

Overview

The Resilient Food Systems and Nutrition work group concentrates on impacts on food and nutrition security resulting from the social drivers, management and/or consequences of environmental change such as natural disasters, climate related emergencies, and land, water, and environmental justice issues. Emergencies and environmental related disruptions affect the food system and access to food and nutrition at the individual, household, and community level. The work group is a collaborative effort of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation's Healthy Eating Research (HER) program and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) Nutrition and Obesity Policy Research and Evaluation Network (NOPREN).

Membership in the work group is open to all with an interest in environmental change and its relation to food and nutrition, including research focused on nutrition assistance programs (e.g., USDA programs), healthy food distribution, food and/or nutrition security, diet quality, health equity, and disaster response. The primary population of interest is communities that are most vulnerable to disasters and public health emergencies, which often are lower-income and racial and ethnic populations at highest risk for obesity and diet related diseases.

Work Group Mission

The mission of the Resilient Food Systems and Nutrition work group is to build a collaborative, interdisciplinary network of researchers and leaders from academia, non-profit organizations, government, and other funding agencies focused on increasing the quantity, quality, and availability of research in the area of food and nutrition to:

- Respond to research needs identified by policy-makers and champions within the environmental change food and nutrition context;
- Describe the impact of disruptions and environmental changes on food and nutrition-related outcomes (e.g., food security, diet quality, overweight and obesity) on communities most vulnerable to disasters and public health emergencies;
- Identify, evaluate, and disseminate best practices and policies with the greatest potential to promote food security, diet quality, and overall health and well-being during and after disruptions and environmental changes;
- Facilitate the development and implementation of evidence-informed nutrition-related resiliency and disaster preparedness policies.

Special emphasis is placed on equity and addressing the needs of those disproportionately affected by obesity and diet-related diseases, especially lower-income and socially disadvantaged populations.

Work Group Goals

Overall Goal: To identify, evaluate, and disseminate the most effective strategies to improve the diet quality, food security, and overall health and well-being of children and their families before, during and after disruptions and environmental changes.

Longer-Term Goals:

1. Build evidence to support changes to federal, tribal, state, and local policies, systems, environments, and practices.
2. Be responsive to the research gaps and needs identified by policy-makers and champion organizations.
3. Increase inter-disciplinary collaboration and coordination among researchers, champion organizations, policy-makers, practitioners, and students.
4. Increase access to and sharing of measurement tools, data collection, and findings to inform ongoing and future environmental changes work.
5. Increase the number and capabilities of environmental changes researchers.
6. Increase the amount and quality of food and nutrition research related to preparedness and environmental changes.

Meeting Frequency and Format:

Full work group meetings will be held every month and may include research presentations, group discussion, and policy and partner updates. The topics for the speaker series will be decided by the working group chair(s) and the leadership committee. Topics of interest for work group meetings include (but are not limited to) food environmental disruption, food and nutrition security following disasters, public health emergencies, and community, household, and individual health consequences of disasters and public health emergencies. All work group members are encouraged to join these meetings. Meetings will be recorded and available on the NOPREN website.

Subgroups will meet at the discretion of the subgroup leaders to delve deeper into topics discussed at the joint speaker series, or on other topics determined by the subgroup. Subgroups may select projects or products to pursue, including papers for publication, grant applications, and/or research to conduct. Projects and corresponding sub-groups may live within other NOPREN or HER NOPREN WGs and will share ongoing efforts with the HER NOPREN Resilient Food Systems and Nutrition WG.

Work Group Chairs

1. **Margaret Read, MA, BA**, Senior Director of Impact and Evaluation, Partnership for a Healthier America
2. **Lauren Clay, PhD, MPH**, Associate Professor & Chair, Department of Emergency Health Services, University of Maryland Baltimore County
3. **Elsie Moore, PHD, MPH**, Postdoctoral Associate, Division of Nutritional Sciences, Cornell University

Work Group Fellow

1. **Maria Muñoz, MS**, PhD Student, Social, Behavioral, & Population Sciences, Tulane University Celia Scott Weatherhead School of Public Health

History of this Work Group

The HER NOPREN COVID-19 School Nutrition Implications Work Group started in March 2020 and was comprised of researchers, champion organization representatives, practitioners, and students who are evaluating the effectiveness of policy, systems, and environmental (PSE) strategies that have strong potential to protect children and their family’s diet quality, food security, and overall health and well-being during and after the COVID-19 pandemic.

From March 2021 - August 2023 the HER NOPREN COVID-19 School Nutrition Implications Work Group transitioned to the HER NOPREN COVID-19 Food and Nutrition Work Group to respond to the broader implications of the COVID-19 pandemic on food and nutrition policies and programs (e.g., school, childcare, charitable feeding system, USDA federal nutrition programs). This iteration of the work group also began to focus on long-term nutrition resiliency and disaster preparedness.

When the federal COVID-19 Public Health Emergency declaration ended on May 11, 2023 a member survey was launched to gather feedback on the work group meetings, including on topics, style of meeting, and work group benefits. Based on member feedback, the working group focus expanded from COVID-19 to encompass the broader impact of global environmental change, hazards, and disasters on food and nutrition security.

All iterations of this work group have been a collaborative effort of Healthy Eating Research, a national program of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s (CDC) Nutrition and Obesity Policy Research and Evaluation Network (NOPREN).

Work Group Name	Timeline
HER NOPREN COVID-19 School Nutrition Implications	March 2020 - April 2021
HER NOPREN COVID-19 Food and Nutrition	May 2021 - August 2023
HER NOPREN Resilient Food Systems and Nutrition	September 2023 -

For more information, please contact:

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