



OFFICE OF READINESS AND RESPONSE (ORR)

February 2026

SNAPSHOT

Mission

To lead, promote, and integrate programs, science, data, communications, and policies that enable the CDC to respond to public health threats at home and abroad.

Organization

Office of the Director (OD)

- Division of Emergency Operations (DEO)
- Division of Regulatory Science and Compliance (DRSC)
- Division of State and Local Readiness (DSLRL)
- Division of Readiness and Response Science (DRRS)

Priorities

- Prepare for, respond to, co-manage, and improve performance in domestic and global public health emergencies 24/7/365.
- Support and enhance state and local health department readiness, response, and recovery capacity.
- Ensure lifesaving research with select agents and toxins, as well as poliovirus containment, is conducted safely and securely.
- Develop scientific principles, tools, and the next generation of public health preparedness professionals and leaders.
- Lead continuous improvement in, and advancement and implementation of, the science of readiness and response.

Why We're Here

As the severity of public health emergencies continues to intensify, public health emergency responses have become more frequent, complex, and often overlapping. CDC's drive to improve its rapid response to disease outbreaks and public health emergencies within the U.S. and around the world necessitates that CDC's internal emergency response structure and readiness capabilities must align with the changing public health landscape to better protect populations at increased risk of death, disability, and disease before, during, and after responses.

To meet these objectives, ORR's mission highlights its role in three critical areas:

1. Leading and adjusting CDC's readiness and response activities to improve response effectiveness
2. Promoting cross-agency and cross-United States Government interagency collaboration related to readiness and response activities
3. Expanding focus on CDC's Emergency Operations Center (EOC) programs, processes, and expertise during emergency responses and exercises

How We Work

ORR leads CDC's readiness for, response to, and recovery from public health emergencies and engages internationally to support global health security. ORR manages CDC's Emergency Operations Center, bringing together highly trained experts and state-of-the-art technology to coordinate resources, information, and crisis and emergency risk communication to detect and respond to public health threats both domestic and global.

ORR's Public Health Emergency Preparedness (PHEP) Program and Cooperative Agreement strengthens state and local public health emergency management and response programs. ORR provides technical assistance, guidance, and capacity building to strengthen all-hazards readiness and threat-based readiness among state, tribal, local and territorial public health partners.

ORR prevents emergencies by overseeing and regulating laboratories that conduct important scientific research with deadly pathogens and toxins, ensuring this important work is conducted as safely and securely as possible. ORR also regulates the importation of infectious biological materials, and the implementation of containment plans for eradicated poliovirus strains.

ORR advances and coordinates CDC's readiness and response science agenda in partnership with internal and external constituencies to collect, analyze, and interpret data and disseminate scientific information for internal and external partners to make actionable decisions.



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CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION

What's Needed

To quickly respond to outbreaks at their source and build on the foundation for strong domestic readiness, ORR is focusing on three priority areas for FY 25:

- **Response Ready Workforce:** CDC will rapidly assign prepared and trained responders for public health emergencies.
- **Response Data Preparedness:** CDC will effectively leverage data during emergencies for rapid decision-making.
- **Operational & Administrative Readiness:** CDC policies, systems, and funding mechanisms are coordinated, flexible, and scalable to support emergency response functions.

Key Accomplishments



Responding to public health emergencies:

Provide 24/7/365 expertise, staffing, resources, and coordination in response to natural disasters, terrorist attacks, and disease threats like Mpox, H5N1 influenza, Zika, Ebola, and COVID-19. More than ten thousand CDC staff have powered dozens of major responses over two plus decades.



Providing critical funding:

Through the Public Health Emergency Preparedness Cooperative Agreement, support preparedness activities in 50 states, 4 localities, and 8 territories and freely associated states. ORR's Public Health Crisis Response Cooperative Agreement enabled award of COVID-19 supplemental response funds within 10 days of appropriation.



Keeping deadly pathogens safe and secure:

Register and inspect more than 200 laboratories and approve access for thousands of individuals who work with select agents and toxins to keep these materials safe, secure, and out of the hands of those who may misuse them.



Training emergency experts:

Educate and train public health practitioners to become emergency response leaders. For example, through the CDCReady Responder program, CDC is improving how the agency identifies and prepares staff to respond ahead of public health emergencies, with over 3000 staff members enrolled.



Connecting state and local partners:

Foster planning, training, exercise and evaluation among the emergency management, public health, and healthcare sectors. ORR executed 404 trainings in 2023.

Long-Term Opportunities

- ORR will build on the successes and improvements made during FY 24 to drive the enhanced development of several readiness and response capacities and capabilities across multiple levels of the US government and abroad.
- Enhance the pipeline of trained public health professional leaders and new cadres of culturally competent, locally trusted workers for responses at the community, local, state, and national levels. Ensure all levels of this workforce address health equity and disparities during routine and emergency situations.
- Promote a science and research agenda to spark innovation and advance evidence-based practice and planning to enhance local resiliency in the face of public health emergencies.
- Leverage lessons learned during emergency responses to further strengthen CDC and State, Tribal, Local, and Territorial readiness and response capabilities.
- Create and maintain a next-generation public health system that can build on existing capacity to develop the resiliency needed to address future challenges, including the ability to "fight on multiple fronts" simultaneously.
- Continue to build emergency management capabilities and capacity globally to stop public health emergencies before they become threats abroad and to the United States.



For more information visit www.cdc.gov or call 1-800-CDC-INFO.



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