

Community Resilience

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About Community Resilience

Resilience has been defined as a community's ability to recover from a disaster and return to normalcy. At its core, resilience is a community-level concept, built on strong partnerships, communication, and planning. A community can play a key role in increasing resilience by enhancing network capacities and cooperation to address issues related to preparedness, response, and recovery. More communities are working to increase their resilience, but actual improvement is difficult to track because few metrics exist with which to track and compare progress.

As part of its engagement with the American Red Cross Community Resilience Project, NORC has developed metrics that provide a basis for measuring community resilience. These metrics—developed to be collectable, transparent, sensitive, and relevant—have been vetted with community networks responsible for implementing resilience project activities. Data collection began in early 2012.

Sample Projects

Several recent projects have addressed issues of security, resilience, and sustainability, capturing issues of public infrastructure and informatics, biomeasures, and environmental impact. Examples include:

Community Resilience Pilot Project. Under contract to the American Red Cross (ARC), NORC is developing metrics, indicators, and survey questions to measure community resilience and analyze the impact of this pilot project. NORC worked closely with ARC to develop a set of resilience metrics that will be used to track community-level resilience as ARC initiates community-level network development activities. Grounded in conceptual frameworks of resilience, metrics will be organized into a resilience index that will help ARC quantify community resilience and track chapter initiatives to increase preparedness and build sustainable, resilient communities.

First Responder Individual Engagement and Network Development (FRIEND). NORC has founded the FRIEND initiative to strengthen and enhance community networks. FRIEND brings together a network of first responders, emergency managers, policy makers, community volunteer responders, and social science researchers to form a multidisciplinary team with the goal of improving research and practices in disaster response. FRIEND networks are being developed in suburban Chicago, IL, and Washington, DC.



Predicting Rural Population Surge Following Urban Disasters. To bridge the divide between local preparedness planning efforts and a lack of information about urban migration to rural areas following an urban disaster, NORC conducted a study for the Federal Office of Rural Health Policy. This study consisted of a national survey of urban households and a series of interviews with community and national experts to inform rural preparedness planning efforts and increase the accuracy of an online, map-based planning tool developed by NORC's Walsh Center for Rural Health Analysis.

Development of Planning Guidelines and Recommendations to Address Emergency Preparedness and Response Needs of Seasonal and Migrant Worker Populations. In order to explore the issues migrant and seasonal workers face and understand how preparedness responders can work effectively with this community, NORC partnered with the National Rural Health Association and the Western New York Public Health Alliance. The resulting planning guide provides specific recommendations and planning considerations to minimize service disruptions and addresses the needs of migrant and seasonal populations during an emergency. The guide focuses specifically on such issues as language barriers, distrust of authorities, and lack of access to health care and other community resources.

NORC staff members support federal, state, and local preparedness, response, and recovery efforts across a wide range of emergency management scenarios. They have done extensive preparedness work surrounding specific disasters such as developing a preparedness standard mandate in the 9/11 Commission Report, supporting Operation American Assist troop safety efforts in the 82nd Airborne Division during Hurricane Katrina's response and recovery efforts, and surveying shopping malls as soft targets for terrorist attacks.

About NORC

NORC at the University of Chicago is an independent research organization headquartered in downtown Chicago with additional offices on the University of Chicago's campus, the D.C. Metro area, Atlanta, Boston, and San Francisco. NORC also supports a nationwide field staff as well as international research operations. With clients throughout the world, NORC collaborates with government agencies, foundations, educational institutions, nonprofit organizations, and businesses to provide data and analysis that support informed decision making in key areas including health, education, economics, crime, justice, energy, security, and the environment. NORC's decades of leadership and experience in data collection, analysis, and dissemination—coupled with deep subject matter expertise—provides the foundation for effective solutions.

Learn more about NORC's work at www.norc.org

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