

KEEP COOL SOMERVILLE

Community Projects Grants

In 2021, the City of Somerville and Metropolitan Area Planning Council gave six community organizations grants to build resilience to heat in Somerville.

The Results?

- ▶ **7**
families received assistance to pay overdue utility bills
- ▶ **35**
air conditioning units distributed
- ▶ **150**
electric fans distributed
- ▶ **100**
cooling kits with hats, insulated lunch boxes, and water bottles distributed
- ▶ Increased public awareness of climate-driven heat
- ▶ Fans, sprinklers, and cooling structures purchased for South Street Farm and several school gardens
- ▶ Chuckie Harris Park attracted families with “Mystery Machine” cooling installation, including cooling mist, music, and animation

The Grants

Community organizations proposed small-scale pilot projects to improve resilience to heat. The program had three goals:

- 1** **Build capacity for collaborative heat resilience planning**
- 2** **Identify community concerns and preferred long-term solutions**
- 3** **Reduce heat risk and discomfort for vulnerable residents during the summer of 2021.**

About Keep Cool Somerville

Keep Cool Somerville is an initiative to improve community resilience to heat. The initiative began in 2020 as a collaboration between the City of Somerville and the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) to address the health impacts of climate change. Prior to this grant program, the team researched heat preparedness strategies and conducted extensive community engagement around extreme heat. Learn more at www.mapc.org/keep-cool-somerville.

Turn the page to learn more about the mini-grants!

Keep Cool Somerville

The Projects

Six community organizations completed projects over the summer of 2021:

Somerville Fresco

A team of immigrant parents and grandparents met regularly to build their knowledge around the health impacts extreme heat and improve their advocacy skills to protect their families and neighbors.

The team:

- Advocated for improvements to local cooling spaces.
- Gave out over 150 bilingual booklets containing tips, recipes, and information on keeping cool.
- Distributed cooling kits containing the booklets, hats, insulated water bottles, and small coolers to 100 students in the Somerville English Language Learner summer program.

Groundwork Somerville

The Groundwork Somerville Green Team consists of youth aged 14 to 19 who work at Groundwork's urban farm and school gardens, learn about environmental justice, and develop advocacy and leadership skills.

This summer, the team:

- Developed and disseminated presentations, fliers, and short videos about their experiences with heat and ideas on mitigating heat impacts.
- Conducted outreach and collected surveys about extreme heat at a Mystery Machine event and at the group's mobile market.
- Reached over 200 people with outreach activities.
- Used mini grant funding to purchase fan misters, shade structures, and sprinklers to keep youth cool at the farm.
- Planned to update future crops to account for climate conditions.

Clarendon Hill Towers

- Distributed 150 fans to older adult households through a lottery.
- Shared information about heat safety with all residents.

Bent/Haus Arts

Bent/Haus Arts created "Mystery Machine," an interactive art installation incorporating music, cooling mist, and colorful animations.

- Two events at South Street Farm and Chuckie Harris Park drew a diverse audience, including families with children, and helped spread awareness of heat safety information to a much larger audience.
- Formed partnerships with Secret Boston, Boston Institute of Nonprofit Journalism, Groundwork Somerville, East Somerville Main Streets, and Friends of Chuckie Harris Park for outreach.

Somerville Housing Authority (SHA)

- Piloted an Air Conditioner Lending Program, distributing and helping to install 18 air conditioner units for families, older adults, and people with disabilities living in low-income housing.
- Distributed Keep Cool Toolkits with heat safety information and worked with other organizations to conduct outreach to residents in charge of cooling assistance.

Community Action Agency of Somerville (CAAS)

- Distributed 17 air conditioning units.
- Assisted seven households with utility bills ranging from \$165 to \$480 and connected some to repayment plan programs.