

CHEER Hub Community Partner Interviews: Disaster Experiences in North Carolina and Texas

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Background

- The Coastal Hazards, Equity, Economic Prosperity & Resilience Hub (CHEER) is based out of the Disaster Research Center (DRC) at the University of Delaware. The CHEER hub is a multi-disciplinary project that will take place over five years under varying “thrust” categories. This data was collected under the household thrust category following community partner interviews with individuals in North Carolina and Texas. These organizations are Community Partners with the CHEER Hub and integral to co-producing knowledge in communities that experience hazard events.
- We conducted qualitative interviews with the seven Community Partners across the two states, highlighting a wide scope of issues related to recovery, community stability, disaster fatigue, and resiliency.
- We shared the preliminary findings with the Community Partners in February 2024 at an in person workshop and asked for their input about the interpretation of these results to use a grounded theory and participatory action research framework.



Community Partners



Helping People. Changing Lives.



New Bern CARES



Major Themes

Housing

“After the repairs are made, what ends up happening is that all of the under-house components, the air conditioning, the joists, end up being soaking wet with no real fans or ventilation to change that, which is a breeding ground, as you know, for mold. What ends up happening is after years people find their walls in the closets are black and all of this side bar impact, that just there's no program really for it. After you spray for mold, which is a structural issue, it's an ongoing health issue. All of that mold is creating all these respiratory challenges. And the health department isn't engaged. We go out and find it, but we have to have them as partners to treat it.”
-Pamlico County Disaster Recovery Coalition

Barriers to Recovery

“Now there's that we are five years post Harvey – five and a half – the funding for major repairs is gone and maintaining a funding source that allows us to continue to help the folks that have been impacted... It's now funding and just continuing to find the dollars that'll support... We've shifted some of our fundraising conversations away from disaster specific language into a more housing crisis conversation of these are families that if their homes aren't repaired, they're going to be condemned or they're going to be unlivable and then the homeless population is going to increase.” - The Restoration Team

Compounding Hazards

“One is that we become experts at it. We have disaster response teams now, and that as part of a legal aid organization. The large organizations have people who are working on disasters year-round. What, whether there's a disaster there or not, they're ready to go. That's why, that one team, the disaster team immediately was able, when there was a mass shooting in Maine, they were able to help, because they already did that.” - Texas Access to Justice Foundation

Resiliency and Empowerment

“And you also have a displacement. You'll have displacements of residents who are in a community, and because that community is impacted they may have to go somewhere else to live because they can't get their homes fixed, or the landlord doesn't repair them, and if they have to move out.... But it's also a loss of intangible things like a loss of your neighbors and your social cohesiveness and interactions that you have within a community, and the loss of feeling safe within your community as well. There was a news report, this week actually, of a older lady who home was impacted by Hurricane Harvey. That was in 2017, 6 years ago, and her home was almost, you know, uninhabitable. But she was still living there, and it's just now, 6 years later, that she has received funds to help renovate and repair her home. So, it's a loss of trust in the entities that, government entities, that she was trying to work through to get assistance. And a loss of, you know, feeling that you are, that you have the power to advocate on your own, or to have people pay attention to you, or believe in your worth, I guess.” - Civic Heart

Key Findings

- Compounding hazards
 - **Housing stock**
 - **Deferred maintenance**
- Long-term solutions need to be:
 - **Cost-effective**
 - **Sustainable**
- There is a **lack of safe, resilient, and affordable** housing available in both states
- Leaves **low-income people at risk**
- There is a great **need for funding, resources, and collaboration**
- The most **vulnerable populations** in each area are often the most difficult to connect with and serve
- **Community advocacy is needed** to support all community members equally
- Community members need to be **educated on risk, mitigation, preparedness, and response.**



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