

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) commitment to disaster resilience has been the foundation for more than three decades of research. Multiple Institutes, Centers and NIH funded grantees conduct research focusing on disaster preparedness, response and recovery issues. These efforts have contributed to a deeper understanding of disaster risks, recovery and act to provide critical information when disasters strike.

In response to recent disasters and the research conducted in their wake, NIH has committed to fund **The NIH Disaster Research Response Project**. This pilot project, developed by the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences (NIEHS) in collaboration with the National Library of Medicine (NLM), aims to create a disaster research system consisting of coordinated environmental health disaster research data collection tools and a network of trained research responders. Elements of the system include epidemiologic questionnaires and clinical protocols, specially trained disaster researchers, environmental health disaster research networks, a reach-back roster of subject matter experts, and a support infrastructure that can be activated and deployed during public health emergencies and declared disasters. NIEHS will build on its extensive program capabilities, research networks, and field experience in leading this pilot.

Project Goals

- **Readily Available Data collection Tools and Research Protocols**
 - Field tested, IRB & OMB approved tools
 - Implementation guidance, forms, and participant tracking information
 - Hosted on publically accessible NLM website
- **Environmental Health Research Response Network**
 - NIEHS intramural/extramural researchers, Centers, grantees, and academic partners
 - Engaged in the development and prioritization of the system & tools
 - Trained ‘research responders’ who are familiar with data collection tools, protocols, and can deploy in a disaster
 - Listing of subject matter and information experts that can be called upon for assistance
- **Coordination & Integration with Disaster Response & Recovery Infrastructure**
 - Multi-stakeholder engagement and information sharing
 - Training exercises for research responders and partners
 - Disaster Research Response Workshop
 - Facilitate State and local environmental health research response capabilities regardless of federal disaster declarations or efforts

“The knowledge that is generated through well-designed, effectively executed research in anticipation of, in the midst of, and after an emergency is critical to our future capacity to better achieve the overarching goals of preparedness and response: preventing injury, illness, disability, and death and supporting recovery.”

Lurie, Manolio, Patterson, Collins, and Frieden. Research as a Part of Public Health Emergency Response. New England Journal of Medicine 368;13 March 28, 2-13

NIH Coordination and Collaboration

Intra-NIH Disaster Interest Group (I-DIG)

- Partnership between 13 NIH Institutes and Centers that aims to share timely information, enhance relationships and processes, improve opportunities for collaborations and serve as a discussion platform for actions.

Environmental Health Science (EHS) Disaster Research Network

- New coordinated group consisting of NIEHS-sponsored research centers, grantees, and academic partners interested in facilitating improved national research response capabilities and responding to environmental emergencies and disasters.

Federal Interagency Coordination

- NIH is among the numerous federal agencies that participate in research following disasters. Additional coordination between the Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response (ASPR), the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), and other agencies, will be guided by NIEHS and project coordinators.

Stakeholder Opportunities

Stakeholders will have an opportunity to be involved in multiple aspects of the project. Stakeholder contributions to the development of deliverables are critical to creating user friendly tools. Those interested may support the project by:

- Providing scientific input, user feedback, and advice to ongoing efforts to create publicly accessible website pages and content
- Participating in the EHS Disaster Research Network and identifying others
- Participating as a subject matter expert for important environmental health disaster research areas including toxic exposures, health impacts, and community resiliency
- Sharing research and lessons learned in past disasters
- Participating in training and pursuing opportunities for field research during environmental emergencies
- Sharing existing protocols and tools for disasters

Previous NIH Disaster Experience

NIEHS has supported the response to many recent disasters including:

- September 11, 2001
- Hurricane Katrina
- Deep Water Horizon
- Hurricane Sandy

NLM's Disaster Information Management Research Center including:

- Customized pages following disasters
- Hazmat and CBRN specific resources
- Mobile apps and resources