

Overview

NIEHS Worker Education and Training Program

Strategic Plan 2008-2013



Vision

To provide model safety and health training and education to those who work with and clean up hazardous materials, and for those who respond to emergencies involving hazardous substances. This model safety and health training is designed to protect these workers, and the communities in which they work, from injury and illness.

Mission

The mission of the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences Worker Education and Training Program is to support the development of a network of non-profit organizations that are committed to protecting workers and their communities by creating and delivering high-quality, peer-reviewed safety and health curricula to target populations of hazardous materials/waste workers and emergency responders. Through the National Institutes of Health extramural grants process, the WETP awards cooperative agreements in order to:

1. Create major prevention education activities for NIEHS as technical, scientific and basic research information is delivered to target populations with high-risk toxic exposures.
2. Establish and modify national benchmarks for quality worker safety and health training in collaboration with the stakeholder community.
3. Develop innovative occupational safety and health training for workers and their supervisors who perform dangerous jobs in the nation's hazardous waste management and remediation programs, as well as for emergency responders to uncontrolled releases.

Values

NIEHS-sponsored training strives to equip hazardous materials and emergency response workers with the knowledge to prevent serious injury and reduce the threat of serious illness by enabling workers to better protect their personal safety, their coworkers, and those in the community in which they work. NIEHS-sponsored training aims to provide the necessary education and training to all workers (federal, state, local, private sector, immigrant, or volunteer) so that they can work safely around hazardous materials. The program emphasizes peer-to-peer training with hands-on activities, as well as primary prevention (i.e., identifying and mitigating safety and health risks). The program also provides training and employment to increase underserved minority representation in the environmental and construction industries.

The WETP supports the development of curricula and training programs to help employers meet Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) requirements under 29 CFR 1910.120, Hazardous Waste Operations and Emergency Response (HAZWOPER) standard, including training programs to meet site-specific needs of contractors, such as confined spaces, blood-borne pathogens, lead, asbestos, unexploded ordnance and mold. (This training is also referred to as HAZWOPER-supporting training.) Integrated safety management, a formal, organized process whereby people plan, perform, assess, and improve the safe conduct of work, is also a core value of the program.

NIEHS WETP Strategic Priorities

Mission Priorities:

1. Continually seek and encourage opportunities to collaborate with organizations (at all levels) that share the common goal of protecting workers and their communities.
2. Advocate for the health and safety of emergency responders and skilled support personnel through actively participating in all phases of the national response to disasters.

3. Oversee and manage the expansion of a national network of trainers with diverse specific skills grounded on a common training doctrine. These trainers will become a national resource for providing health and safety education and will prepare responders to perform their duties in a hazardous environment.
4. Expand opportunities for minority and underserved populations in cities and surrounding communities by providing life skills, construction, and career training in the handling and remediation of hazardous materials.
5. Leverage and actively integrate technology and innovation to improve the delivery of education and training to workers performing duties in a hazardous environment.

Organizational Priorities:

1. Foster more awardee partnership activities.
2. Institutionalize the WETP in awardee organizations by capturing program history and maintaining strong leadership development programs.

The NIEHS WETP provides support through the following program areas:

Hazardous Waste Worker Training Program (HWWTP)

This program provides model occupational safety and health training for workers who are, or may be, engaged in activities related to hazardous waste removal, containment, or chemical emergency response.

Minority Worker Training Program (MWTP)

This program is focused on delivering comprehensive training to increase the number of underrepresented and disadvantaged minority adults employed in the fields of environmental restoration, hazardous materials, and construction.

NIEHS/EPA Brownfields Minority Worker Training Program (BMWTP)

This program broadens the MWTP to provide comprehensive training of disadvantaged residents in communities impacted by brownfields. This training helps foster economic and environmental restoration of their communities.

NIEHS/DOE Nuclear Worker Training Program (DOE)

This program focuses on training workers engaged in environmental restoration, waste treatment, and emergency response activities at sites in the Department of Energy's (DOE) nuclear weapons complex.

Hazmat Disaster Preparedness Training Program (HDPTP)

This program enhances the safety and health training of current hazardous materials workers and chemical responders; trains skilled support response personnel; creates materials and delivers training to weapons of mass destruction response workers; and augments prevention and preparedness efforts in a wide variety of high risk settings.

Advanced Training Technology Program (ATT)

This program focuses on the development of Advanced Technology Training (ATT) products for health and safety training of hazardous materials (HAZMAT) workers, emergency responders, and skilled support personnel. This includes the Small Business Innovative Research and Small Business Technology Transfer (SBIR/STTR) programs.

National Clearinghouse for Worker Safety and Health Training (National Clearinghouse)

The National Clearinghouse supports the work of WETP by facilitating national workshops on safety and health topics, and by maintaining a website that contains the important documents developed by WETP, as well curricula created by its awardees. These curricula focus on OSHA's hazardous waste worker standard (1910.120) and are available at no cost to the public. The Clearinghouse website also contains a database of important worker protection documents organized by subject matter, along with downloadable materials including training tools, such as the Hurricane Response PowerPoint awareness presentation and the printable formatted booklet based on the PowerPoint.

More information on the NIEHS WETP can be found on the Internet at <http://tools.niehs.nih.gov/wetp>.