COVID-19 Appropriations: Health and Safety Training During a Pandemic

The NIEHS Worker Training Program (WTP) had a swift response to the coronavirus 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic. This response is based on years of experience and the program’s capacity to address infectious diseases, bloodborne pathogens, and other biosafety hazards using regular program funds and emergency appropriations from Congress. This document focuses on how WTP used $10 million in emergency appropriations from the Coronavirus Preparedness and Response Supplemental Appropriations Act, 2020.*

OVERVIEW

Total dollars funded in supplemental grants
$9 MILLION

Total number of courses (online and in-person)
2,893

Total number of workers trained
56,461

Top courses *

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Infectious Disease Awareness</td>
<td>1,261</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community-Level Infectious Disease Awareness</td>
<td>404</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Domestic Preparedness Awareness</td>
<td>316</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Industry Safety</td>
<td>128</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Construction Safety</td>
<td>109</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resiliency</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hazard Communication</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respiratory Protection</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Geographic spread of training courses

These graphics and data are based on training delivered by grantee organizations from March 2020 to July 2022.

WORKER SECTORS TRAINED

WTP-funded organizations (grantees) make up a national network of health and safety specialists. In response to COVID-19, grantees trained workers in many occupational sectors. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Health care workers (first responders, emergency medical service workers)
- Teachers and students
- Construction workers
- U.S. Department of Energy workers and contractors
- Painters
- Maintenance professionals
- Public health professionals
- Transportation workers (waste haulers, airline/airport workers)
- Disaster and community volunteers/workers
- Maritime workers
- Food service workers
- Laboratory workers

*Funds from the emergency appropriations were allocated for supplemental training grants and program contract support. This document does not reflect additional training and resources completed through WTP Superfund-related funding.
COVID-19 RECOVERY CENTERS

Several WTP grantees used funds to establish COVID-19 recovery centers. These grantees partner with local businesses and organizations across the nation to train workers and coordinate resources to promote recovery in disadvantaged communities that face social inequities. Key activities include:

- Train and educate
- Support vaccination efforts
- Provide social support
- Promote mental health resilience
- Develop a risk assessment tool

E-LEARNING ACTIVITIES

Some WTP small business grantees used funds to develop and deploy innovative tools for e-learning activities such as training videos, mobile applications with learning modules, and adaptive role-playing games.

RESOURCES AND EVALUATION FINDINGS

Through the emergency appropriations, contract support has and continues to provide critical COVID-19 resources and tools to further grantee training efforts across the country. The following tools and resources can be found on the WTP COVID-19 website.

Training Tools and Resources

- Conducted a needs assessment to understand training gaps and challenges among grantees given the pivot to online and virtual learning.
- Conducted an evaluation of WTP’s grant-funded COVID-19 activities, with a key finding that NIEHS WTP support and resources provided grantees with the necessary tools to deliver trainings during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Webinars and Presentations

Hosted a series of COVID-19 webinars to share information with the public. Examples include:

- Realigning Conventional Routes of Transmission: Occupational Exposure (April 17, 2020)

Fact Sheets and Technical Briefs

Developed several technical briefs, fact sheets, and checklists to communicate key messages about COVID-19 health and safety issues. This includes:

- COVID-19 Vaccine Information for Workers
- Workplace Checklist for Prevention of Exposure to SARS-CoV-2 Virus in Non-Healthcare Industries

Needs Assessment and Evaluation