

HOW CDC INVESTS IN PEOPLE DEVELOPING DISEASE DETECTIVES

At CDC, people are at the heart of everything we do. Our activities are focused on improving people's daily lives and responding to health emergencies at home and across the globe. One way we accomplish this mission is through training a global workforce of field epidemiologists, or "disease detectives."

Disease detectives are critical to stopping outbreaks before they become epidemics. They increase our ability to detect and respond to events in a world where the next outbreak is only a plane ride away.

When health threats strike, disease detectives investigate and use what they've learned to prevent others from getting sick. They communicate crucial information quickly about health problems in a community, including both infectious and noncommunicable diseases. Their work prevents illness, gets to the root of health problems, and helps people cope in difficult situations.

Photo: Liberian disease detective trainees carefully cross a river on a long raft to reach remote settlements

BOOTS ON THE GROUND

Disease detectives must deal with unexpected, sometimes urgent, problems that demand immediate and innovative solutions. Both the [Epidemic Intelligence Service](#) and the [Field Epidemiology Training Program](#) are two-year fellowships that prepare experts to tackle the challenges of keeping people healthy. **Learning by doing** is the backbone of field epidemiology training programs – trainees spend over 75% of their time in the field.

- **Epidemic Intelligence Service (EIS)** Each year, 70–80 new EIS officers are selected from among hundreds of physicians, doctoral-level scientists, veterinarians, and other health professionals. As CDC's disease detectives, EIS officers are among the agency's first-line rapid responders.
- **Field Epidemiology Training Program (FETP)** is modeled after EIS and builds a global workforce so that outbreaks can be detected locally and prevented from spreading. FETP trainees spend most of their time investigating outbreaks, conducting studies, and training other healthcare workers in their countries.

