**Initial Research to Set Up a Community Climate Liaison Program: Template**

This **Template** is designed to guide program managers in conducting initial research to establish a community climate liaison program. This resource guides users on researching the following topics:

1. **Climate Hazards and Vulnerabilities**
2. **Climate Equity**
3. **Climate Readiness and Available Resources**

The information gathered through this exercise helps to equip program managers with important insights to develop a well-informed and inclusive community liaison program that is tailored to their municipality’s unique needs. To see this template in action, explore the Cambridge case study for a real-world example.

The information collected in this research exercise should be incorporated into the liaisons’ training materials.

1. **Climate Hazards and Vulnerabilities**

**What?**Identify your municipality’s most notable climate hazards, such as extreme heat, coastal or inland flooding, or severe storms. What specific areas will be most affected by the hazards? What specific demographic of people are most vulnerable?

**How?**  
Review existing documents, such as your municipality’s *Hazard Mitigation Plan* or *Climate Action Plan* to identify the top hazards. As available, review historical and future projected climate data to better understand how these hazards are expected to change. Work with GIS department to map the hazards (e.g., hottest areas of the region or projected sea level rise) against critical facilities and environmental justice neighborhoods.

**Why?**Understanding the climate hazards and vulnerabilities forms the foundation for the liaison program’s the preparedness initiatives. Table 1 below outlines direct and indirect health impacts of different climate hazards.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Climate Hazard** | **Health Impacts** |
| **Extreme Heat** | **Direct**: heat exhaustion, heat stroke, dehydration, heat cramps/rash, sunburn  **Indirect**: exacerbation of pre-existing health conditions (e.g., cardiovascular disease, respiratory illness), vector-borne diseases, increased hospitalization rates, decreased productivity, mental health impacts (e.g., stress, anxiety, depression), strain on public health infrastructure |
| **Flooding** | **Direct**: drowning, injury, displacement, waterborne injuries (cuts, bruises), electrocution from submerged electrical hazards  **Indirect**: mold exposure (i.e., respiratory illness), outbreak of water-borne and/or vector-borne diseases, drinking water contamination, mental stress and trauma, business interruption/economic repercussions, disruption of healthcare services |
| **Severe Storms** | **Direct**: drowning, injury from debris/collapsing structures or trees, displacement, electrocution from submerged electrical hazards, hypothermia  **Indirect**: mold exposure, outbreak of water-borne and/or vector-borne diseases, drinking water contamination, m mental health impacts (e.g., stress, anxiety, depression), business interruption/economic repercussions, disruption of healthcare services |

1. **Climate Equity**

**What?**Investigate existing disparities in climate impacts across different socio-economic and racial groups in your municipality. Understand which communities are most vulnerable to climate change and most likely to be most affected by its impacts. What neighborhoods have a higher population of people of color, lower income households, and/or English isolation?

**How?**  
Review maps of environmental justice neighborhoods, flood hazard areas, toxic sites, and other socio-economic maps of relevance. Engage with the municipality’s Director of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI), or similar role, to gain insights into the traditionally underserved populations and their challenges.

**Why?**Recognizing and understanding climate inequities helps ensure the community liaison program is inclusive and responsive to all residents. Program managers can use this information to both target recruitment of liaisons in priority neighborhoods and prioritize outreach activities for the liaison program.

**Resources:**

* [Leading with Equity: A Guide to Community-Driven Planning](file:///C:\Users\jnassar\Metropolitan%20Area%20Planning%20Council\PUBLIC~1\03_COM~1\CLIMAT~2\3_RESE~1\17E87~1.GET\-%09https:\mapc365.sharepoint.com\:p:\s\PublicHealthTeam\EYWsjJQjR0hHgY94G_c1f70BvnmhqkAGOQBzVoDi4efwnw%3fe=rx08qF)
* [Environmental Justice Map Viewer (Massachusetts)](https://mass-eoeea.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=1d6f63e7762a48e5930de84ed4849212)

1. **Climate Readiness and Available Resources**

**What?**Assess the current state of your municipality’s climate readiness, including climate commitments; climate action or emergency response plans; planned or ongoing resilience projects, plans, or initiatives, etc. Inventory the resources or services available to residents to enhance their climate readiness, such as no-cost home energy assessments, flood retrofit assistance, and other climate resilience practices.

**How?**  
Review the City’s climate related plans and engage with relevant municipal departments responsible for planning for and responding to climate- impacts.

**Why?**Evaluating the state of climate readiness not only provides a comprehensive overview of the municipality’s preparedness to climate change, but also allows the program manager of the community climate liaison program to better understand the gaps or areas for improvement that the liaisons can help to fill. The inventory of resilience resources will also be useful for the liaisons to share with the community and support awareness.