



## Sample Success Story Template



Insert Graphic Element Here  
(Stock image that represents  
the event described, other  
program logo, etc).  
Otherwise, delete this box  
and center your state logo.

*The Public Health Emergency Preparedness (PHEP) program integrates public health in emergency responses and, in collaboration with partners, leads and coordinates the public health and health care sectors.*

From June to September 2015, the Washington State Department of Health's Office of Emergency Preparedness and Response faced the worst wildfire season in the history of the state. Low snowpack during the winter and severe to extreme droughts throughout the state in the summer created the ideal dry conditions for the rapid spread of wildfires, both in the east where wildfires are part of the ecosystem and in the west where they are less common. The 2015 wildfire season killed three U.S. Forest Service firefighters, injured dozens, destroyed over 300 homes, and burned over 1.1 million acres.

Faced with consequences ranging from environmental health impacts to medical facility evacuations, the Washington State Department of Health (WADOH) quickly adapted its response plans. Implementing emergency capabilities built with funding from the Hospital Preparedness Program (HPP) and the Public Health Emergency Preparedness (PHEP) cooperative agreement program allowed WADOH to mitigate the effects on public health, behavioral health, and the healthcare sector.

"The [HPP] and PHEP program built the foundation upon which we could engage such a diverse, nontraditional group of partners and lead a coordinated, statewide response. We have information management systems, policy level exercises, tools that aid in information collection, documentation and decision making, and a process for managing and fulfilling requests for assistance from our partners. None of that existed prior to the PHEP program," said Michael Loehr, Chief of Emergency Preparedness and Response, Washington State Department of Health.

- Using HPP and PHEP funding, WADOH proactively trained four Type 3 Incident Management Teams. Each team member received over 200 hours of training, and each is required to participate in quarterly drills. Most had already gained significant experience responding to multiple disasters during 2014. The WADOH Incident Management Team responded to this wildfire incident for three weeks.
- Power outages, road closures, and evacuation orders affected WIC services. WADOH ensured the continuation of these services in impacted areas by developing contingency plans during the response to provide services directly from the state level when needed.