



Bridging the Communications Gap for Immigrants and Refugees 2009 Annual Report



What Partners Make Possible

Dear Reader,

During our Healthy Communities Breakfast last fall, someone asked, “How did ECHO deliver so much H1N1 flu information, in so many languages, in so little time?” I gave a one-word answer, “Partnership.”

But I realized my answer was incomplete. The term partnership doesn't reveal how ECHO Minnesota operates. We are *part of a partnership* of dedicated public, private and nonprofit organizations. And together, we are bridging the communications gap confronting limited-English speaking Minnesotans to help them integrate successfully into our communities.

Last year — our first as a nonprofit — ECHO added civic engagement initiatives to better serve our rapidly growing immigrant and refugee communities. Programming efforts like “Affordable Housing” and “Hunger Relief Services” empower new Americans with critical resources that enable them to make informed decisions affecting their health and safety. After all, how can you be healthy or safe without food or housing?

ECHO also strengthened existing partnerships with emergency responders by drafting field operation policies that will facilitate activation of our multi-language communication tools during a crisis.

And we put those policies to the test, with two emergency activations in 2009. In the spring, Clay County enlisted ECHO to help deliver flood evacuation messages to residents in Spanish, Somali, Croatian and Kurdish speaking communities along the Red River.

The Minnesota Department of Health employed ECHO tools to deliver a targeted, multi-language, H1N1 flu media campaign. ECHO messages went out over public and cable TV, toll-free phone, DVD's and local radio. Users from over 150 countries logged on to ECHO Web to access files at home, a 200% increase over day-to-day usage.

But with 18,000 immigrants and refugees settling in Minnesota annually, much more remains to be done. To continue meeting new challenges affecting the well-being of our communities, we need the ongoing support of our generous partners, program sponsors, donors and grantors. I look forward to our continued work with these partnerships to ensure that our ever-changing, diverse communities can be healthy, be safe and be ready.

Best,



Lillian McDonald - Executive Director





Six years ago, public agencies charged with securing public safety and ensuring public health recognized that thousands of Minnesotans faced a critical communications gap.

Over 500,000 limited English speakers across the state found themselves at-risk due to the lack of reliable health and safety resources available in the languages that they understood best.

So in 2004, public health and safety agencies founded ECHO Minnesota as a collaborative effort to bridge the communications

gap and empower limited-English speaking Minnesotans with the information they need to be healthy, be safe and be ready.

Today, ECHO is a leading authority on multi-language health, safety and civic engagement education and emergency response communication.

ECHO collaborates with health and safety experts, community leaders and bilingual spokespersons to create and distribute educational resources, to maintain an efficient and effective emergency response infrastructure and to provide targeted community outreach services in multiple languages.



Mission Statement

The mission of ECHO Minnesota is to leverage partnerships to deliver vital health, safety, emergency and civic engagement information to help the ever-changing, diverse population integrate and become successful in our communities.

Vision Statement

All people are provided with quality health and life saving communications!

A Well-Stocked Communications Tool Kit

ECHO's educational productions, emergency alert services and community outreach resources are available through a broad-range of effective communication channels.

ECHO TV: a ground-breaking series with monthly health and safety programs presented on-camera by community spokespersons and bilingual experts, broadcast statewide on Twin Cities Public Television's Minnesota Channel and participating cable TV stations. **ECHO PHONE (1-888-883-8831):** a toll-free info line featuring health and safety tips in 10 languages, updated monthly. **ECHO WEB**

(www.echominnesota.org): an online library of resources on over 50 health, safety and emergency readiness topics in 7 languages. **ECHO PARTNER RELAYS:** information distributed through our community partners in local public health and safety agencies, ethnic and nonprofit organizations and educational institutions.



These distribution channels also function as an **emergency infrastructure**. When a crisis occurs, ECHO has a proven system in place to translate, produce and distribute critical information rapidly and effectively.

Looking to the Future

With over 18,000 immigrants and refugees arriving in Minnesota each year, from vastly different climates and cultures, the demand for ECHO’s emergency preparedness resources, educational programs and community outreach services is growing in leaps and bounds. Over the next 3 years, ECHO will strive to help our new Americans integrate by:

- **Expanding** our services regionally throughout the Midwest,
- **Growing** our communications toolkit by strengthening partnerships with local public radio stations to launch ECHO Radio,
- **Enhancing** our educational resources through the addition of new voices to the ECHO Team and new topics to our library of health, safety, civic engagement and emergency readiness resources with topics ranging from Affordable Housing to Mass Evacuations.

None of this work would be possible without the dedication of our volunteers, the backing of our community partners, or the generosity of our donors. We are deeply grateful for your ongoing support.



Programs that Work

Educational Programs

ECHO provides ongoing health, safety, civic engagement and emergency readiness education on topics impacting immigrant and refugee communities, to ensure that limited English speaking families have the tools they need to successfully integrate into our diverse communities.

ECHO uses a broad range of **effective media tools**, including television, radio, phone and partner relays to distribute these resources.

Emergency Prep. Services

During an emergency, local and state health and safety agencies can activate ECHO’s communication tools, which serve as an **emergency response infrastructure**.

In a crisis, ECHO has a proven system in place to produce, translate and distribute culturally appropriate emergency information in multiple languages rapidly and effectively, helping ensure broader **access** to life-saving resources for all Minnesotans.

Community Outreach

ECHO programs are designed to **make a direct impact** on Minnesota’s diverse populations by connecting limited-English speakers to health, safety, civic engagement and emergency resources. ECHO works with public health and safety agencies, nonprofits, libraries and educational institutions. This process helps secure a broad distribution of key resources and ensures that limited-English speakers know that when it comes to health and safety, they’re not alone.

Spotlight on Communities

ECHO Community Spokespeople - our Heart and Soul



Each year, ECHO spokespeople volunteer over 1,000 hours of service to their communities. They serve on ECHO TV, lending their talent to our monthly programming as skilled hosts. They provide the voices for ECHO's phone line, bringing timely health and safety tips to hundreds of Minnesotans in 10 languages. They volunteer as ECHO Ambassadors at community events, putting ECHO resources in the hands of the limited English speaking populations who need them most.

ECHO's spokespeople also provide key emergency communication services, always ready to lend a hand — or a voice — in a time of need. During a public health or safety crisis, ECHO spokespeople are quick to volunteer, translating life-saving messages into multiple languages, recording public service announcements for radio, television, phone and electronic media and helping to ensure that limited English speakers can access the information that they need to be healthy, be safe and be ready. Simply put, ECHO's work would not be possible without the dedication and support of these caring individuals — like Leo Espinoza, and Mao Thao, two of our talented TV hosts.

Spotlight on Leo Espinoza, ECHO TV Latino Co-Host

Born in Ecuador, Leo Espinoza wears many hats in Minnesota. He is a community builder, a TV and radio personality, a business owner, a cultural advisor and a public speaker. In his own words:

“I believe that each member of our community has the moral responsibility to help those less fortunate, in this particular case folks that do not speak the English language. There is no greater reward in life then to utilize your skills and talents on behalf of human kind.” — Leo Espinoza



Spotlight on Mao Thao, ECHO TV Hmong Co-Host

Mao Thao came from Laos over 30 years ago. Today, she works in local public health and gives back to the community through ECHO. As Mao says,

“For me, being a host is both an honor and a privilege. Giving back to the community has always been a passion of mine especially in time of great needs. Knowledge is power and when we make efforts to provide community members with information and knowledge that may help save lives, we are building healthier communities because they will have access to accurate information on health, emergency preparedness and other challenges they face in life. ECHO TV is the only program in the country that addresses emergency preparedness, public health topics, and emerging needs for Limited English Proficiency (LEP) including the Hmong community. I truly believe that ECHO plays a vital role in improving the health and lives of communities.” — Mao Thao



Spotlight on ECHO Sponsors

ECHO programming sponsors are critical to our success as an organization. They provide the crucial funding and expertise that make our high-quality educational and outreach services possible.



This year, ECHO teamed up with the American Cancer Society to produce a series of 20 minute long television specials on “Understanding Colon Cancer” in seven languages.

Colon cancer, which is a treatable disease, claims 50,000 American lives each year. The program was developed to raise awareness about cancer prevention in Minnesota’s medically underserved and LEP communities.

“When we talk about cancer, we don’t have a translation for it in Hmong. But the way I think about it is that your body has many parts that make it up: bones, blood, muscle, hair, skin. The tiniest little thing has the ability to create a cancer. And that little thing you can really defend against it. Furthermore, cancer—maybe there are those of us who know people who have cancer. But when it comes to colon cancer, we need to look for it before you feel sick. Once you feel sick, it might be too late already,” said Dr. Cheng Her on the Hmong version of the program.



“We could save thousands of lives every year if everyone over 50 was screened. That is why it is so important that our communities learn more about colon and rectal cancer. One of our priorities is to raise awareness about cancer prevention among our new immigrant and medically underserved populations, who lack easy access to health information in their native languages. ECHO fills that void in Minnesota, and we are thrilled to partner with them in this unique venture.”

~ Roshan Paudel, Health Disparities Manager, American Cancer Society.

“Understanding Colon Cancer” dispels common misconceptions about the disease, stresses the need for regular testing for men and women over the age of 50, and explains testing options. All seven versions of the program are available around the clock on ECHO Web, www.echominnesota.org. Information on colon cancer was also provided over ECHO Phone (1-888-883-8831).



“Recently there was an ECHO program on colon cancer. Somali people do not know much about this condition. This program educated us on the importance of screening, following up with the doctors, etc.”
~ Huda Ahmed, community member

How to Help Everyone Be Healthy, Be Safe, Be Ready.

None of our work would be possible without the generosity of our community and Board volunteers, who donate over 1,000 hours of service annually, the support of our friends in local public health and safety agencies who contribute 1/3 of ECHO funding, or the backing of our community partners, who promote our work, help distribute our resources and keep our organization going strong.

But to continue our life-saving work into the future, we need your support, too. There are many ways to get involved, here are just a few:



Become a volunteer

Volunteer opportunities abound at ECHO. You can choose to get involved as a community spokesperson, ECHO Board or Committee Member, ECHO Ambassador, or by volunteering your time to work at ECHO's offices. If you would like to learn more about these, or other, positions, call ECHO at **651.789.4342** or visit www.echominnesota.org.

Sponsor an ECHO Program

Each year, ECHO produces a variety of television, phone, radio, web and print resources on critical health, safety, emergency preparedness and civic engagement topics. We rely on the generosity of our sponsors to create and distribute these one-of-a-kind resources. To learn more about sponsoring a program call **651.789.4342**.



Promote our Work

Help us make a difference in the lives of limited-English speakers across the state and around the country by promoting our resources. Follow us on twitter for the latest ECHO news, visit us on YouTube to view and share our educational productions and spread the word about ECHO's life-saving materials. Learn more at www.echominnesota.org.

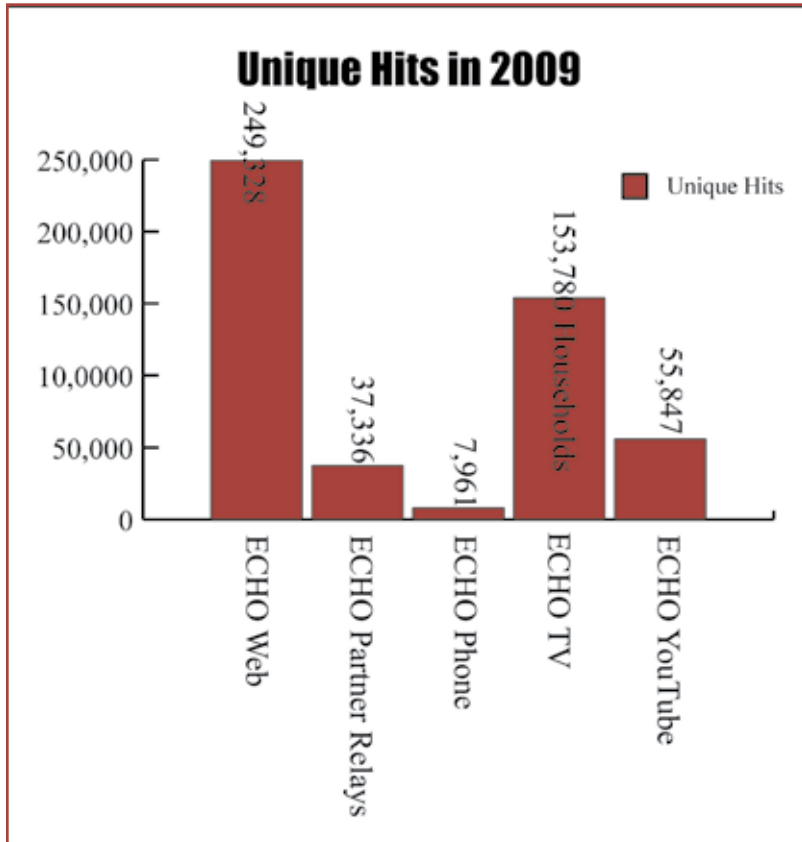
DONATE to ECHO's Mission

As a 501(c)3 nonprofit, ECHO is committed to making every penny count. We maximize your investment by collaborating with content matter experts, cultural advisors and our highly skilled translation team to create the highest possible quality educational productions, community outreach resources and emergency response services. Make your gift online today at www.echominnesota.org, — or learn more about making in-kind contributions by calling **651.789.4342**.

Measuring our Success...

ECHO TOOL USAGE ALL TOOLS SUMMARY

FISCAL YEAR 2009



Total Unique Hits for 2009: 504,252

Unique Hits are the number of individual media impressions made by all ECHO Tools.

Unique Hits are defined as:

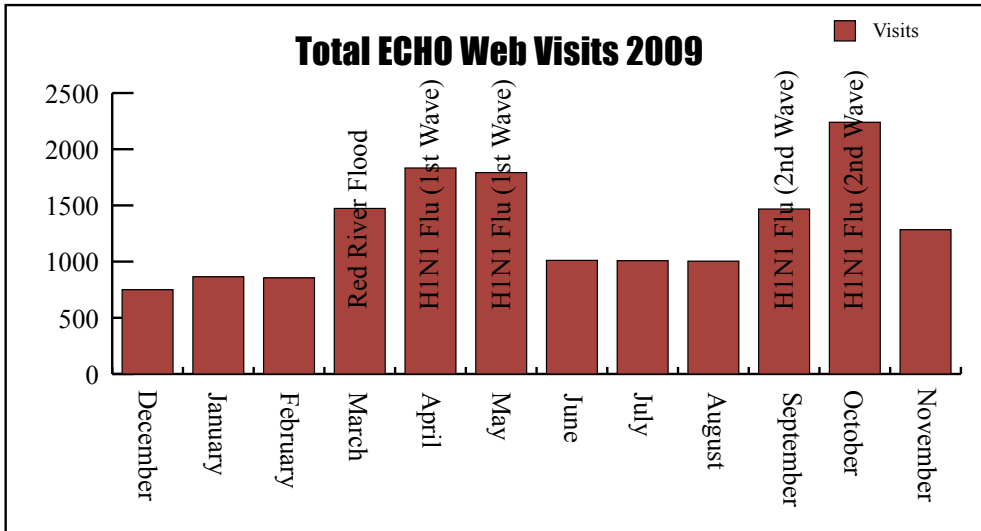
$$\frac{\text{Total Audience Size}}{\text{times}} \times \text{Number Unique Messages Sent}$$

(i.e. if the total audience for ECHO Web is 5,000 users and 12 messages were sent over ECHO Web, that would be 60,000 "unique hits")

COMMUNICATION TOOL	POTENTIAL AUDIENCE
Partner Relays	2,356 partners
KFAI Community Radio	3,400 members
Public Access Cable	3,695,904 served
TPT	Statewide
ECHO Web	Unlimited
ECHO Phone	Unlimited

ECHO's audience size increases with your investment and promotion.

Together, we can ensure that everyone has access to the information they need to be healthy, be safe and be ready.

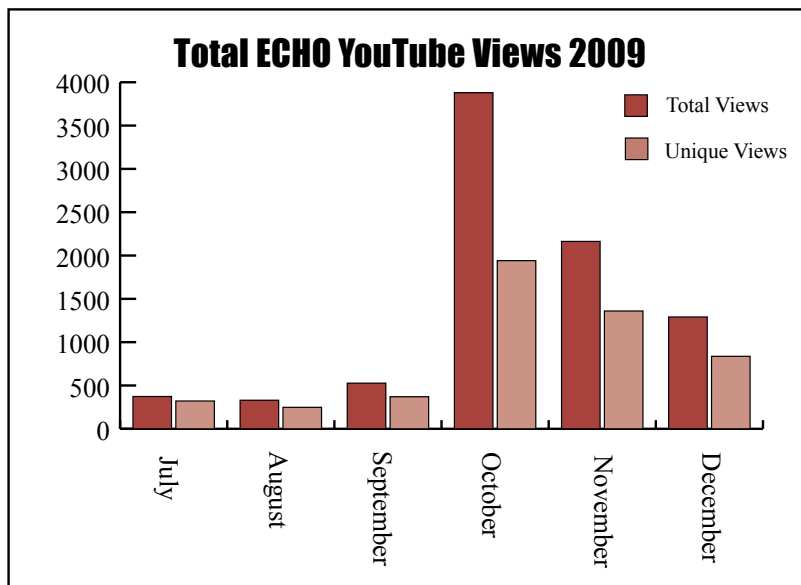


Total Visits 2009: 15,583
26% increase from 2008

Avg. Monthly Visits: 1,300
 Visits peaked during public health and safety emergencies:

- Visits during flood: 1,473
- Visits during 1st Wave H1N1: 3,625
- Visits during 2nd Wave H1N1: 3,700

Total Visitors 2009: 11,019
195% increase over 2008



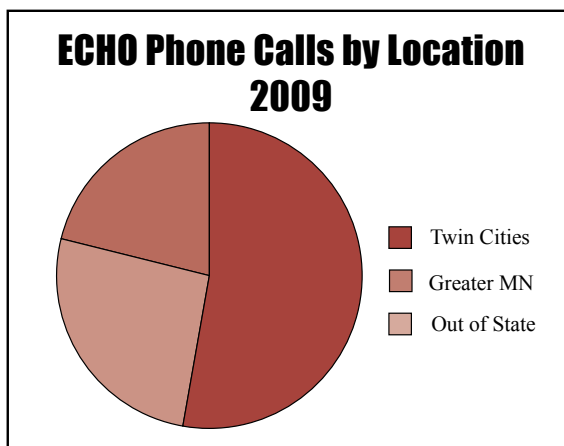
Total Views 2009: 8,762
26% increase from 2008

Avg. Monthly Views: 1,460
 Views peaked during public health and safety emergencies:

- Visits during 2nd Wave H1N1: 6,042
- 207% increase over monthly avg.**

Total New Viewers: 5,077

** ECHO YouTube launched July, 2009. Data reflects July-December usage.*



Calls peaked during public health and safety emergencies:

- 63% increase during Flood
- 115% increase during 1st Wave H1N1
- 84% increase during 2nd Wave H1N1

53% of calls originated in Metro Area.
 26% of calls originated in Greater MN.
 21% of calls originated outside MN.

Spotlight on Board of Directors

From the Chair

This has been an exciting and dynamic year for ECHO Minnesota. In October 2008, the Board approved an ambitious strategic plan to move ECHO forward in its first year as an independent nonprofit. The overarching goals of the three-year plan are to increase our impact in supporting Limited English Proficiency populations in the state and region, to strengthen ECHO as an independent nonprofit and to create financial stability as we expand. With the help of our community partners and hard work of ECHO staff, we were able to make significant progress in moving our strategic plan forward and growing the work of ECHO in 2009.

ECHO's work during the spring flooding in the Red River Valley and H1N1 outbreak in the fall are just two examples of the valuable service ECHO provides to Minnesota's communities in a crisis. These services along with ECHO TV, ECHO Phone, ECHO Web and our invaluable community outreach help provide a foundation of health, safety, emergency and civic engagement information for our Limited English Proficiency populations working to succeed in our communities.



Thanks to all who have helped us achieve our goals this year. This was a true team effort and would not have been possible without the hard work of ECHO's staff, board of directors, community partners and funders. We hope you will continue to work with and support ECHO as we continue to grow and implement our mission and vision.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kristen Norman-Major'.

Kristen Norman-Major, Board Chair

Executive Committee, 2009

Chair: **Kristen Norman-Major**, Associate Professor, School of Business, Hamline University

Vice Chair: **Jay Elepano**, Upper Midwest Regional Sales Manager, Metris USA

Secretary: **Julie Ring**, Director, Local Public Health Association

Treasurer: **Kevin Verzal**, Mechanical Design Engineer, Envoy Medical

Board of Directors, 2009

Jeff Cook, Organizational Development Specialist, Digital River; Adjunct Professor, University of St. Thomas

Jill DeBoer, Director, Office of Emergency Response, Academic Health Center/ Associate Director, Center for Infectious Disease Research and Policy (CIDRAP), University of Minnesota

Maritza De Jesus, Director of Human Resources / Chief Administration Officer, West Side Community Health Services

Troy Dickinson, Process Analyst, Blue Cross Blue Shield of Minnesota

Robert Herman, Partner, The Lucidity Group, LLC

Chris Kuhlman, Attorney – private practice

Sandy Lien, Regional Coordinator, Medica, Minnesota Council of Health Plans

ECHO Sponsors & Partners

ECHO is proud to partner with dozens of local public health and safety agencies, ethnic and nonprofit organizations, libraries and educational institutions to promote our resources and advance the health, safety and well-being of all Minnesotans. Thank you for making our work possible!

Public Health & Safety Agencies

Aitkin-Itasca-Koochiching CHB
Anoka County Health & Environmental Services
Becker County CHB
Benton County CHB
Blue Earth County Public Health
Brown County Public Health
Carver County Public Health
Cass County CHB
Chisago County CHB
City of Bloomington CHB
City of Edina CHB
City of Minneapolis CHB
City of Richfield
Clay County Public Health
Clay-Wilkin CHB
Cottonwood Jackson CHB
Crow Wing County CHB
Dakota County Public Health Dept.
Douglas County CHB
Freeborn County Public Health
Hennepin County Public Health Protection
Hennepin Regional Poison Control Center
InterCounty Nursing Services
Isanti- Mille Lacs CHB
Kanabec-Pine CHB
LeSueur-Waseca CHB
Life Care Public Health
McLeod County Public Health
Medical Response System (MMRS)
Minneapolis Dept. of Health & Family Support
Minneapolis Public Housing Authority
Minnesota Dept. of Health
Morrison-Todd-Wadena CHB
Mower County CHB
Nobles/Rock Community Health Services
North Country CHB
Olmsted County Public Health
Otter Tail County Public Health Services
Polk County CHB
Rice County Public Health
St. Paul Ramsey CHB
Scott County CHB
Sherburne County CHB
Sibley County Public Health
Stearns County CHB
Steele County Public Health
Urban Area Security Initiative
Washington County CHB
Winona County CHS
Winona County Emergency Management
Wright County CHB

Nonprofit Organizations

AAA Minnesota/Iowa
American Cancer Society
American Red Cross, Carver County Chapter
American Red Cross, Twin Cities Chapter
Association of Minnesota Counties
Children's Dental Services
Chicano Latino Affairs Council
CLUES
CommonBond Communities
Confederation of Somali Communities
Council of Asian-Pacific Minnesotans
Delta Dental of Minnesota
Hmong American Mutual Assistance Association
Lutheran Social Services of Minnesota
Lao Assistance Center of Minnesota
Neighborhood House
Oral Health America
Pillsbury United Communities
Project for Pride in Living
St. Paul Neighborhood Network
Sub-Saharan African Youth and Family Services
Twin Cities Public Television
United Cambodian Association
United Way
West Side Community Health

Educational Institutions & Libraries

Minneapolis Literacy Council
Hennepin County Libraries
Minneapolis Public Schools
Owatonna Public Schools
Ronald M. Hubbs Center
Saint Paul Public Library
SHAPE

Health Plans, Clinics & Private Organizations

HealthPartners
Medica
Preferred One
Sherman Associates
UCare

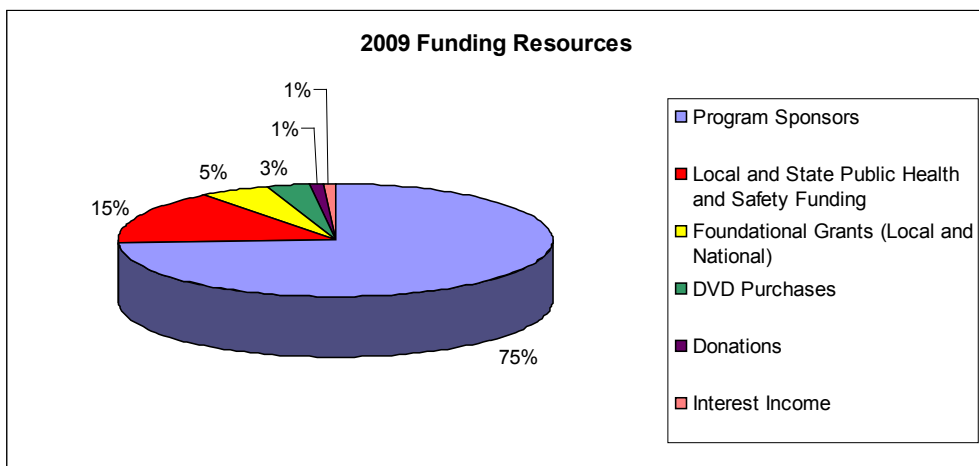
Foundations

Otto Bremer Foundation
Robert Wood Johnson Foundation
Saint Paul Foundation

We do our best to keep up with our ever-growing list of partners. But if we missed your organization, just let us know! Thank you!

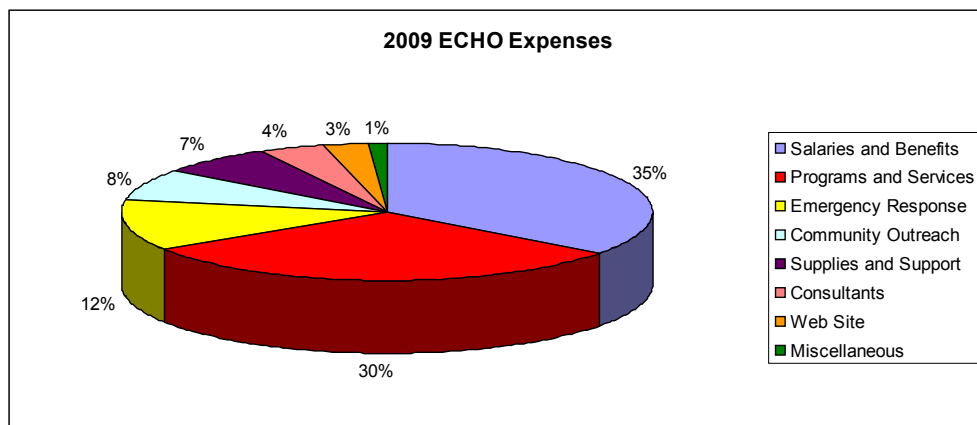
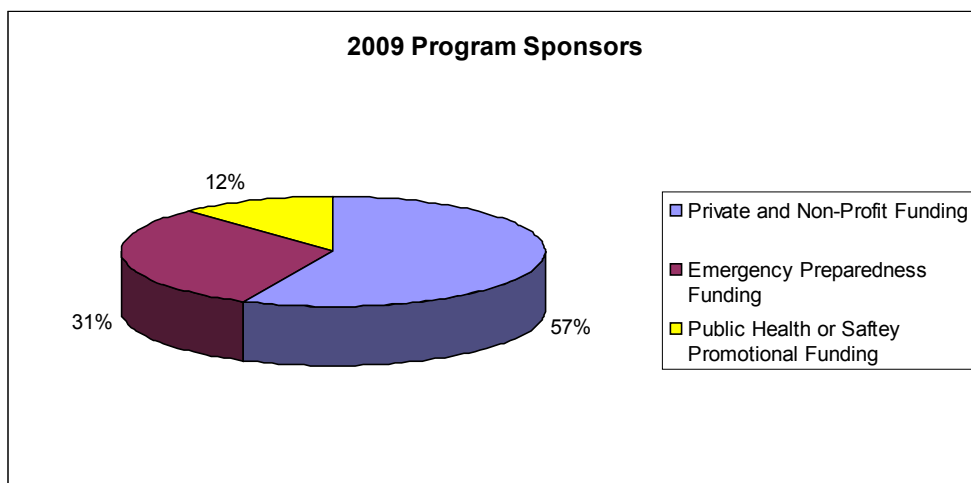
ECHO Minnesota Financial Summary

We keep a close eye on our financials so that we can maximize the value of your investment, by putting it to work wherever it's needed most - whether it's budgeting for future emergencies or funding program initiatives to raise awareness of the most pressing health, safety and civic engagement needs in our communities. Complete financial information is available online at Guidestar.org.



ECHO thanks our generous sponsors and partners, who make our programming work and outreach services possible.

Thanks to their generosity, in 2009, ECHO introduced 7 new programs to our library of resources, including “Know What to Do About H1N1 Flu” and “Shelter-in-Place.” We are deeply grateful for their ongoing support.



With over 18,000 immigrants and refugees arriving annually in Minnesota - we need your support now more than ever.

Your gift will go toward creating powerful new educational programs, continued outreach efforts to the most at-risk and underserved communities, and making a healthier, safer Minnesota.



BE HEALTHY. BE SAFE. BE READY.

ECHO Minnesota • c/o Association of MN Counties • 125 Charles Avenue • Saint Paul, MN 55103

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