The NIEHS Worker Training Program (WTP) is implementing infectious disease response training for workers across sectors who may be exposed to infectious diseases. This addresses an important gap revealed by the 2014 Ebola outbreak.

The Ebola Biosafety and Infectious Disease Response WTP began June 1, 2016, and will run through May 31, 2019. NIEHS is building federal capacity for biosecurity, biopreparedness, and rapid response to emerging infectious diseases, including developing an infrastructure of trainers and organizations who can be a resource during emergencies.

NIH launched the program with the
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)
- U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Office of the Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response
- National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health
- Occupational Safety and Health Administration.

The program is funded through a $10 million transfer to NIEHS WTP via CDC using Ebola emergency supplemental appropriations.

Program Accomplishments as of March 31, 2017:

- Approximately 200 courses to more than 3,700 workers, with in-person trainings in approximately 25 states across the country.
- Approximately 25 Train-the-Trainer and Trainer development courses were provided to more than 300 trainers across the country to become trainers or increase their capacity to train.
- More than 20 new curricula are available on the NIEHS WTP Clearinghouse Curricula Catalog, some tailored to various worker occupations.

The new curricula include:
- Hands-on skills and adult learning techniques.
- Materials that are publicly available on-line.
- Continuing education credits across several specialties.
- Approval or integration into state and national organizations.

Occupations Trained:
- Airports/Airlines
- Construction Workers
- Corrections Workers
- Custodial/Environmental Service Workers
- Death Care Workers
- EMS and First Responders
- Healthcare Workers – patient care
- Healthcare Workers – non-patient care and laboratory
- Homeless Outreach Teams
- Nail Salon Workers
- Occupational Health and Safety Specialists
- Security and Customs
- Volunteers/Disaster Workers
- Vulnerable Populations
Program awardees are developing and delivering evidence-based infection control and hazard recognition training to worker populations they can access through labor unions and partnerships. By learning how to protect themselves during an outbreak, these workers become part of a preventive strategy which helps keep their worksites and communities safe.

Each awardee supports a consortium with subawards to expand their reach to more states and worker populations. The eight primary awardees of the Ebola Biosafety and Infectious Disease Response WTP are:

- Duke University
- Emory University
- Indiana University Bloomington
- International Chemical Workers Union Council (ICWUC) Center for Worker Health and Safety Education
- Laborers’ International Union of North America Training and Education Fund
- Rutgers University (New Jersey/New York Hazardous Materials Worker Training Center)
- The Steelworkers Charitable and Educational Organization
- University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB)

The Ebola Biosafety and Infectious Disease Response WTP builds off the overall NIEHS WTP, with its 30-year history of hazardous waste worker and emergency response training across the country, responsiveness to federal regulations and guidance, and strong position on and training in infectious disease response over approximately two decades.
Awardee Training Highlights

Across all awardees, thousands of healthcare providers and first responders have been trained in awareness, operations, and trainer development to increase capacity to safely respond to an outbreak.

Additional highlights are:

- **Trainings for U.S. Customs and Border Protection officers in Raleigh, Albuquerque, and Norfolk (Duke University)**
- **Operations and trainer development courses for federal prison staff (American Federation of Government Employees, through ICWUC)**
- **Public-private partnerships:**
  - Working with Stericycle for tailored curriculum and training on worker safety in medical waste handling (Laborers’ International Union of North America)
  - Delivering awareness training across the country for physicians and nurses from ExxonMobil Occupational Health Service Units and general and operations managers at Sodexo North America Environmental Services Division (Indiana University Bloomington)
  - Integration of infectious disease response into emergency medical services training, with offices in Georgia and Florida providing continuing education approval for operations and technician courses, and tailoring of an emergency medical technician awareness course to become compulsory training for American Medical Response. (Emory University)
  - Delivering a trainer development course for Communications Workers of America (CWA) union members, allowing the union to develop a trainer cadre and approach for preventing infectious diseases among CWA members, who are employed in the health care, airline, social service and corrections sectors. (The Steelworkers Charitable and Educational Organization)
  - Developing and delivering a 26-hour training curriculum for nail salon workers in English and Spanish, which was approved by New York State Department of State. (New York Committee for Occupational Safety and Health, through Rutgers University)
  - Training a wide variety of healthcare and public safety workers in Alabama and Mississippi (including emergency medical services, fire fighters, nurses, laboratory technicians, veterinarian services, physicians/physician assistants, and law enforcement) on safety practices with personal protective equipment. (UAB)
Gap Analysis Project

With the 2015 Congressional Ebola funding, one of the first activities NIEHS WTP undertook was a training needs assessment and gap analysis to best inform the future programming. The report, *Ebola Biosafety and Infectious Disease Response Training: Needs Assessment and Gap Analysis for the NIEHS Worker Training Program*, discussed gaps in integration between public health, medical, occupational health, and worker safety activities; minimal protective guidance informing the full spectrum of workers; and the difficulty of sustaining a high level of readiness and worker competency.

Several recommendations were made, including implementing changes in biohazard preparedness that endures for future infectious disease outbreaks; improving communications across disciplines and organizations; and developing official guidance that is better coordinated, more timely, and created with the input of end users. For all future activities, the report notes that sustainability depends upon funding, the elimination of complacency, and application of training to daily functions rather than just for episodic outbreaks.

The full report is available on the NIEHS WTP Clearinghouse.

---

NIH Pathogen Safety Data Training

The NIEHS WTP and WTP Clearinghouse produced a *Pathogen Safety Data (PSD) Guide* and *PSD Training Module* to clarify the use of PSD resources currently available for development of infectious disease occupational exposure control plans in a broad spectrum of industries. The PSD Guide reviews existing PSD resources, their strengths, and limitations, and explains how to access them. The training module was developed to train workers with potential exposure to infectious pathogens on how to use the PSD Guide and resources. The PSD module may be integrated into existing infectious disease training programs or used as a standalone module.

The PSD curriculum has been piloted with a variety of worker populations across the U.S., including environmental services workers, fire department employees, paramedics, day laborers, and U.S. Customs and Border Patrol officers.

The curricula is available on the NIEHS WTP Clearinghouse.

For more information on the NIEHS Infectious Disease Response Worker Training Program, visit: https://www.niehs.nih.gov/careers/hazmat/about_wetp/ebola/index.cfm.