

# UW Center for Disaster Resilient Communities (CDRC)

---

**Resham Patel, MPH**

Partners in Emergency Preparedness Conference (PIEPC)

Tacoma, WA

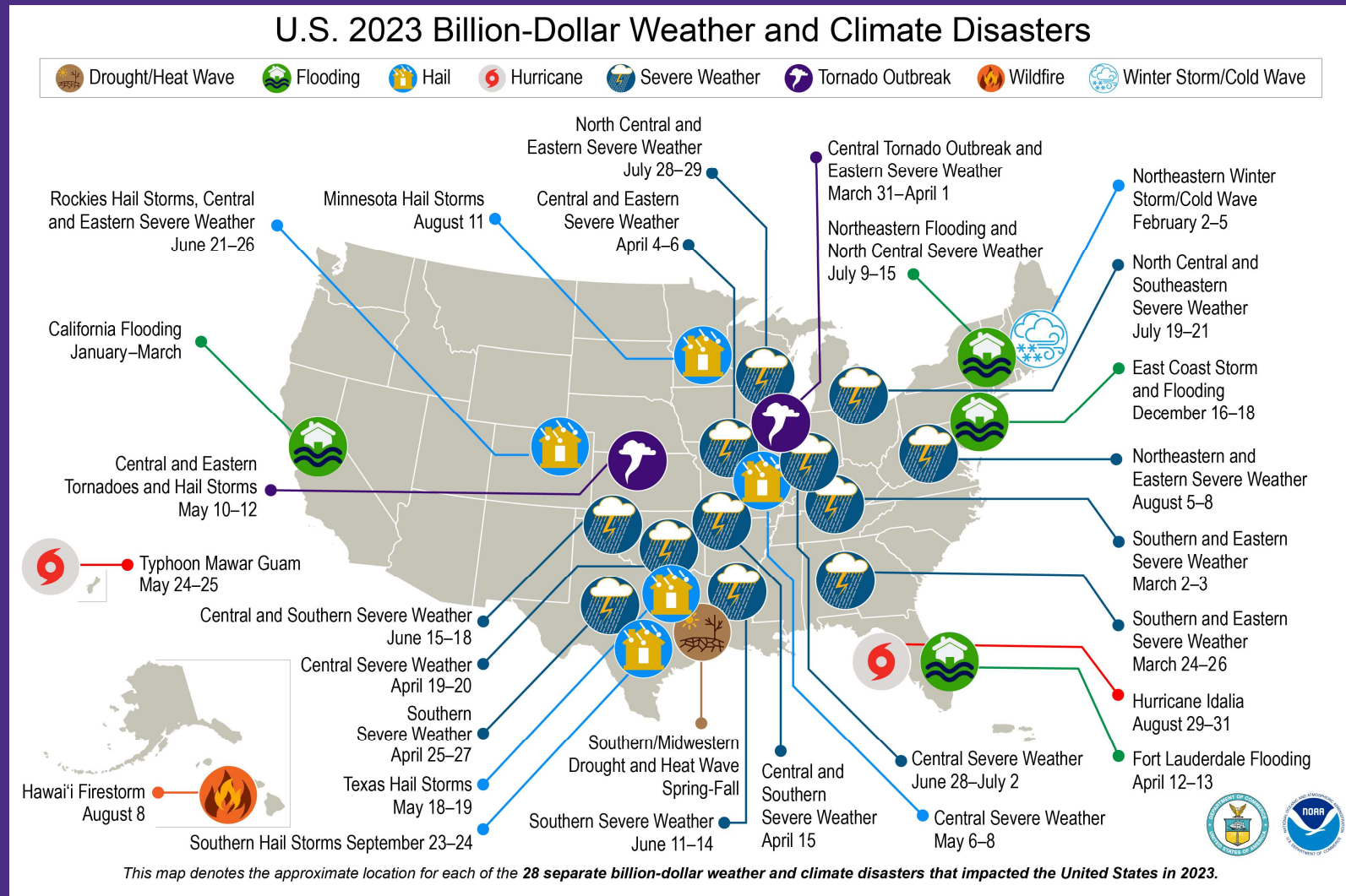
April 3, 2024



CENTER FOR DISASTER RESILIENT COMMUNITIES

UNIVERSITY of WASHINGTON

# The Problem



NOAA National Centers for Environmental Information (NCEI) U.S. Billion-Dollar Weather and Climate Disasters (2023). <https://www.ncei.noaa.gov/access/billions/>, DOI: [10.25921/stkw-7w73](https://doi.org/10.25921/stkw-7w73)

W

# Center for Disaster Resilient Communities (**CDRC**)

## Depth of expertise

100+ faculty researchers

## Breadth of expertise

Public health, public policy, planning, healthcare, engineering, hazard processes, & more

## Strong foundations

M9 Project, NIEHS Disaster Research Response

## Momentum from ongoing transdisciplinary activities

Natural Hazard and Disaster Reconnaissance Facility,  
Pacific Northwest Seismic Network, Cascadia Coastlines & Peoples  
Hazards Research Hub, Individual Research Projects



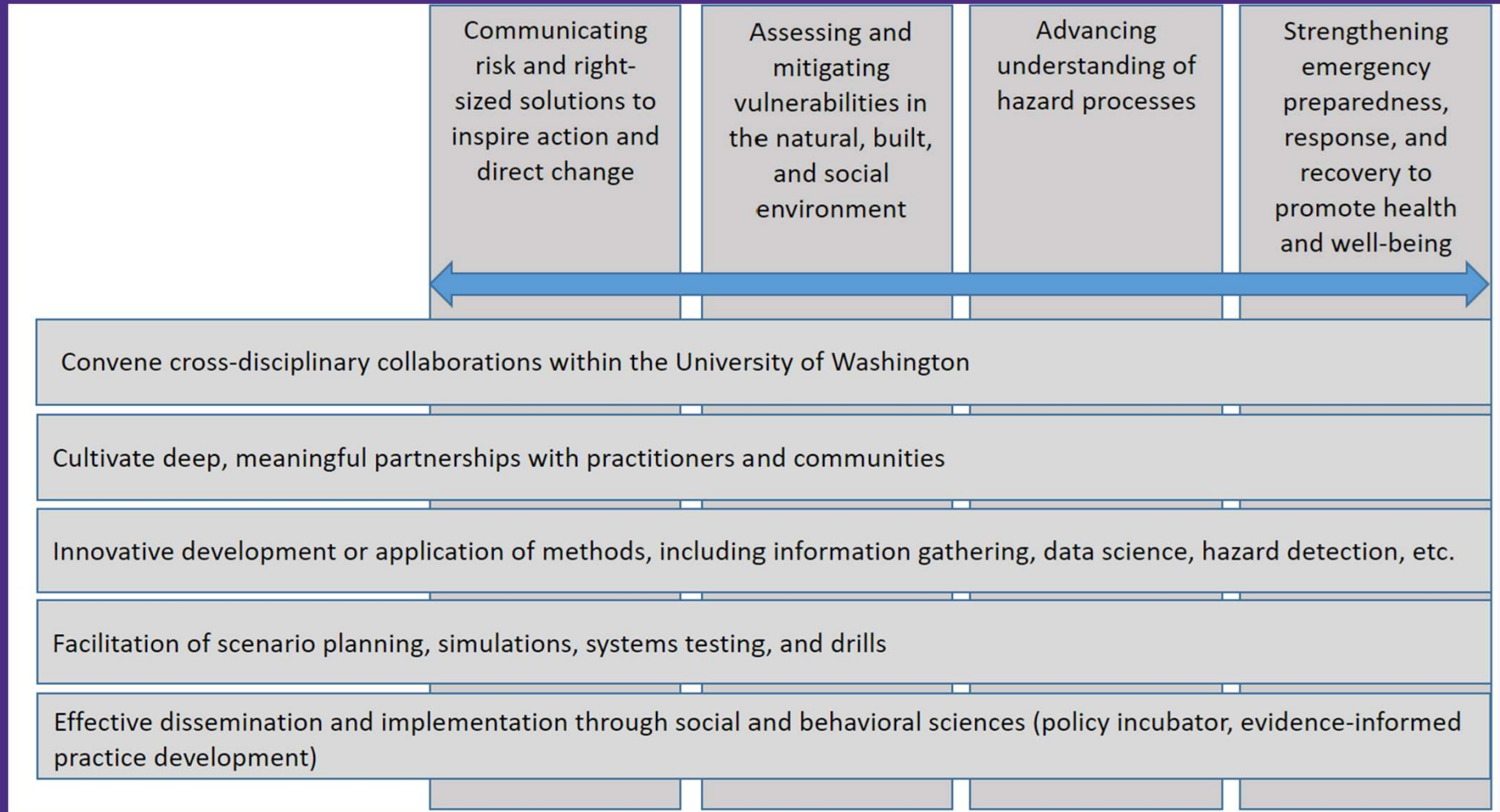
# Center for Disaster Resilient Communities (CDRC)

---

- > **Vision:** All communities have the knowledge, capacity, and partnerships to anticipate, mitigate, prepare for, respond to, and recover from disasters.
- > **Mission:** The Center for Disaster Resilient Communities brings together the University of Washington, government, and community partners to create and implement transformational hazard and disaster science, build workforce capacity, inform equitable disaster risk reduction policy and practice, and contribute to more resilient communities.



# CDRC Initial Research Agenda



Center for Disaster Resilient Communities. <https://cdrc.uw.edu/>





# CDRC Foundational Projects

---

- > Build tribal partnerships for disaster resilience
- > Plan for a center on evidence-informed public health emergency preparedness
- > Launch workshops to begin scoping projects that leverages multidisciplinary expertise
- > Assess education and training needs of local health departments



Photo credit: Elizar Mercado



Photo credit: Matias Korfmacher



# Build Tribal Partnerships for Disaster Resilience

---



- > **Foster relationship-building** with northwest tribes that are particularly at risk to natural hazards exacerbated by climate change
- > **Learn from northwest tribes** and tribal organizations about the work they have been engaged in pertaining to disaster resilience, including their information needs related to natural hazard risk and resilience.
- > **Identify joint areas of interest** related to UW CDRC research and training
- > **Promote tribal emergency preparedness through a scenario-based exercise** that identifies opportunities and challenges for partnering on disaster research.
- > **Ensure sustainable engagement** of tribal partners throughout the center life cycle



# FEMA HAZARD MITIGATION POLICY EVALUATION

## A “Hole-in-the-Community” Approach

*How Federal Disaster Policy Overlooks Indigenous Communities*



The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) advocates a “Whole Community” approach to disaster resilience and recovery considering the interests of all private and public stakeholders.

Tribal governments are part of the whole community, but an analysis of FEMA policy documents, grant data, and interviews with hazard management professionals revealed that in practice, Tribes lack equitable access to FEMA assistance.

Barriers include lack of resources to execute mitigation projects; lack of capacity and appropriate assistance to secure grants; and standards that undervalue projects situated on Tribal lands and/or using Indigenous techniques. Tribes also lack a meaningful voice in the direction of federal policy. The [published report](#) includes a full discussion of proposed policy changes and workaround strategies.



Scan here for the full report

### Proposed Responses

- Establish an interagency Tribal government task force and reorganize FEMA’s Tribal Liaison Offices to improve federal-Tribal engagement.
- Review and revise the Department of Homeland Security [Lexicon\\*](#) to account for Indigenous concepts, knowledge, and perspectives.
- Change or eliminate the benefit-cost analysis requirement that is a formidable barrier to Tribal mitigation projects.
- Include Tribes in all mitigation and preparedness grant programs.

\* The Lexicon is a unified controlled vocabulary that the Dept. of Homeland Security and its sub-agencies use when communicating and sharing data.

- > Evaluated how **FEMA’s grant programs** enhances or impedes Tribal hazard mitigation projects
- > Identified several **policy and institutional factors** that prevent Tribal governments from accessing hazard mitigation funding, then recommended fixes
- > Follow-up project is examining **the role of FEMA-required hazard mitigation plans** in Tribal emergency preparedness



Cascadiacopeshub.org

@CascadiaCopes

emix@uw.edu  
Evan Mix, JD, MPA



# W



# Region 10 PHEPR Center Work Plan

---

- > CDC contracted with institutions to convene coordinating bodies and facilitate development of five-year work plans for future regional centers focused on improving the uptake of evidence-based strategies and interventions in public health emergency preparedness and response (PHEPR)
- > UW was selected to facilitate development of a Region 10 PHEPR work plan, and a Tribal-specific work plan and a regional data ecosystem work plan
- > More information about the project →

<https://cdrc.uw.edu/key-initiatives/enhancing-public-health-preparedness-and-response/>



# Public Health Emergency Preparedness and Response (PHEPR) Workforce Competencies

Equity	01	Public health foundations	Knowledge of the public health core components
	02	Collaboration	Two-way relationship building with individuals or groups inside and outside of the organization
	03	Communications	Written or verbal information sharing
	04	Management & leadership	Administrative and organizational skills and leadership
	05	Data collection and analysis	Collect, synthesize, and present scientific data pertaining to an event
	06	Preparedness and response	Knowing the preparedness cycle and key steps in incident response
	07	Mindset	Personality traits or skills that facilitate effective participation in preparedness and response

# Collaborative on Extreme Heat Events

---

- > A collaborative network led by practitioners from Multnomah County, OR, King County, WA, and Vancouver, BC
- > Established in 2023 through the UW Center for Disaster Resilient Communities, with funding from Urban@UW Research to Action Collaboratory
- > Four-part peer sharing webinar series
- > Virtual, participatory workshop to co-develop action and research agendas
- > More information and ways to stay connected →







# Scaling towards sustainability

---

Evaluating grant opportunities such as:



National Institutes  
of Health

- Exploratory Grants for Climate Change and Health Research Center Development



- Humans, Disasters, and the Built Environment
- Leading Engineering for America's Prosperity, Health, and Infrastructure
- Dynamics of Integrated Socio-Environmental Systems
- National Research Traineeship



FEMA

- Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities



# Discussion

---

- > What is a priority disaster topic or activity that CDRC should focus on?
- > How can CDRC best collaborate with partner in emergency preparedness across the region, or even across the country?
- > Who else should be involved?

# Thank you!

---

**Resham Patel**  
[rapatel@uw.edu](mailto:rapatel@uw.edu)

<https://cdrc.uw.edu/>



CENTER FOR DISASTER RESILIENT COMMUNITIES  
UNIVERSITY *of* WASHINGTON