

Investigating Vermonters' Disaster Preparedness Perceptions and Practices Using Findings from a Statewide Survey

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Natural and man-made disasters reach beyond geographic, demographic and socio-economic boundaries when they occur. How different areas and groups of people perceive, prepare and respond to disasters can vary. For example, the disaster literature identifies low-income households as having higher perceptions of risks in their environment, yet the same households take few actions to reduce vulnerability to the perceived risk (Morrow, 1999; Fothergill & Peek, 2004; Philips, Metz, & Nieves, 2005). Understanding differences in emergency preparedness perceptions and practices can inform outreach efforts for a better informed citizenry as well as local and centralized emergency responders and planners—leading to more disaster resilient communities.

This research analyzes data from the 2011 Vermonter Poll conducted by the Center Rural Studies as a part of a multi-year research project led by Principal Investigator Dr. Daniel Baker entitled "*Building Resilience through Community-Based Action Research: Identifying Vulnerabilities and Facilitating Change in Rural Mobile Home Parks*". Specifically, this research investigates how Vermont households, perceive and prepare for disaster risks and respond directly following a disaster. Univariate and bivariate analyses will be used to determine if any relationship exists between perceptions, practices, and household characteristics such as income, education, and housing type.

Findings from this research will eventually be compared to data from surveys of Vermonters residing in the state's mobile home parks to determine if there are any differences in disaster preparedness perceptions and practices between respondents living in different housing types.