

# First Responder Individual Engagement and Network Development (FRIEND)

## CONTACT

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## About FRIEND

First responders play a critical role in securing public safety and infrastructure after natural disasters, terrorist attacks, and other catastrophic events. Heroic response efforts such as those seen in the aftermath of 9/11 and Hurricane Katrina have saved countless lives, and have lessened these catastrophes' severe collateral damage. These types of response efforts require a great deal of cross-jurisdictional planning, logistics, training, and communications.

NORC at the University of Chicago is positioned to bring thought-leading innovation to the field of emergency response through a multidepartmental initiative called the First Responder Individual Engagement and Network Development (FRIEND). FRIEND brings together a multidisciplinary team that includes first responders, policy makers, community volunteer responders, information technology specialists, engineers, and social science researchers, all with the common goal of innovating research and practices in disaster response.

## Project Highlights

**County and community needs assessment.** The FRIEND initiative currently works with emergency management leadership and volunteers in two counties adjacent to NORC offices. One of these efforts includes a needs-assessment survey of Community Emergency Response Teams (CERTs) in order to explore how community volunteers can be more effective in their roles. Another effort seeks to create alliances among county fire districts in order to improve response capabilities through resource- and knowledge-sharing during a time of declining budgets.

**Emergency outreach using social media RSS and mobile computing with SharePoint.** The FRIEND team's robust, external-facing SharePoint site serves as a hub for information sharing, alerts, and networking among group members. The site uses tools such as RSS (Really Simple Syndication) as a way to publish frequently updated content. The FRIEND SharePoint site serves as a concept model for information sharing during emergencies, providing emergency response professionals and volunteers a tool to access and share real-time data from their mobile phones. This allows for simplified and targeted communications in the event of a disaster.



## FRIEND Leadership

**John Lickfett**, Senior Research Analyst, serves as the leader and convener for the FRIEND initiative in Chicago and Washington, D.C. He organized the FRIEND initiative in 2011 under NORC's Security, Energy, and Environment department and brought together a group of two dozen volunteers with backgrounds ranging from fire and rescue to cybersecurity. Lickfett currently leads development of the NORC security research portfolio and brings more than seven years of experience in program management, financial analysis, business operations, and systems analysis.

**Michael Meit, M.A., M.P.H.**, Rural Health Program Area Director, has more than 15 years of experience as a health services researcher and project manager. Prior to arriving at NORC, Meit worked at the state and national levels with the Pennsylvania Department of Health and the National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO), followed by a five-year tenure as the Director of the University of Pittsburgh's Center for Rural Health Practice. Meit serves on the Board of Directors for the Maryland Public Health Association. He holds a Master's degree in clinical psychology from Indiana University of Pennsylvania and a Master of Public Health degree from the University of Pittsburgh.

**Douglas Humberger, Ph.D.**, Senior Vice President and Director, has more than 30 years of experience, including more than ten leading emergency preparedness, response, and recovery for federal, state, and local activities. He has worked with government, private industry, and nonprofit entities to develop and implement plans, execute training and exercises, and evaluate emergency management processes, tools, and techniques. He holds a doctorate degree in Physics from Georgetown University.

## Other NORC Projects

- Urban to Rural Evacuation Tool for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
- Development of Community Resilience Indicators for the American Red Cross
- Radiation Exposure Screening and Education Program (RESEP) for the Office of Rural Health Research
- Migrant and Seasonal Farm Worker Preparedness Planning for the National Rural Health Association
- Resident Relocation Survey for the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation
- Energy Consumption Surveys for the Energy Information Administration

## 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](http://www.norc.org)

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