



Create Social Responses to a Changing Environment

The Issue

Unprecedented environmental changes threaten human health and well-being in communities worldwide. Urbanization and population growth are on the rise, and extreme weather events are increasing in frequency and severity. Escalating environmental threats are a social justice issue: social, economic, and environmental inequities are deeply intertwined. People in poverty, children, older adults, members of racial or ethnic minority groups, and people with a history of mental health problems are especially vulnerable to the harmful impacts of environmental change.

Societal Goal

We aim to catalyze social responses that strengthen individual and community capacities for anticipating and adapting to environmental changes, particularly for vulnerable groups, and reduce inequities in exposure to environmental risks and access to needed resources.

A Decade of Work

Over the next ten years, researchers, practitioners and policymakers can engage in a variety of activities that will advance this Grand Challenge and ignite social work achievements focused on disaster risk reduction, environmentally displaced populations, community adaptation and resilience to environmental change, and environmental justice. We envision close partnership with diverse disciplines and sectors, and progress in all areas of social work research, policy, practice, and education.

Resources

- Kemp, S. P., & Palinkas, L. A. (with Wong, M., Wagner, K., Mason, L. R., Chi, I.,...Rechkemmer, A.).(2015). [*Strengthening the social response to the human impacts of environmental change*](#) (Grand Challenges for Social Work Initiative Working Paper No. 5). Cleveland, OH: American Academy of Social Work and Social Welfare.
- Kemp, S. P., Mason, L. R., Palinkas, L. A., Rechkemmer, A., & Teixeira, S. (2016, September). [*Policy recommendations for meeting the Grand Challenge to Create Social Responses to a Changing Environment*](#) (Grand Challenges for Social Work Initiative Policy Brief No. 7). Cleveland, OH: American Academy of Social Work & Social Welfare.

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- Mason, L. R., Shires, M. K., Arwood, C., & Borst, A. (2017). [Social work research and global environmental change](#). *Journal of the Society for Social Work and Research*, 8(4): 645-672.
- Sears, J., Kemp, S. P., & Palinkas, L. A. (2017). [Develop policies targeting environmentally induced displacement in the United States](#) (Policy Action Statement). American Academy of Social Work and Social Welfare.
- Website: <https://csd.wustl.edu/OurWork/EnviroSocialDev/Pages/default.aspx>

Network Leadership

Susan P. Kemp, PhD

Charles O. Cressey Endowed Professor
University of Washington, School of Social Work
University of Auckland, Faculty of Education and Social Work
spk@uw.edu

Lisa Reyes Mason, PhD

Assistant Professor
University of Tennessee, College of Social Work
mason@utk.edu

Lawrence A. Palinkas, PhD

Albert G. and Frances Lomas Feldman Professor of Social Policy and Health, and Director, Behavior, Health and Society Research Cluster
University of Southern California, Suzanne Dworak-Peck School of Social Work
palinkas@usc.edu

Get involved!

Sign up to the Grand Challenges mailing list:

Sign up for the Grand Challenges newsletter & updates: www.GrandChallengesforSocialWork.org

Contact: Lisa Reyes Mason

mason@utk.edu

(865) 974-6544