



COVID-19 Recovery Centers

The COVID-19 Recovery Centers are promoting health, safety, and recovery training for essential workers and communities impacted by high rates of COVID-19. The centers are supported by funding under the Coronavirus Preparedness and Response Supplemental Appropriations Act, 2020.

October 2022 Update

Summary

The NIEHS Worker Training Program (WTP) funded supplemental grants under [NIH NOT-ES-21-002](#) and [NIH NOT-ES-22-005](#) Notice of Special Interest (NOSI): Promoting Health, Safety, and Recovery Training for COVID-19 Essential Workers and their Communities, with support from the [Coronavirus Preparedness and Response Supplemental Appropriations Act, 2020](#). Grantee organizations are leading centers across the nation and will partner with local businesses and community organizations to assess COVID-19 health risks, train essential workers, and coordinate resources needed to reduce disease transmission and promote recovery in disadvantaged communities.

Visit the NIEHS Environmental Factor newsletter article, [COVID-19 resilience and recovery for workers, communities](#), for more information.

NIEHS WTP has funded a total of \$3,459,746 in supplemental grants for COVID-19 recovery center activities. One grantee organization implemented recovery center activities under their parent [Hazardous Waste Worker Health and Safety Training](#) cooperative agreement grant. Summaries of all grants and their activities are listed below. A [recording is available](#) from an October 2021 project update meeting from grantees, and the slides are on [the meeting web page](#).

NIEHS WTP Homepage

www.niehs.nih.gov/wtp

NIEHS WTP Coronavirus/COVID-19 Resource Page

<https://tools.niehs.nih.gov/wetp/covid19worker/>

Institution: University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston

Grant Number: U45ES019360-11S3 • U45ES019360-13S1

PI Name(s): Janelle Rios and Robert Emery

Summary: The Prevention, Preparedness, and Response (P2R) Consortium, located at The University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston (UTHealth) School of Public Health, will deliver actionable, site-specific training in COVID-19 mitigation strategies to vulnerable populations in the El Paso, Texas area. To achieve this objective, the P2R Consortium will work with local partners at the El Paso Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, El Paso Water, and University Medical Center of El Paso to identify resource and training needs and to fulfill the following aims:

- Expand and refine a COVID-19 risk profile tool that will calculate a site-specific risk profile for workers by job classification and task.
- Create an individual and actionable SARS-CoV-2 transmission mitigation plan in English and Spanish. Business owners will be full partners in developing the mitigation plan.
- Deliver high quality, culturally appropriate training and resources to mitigate the transmission of SARS-CoV-2 in the workplace. The project team will focus on supporting business owners to effectively implement the mitigation plan at the worksite.

Activities Update (April 2022): P2R has been working on multiple activities, particularly the refinement and deployment of a tailored risk profile tool. The goal is the refinement of preliminary hazard classification, on-site assessment of risk, and the development of a tailored assessment tool. The tool uses an innovative approach of merging the occupational risk pyramid for COVID-19, the Occupational Information Network (O*NET), and the hierarchy of controls.

P2R is developing its COVID-19 risk profile tool. To date, the draft hazard classification tool has been refined; survey instruments for employers and employees have been constructed and pilot tested in English and in Spanish as well as on paper and online. Additionally, P2R has made advances on its second aim of applying the hierarchy of controls framework to each worksite's risk profile and creating an individual and actionable COVID-19 transmission mitigation plan. Mitigation strategies have begun to be mapped to specific worksite risks, which will be used as the basis for the customized transmission mitigation plan. A scoring system is also being developed so that survey results can be quickly and easily used to inform the components of the mitigation plans.

Institution: University of Massachusetts Lowell

Grant Numbers: U45ES006172-29S2 • U45ES006172-30S1 • U45ES006172-31S1

PI Name(s): David Turcotte

Summary: The New England Consortium-Civil Service Employees Association (TNEC-CSEA) is a worker health and safety training partnership directed by the University of Massachusetts Lowell. The target populations of the Recovery Centers are the essential workers and their communities in Lowell, Massachusetts; eastern Massachusetts (Boston, Brockton, New Bedford); and the Naugatuck Valley, Connecticut. Key partners in the activities are Massachusetts Council for Occupational Safety and Health (MassCOSH), Connecticut Council for Occupational Safety and Health (ConnectiCOSH), the Naugatuck Valley Project, Coalition for a Better Acre and the Lowell Community Health Center in Lowell, and Massachusetts Association of Community Health Workers. Led by TNEC-CSEA, the centers will support COVID-19 testing, contact tracing, infectious disease control, training and education, legal support, employment assistance, and housing assistance. Specific activities under the centers include the following:

- Provide health and safety education and training on COVID-19 and disaster preparedness, including CPR/First Aid.
- Develop science-based, culturally specific training and resources for high-risk workers in environmental justice communities and immigrant communities.
- Serve as a clearinghouse creating multilingual educational materials in English, Spanish, Portuguese Creole, Albanian, and French Creole.
- Educate workers and communities about vaccination.
- Establish protocols for infection control for community partners.
- Partner with local public health agencies and employers to connect individuals to resources such as testing, contact tracing, vaccinations, infection control, mental health counseling, and peer support.
- Provide connections to job training and employment.
- Make referrals to social services, food, and emergency housing.
- Train bilingual trainers to support more delivery of courses in Spanish.

Activities Update (April 2022): TNEC's Recovery Centers have been in Connecticut and Massachusetts to support essential workers with education, training, and social support. Their partner, MassCOSH, supports a collaboration that engages 12 community partners in four communities in Massachusetts to provide important health and safety education training and to link workers with the resources they need to survive and recover from COVID-19. This includes training courses, multilingual fact sheets outlining the protections and rights under the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) Emergency Temporary Standard for healthcare setting workers, and three multilingual Town Halls to train workers in English, Spanish, Portuguese and Nepalese. The Town Halls included workers from some of the most hard-hit industries including childcare, restaurant, and domestic workers.

Additionally, their partner, ConnectiCOSH, is working with the state's Naugatuck Valley Project (NVP) to create a multi-pronged community-based recovery center to assist low-income residents, working families, and people of color. NVP held a town hall focused on pandemic-related workplace health and safety issues in a Waterbury hospital and continues to address the employee concerns. ConnectiCOSH and NVP also delivered awareness level trainings to Naugatuck Valley residents. Training topics included Workers' Rights, Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), Safe Cleaning and Disinfecting, Heat Stress, and Respiratory Protection. Each training was presented in English or with a Spanish translator.

Other efforts include COVID-19 testing, contact tracing, infectious disease control, legal support, employment, housing, and food assistance.

Institution: Rutgers School of Public Health

Grant Numbers: U45ES006179-29S2 • U45ES006179-30S1

PI Name(s): Mitchel Rosen

Summary: The Atlantic Center for Occupational Health and Safety will provide essential training and outreach in response to the Coronavirus (SARS-CoV-2, COVID-19) pandemic. Utilizing a broad-based approach, the center will target various populations to provide training and outreach to increase the knowledge and skills of vulnerable and essential workers in New Jersey, New York, and Puerto Rico. Rutgers School of Public Health will lead this effort. The project's overall aims include the following:

- Prevent and reduce Coronavirus exposure for essential workers who are at risk through their work duties.
- Connect community members to resources and services to prevent Coronavirus exposure, increase access to testing, and provide vaccination information.
- Improve knowledge and practices regarding the use of personal protective equipment and other risk reduction strategies during mass testing and vaccination events.
- Increase knowledge of workplace Coronavirus exposure and strategies to educate other workers about occupational exposure. The center will identify trainers who can deliver courses in multiple languages, including Spanish and other regionally-relevant languages.

Activities Update (April 2022): The Atlantic Center has created new partnerships and reached new audiences. These new audiences include the Hispanic and Latinx community; the Haitian community in the west and south ward in Newark; vulnerable populations throughout New Jersey; navigators who work with immigrant communities throughout New York State; and school staff, contact tracers, business and school inspectors, and food pantry volunteers. For example, the Atlantic Center conducted training and outreach activities for the Haitian community. These activities included providing translated materials, discussing vaccine myths on a local Haitian radio show, partnering with local businesses to incentivize vaccinations, and collaborating with groups who administer vaccines. Additionally, the Atlantic Center partnered with New Labor in New Jersey, which provided outreach through an “equipo de la calle” street team and social media communications through Facebook Live and posts.

Institution: Sustainable Workplace Alliance, Inc.

Grant Numbers: U45ES032171-01S2 • U45ES032171-02S1

PI Name(s): David Cassavant

Summary: The Sustainable Workplace Alliance (SWA) will conduct training and outreach designed to assist participants in making effective decisions which will result in a reduction of Coronavirus exposure and transmission. Training will focus on both at-risk citizens (youth and the elderly) and essential workers, including frontline health care workers, first responders, business operations workers, transportation sector workers, environmental cleanup workers, and water and sewage treatment workers. Outreach activities will include collateral services such as mental health counseling and referrals for employment opportunities, social services, childcare, food distribution, and emergency housing. SWA will target disproportionately affected communities in Puerto Rico and Florida with a specific focus on communities with higher-than-average COVID-19 transmission rates. Under this project, SWA expects to provide COVID training and outreach to a minimum of 3,675 citizens and essential workers. This project will evaluate and determine the following:

- How SWA community-based partnerships helped with recovery during a pandemic.
- What hurdles exist in assisting citizens during a disaster, including a pandemic.
- How effective SWA outreach was to essential workers and their employers.
- What are best practices during a disaster and response.
- How social leaders influence pandemic mitigation steps.

Activities Update (April 2022): In Florida, SWA's Recovery Center has worked with partners to deliver COVID-19 awareness training. SWA has also supported activities around vaccine counseling, job and career development referrals, COVID-19 testing and vaccinations, and mental health counseling. Additionally, SWA has made referrals for social services, such as childcare, food distribution, and emergency housing.

For those who were not able to attend formal courses, SWA conducted COVID-19 related outreach to hundreds of residents in rural communities. Through partnerships with community-based organizations, SWA was able to reach these communities at a grassroots level.

Institution: Deep South Center for Environmental Justice, Inc.

Grant Number: U45ES010664-22S2 • U45ES010664-24S1

PI Name(s): Beverly Wright and Robert Bullard

Summary: The Historically Black Colleges/Universities and Communities Consortium (HBCUC) is directed by the Deep South Center for Environmental Justice in New Orleans, Louisiana, in partnership with Texas Southern University in Houston, Texas; and in collaboration with five community-based organizations located along the Gulf Coast in five states (Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, Florida, and Texas). The Deep South Center will expand the work of the consortium to include the development of a Gulf Coast COVID-19 Recovery Center to promote health, safety, and recovery training for COVID-19 essential workers and their community. The overall goal of this training program is to assist and facilitate equity in community recovery from the SARS-CoV-2 virus and resulting COVID-19 pandemic, leading to broader acceptance of public health measures in the hardest hit communities. The specific aims of this project include the following:

- Develop partnerships for COVID-19 training with community-based organizations representing high risk communities and provide education and awareness training on COVID-19 health risks.
- Facilitate access to wraparound service resources for disaster preparedness, response, and recovery through city agencies.
- Provide two classes per month on COVID-19 at designated sites in the consortium thereby training approximately 241 residents through 1,868 contact training hours.
- Develop monthly YouTube videos presenting COVID-19 cases and an impact analysis for each community.
- Conduct train-the-trainer classes for participating community-based organization leaders.

Activities Update (April 2022): Through partnerships with community and faith-based organizations, HBCUC has provided community awareness training at churches, nursing homes, and assisted living facilities throughout New Orleans and the Houma area. HBCUC delivered online sessions on the topics of COVID-19 awareness, vaccines, variants, understanding the science, and mental health. For example, they provided COVID-19 training in partnership with a residential cleaning service and disinfection company.

Additionally, in September 2021, a COVID-19 train-the-trainer workshop was presented to consortium trainers from Houston, New Orleans, Pensacola, Atlanta, and Detroit. This training provided updated information on the pandemic's progression, new health effects, rapidly emerging and changing barriers, vaccines and the science behind them, treatment methods, and mental health issues.

Institution: International Chemical Workers Union Council

Grant Number: U45ES006162 (Implementing work under existing funds)

PI Name(s): Shari Glines-Allen

Summary: The International Chemical Workers Union Council (ICWUC) is building six COVID-19 recovery centers in diverse geographical areas. To accomplish this, ICWUC will work with local organizations that have strong working relationships with five existing consortium partners. Recovery center activities will take place in Riverside, California; Rochester, New York; Detroit, Michigan; Portland, Oregon; Houston, Texas; and Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. The centers will deliver 204 programs to 2,960 workers and community members for 7,182 contact hours. Partners will take a lead role in working closely with their respective local community organizations to expand their COVID-19 community training. The American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) will take a lead role in the coordination of training while other partners take the primary role in training delivery. The consortium will deliver a range of disaster resources and curricula that utilize the NIEHS Protect Yourself booklets. To support community training needs for future disaster situations, ICWUC may deliver the English or Spanish Disaster Train-the-Trainer classes and assist with disaster awareness classes at the seven sites. Program classes may also include resiliency awareness, disaster first aid/CPR/AED, and mold awareness, and muck and gut (with the mold curriculum available in Spanish). ICWUC will train new bilingual trainers and further the skills of trainers and partner staff who delivered these programs in the past, using participatory adult education techniques.

Activities Update (April 2022): ICWUC has reached a variety of workers who are at high risk of COVID-19 or have been struggling as essential workers during the pandemic. They have trained more than 650 workers to date. Their consortium member, the American Federation of Teachers (AFT), partnered with Health Professionals and Allied Employees and its community partner, the Mental Health Association in New Jersey, Inc., to provide mental health training for both union members and community members across New Jersey. COVID-19 has put extraordinary stress on health care workers and the pandemic has exposed nurses and health care workers to conditions that threaten their health, well-being, and ability to work. AFT members are dealing with high workloads, understaffing, and feelings of inadequacy and helplessness regarding patients and their treatment. Additionally, ICWUC has trained immigrant day laborers, restaurant workers, underemployed individuals, and construction workers through their consortium members the National Council for Occupational Safety and Health and the Coalition of Black Trade Unionists. Training has reached frontline workers in Texas, Pennsylvania, and Michigan. Training included an eight-part train-the-trainer series, building day laborer and domestic workers' capacity to lead health and safety training sessions on street corners and community spaces.

Institution: University of California Los Angeles

Grant Number: U45ES006173-30S1 • U45ES006173-31S1

PI Name(s): Kevin Riley

Summary: The Western Region Universities Consortium (WRUC), led by the University of California Los Angeles, will establish a network of COVID-19 resource and recovery centers in the western region of the U.S. The centers have the capacity to meet the critical needs of essential workers and communities disproportionately impacted by COVID-19 through engagement with worker and community organizations that maintain trusted relationships with key target groups. The model will extend much needed resources, training, and technical assistance to these organizations. WRUC will collaborate with the Southern California Coalition for Occupational Safety and Health and twelve worker and community organization partners in California, Arizona, and Washington State. These organizations collectively reach a wide diversity of essential workers and COVID-vulnerable communities, including domestic workers and day laborers; home healthcare, nursing home, and residential service workers; restaurant and garment workers; diverse immigrant and refugee communities, and communities of color, many of which are low income and working poor. Recovery center activities will include the following:

- Conduct outreach and training (both virtual and in-person) to essential workers and COVID-vulnerable communities.
- Develop videos and other educational tools on several COVID-related topics.
- Provide assistance in accessing COVID testing and vaccines.
- Conduct contact tracing activities.
- Collaborate with public health agencies.
- Provide connections to local resources related to food, housing, job assistance, and domestic violence.

Activities Update (April 2022): As part of their COVID-19 Recovery Center, WRUC has engaged with multiple organizations throughout Los Angeles, Northern California, and Arizona. The communities reached include essential and frontline workers, day laborers and domestic workers, Latinx and indigenous communities, immigrant and refugee communities, African American communities, and the working poor. Some of the activities conducted include mobile vaccine points of distribution, outreach and training on COVID-19 prevention and controls, referrals to local clinics, testing sites, housing, food banks, and other community resources, and support for community health *promotoras* (workers) and volunteers. Partner organizations include the California Healthy Nail Salon Collaborative that supports Vietnamese nail salon workers and community members, Preparados y Unidos working with Latinx agricultural workers in California, and Unlimited Potential who works through their network of trained community health workers in Phoenix, Arizona.

Also, beginning in November 2021, WRUC began hosting a series of evening *charlas* (chats) in Spanish via Zoom for community health workers, worker- and community-leaders, and representatives from COVID-19 Recovery Center partners. Each chat focused on a different topic—basic COVID-19 awareness, COVID-19 vaccines, proper use of N95s, mental health and well-being during the pandemic, etc.—and guest speakers from the Los Angeles County Health Department and local community-based organizations have been invited to participate in the discussions.

Institution: The Steelworkers Charitable and Educational Organization

Grant Number: U45ES006175-32S1 • U45ES006175-33S1

PI Name(s): Ashlee Fitch

Summary: The Steelworkers Charitable and Educational Organization/Tony Mazzocchi Center (SCEO/TMC), in conjunction with community-based organizations in both the New York/New Jersey metropolitan region and in the Anniston-Oxford metro area in northeastern Alabama, have created new and expanded partnerships to address social disparities that contribute to inequitable rates of COVID-19 disease and death. SCEO/TMC and partner organizations will provide essential COVID-19 information, training, and services to promote local resilience and recovery for low-income Latinx and African American workers and their families and will support ongoing recovery activities through wider dissemination of appropriate public health practices and support services. Recovery center activities will promote community recovery through COVID-19 training interventions and perform educational outreach, material adaption; and expanded coordination with service providers, public health providers, and other emergency support services to extend and deepen reach to underrepresented community members. Recovery centers will also do the following:

- Enhance training for on-the-job job safety.
- Provide assistance with distribution of personal protective equipment.
- Provide infectious disease guidance and referral to testing, medical care, and other essential services.
- Continue to build ongoing disaster preparedness.

Activities Update (April 2022): The Steelworkers have focused on empowering workers with accurate information to make changes in their workplaces and communities. Training topics have included COVID-19 transmission, protection, and vaccinations. The efforts are helping dispel myths circulating on vaccinations by embedding content into workers' rights training.

Through SCEO/TMC's Recovery Center, two projects have been implemented. First, Jobs to Move America (JMA) of Anniston, Alabama provided training, connected with community-based organizations, and conducted outreach activities to help workers and community members who live in highly disadvantaged areas. JMA developed and delivered several virtual training classes that discussed COVID-19 variants, public health prevention measures, workplace infection control measures, and workers' rights in the workplace. JMA has also developed and implemented digital platforms and tools to disseminate information.

Second, the National Day Labor Organizing Network (NDLON) conducted outreach activities, both online and out in the streets, to ensure workers are being trained on how to protect themselves from COVID-19 on the job. The material utilized was created by NDLON's Popular Education and Health and Safety teams to ensure they are combating the misinformation around the virus and vaccine. During this reporting period, NDLON spent just over 700 hours developing and conducting outreach activities. The outreach included promoting resources through social media outlets and podcasts, creating and updating educational material, and doing live stream events.

Institution: International Union, United Automobile, Aerospace and Agricultural Implement Workers of America (UAW)

Grant Numbers: U45ES006180-31S1

PI Name(s): Darius Sivin and Andrew Comai

Summary: UAW proposes to work with local organizations in high COVID-19 impacted communities to provide culturally and linguistically appropriate education about COVID-19 health risks and protective measures. They plan to connect community members to needed public health resources such as COVID-19 testing, contact tracing, infection control, medical care, and mental health services. The overall goal of this project is to move communities in Oakland County, Michigan and New York City (NYC) towards a recovery phase in the pandemic in which appropriate public health practices are more widely spread. There are two projects:

- COVID-19 awareness, mental health resilience, and ventilation training to UAW members in organizations that serve NYC immigrants and low-income residents. UAW will partner with Microecologies, Inc. to deliver these training workshops.
- COVID-19 health and safety training for limited-English proficiency adults who work in construction, landscaping, manufacturing, housekeeping, restaurant services, and janitorial services. Spanish-speaking populations in the Oakland County, Michigan (Detroit metro area) through consortium member Catholic Charities of Southeast Michigan/La Casa Amiga.

Note: This grant was first funded in September 2022, so the April 2022 activities update does not apply.