

# Public Health Recovery Landscape Analysis



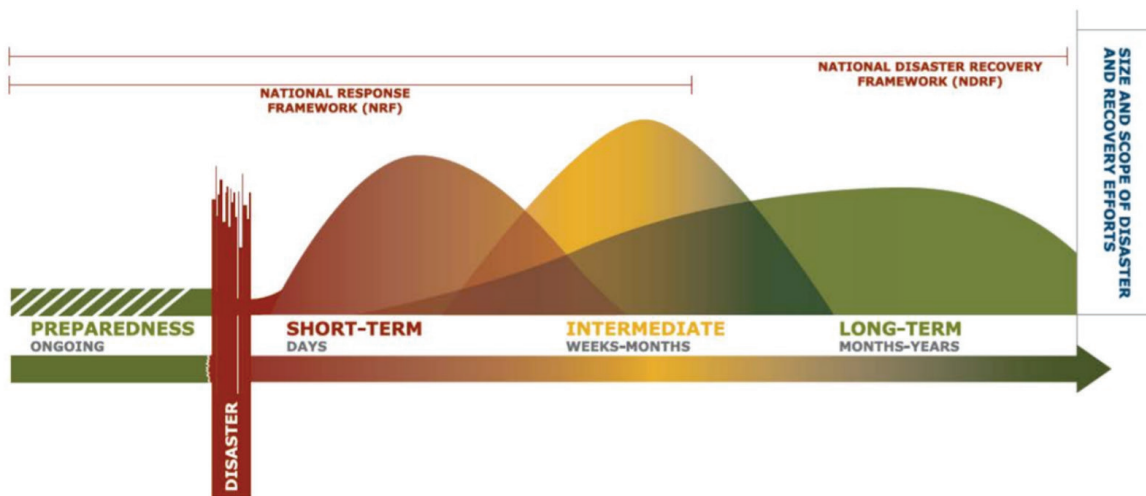
## Introduction

The National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO) conducted a landscape analysis of local public health recovery in September 2017 and completed reviews of recovery-related documents, local plans, and federal guidance in March 2018. NACCHO used the Federal Emergency Management Agency’s (FEMA’s) second edition of the National Disaster Recovery Framework (NDRF) as the measurement standard for the reviews because it provides a framework for the planning and delivery of eight core recovery capabilities, including five specific recovery support functions. Figure 1 describes the overlapping nature of recovery phases and the integration of the National Response Framework (NRF) and the NDRF. This fact sheet summarizes NACCHO’s landscape analysis of local public health recovery.

## Background on Local Public Health Recovery

The Health and Social Services Recovery Support Function (RSF #3) outlines three key objectives for the recovery of public health, healthcare, and social services functions in the local community: “Assess and prioritize the health and social service needs of the community, restore health care, public health, and social services functions, and restore and improve resilience of health care system and social service capabilities.”<sup>1</sup> The NDRF recognizes the primacy of locally led recovery planning and operations; however, information related to local health department (LHD) roles and responsibilities for recovery is difficult to find. Planning guidance and LHD plans often lack specific operationalized functions related to disaster recovery. According to the *2016 Preparedness Profile Assessment*, LHDs are not conducting many long-term recovery activities.<sup>2</sup>

FIGURE 1. THE RECOVERY CONTINUUM



Source: Federal Emergency Management Agency. (2016). National Disaster Recovery Framework. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Homeland Security. Retrieved June 22, 2018, from <http://bit.ly/2KeCr5B>.



## Methods

To better understand the current state of LHD recovery planning, NACCHO reviewed recovery-related documents, local plans, and federal guidance, and conducted key informant interviews with local and national organizations. Figure 2 illustrates the recovery-related research. NACCHO analyzed this information using the NDRF as a baseline for comparison. NACCHO identified promising practices and strong examples as those that align with NDRF strategies and objectives while also providing information or reference to specific local public health roles and responsibilities. Highlights from the analysis and recommended next steps are described below.

## Highlights from Landscape Analysis

Due to the unique characteristics and structure of individual LHDs and jurisdictions, no single local plan can serve as a universal template for public health recovery planning. However, there are multiple plans containing strong language and components of recovery planning that can be adapted across jurisdictions. For example, NACCHO identified the following elements as potential promising practices from the local plans reviewed:

**FIGURE 2. NACCHO UNDERTOOK THE FOLLOWING RESEARCH FOR THIS ANALYSIS.**



**Reviewed 21 local health department recovery plans and annexes**



**Evaluated 9 national and federal recovery resources**



**Conducted 7 key informant interviews**

- Language describes transition from short- and mid- to long-term recovery operations, including triggers that indicate when such transitions should occur.
- Checklists describe actions and operational roles for LHDs and partners.
- Planning processes and frameworks include stakeholder engagement and suggested structures for advisory committees that align with NDRF language and structure.

Through the document review and key informant interviews, NACCHO identified the following common challenges and barriers in recovery planning:

- Lack of clear roles and responsibilities—not just for LHDs, but for all stakeholders in recovery.
- Absence of a Unified Command for recovery efforts. There are strong examples of plans and frameworks that approach recovery from a “whole community” lens; however, it is difficult for a single agency to take ownership of recovery efforts because it is inherently collaborative.
- Lack of publicly available recovery plan examples. Several LHDs expressed interest in seeing examples of recovery plans from peers in other states and jurisdictions. Individuals felt they learned best from seeing how other health departments plan for and respond to varying scenarios.

## Next Steps

The results of the landscape analysis indicate that there are promising practices that can be adapted and used by LHDs. NACCHO is currently working with LHDs and federal partners to share strong local recovery plans through the NACCHO Toolbox, an online set of resources on various topics. Additionally, NACCHO is working with the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response to develop a planning tool that

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focuses on the LHD role in recovery and identifies key priorities and associated strategies for each recovery phase. The purpose of these efforts is to equip LHDs with resources that can help increase efficiency and inform recovery planning.

One of the key challenges identified is the lack of clear roles and responsibilities with respect to recovery. Additionally, the NDRF and Recovery Support Functions (RSFs) do not appear to be as widely adopted and referenced in state and local planning documents as the NRF and Emergency Support Functions. This presents the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and NACCHO with an opportunity to assess gaps in adoption and implementation and provide feedback to LHDs and federal partners. To achieve this, NACCHO proposes developing an issue brief to explore challenges and identify promising recovery strategies, models, and practices in local public health recovery based on the NDRF and RSFs. The issue brief will be disseminated broadly through NACCHO’s communications channels to help inform the field of disaster recovery at the local, state, and national level.



# [FACT SHEET]

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## References

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2. NACCHO. (2017). *The Public Health Emergency Preparedness Landscape: Findings from the 2016 Preparedness Profile Assessment*. Washington, DC: NACCHO. Retrieved June 22, 2018, from [http://nacchopreparedness.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/2016-Preparedness-Profile-Report\\_FINAL.pdf](http://nacchopreparedness.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/2016-Preparedness-Profile-Report_FINAL.pdf)

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# NACCHO

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*The National Connection for Local Public Health*

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The mission of the National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO) is to improve the health of communities by strengthening and advocating for local health departments.

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