

Tracking Success Stories



CASPER Response for Eastern Kentucky Floods

In response to the deadly flooding in Eastern Kentucky in July of 2022, Kentucky Environmental Public Health Tracking assisted with a Community Assessment for Public Health Emergency Response (CASPER).

A CASPER is a rapid needs assessment (RNA) that unites Local Health Departments and State Public Health Professionals to assist affected communities with disaster recovery. Information is gathered from clusters of affected households during the response and can be utilized to put forth public health action, facilitate planning for potential disasters, response, and recovery activities.

Kentucky Tracking volunteered to participate in the response and dispatched three team members to assist. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Kentucky Department for Public Health quickly organized a CASPER training in Floyd County at the Rescue Training Facility. Kentucky Tracking volunteers joined with several public health and emergency preparedness professionals from across the state for a half-day Just-in-Time Training session.

During the training, CDC, state, and local officials discussed the CASPER approach and useful techniques, which consisted of teams conducting detailed interviews with households across several disaster-impacted areas.

Due to the size of impacted area, two CASPERs took place over a four-day period. The first focused on the Kentucky River District Health Department, which serves the counties of Knott, Lee, Leslie, Letcher, Perry and Wolfe. The other focused on the surrounding counties including Clay, Floyd, Breathitt and Pike.

In the following days, groups were assembled and went door to door interviewing residents about the impact of flooding to their household and what resources the community most needed. Over a four-day period, 387 households were interviewed across Breathitt, Clay, Floyd, Knott, Letcher, Owsley, Perry and Pike counties.

CASPERs are conducted through face-to-face interviews in the field. There are several advantages to in-person interviews, including:

- A high response rate and the ability to distribute health information or materials
- Directly connecting the community with local staff, increasing visibility and trust
- The ability to provide anecdotal information that can help guide response and recovery efforts

