

# PHEP Notice of Funding Opportunity: Risk Communication Supplemental Guidance and Resources

July 2024

## Overview

The right message at the right time from the right person can save lives. Hurricanes, chemical releases, bombs, pandemic illness, and earthquakes are just some of the emergencies that can threaten any community at any time. Through effective communication, PHEP recipients and their partners can impact how their communities respond to and recover from these potentially devastating emergencies.

Although risk communication is a foundational capability of public health preparedness planning, the COVID-19 response identified a need for enhanced focus on this area. Through a renewed emphasis on [CDC's Crisis and Emergency Risk Communication \(CERC\)](#) principles, CDC will continue to support PHEP recipients in advancing their current capabilities-based strategies and plans and ensuring appropriate resources and systems are in place to meet new programmatic requirements.

## Purpose

[CDC's Response Readiness Framework](#) describes 10 cross-cutting priority areas to focus efforts on during the federal fiscal years (FY) 2024-2028 period of performance. This supplemental guidance outlines requirements as defined in the PHEP notice of funding opportunity (NOFO) for strengthening risk communications activities to improve proficiency in disseminating critical public health information and warnings and for addressing misinformation and disinformation. This supplemental guidance also provides recommendations and resources for PHEP recipients to advance their CERC planning efforts toward a more response-ready approach.

## Programmatic Requirements

The [Public Health Emergency Preparedness and Response Capabilities: National Standards for State, Local, Tribal, and Territorial Public Health](#) describes the 15 capability standards designed to support state, local, tribal, and territorial jurisdictions as they prepare for, respond to, and recover from public health threats and emergencies. These capabilities are foundational to the CDC Response Readiness Framework. CDC expects recipients to use established PHEP national preparedness capabilities as applicable to improve whole community readiness, response, and recovery through enhanced partnerships and improved communication systems for timely situational awareness and risk communication. Recipients should select strategies and implement activities that expand and sustain current capacity based on the priorities and public health needs of their jurisdictions to make progress toward the outcomes defined in the PHEP NOFO.

**RSK-A: Develop or update crisis and emergency risk communication and information dissemination plans that are reviewed each year and updated as needed.**

### Recommendations

- Assess the development and timely dissemination of effective CERC messaging during response, including tailoring of messaging to appropriate audiences for real-time or near real-time dissemination.
- Build and maintain mutually beneficial connections with organizations that serve populations most likely to be disproportionately affected in a public health emergency.
- Ensure that all essential documents and other communication materials are accessible to people with disabilities, limited English proficiency, and other populations with barriers to access to information.



# PHEP Notice of Funding Opportunity: Risk Communication Supplemental Guidance and Resources

July 2024

- Support broad information dissemination via various channels and networks, including collaborating with trusted messengers to build and support trust for public health authorities.
- Update media strategies with existing and new community partners to include developing supporting materials and update information dissemination activities to include offline and digital strategies to strengthen crisis and emergency risk communications.
- Identify gaps related to the social, economic, political, and cultural factors within the jurisdiction and among various audiences that impact perception of risk and risk-reduction behaviors or may contribute to the proliferation of misinformation and disinformation.
- Ensure planning that better integrates CERC and information dissemination strategies into operational activities, such as inclusion in exercise and drill scenarios.

## **RSK-B: Identify and implement communication surveillance, media relations and digital communication strategies in exercises.**

### *Recommendations*

- Conduct media monitoring and communication surveillance activities, including identifying appropriate media sources to monitor (i.e., traditional and digital); defining reporting and data analysis criteria to gather insights for message development; and employing appropriate technologies to support media monitoring during response.
- Develop or update approach for regular media outreach, including media for specific audiences, and routine monitoring of news outlets to identify messaging/information gaps and opportunities to shape messages to address public questions and concerns in real-time (or near real-time) during response.
- Identify opportunities to address misinformation and disinformation during response, including improvements in proactive, bidirectional communication to/from partners, stakeholders, and the public.
- Identify and implement activities to measure success in equitable dissemination of information.

## **RSK-C: Identify and implement specific crisis and emergency risk communication activities that meet the diverse needs of communities of focus.**

### *Recommendations*

- Identify gaps in CERC and information dissemination activities that support communities of focus.
- Collaborate with access and functional needs (AFN) partners to develop culturally appropriate risk communication messages that consider health disparities.

Establish outcomes and objectives for CERC efforts and assess whether identified outcomes and objectives are achieved.



# PHEP Notice of Funding Opportunity: Risk Communication Supplemental Guidance and Resources

July 2024

## Related Response Readiness Framework Activities

The following table identifies risk communication recommended activities that align with the Response Readiness Framework workforce priority and PHEP NOFO exercise requirements.

Related NOFO Areas	Risk Communications Activities
<b>Workforce (WKF)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Identify a PHEP-funded CERC coordinator to support CERC planning and implementation efforts, conduct communication surveillance activities and coordinate with health department communication staff to identify and address mis/disinformation before, during, and after response.</li><li>• Identify and document completion of CERC trainings for public information officer(s), spokesperson(s), or similarly designated staff (i.e., PHEP-funded CERC coordinator).</li><li>• Provide training opportunities, tools, and resources for staff, partners, and stakeholders related to strategies and best practices for engaging with the media and combatting misinformation and disinformation.</li></ul>
<b>Exercise Requirements</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Develop a risk communication simulation or exercise injects, including the development of performance standards, to support testing of communication surveillance, media relations, digital communication, and community engagement strategies during an exercise.</li><li>• Evaluate performance during the simulation and document lessons learned.</li></ul>



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July 2024

## Suggested Resources

Title	Description	Link/Location
CDC's Crisis & Emergency Risk Communication (CERC) Program	CDC's CERC program website offering trainings, tools, and resources to help health communicators, emergency responders, and organizational leaders communicate effectively during emergencies.	<a href="#">Crisis &amp; Emergency Risk Communication (CERC) CDC</a> Contact: <a href="mailto:cercrequest@cdc.gov">cercrequest@cdc.gov</a>
CDC's Health Equity Guiding Principles for Inclusive Communication	Emphasizes the importance of addressing all people inclusively and respectfully.	<a href="#">Health Equity Guiding Principles for Inclusive Communication</a>
Public Health Communications Collaborative (PHCC)	An online resource to create, coordinate, and amplify science-based messaging to support and enhance the communications capacity of health departments across the country.	<a href="#">Public Health Communications Collaborative</a>
National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO) Toolbox	A free, online collection of public health tools that have been created and shared by members of the public health community.	<a href="#">NACCHO Toolbox</a>
National Public Health Information Coalition (NPHIC)	NPHIC is an independent organization of professionals with the mission of improving America's health through public health communications.	<a href="#">National Public Health Information Coalition (NPHIC) - Home</a>

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