

## Training and Education Collaborative System Preparedness and Emergency Response Learning Center - Overview

The Training and Education Collaborative System Preparedness and Emergency Response Learning Center (TECS-PERLC) was designed to meet the training and educational needs based on the core-competencies of the state, local, and tribal public health workforce and authorities. TECS-PERLC values the importance of training and preparing the public health workforce to be better equipped to plan for, respond to, and recover from an emergency. Thus, TECS-PERLC prioritizes activities that maximize the preservation of learning projects and products; these are activities that will most likely contribute to improved emergency preparedness competencies and emergency capabilities in its partner states; facilitate greater audience access to an array of competency-based courses; and strengthen relationships that will support the continuation of program activities and infrastructure.

### Partners

TECS-PERLC is a collaboration among the Texas A&M Health Science Center School of Rural Public Health, the University of Texas School of Public Health, and the University of North Texas Health Science Center School of Public Health. TECS-PERLC furthers their partnerships with two state health departments: Texas and South Dakota. Since local health departments and public health services are not available in every county in its partner states, TECS-PERLC targets audiences not just limited to health department personnel, but also in the broader and non-traditional public health workforce. TECS-PERLC exercises its expertise in providing support for the broader public health workforce and community, paying special attention to rural and underserved populations.

### National Network of Learning Centers

TECS-PERLC 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 US 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

TECS-PERLC supports a cadre of learning projects that align with the competency and capability frameworks. TECS-PERLC increases access to learning products through the TECS-PERLC Learning Management System, which can be found at: <http://tecsperlc.org/trainings/>. In addition to eLearning activities, TECS-PERLC facilitates community engagement, conducts table top exercises, delivers face-to-face training, provides technical assistance, and guides Rural Preparedness Roundtables in response to partners' requests.



## Key Accomplishments

### Building Community Capacity for Pandemic Influenza

The Rural Pandemic Influenza Public Engagement (R-PIPE) Project fostered community capacity by organizing locally available resources to create local solutions to improving community health. The R-PIPE Project was successful in engaging 129 stakeholders representing 74 different organizations, agencies, or stakeholders in planning meetings, an educational conference, a series of work group meetings, town hall meetings, and community education. In the two rural counties involved in this project, residential participants identified local priority issues and concerns in addition to potential stakeholders to attend future group meetings. Participants also planned town hall meetings and community-wide education activities and identified concrete solutions to issues.

While the project goal was planning for local pandemic flu issues, one of the primary outcomes was the development of a stronger communication and resource-sharing network between stakeholders and the public. Three years after the project, this network continues to operate.

### Bridging the Divide for a Prepared Nation

After gaining recognition by its state health department partners, TECS-PERLC has continued to accomplish notable strides over the past two and a half years. Due in part from generous funding from the CDC, TECS-PERLC is now an established collaborative partner and a trusted resource for its state health department partners. The following activities highlight examples of TECS-PERLC's responsiveness to its partners' requests over the last two years and a half years:

- As a member of the Texas Preparedness Coordinating Council (PCC), Dr. Barbara Quiram, TECS-PERLC Principal Investigator, provides advice and assistance to the State Health Services Council and the Department of State Health Services in coordinating efforts to prepare the State of Texas for bioterrorism attacks, other infectious disease outbreaks, and additional public health threats and emergencies.
- At the request of the Texas Department of State Health Services, TECS-PERLC conducted a beta test of the Texas Public Health Risk Assessment Tool (Texas Tool) to assist the Texas Risk Based Funding recipients meet their objectives as outlined by the CDC PHEP Cooperative Agreement. TECS-PERLC continued to partner with the Houston and Dallas MSAs to create a strategy for using data to engage stakeholders in the mitigation planning process. The resulting Texas Tool County Profile provides county level background data, reports and explains Texas Tool results, and explains how a county's hazard risk, residual risk, hazard capability, and resource scores align with other counties in the MSA. TECS-PERLC developed an overview that incorporates the four primary results from the Texas Tool and a detailed explanation of the formulas used. In addition, TECS-PERLC staff serve on the Texas Jurisdictional Risk Assessment Tool Working Group for the development of the Texas Tool Version 2. TECS-PERLC is collaborating on the development of a social vulnerability index data tool for the second version of the Texas Tool, which will determine populations at risk of health impact indicators for specific hazard events as defined by the Texas Tool. TECS-PERLC will be showcasing its collaboration with Texas Department of State Health Services on the Texas Tool at the Public Health Preparedness Summit, the Texas Department of Emergency Management Conference, and CDC's Office of Public Health Preparedness and Response Director's Seminar Series.
- In collaboration with the South Dakota Department of Health, TECS-PERLC conducted disaster response workshops and table top exercises to build community resilience on two tribal reservations: Cheyenne River Reservation and Pine Ridge Reservation. The workshops provided each tribe with the opportunity to exercise their emergency operations plan; discuss ways to engage the broader community in preparedness and response; identify strengths and challenges of their tribal communities; and identify their next steps to promote community resilience. TECS-PERLC is currently working with the South Dakota Department of Health to identify additional Sioux Tribes to host future disaster response workshops adapted for their needs.

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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](mailto:perlcprogram@cdc.gov) or visit our website at <http://www.cdc.gov/phpr/perlc.htm>.