# TRACIE





Technical Resources, Assistance Center, and Information Exchange (TRACIE) is a threepronged information gateway for homeland security, emergency management, and public health professionals. This gateway allows each user to determine the best approach for connecting with top-level content about disaster preparedness, response, and recovery.



### The Challenge

Across the country emergency managers, homeland security specialists, and healthcare system and public health preparedness practitioners are faced with constantly changing priorities, newly emerging threats, and a continual decrease in funding. When the nation faces consequences from hazards, emergencies, or disasters, these dedicated professionals are charged with mitigation, response, and recovery. At the same time, they must support goals for prevention and protection.

The importance of their mission requires that emergency management professionals and emergency first responders have a foundation of solid, reliable information. Such information historically has been difficult to find. These professionals have been faced with:

- Too much information in some areas, not enough in others;
- Conflicting opinions provided by experts;

- Varied sources with unknown reliability: and
- Challenges in requesting technical assistance and training.

Resorting to Google searches—and the unverified, unreliable information they can produce—is not a viable approach considering what is at stake.

Faced with this information challenge, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response (ASPR) teamed with ICF International to meet the clear need for a reliable source of easily accessible information and technical assistance about healthcare system preparedness, public health preparedness, and disaster clinical medicine. Targeted stakeholders include state and local authorities, HHS preparedness grantees, healthcare facilities' emergency managers, healthcare coalitions, and healthcare practitioners.

The ASPR and ICF team envisioned a comprehensive system of peer-reviewed materials vetted by subject matter experts (SMEs). The system would be dynamically structured to reflect current issues and ensure fresh, up-to-date content, access to specialists and SMEs for more personal support as well as mechanism to facilitate peer-to-peer support. The team was driven by the knowledge that doing its job well would result in a direct improvement to the nation's healthcare system resilience and preparedness. The result was the ASPR Technical Resources, Assistance Center, and Information Exchange (TRACIE).

### ICF's Three-Pronged Solution

ASPR TRACIE is a three-pronged information gateway for public health and healthcare system preparedness professionals. This gateway allows each user to determine the best approach for connecting with top-level content about healthcare system preparedness, response, and recovery. The system's ease-of-use reflects the importance placed on stakeholder engagement, before, during, and even after the development process. Feedback was solicited and incorporated from a wide variety of stakeholders. The result is a truly end-user designed service.

## **ASPRTRACIE**



#### https://asprtracie.hhs.gov

## Contact

**ICF** Emergency Management

Learn more about how ICF can help your organization.

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#### **About ICF International**

ICF International (NASDAQ:ICFI) provides professional services and technology solutions that deliver beneficial impact in areas critical to the world's future. ICF is fluent in the language of change, whether driven by markets, technology, or policy. Since 1969, we have combined a passion for our work with deep industry expertise to tackle our clients' most important challenges. We partner with clients around the globe—advising, executing, innovating—to help them define and achieve success. Our more than 5,000 employees serve government and commercial clients from more than 70 offices worldwide. ICF's website is www.icfi.com.

The **Technical Resources (TR)** domain is a self-service collection of 65 plain-English topics, available 24x7. The collection represents the compilation of many applicable sources and was gathered in collaboration with the National Library of Medicine. Experts have vetted annotated bibliographies (called Topic Collections) that identify studies, toolkits, lessons learned, planning guides, and training. All materials provide real-life, illustrative examples of resources put into practice. Helpful browsing features include a highlighted short list of must-read information and the ability to both search for, rate, and comment on content.

Users of the **Assistance Center (AC)** can get direct help by telephone or email during business hours. Requests for information already available in ASPR TRACIE's TR section are usually able to be completed within a few hours. More complex requests also are welcome and may require ASPR TRACIE to reach out to its cadre of SMEs. Experienced in public health and healthcare system preparedness, ICF's trained technical assistance specialists field AC requests. Essentially, the AC offers on-demand access to a deep bench of expertise whether the information is available on ASPR TRACIE or not.

The third domain of ASPR TRACIE is the **Information Exchange** that allows for peer-to-peer sharing of questions, concerns, past experiences, best practices, and resources. Through this discussion board, registered, vetted users can work together in an environment that is password protected and monitored. Users can post, search, upload, and share documents as well as establish private groups if desired.

#### The Results

ASPR TRACIE represents a best case outcome for collaborative development, offering an innovative framework and rich content defined by users. Users can find information in the most comfortable or appropriate manner.

Integrated feedback from stakeholders throughout the development process has resulted in audience-tailored materials with three distinct but combined options for accessing and sharing knowledge. The system helps those seeking information about healthcare system preparedness to prioritize activities, make smart decisions, find training, get answers, identify resources, and build on shared experiences.

Disaster health is a complex and constantly evolving field. ASPRTRACIE can improve program and operational planning, response, and recovery, even as its context changes. The system will continue to grow and add features as dictated by the user community's ongoing feedback. Its design ensures all aspects of ASPRTRACIE are continually validated through use, just as any gaps or enhancements are identified. The system structure also enables ASPR and ICF to track trends and usage to predict future technical assistance needs and develop materials and support in anticipation of those needs.

With ASPR TRACIE, users work in their preferred style or best-suited way for a filling a particular information need.







As a development partner, ICF brought subject matter expertise in disaster preparedness and recovery as well as proven capabilities in information technology, including successfully implemented proofs of concept for each of ASPRTRACIE's three components. For this project, the company tapped into its team of experts in design, implementation, marketing, communications, training, and engagement for digital media and Web development. IT efforts have been strengthened by ICF's solid understanding of user requirements from its long-time provision of advisory services to address state and local challenges and from its established leadership in public health preparedness.