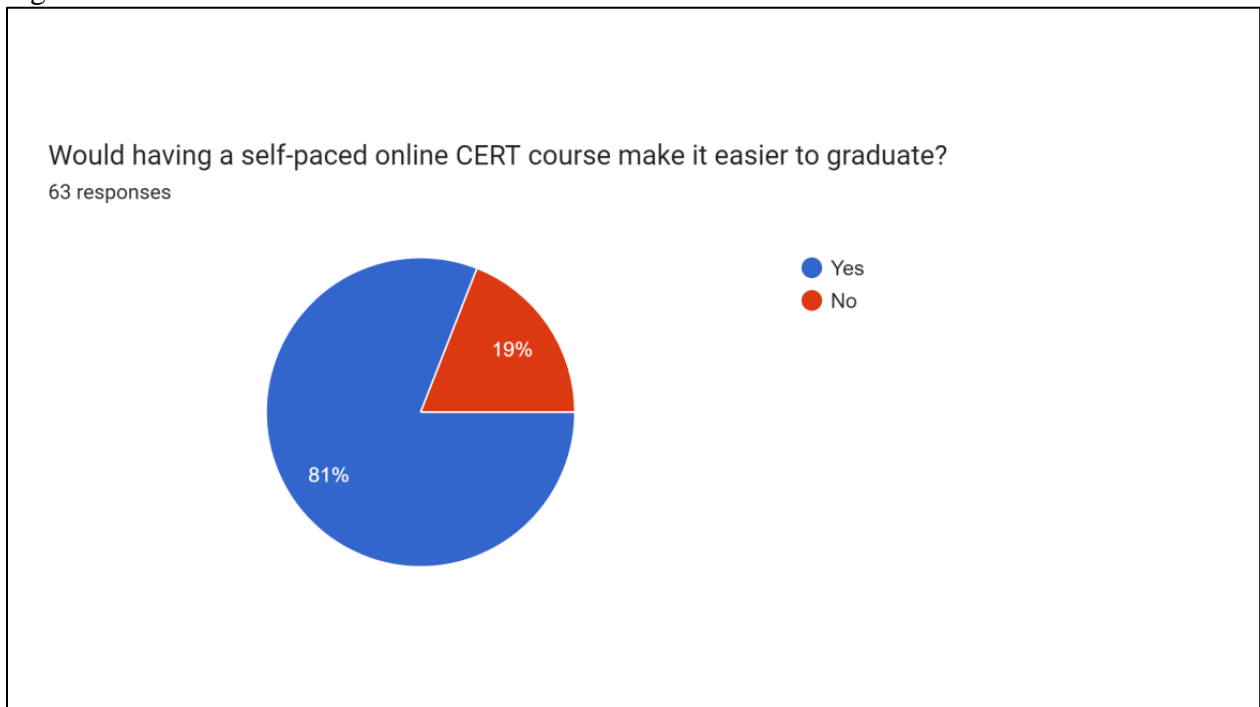
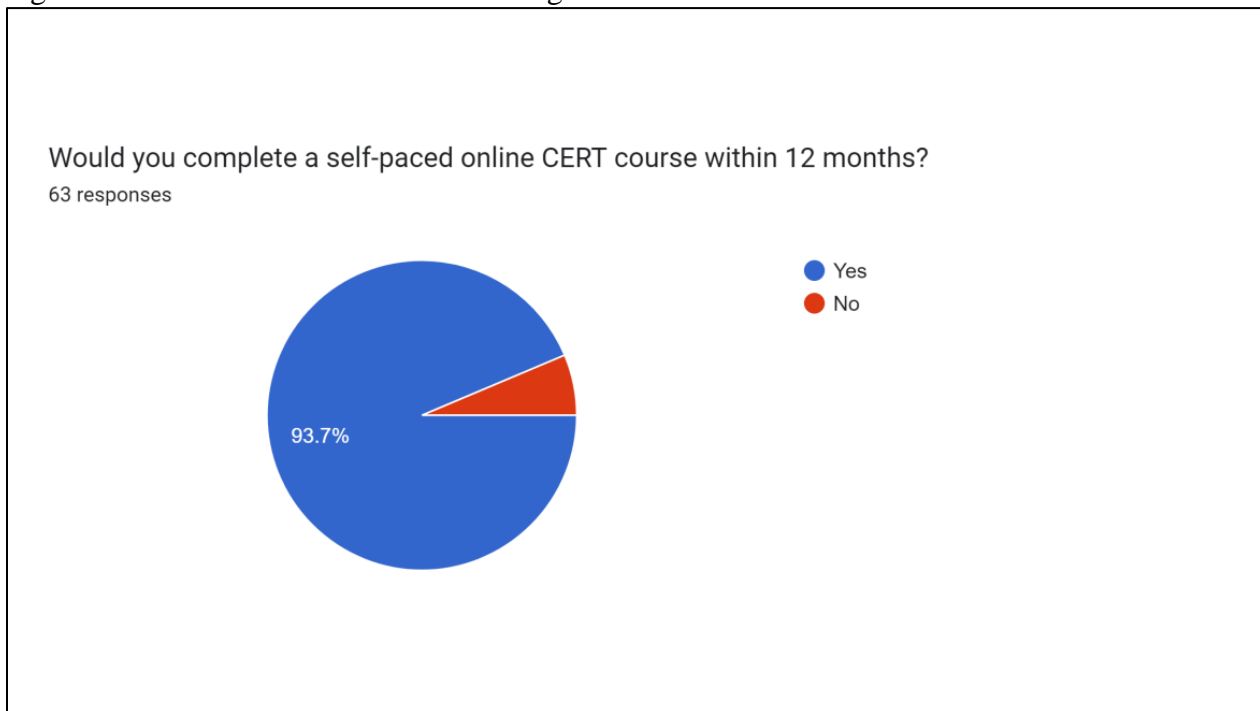


Figure C: Self-Paced CERT Course Timing



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### **EVALUATION AND FOLLOW-UP**

At the next Emergency Services Council meeting, updates on the addition of the Online CERT training program will be discussed, including changes in the number of CERT graduates and any issues or challenges in the implementation of the program, as needed.

### **COORDINATION**

This memo has been coordinated with the City Manager's Office and City Attorney's Office.

### **CEQA**

According to CEQA Guideline PP17-009 this report is a Staff Report or Informational Memo that involves no approvals of any City action.



RAYMOND RIORDAN

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Management

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