

Mountain West Preparedness and Emergency Response Learning Center- Overview



The Mountain West Preparedness and Emergency Response Learning Center (MWPERLC) provides regional core competency-based training to improve the nation's public health preparedness and response capabilities during emergencies. MWPERLC develops and shares with other Preparedness and Emergency Response Learning Centers (PERLC), models for tribal training, both directly and through tribal community colleges. In addition, the MWPERLC works closely with CDC, fellow PERLC, and other partners to share expertise in competency-based training, tribal public health preparedness, program planning and evaluation, and other focus areas requested by the CDC.

Partners

The MWPERLC collaborates with the Departments of Health in Arizona, Colorado, New Mexico, and Utah to modify, develop, and deliver state, local, and tribal partner-requested education and training programs. In addition, the MWPERLC provides unique support of tribal emergency preparedness training in the Navajo Nation, Tohono O'odham Nation, Indian Health Board of Nevada, and Little Big Horn College through collaboration with Montana State University.

National Network of Learning Centers

MWPERLC is part of a network of training centers, called the Preparedness and Emergency Response Learning Centers (PERLC), which is funded by the CDC. The PERLC serve in a national capacity to meet the preparedness and response training and education needs of the U.S public health workforce. The PERLC provide competency-based training to state, local, and tribal public health authorities within defined service areas. In doing so, PERLC provide specialized training, education, and resources, in addition to exercising consultations for partners on request. PERLC are acknowledged for their unique capacity to adapt and tailor preparedness training to meet stakeholder requirements. The PERLC are established within the Council on Education for Public Health (CEPH)-accredited schools of public health and serve as an important national resource to meet the requirements of the Pandemic and All-Hazards Preparedness Act (PAHPA), Sec. 304 (d).

<http://healthyamericans.org/reports/bioterror07/PAHPAPublicLaw.pdf>

Key Activities

MWPERLC hopes to gain recognition as a premier Learning Center, specializing in the development of public health emergency preparedness curriculum tailored to meet the needs of state, local, and tribal public health professionals.

To accomplish this, MWPERLC:

- **Designs Emergency Preparedness Training Curriculums** that align with the Centers for Disease Control and Association of Schools of Public Health (CDC/ASPH) preparedness standards. These training programs were conceived in accessibility and are available in face-to-face training, online trainings, and handbooks/guides.
- **Develops and Markets Tribal Preparedness Models** that may be adapted by and shared with other PERLC in the network. The MWPERLC will also work closely with the CDC, state, local, tribal, and other federal partners and PERLC to refine techniques in competency-based training, tribal public health preparedness, program planning, evaluation, and additional focus areas requested by the CDC.
- **Meets the Unique Training Needs of Partners** to serve the public health workforce of the states, counties, and tribes of Arizona, Colorado, New Mexico, Utah, and Montana.



Key Accomplishments

Facilitated ICS Training for Tribal Public Health Professionals

By understanding the National Incident Management System, public health professionals are better equipped to lead their agencies in crisis situations that depend upon communication with other local, state, tribal, and federal partners. MWPERLC supports the network of Tribal public health professionals by facilitating the four FEMA courses (ICS 100, 200, 700, and 800) in a face-to-face group setting. MWPERLC developed this facilitated training package to aid public health professionals in completing the necessary FEMA training. Students may then obtain their FEMA Certificates by taking the online exams separately. To ensure the integrity of individuals taking the exams, MWPERLC adheres to all guidelines established by FEMA. In addition, upon the completion of all FEMA courses, students must participate in a mandatory scenario-based discussion, demonstrating the application of the Incident Command System to a public health emergency. This allows the students to apply their knowledge to real-life problems that might impact their community.

Designing and Delivering Relevant Public Health Preparedness Training

The MWPERLC is currently adapting the Epidemiology of Chemical, Biological, and Radiological module for the Utah Department of Health and the Special Needs Populations module for the Colorado State Health Department. The adaptation of these modules offers several benefits for partners throughout the United States. Partners can tailor training materials to meet the unique needs of their respective region and or jurisdiction, resulting in an increased sense of ownership of the module. As a result, affected regions are more likely to have increased investment and participation in the training. In a digital format, the module translates to both a relatable and sustainable medium. Additionally, MWPERLC is working to make adapted modules available through the TRAIN network, facilitating access for the broader public health audience.

Public Health Collaborative Training for a Rural Border County

The trainings were developed for small, rural health departments on the US-Mexico Border which are designed to:

- Highlight the roles of environmental health professionals during a public health emergency with specific focus on collaboration with disease epidemiological staff (including public health nurses and bioterrorism staff); and
- Provide public health nursing staff with the necessary knowledge and skills to respond to a food-borne disease outbreak through collaboration with environmental health professionals.

These two workshops provide public health professionals with an introduction to the environmental health aspects of public health emergencies and the benefits of outbreak investigation. Coupled with online modules, these two workshops show participants the importance of collaboration and communication between communities during public health emergencies.

Contact Information

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CDC Preparedness and Emergency Response Learning Centers (PERLC)

For more information about the PERLC program please email us at perlcprogram@cdc.gov or visit our website at <http://www.cdc.gov/phpr/perlc.htm>.