



Worker Training Program: North Carolina

A National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences (NIEHS) Superfund-Related Activity

The NIEHS Worker Training Program (WTP) annually funds training for more than 3,800 workers through 220 health and safety courses in North Carolina. Recipients of NIEHS WTP grants lead trainings to prepare workers to perform their jobs safely, handle hazardous materials, and respond to disasters in their communities.



Courses include:

- Basic Superfund Site Worker and Site Worker Refresher
- Confined Space Entry and Rescue
- Crane and Forklift Operator Safety
- Disaster Site Safety Awareness
- Emergency Response Awareness
- General Construction and General Industry Safety
- Hazardous Waste Operations and Communication
- Hazardous Materials Transportation Awareness
- Infectious Disease and Bloodborne Pathogen Awareness
- Lockout/Tagout
- Microbial Remediation
- Personal Protective Equipment Awareness
- Respiratory Protection

Training Highlights

Hurricane Response and Recovery

WTP grantees deliver training to help North Carolina workers and communities prepare for and respond to hurricanes and flooding.

In response to Hurricanes Matthew and Florence, the International Chemical Workers Union Council Center for Worker Health and Safety Education partnered with the Robeson County Disaster Recovery Committee to provide mold awareness and remediation training. They delivered a train-the-trainer course to disaster case workers, construction analysts, local government officials, and community members. The course provided participants with the knowledge to recognize mold hazards and the skills needed to deliver training to others.

Additionally, the United Steelworkers Tony Mazzocchi Center deployed their Specialized Emergency Response Trainers (SERTs) to hurricane-impacted regions in Wilmington where they delivered training on mold remediation and generator safety. The SERTs also distributed emergency supplies and personal protective equipment to workers and community members.



Photo courtesy of Demia Wright, WTP



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About the Worker Training Program

WTP funds nonprofit organizations to provide health and safety training for workers who may be exposed to hazardous materials and waste at work or while assisting with emergency response. WTP was initiated under the Hazardous Substance Basic Research and Training Program authorized by the Superfund Amendments and Reauthorization Act of 1986 (42 USC 9660a).

Under these NIEHS Superfund-related activities, WTP grantees provide trainings across the country through the [Hazardous Waste, Hazmat Disaster, and Environmental Career Worker Training Programs](#).

For more information, visit www.niehs.nih.gov/wtp.

NIEHS Women's Health Awareness Conference

WTP is a longtime participant in the annual NIEHS [Women's Health Awareness](#) conference, hosted in Durham. The event promotes healthier lives in women through environmentally safer homes and communities, with emphasis on understudied, underrepresented, and underreported populations. Through information and resources, it empowers women to take responsibility for their health. In recent years, WTP staff have participated on the event planning committee and helped coordinate sessions to raise awareness about the opioid crisis, disaster safety and preparedness, and racial barriers in rural communities.

Industrial Training

The International Union, United Automobile, Aerospace, and Agricultural Implement Workers of America (UAW), a WTP grantee, delivers worker training at North Carolina automotive manufacturing facilities in Gastonia, Cleveland, Mount Holly, and High Point. Topics include ergonomics, general industry, confined space, and crane and forklift operator.



Photo courtesy of UAW

The UAW ergonomics course has high participation from union members and other essential team members like engineers, medical providers, and first responders. At the end of the course, participants propose an idea on how to resolve an ergonomic issue that also saves money. These ideas are often implemented in their facilities.

Infectious Disease Awareness and Safety Training

Workers from a variety of sectors receive infectious disease awareness and safety training to protect themselves, their colleagues, and the public.

For example, UAW provided online training to help health and safety professionals at an automotive manufacturing company with return-to-work safety protocols during the COVID-19 pandemic. As a result, new protective protocols were put in place.

Another WTP grantee, OAI, Inc., which partnered with an infection prevention and control consultant in Wingate, delivered online infectious disease awareness training to health care workers in dental, ambulatory medical care, long-term care, and other facilities. This helped fill a gap in training and resources during the peak of the COVID-19

pandemic. The virtual training format has helped OAI reach nearly 700 workers within and outside of North Carolina.

Supporting the Military

The International Brotherhood of Teamsters (IBT), a WTP grantee, delivers annual hazardous waste training to workers at Fort Bragg, a military installation of the U.S. Army located near Fayetteville.



Photo courtesy of IBT

IBT has trained more than 400 active duty military personnel who work in various departments on the base, including the Department of Public Works and Water Management, the Environmental Safety Department, and the Womack Medical Center. Training is mandatory for these workers because many of them work in warehouse facilities where hazardous materials may be stored or help with ammunition cleanup on base.

IBT also offers training for military personnel who are being discharged. This training provides them with skills and qualifications needed to obtain employment outside the military.

Community College and State Agency Training

Every year, thousands of North Carolinians receive health and safety training through the Community College Consortium for Health and Safety Training/National Partnership for Environmental Technology Education, a WTP grantee. The courses cover topics such as industrial emergency response and hazardous materials operations.

These courses are delivered at many colleges within the North Carolina Community College System, including Pamlico Community College, Blue Ridge Community College, Southeastern Community College, and Gaston Community College. These trainings can be for workers employed within a nearby community or by the colleges.

The consortium also delivers training for two state agencies: the North Carolina Department of Transportation in Shelby and the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services in Grantsboro. Courses cover topics such as general industry safety, respiratory protection, and HAZMAT transportation awareness. Train-the-trainer courses help build the agencies' capacity to deliver training on these topics.