

PFAS

Community Perspectives, Problems, and Progress

*Resident Reflections
from Westfield, Massachusetts*

WESTFIELD
RESIDENTS
ADVOCATING
FOR
THEMSELVES

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NEWMOA Conference
April 5, 2022

Outline

Perspective

Community Profile and Demographics, PFAS Contamination, Speaker

Problems Addressing the PFAS Contamination

Responsibility, Communication, Capacity (Scientific and Financial)

Progress Addressing PFAS Contamination

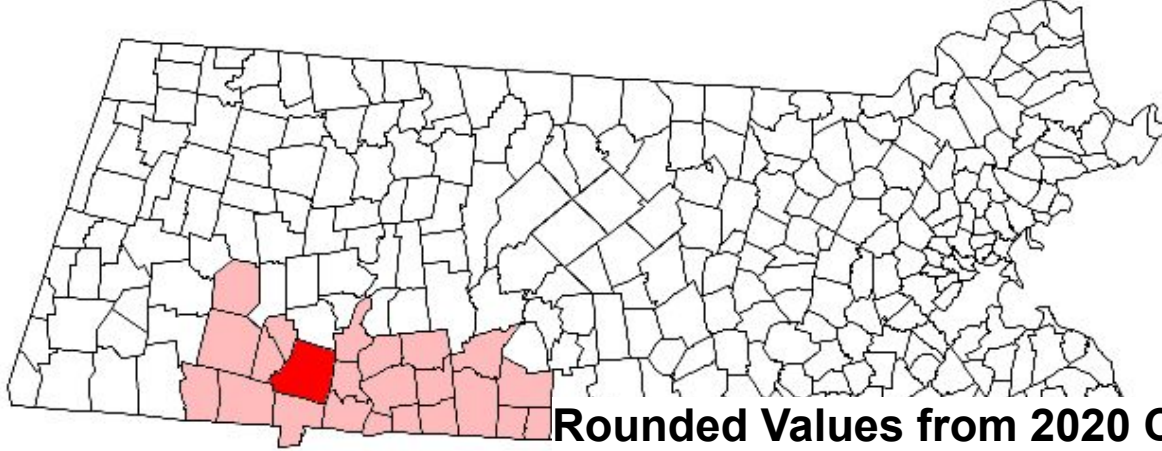
Resources and their Local Effects

Engagement Examples: ATSDR

Best Practices

Community

Westfield, Massachusetts



Rounded Values from 2020 Census

41,000 residents

Race: 84% identify as White alone
10% identify as Hispanic/ LatinX

Age: 20% are under 18yrs
20% are over 65 yrs

EJ: 41% live in Environmental Justice Areas

(<https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/westfieldcitymassachusetts/INC110219> and <https://www.mass.gov/doc/massachusetts-cities-towns-with-environmental-justice-populations/download>)

As of July 2021:

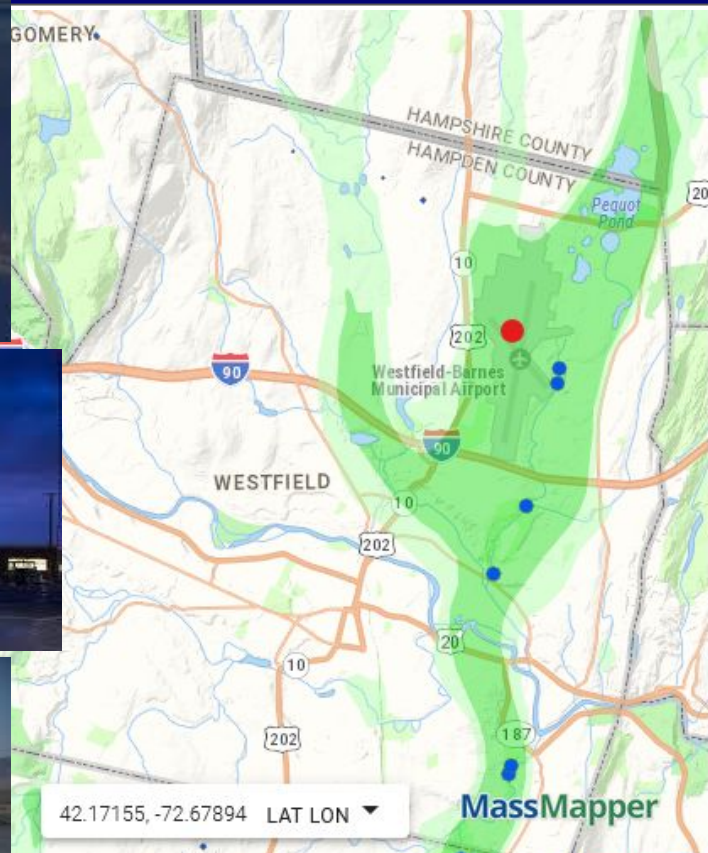
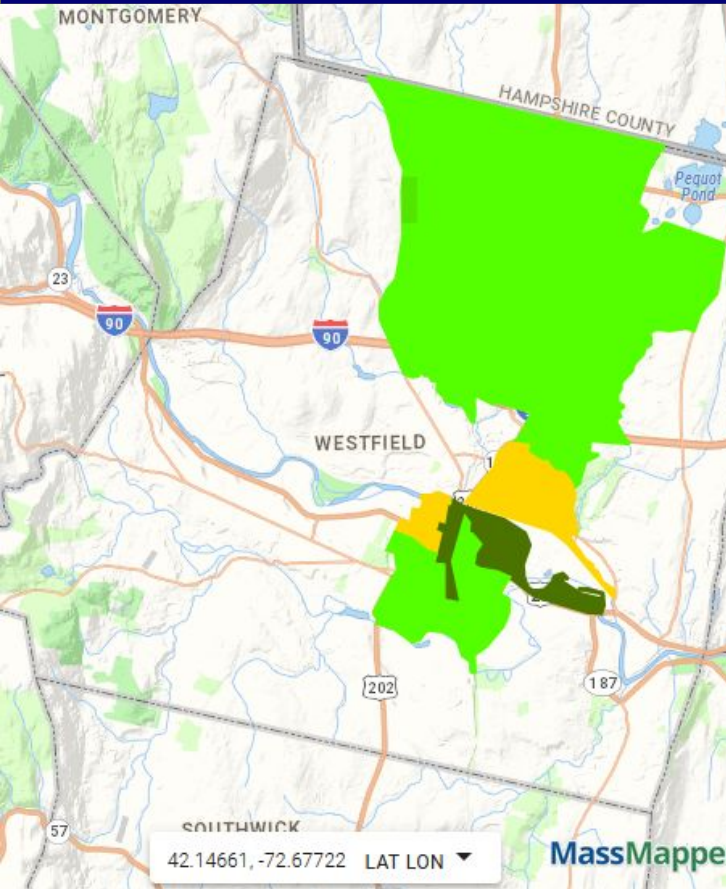
25,723 registered voters

21% (D), 18% (Rep), 60% Unaffiliated

(<https://www.cityofwestfield.org/242/Demographics>)



Community PFAS



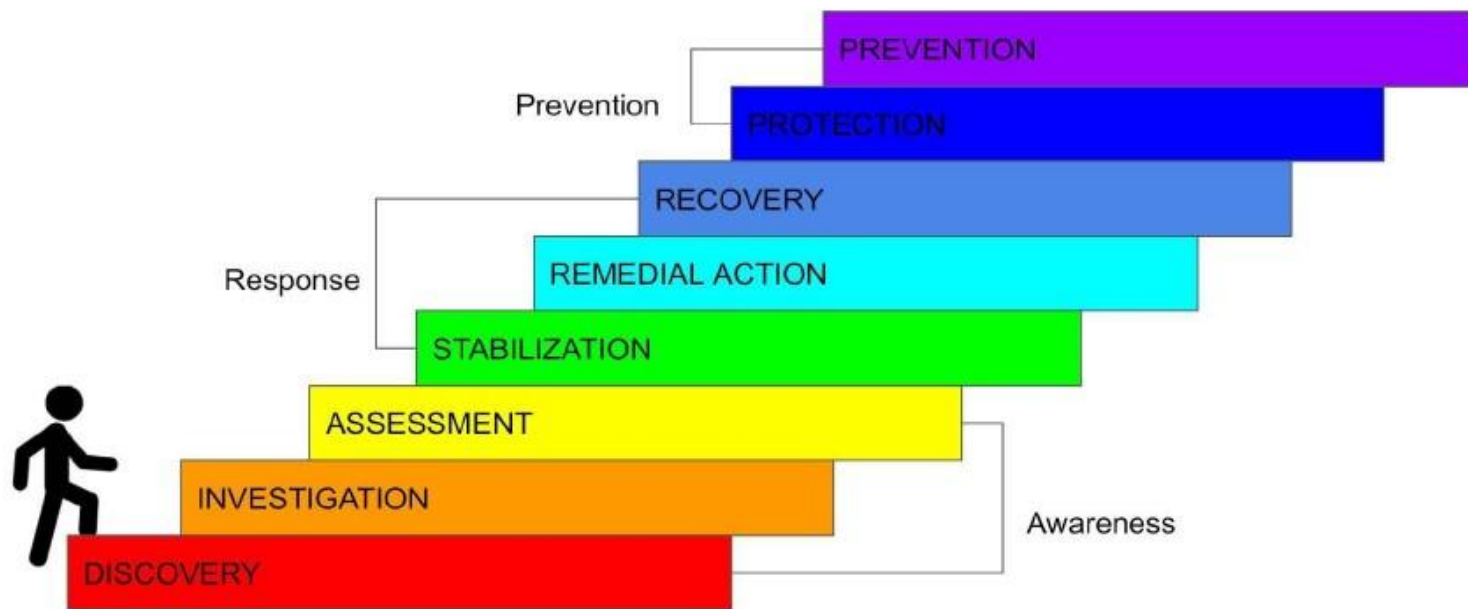
Personal Perspective

A little about me...

...my background, education, and how I got dragged into this mess.

Community Perspective

PFAS Contamination Management



MA PFAS Community Identified Needs / Management Plan

1. PFAS Analytical Instrumentation & Training

Community Problems

No state labs for water testing or blood testing (in 2017).

No money allocated to fix the problem (back in 2017).

No medical training on PFAS.

No real remedies available for water, land or bodies, only filtration methods that carry drawbacks.

No alternative drinking water supply was ever offered to Westfield by anybody.

Mixed responsibility

National Guard DERP loophole.

Water Quality monitoring left in the hands of those who need to sell the water.

GAC solution paid for by unknowing, unconsenting victims.

Community Problems

Lack of local education and understanding.

At first, they Cindy-Loo Who'd us and hoped we go away. (Dismiss)

Then it went: Deny - Diminish - Denounce - Disparage

Victim blaming, name calling, harassing online and in public

Whitewashing / Greenwashing / Outright Lying

Unfulfilled Promises from Dept of Defense

And to top it all off...

*Plenty of people have been looking to make money off our multi-generation,
slow-motion unfolding, environmental and public health disaster.*

Community Progress *Resources*

MassDEP: Provides Data, Private well testing, demanded RAB, keeps track of the City, responds to DoD plans, convened PFAS MCL Stakeholder Group, gave AFFF samples to researchers for characterization and toxicity studies, published MMCLs, and MCP values for PFAS6

TURA / TURI: 172 PFAS added to TURA when added to federal TRI; PFAS NOL added to TURA Dec 2021

OTA: Offering education, resources, and confidential support for businesses w TURA reporting.

\$31Million bonded for GAC Filtration on Westfield municipal wells 7&8 and 1&2

ATSDR: Exposure Assessment & Stress Factsheet

NASEM: Drafting updates for ATSDR's Guidance for Clinicians on PFAS

EPA: released new Draft RfDs for PFOA and PFOS in Nov 2021 (orders of magnitude lower!)

DoD: Finally approved DERP Eligibility for Barnes ANGB in Feb 2022

Community Progress

Local effects

Dramatically Increased Community Awareness

Congressional Engagement: NDAA

RAB and DERP eligibility for Barnes ANGB

State Task Force and MA Legislative Efforts

Academic and NGO Engagement - AFFF analysis, Mass PFAS-Cov Study

NEW EJ Outreach Requirements for MEPA process

ATSDR Exposure Assessment Final Report Nov 2021, and a call last week to share that

ATSDR IS RETURNING TO WESTFIELD JUNE 2022

ATSDR Stress Factsheet

2017 version

Coping with the stress that environmental contamination can cause

Environmental contamination in your community can disrupt life as usual. Feeling stress is a normal reaction to this unusual situation.

This fact sheet discusses some reasons people feel stress about environmental contamination, what you can do to support your health if you feel stress, and who to contact if you need help dealing with stress.



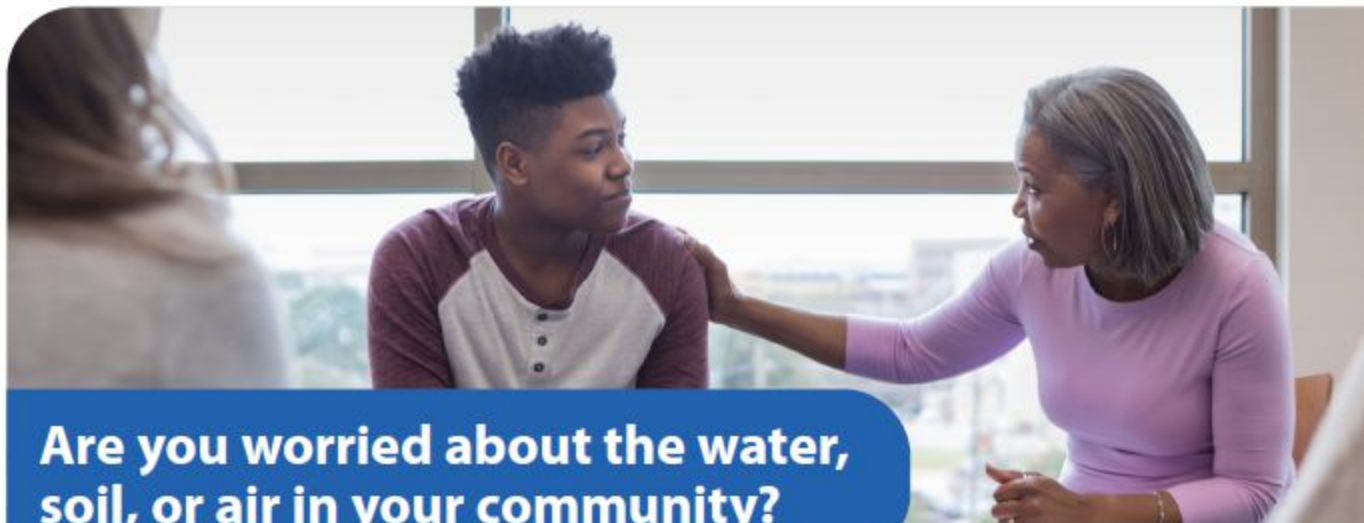
**Stress is your
body's natural
reaction to any**

Environmental contamination can cause stress for several reasons.

- **You may feel unsafe at home.**
You may worry that your home and neighborhood are unsafe.
- **You may fear for your children's health.**
If you have little or no control over possible harmful exposures, you may feel you can't protect your children from harm.
- **You may feel uncertain about your present and future health.**
It's often not easy to spot or measure health effects from exposure to environmental contaminants. Sometimes people exposed to contaminants don't show health problems until years later. Sometimes exposure is at levels that will not cause harm. You may feel like you can't protect your health or gain closure because of these uncertainties.

ATSDR Stress Factsheet

2020 revision. Reframed with Agency.



You can take steps to manage stress and work toward positive change.

If you've learned that your community's water, soil, or air may not be safe (for example, because of chemicals from a nearby factory), you may be facing difficult questions like:

- Is my health at risk?
- How can I protect myself and my loved ones?
- Is it safe to stay in my home?
- Where can I get reliable information about

How can stress affect me?

Everyone feels and responds to stress differently. People who are going through difficult situations often notice these common signs of stress:

Constantly feeling worried or on edge. You may have trouble sleeping or suddenly have a lot more or less energy than usual. Or you might find yourself getting annoyed or even

ATSDR PFAS Exposure Assessment 2019 Sampling

Sampling Frame for Hampden County Site Westfield, Hampden County, MA



ALERT - DPW DOOR TO DOOR SCAM NOTICE



There have been some reports of individuals trying to get into residential homes claiming to be from the City of Westfield Department of Public Works. If they do not provide City credentials, are wearing a City-issued uniform, and are driving a City issue vehicle, we advise that you do not let them onto your property. If you are unsure or have any questions, please contact the Department of Public Works at 413-572-6226. The City of Westfield Police Department has been notified and are aware of this situation.

Hampden County (MA) near Barnes Air National Guard Base PFAS Exposure Assessment Participation

A total of
459
people



participated in the
exposure assessment:

410 adults
49 children

Those people represented

247
households

PRJ 05386 OPV1 3/25/19

Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry
Division of Community Health Investigations



FINAL - FOR PUBLIC RELEASE

ATSDR PFAS Exposure Assessment 2021 Results



"Of the seven PFAS tested in Westfield, five PFAS were detected in more than 85% of the blood samples collected: PFHxS, PFOS, PFOA, PFNA, and PFDA."

<https://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/pfas/activities/assessments/sites/hampden-county-ma.html#Results>

"This PFAS EA has demonstrated that past exposures to PFAS in drinking water have impacted the levels of PFAS in people's bodies. PFAS are eliminated from the body over a long period of time. This allowed ATSDR to measure PFAS even though exposures through drinking water were mitigated, or lowered, years ago."

(emphasis added)

Page 4. Consumer Summary here:

<https://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/pfas/docs/PFAS-EA-Hampden-Community-Summary-H.pdf>

Best Practices

In general...

| Avoid | Try |
|--|--|
| Compartmentalizing (all the time). <i>Focusing exclusively on the work, rules, and law can make one lose their humanity.</i> | Treating us as you would want you and your family members to be treated and spoken to if you were us. |
| Assuming you know your audience <ul style="list-style-type: none">• who we are,• how you can speak to us, and• what, if anything, we want from (or are willing to do for) you. | Asking us <ul style="list-style-type: none">• who we are, and• what we want, and <p>Remembering that <i>municipal officials and employees might want very different things than what community members want and need.</i></p> |

Best Practices

In conversation...

| Avoid | Try |
|--|---|
| <p>Saying to us:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● “We know...”● “...an abundance of caution...”● “Let’s not get emotional.”● “Trust the experts.”● “The water/ emissions/ whatever is compliant with regulations.”● “You are lucky.” <p><i>No one is ever “lucky” to be contaminated without their knowledge or consent.</i></p> | <p>Instead try saying:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● “Please share your experience & concerns with us,” and “how do you see this?”● “Let’s ask the experts.”● “Let’s discuss the reasons the regulations allow this much in the water/ emission/ whatever.”● “I don’t know, but I’ll try to find out” when you don’t know, <i>and then follow through.</i> |

Best Practices *In Meetings...*

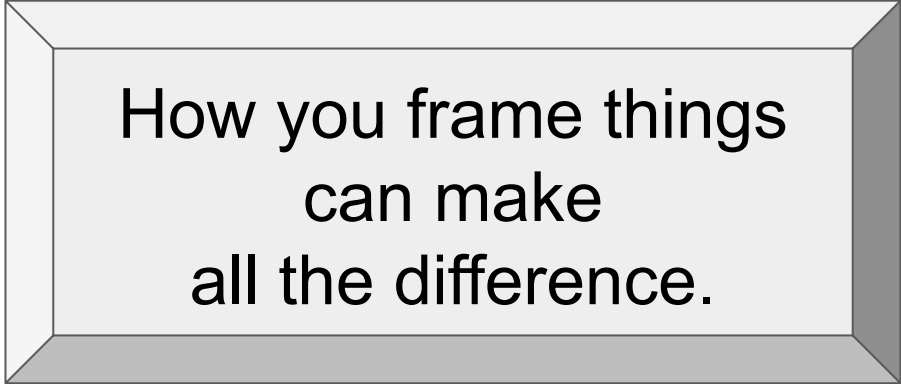
| Avoid | Try |
|---|---|
| <p>Ignoring the rights and needs of the community members</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Disrespecting those who are willing to engage● Minimizing community concerns or challenges● Ignoring opportunities for mutual engagement and education● Forgetting MA residents' rights to clean air, water, and meaningful engagement | <p>Meeting us where we are</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Offering off-hour meetings, translation, childcare/ supervision.● Meeting online or in locations people can access with public transportation during transit operating hours.● Recording meetings for those who cannot attend, with Captioning.● Listening to what we know / feel / experience.● Helping us understand the more technical information. |

Best Practices

In Conclusion...

Keep the Community Perspective in Mind at all times.

Remember we are unconsenting victims of a crime.



How you frame things
can make
all the difference.

Acknowledgements

Westfield Residents, Fellow WRAFTers, and all the other PFAS Advocates, Researchers, Scientists, Students, NGOs, Reporters, and Public Records Officers across the world

New England Grassroots Environmental Fund, Environmental Working Group, Safer Chemicals - Healthy Families, Earth Justice

State and Federal Legislators, especially their legislative aides

UMASS Amherst Partners

MassDEP and TURI

ATSDR

NASEM

ITRC



*Presented in loving memory of
Sue Phelan, GreenCAPE.*

Questions?

