



# Northeastern IPM Center Partnership Grant Impacts



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## Municipal Rodent IPM Working Group (2021–2023)

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### THE NEED

- Brown rats\* represent a persistent challenge for municipalities where they cause loss of business, structural damage, food contamination, and potentially spread pathogens that pose public health risks. To combat rat problems and respond to resident complaints, municipalities perform large-scale management. Unfortunately, these efforts rarely result in successful long-term management, and cities continue to deal with rats.
- Despite having common goals and shared challenges for developing and delivering municipal rodent control programs, there was previously no network or coalition dedicated to advancing the science and implementation of municipal rodent management. Furthermore, there are only a handful of technical resources intended for this important audience, and subject area experts are similarly rare.
- This working group sought to facilitate communication between municipal rodent managers and connect them to experts having practical skills and insights, including pest management industry representatives (manufacturers, consultants, and applicators), and academicians. By implementing communication tools such as a listserv and landing page or website with contact details, this effort aims to create a long-term collaboration network to identify, refine, and address the needs of municipal rodent management.



Rats living in city infrastructure. Photo: Matt Frye



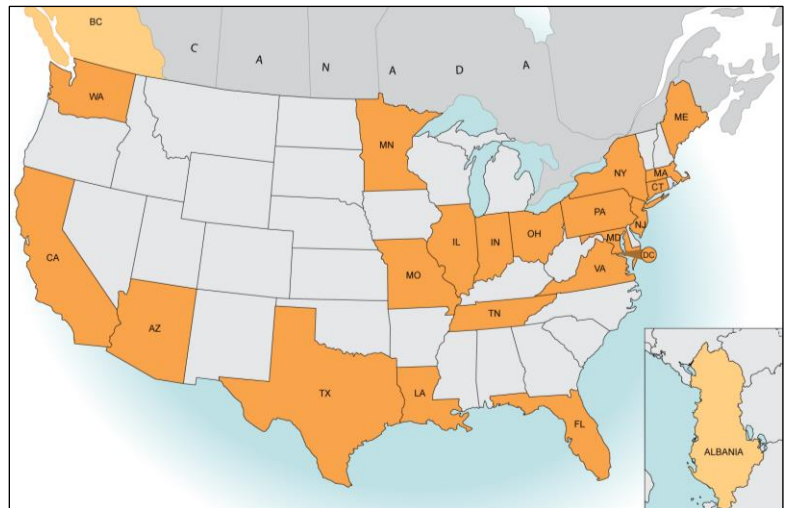
Rats search for food. Photo: Matt Frye



Rats feed on trash. Photo: Matt Frye

## IMPACTS

- The working group created a stakeholder network that represents 3 countries (US, Canada, Albania), and 20 US states: AZ, CA, CT, FL, IL, IN, LA, MA, MD, ME, MN, MO, NJ, NY, OH, PA, TN, TX, VA, WA plus Washington, DC.
- As of March 31, 2023, stakeholders represent 58 organizations: 22 municipalities, 17 industry and technical experts, 18 academic institutions, and 1 federal government employee.
- A listserv was created to facilitate communication between municipalities and others involved in municipal rodent management. As of March 31, 2023, there were 82 listserv members, and the list continues to grow.
- Use of the listserv has already resulted in dialogue and collaboration between subject area experts and municipal program leaders, providing an opportunity for changes in practices and adoption of new techniques.
- In general, reducing rodent food and shelter is critical for long-term solutions. Rodenticides are the most commonly used management approach because they are easy and cheap. Trapping is used in special situations because it requires time and expertise, while burrow treatments are becoming more popular. But these approaches fail in the long-term if food and shelter are not addressed, specifically because they do not take into consideration that rodent populations extend beyond individual buildings and rat reproduction can quickly outpace management efforts.
- A research priority ranking tool was sent to 81 members of the Listserv and received 36 responses (44.4% response rate). A summary of results are posted on the [Municipal Rodent IPM Working Group Website](#).
- The priorities list, challenges and opportunities section of the 11/19/2021 meeting notes, and “A Roadmap for Municipal Rodent Management” all provide guidance for researchers, academics, and municipal rodent managers to advance the field of municipal rodent management, which has remained relatively unchanged for the past several decades.
- An article intended for pest control professionals, “What can PMPs learn from Municipal Rodent Control Programs?” will be published in 2023 in Pest Control Technology (PCT) Magazine to reach a broad audience. The article will highlight opportunities for collaboration between pest management companies and municipalities, and among different pest management companies.
- Find 2 publications, meeting notes from 3 meetings, and more here: [Municipal Rodent IPM Working Group Website](#)
- Presentations by several municipalities were recorded and available upon request.
- The Municipal Rodent IPM Working Group is preparing to publish a paper entitled “Current Approaches to Municipal Rodent Management.” The paper will increase the awareness of IPM tools available to municipalities, which will become increasingly important considering proposed federal changes to rodenticide registration.



The working group stakeholder network included 20 US states, plus Washington, D.C., Canada, and Albania.

## WEBSITE

[www.northeastipm.org/working-groups/municipal-rodents/](http://www.northeastipm.org/working-groups/municipal-rodents/)

\**Rattus norvegicus*, the Norway rat