



Extreme Heat Response Plan

Health and Human Services Committee Meeting
October 17, 2023

Tom Barnett, Deputy Director, HCD, Office to Prevent & End Homelessness
Jill Clark, HHS Policy and Planning Manager, NCS

Background

- Extreme Heat Response Plan is activated whenever the National Weather Service issues a heat advisory or excessive heat watch
- All libraries, community centers, rec centers, and human services centers are cooling centers
- Heat supplies were distributed to unsheltered residents and all County cooling centers received a heat supply kit
- Robust communications and outreach plan, including new Fairfax Alerts groups and a GIS map of cooling centers
- Connector bus passes and TOPS cards were distributed to mitigate barriers getting to cooling centers

Extreme Heat Response Plan

- Cooling centers offer bottled water, sunscreen, and insect repellent
- Emergency shelters activate their overflow space plan
- Increased communications (web site, social media) about extreme heat resources
- Outreach workers target areas with high concentrations of unsheltered residents
- Fairfax Alerts messages sent to two new groups: County cooling centers and unsheltered residents/homeless services providers

Summer 2023 Extreme Heat Plan Activation Dates



July
26



July
27



July
28



September
5

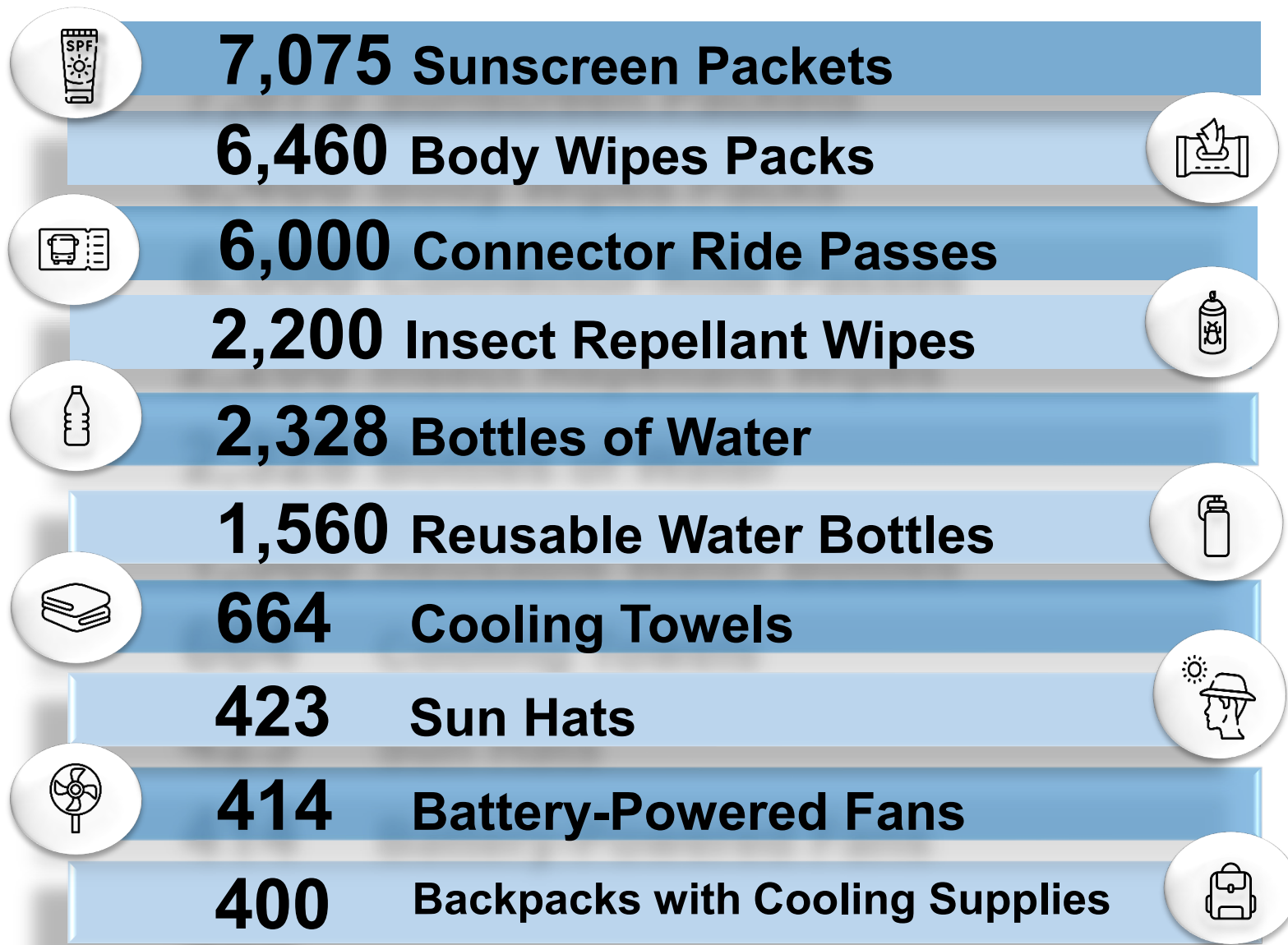


September
6

Extreme Heat Response Plan

- Per the Health Department, individual reactions to heat/humidity can vary widely, and thus a lesson learned is to better communicate what is available throughout the summer, regardless of the level of heat/humidity
- Any individual experiencing difficulty in the heat can **AT ANY TIME** come inside a County cooling center regardless of whether the Extreme Heat Response Plan is activated
- Communications plan for next summer will increase the messaging about this

Items Distributed



27,524
Total
Supplies
Distributed
at
62
County
Cooling
Centers and
Community
Partner
Sites

Summer 2023 Cooling Center Usage

- **251** visits recorded at County cooling centers during activation dates
- **Significant library use** (88% of all visits)
- **City of Fairfax Regional Library and Centreville Regional Library** had the highest number of recorded cooling center visits

Program Evaluation

- NAACP conducted a follow-up survey of unsheltered residents in July on the Extreme Heat Response Plan
 - Survey focused upon individual health effects, most favored services, awareness and communication, and thoughts/ideas/suggestions for improvement
- Debriefs held with the Extreme Heat Workgroup and County staff in September to discuss implementation, survey results, and future enhancements
- The work continues...

Next Steps

- Evaluate which recommendations from the survey and debriefs can be implemented
- Develop strategies to increase awareness of the Extreme Heat Response Plan
- Share enhancements that will be implemented in Summer 2024 with stakeholders
- Engage the Continuum of Care Board on this initiative