

# Helping Massachusetts Communities Get Ready for Climate Change



**MVP**  
Municipal Vulnerability  
Preparedness



Pioneer Valley  
Planning Commission

Webinar  
September 10, 2025, 12-1 pm

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# Agenda

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- Welcome
- Playbook Overview
- Engagement Process
- Tool Demo
- Alignment with Other State Efforts & Resources
- Question & Answer



# The Climate Resilience Playbook

# What is the Playbook?

- An online tool  
(with downloadable options!)
- Framework for actions and step-by-step guidance to advance climate resilience planning and implementation



Housing



Ecosystems  
and Natural  
Environments



Infrastructure



Economy



Communities  
and Government

# Why the Playbook?

- Addressing climate and social inequities
- Exploring how municipalities and their communities can co-lead and co-implement climate solutions
- Tailoring projects based on community types and applicability



*Photo Credit: MVP*

# Why the Playbook? (cont.)

Specific case studies and best practices to support local efforts:

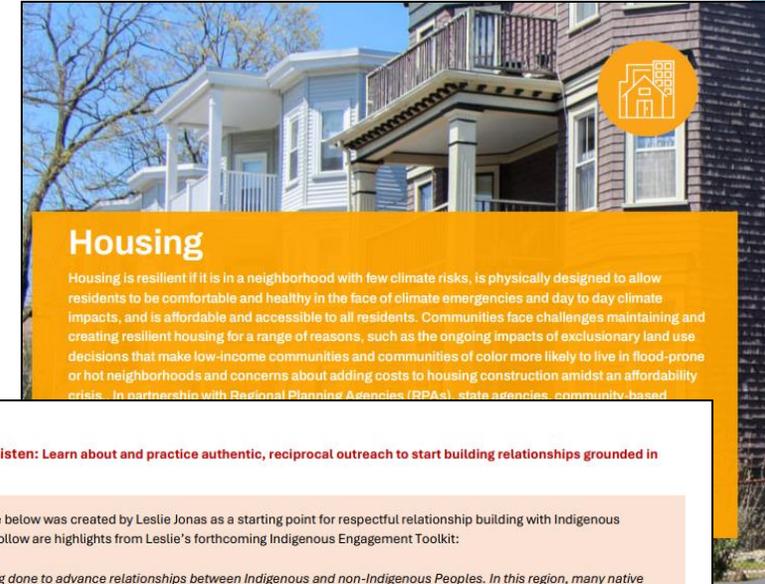
1. Planning → Implementation
2. Community-driven planning and power sharing
3. Adapting state guidance to local contexts



# Key Features of the Playbook

## Planning Resources

- *How to Use the Playbook to Guide Local Climate Resilience Planning*
- *Climate Vulnerability and Building Resilience*
- *Community Engagement and Climate Resilience Planning*
- *Partnerships with Indigenous Communities*
- *Adaptive Management for Cost-Effective Climate Adaptation Planning*
- *Playbook Development Process*
- *Glossary*



### Housing

Housing is resilient if it is in a neighborhood with few climate risks, is physically designed to allow residents to be comfortable and healthy in the face of climate emergencies and day to day climate impacts, and is affordable and accessible to all residents. Communities face challenges maintaining and creating resilient housing for a range of reasons, such as the ongoing impacts of exclusionary land use decisions that make low-income communities and communities of color more likely to live in flood-prone or hot neighborhoods and concerns about adding costs to housing construction amidst an affordability crisis. In partnership with Regional Planning Agencies (RPAs), state agencies, community-based

#### Part 2: Hearing to Listen: Learn about and practice authentic, reciprocal outreach to start building relationships grounded in trust.

The follow guidance below was created by Leslie Jonas as a starting point for respectful relationship building with Indigenous communities. The follow are highlights from Leslie's forthcoming Indigenous Engagement Toolkit:

Recent work is being done to advance relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Peoples. In this region, many native leaders are being called on to work with non-native organizations, schools, higher ed, science, medical communities and local and federal govts. as it relates to increasing opportunities to bridge relationships and utilize traditional ecological knowledge – especially in Climate, Energy, Land and Water spaces.

The work to build trusting relationships is on-going and decolonizing the systems that tear at the fabric of this work will take many decades to dismantle.

This overview is part of a toolkit intended to encourage and facilitate that work in the field of respectful relationship building with the Eastern Woodlands coastal Indigenous communities.

It starts with:

#### Ethics, Authenticity, and Responsibility in Communication

- Understanding the history of the community and its relationship to the homeland territory.
- Outreach and connection to a member of the community.
- Once a connection is established, create a safe space to begin engagement.
- Initial dialogue includes gratitude for community time and acknowledgement of historical traumas and continuing colonial impacts.
- Develop and establish a respectful process for information exchange.
- Create dialogues with a mutual understanding of language and the ways in which language plays into colonial impacts – define what words mean to one another to establish a common style of communication.

# Key Features of the Playbook

The screenshot displays the 'Climate Resilience Playbook' interface. On the left, a 'Filters' sidebar includes sections for 'Priority Climate Threats' (with 'Coastal Flooding a...' selected), 'Project Types' (with 'Planning and Assessment' selected), and 'Climate Resilience Themes' (with 'Infrastructure' selected). The main content area features a search bar and a grid of project cards. A callout box highlights the 'Capital Improvement Program' card, which contains the text: 'Integrate climate priorities into local capital planning processes, including the annual budget process and longer-term Capital Improvement Program.' Below the callout are icons for a building, a thermometer, and a cloud with rain.

## Actions Tool

- Searchable list of 120 municipal project ideas
- Filterable by climate threat, project type, theme, and more



# Key Features of the Playbook

20+ detailed  
implementation  
blueprints  
(and growing!)



**Climate Resilience  
PLAYBOOK**

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## Implementation Blueprint | Community Liaison Program

Develop or support a Community Liaison Program that engages and shifts power to community members most impacted by climate change throughout all elements of a project.

### Key Considerations

Community liaison programs are emerging as a powerful tool to enhance community engagement and offer opportunities to meaningfully involve a broader range of voices. Through community liaison models, residents directly engage their family, friends, and neighbors. By leveraging the local expertise, passion, and dedication of community members, municipalities are better able to plan for and take effective action to enhance local climate resilience. Community liaison programs are particularly effective in smaller communities or groups most impacted by climate threats, such as low-income households, people of color, and people with disabilities.

There are three common structures for community liaison programs: 1) a dedicated staff position, 2) a volunteer-based program, and 3) a hybrid model. Each structure has its own strengths and challenges. For more information, see the [MetroWest Climate Equity project](#) in Framingham, MA, which was the focus of a survey and conversation guide on climate resilience by climate change, defined the impacts residents

### Adapting to Community Type:

- Different municipalities may need to take different approaches to recruiting liaisons depending on the strength of existing relationships between municipalities and community members, CBOs, and other partners and the presence of community organizations throughout the community. All municipalities should reach out to not only climate- and environmental-focused organizations, but also organizations whose primary focus may be housing, food security, public health, tenant rights, immigrant rights, English Language Learners, and other issues particularly relevant in smaller communities or community-based organizations.
- The outreach strategies utilized by liaisons will vary depending on the community (e.g., calling residents for input vs. tabling at gathering places).

### State and National Context:

- EEA's Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness Program was launched by Governor Healey in April 2021 to help municipalities update their original MVP plans and maintain eligibility.

### Potential Partners

Table 1. Partners

Municipal Departments and Commissions	Community-Based Partners	Regional and State Agencies, National/Statewide Organizations, and Private Sector Partners
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Planning</li><li>• Housing and Community Development</li><li>• Public Health</li><li>• Sustainability/Environment</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• CBOs</li><li>• Community Centers</li><li>• Community development corporations</li><li>• Faith-based institutions</li><li>• Public Health and Social Services Organizations</li><li>• Boys and Girls Clubs</li><li>• Teen Centers</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Regional Planning Agency (RPAs)</li><li>• EEA</li><li>• Tribes</li></ul>



# Who is the Playbook for? How would someone use it?

A community-based organization (CBO) is working on a project related to **green infrastructure** and looking for examples of how other CBOs have worked with municipal partners in the past on similar projects.

A community has **limited staff** and is looking for a project related to **emergency preparedness that could be pursued regionally** in collaboration with other municipalities.

A town has recently started to assess local **food security** and needs and is brainstorming priority actions.

A town is updating its **zoning bylaw** and looking for examples of how other communities have incorporated resilience.

A town wants to expand **cooling options** for residents and finds an implementation blueprint outlining key steps to consider.

A town that hasn't completed climate resilience projects to date is looking for **ideas to pitch for an MVP grant application**.

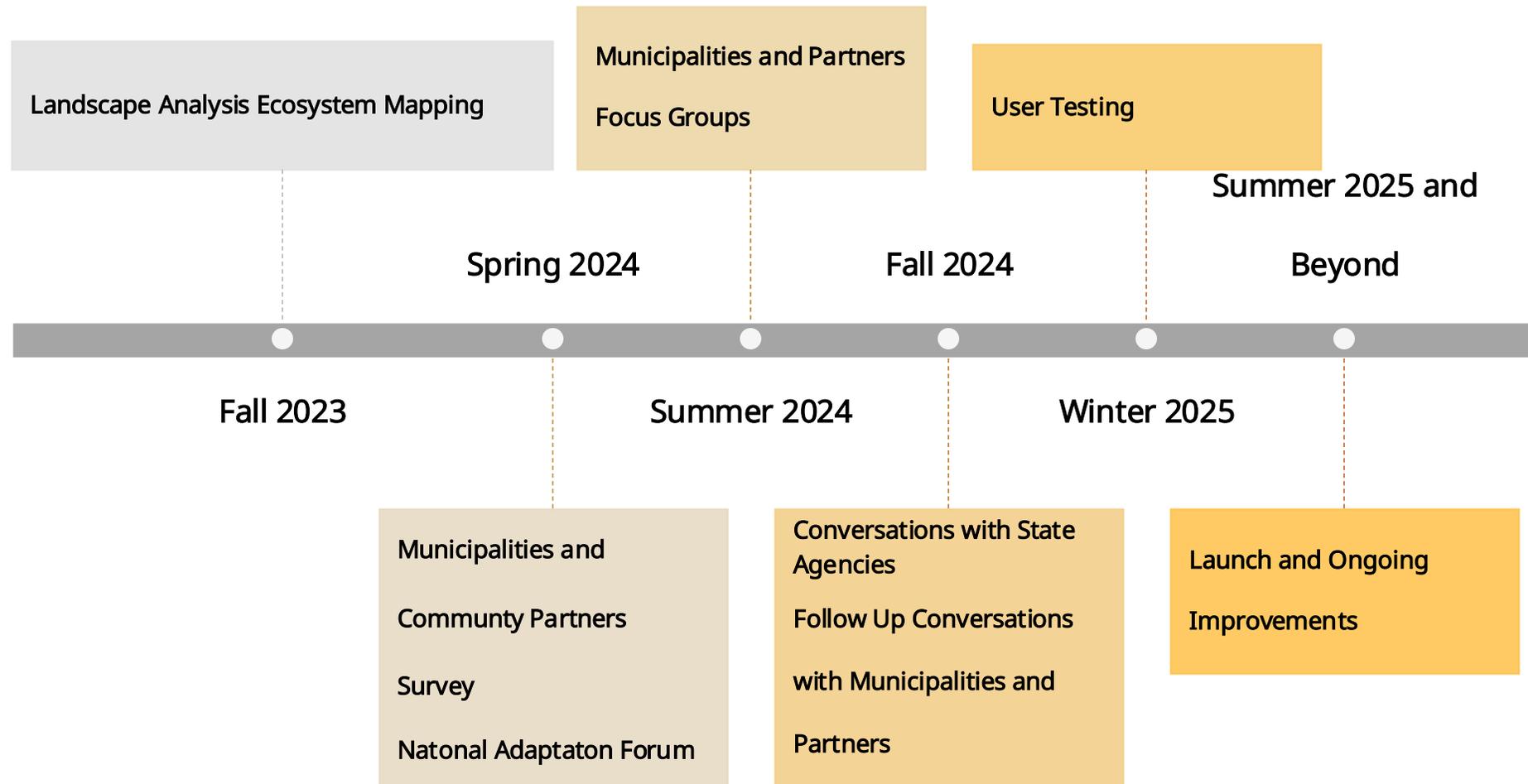
A city is working with **local university students** on a semester project to prepare residents for **extreme heat**. The city searches the database to find potential project ideas.

An MVP 2.0 community is brainstorming ideas for a **seed project** related to the top identified community priority of **reducing stormwater flooding in an Environmental Justice neighborhood**.



# Engagement Process

# Engagement Process



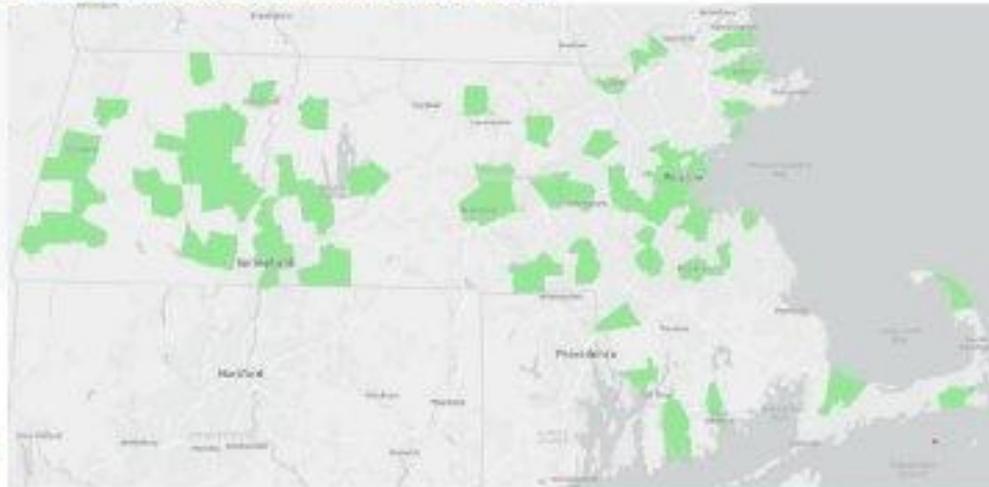
To inform the Playbook, MAPC, MVP, and PVPC consulted with representatives from 87 cities and towns across the state (see left) and more than 80 community partners.

**11**

Technical Assistance Providers Engaged

**260**

Survey Responses



Insights from community partners who focus on housing, public health, environment justice, economic development, Indigenous land stewardship and more

Insights from municipal staff representing Public Health, Planning, Conservation Commissions, Public Works, Sustainability, and Other Departments

**10+**

State Agencies Consulted

Feedback from youth focus group

**87**

Cities and Towns Engaged Through Surveys and Focus Groups

**82**

Community Partners Engaged Through Surveys and Focus Groups



From Left to Right: Credit: City of Medford/Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness Program. Credit: Town of Oak Bluffs and Martha's Vineyard Commission/Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness Program. Credit: Towns of Natick and Ashland and City of Framingham/Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness Program. Credit: City of Cambridge.





# What We Heard: Needs and Opportunities

## Needs

- Staffing capacity & capability
- Necessary technical expertise on climate issues amidst evolving job requirements
- Building community partnerships
- Figuring out where to start - selection, prioritization, and justification
- Funding and timing

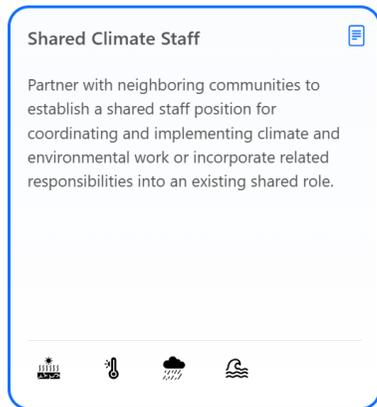
## Opportunities

- Integrate resilience components into required and ongoing projects and processes (e.g. local planning efforts like Open Space and Recreation Plans local processes like capital planning)
- Lean into partnerships with community organizations and/or colleges and universities.
- Training for staff and volunteers
- Pursue regional opportunities
  - Peer learning and education
  - Circuit rider
  - Watershed-scale planning
  - Technical assistance from RPAs



# Examples of How This Input Shaped the Playbook

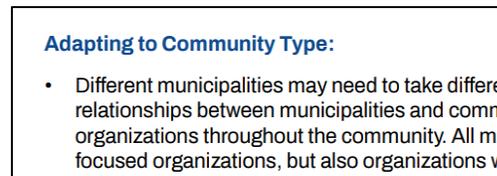
Pursue regional opportunities + volunteers and staff having to wear many hats



*Implementation Blueprint about establishing shared climate staff role*

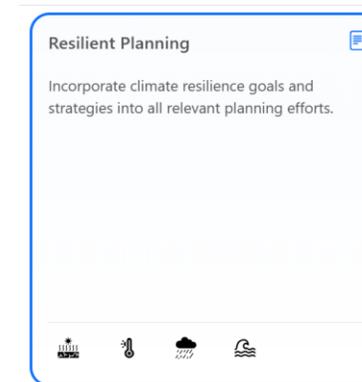


*Search function allows user to filter by actions that could be pursued in collaboration with one or more other municipalities*

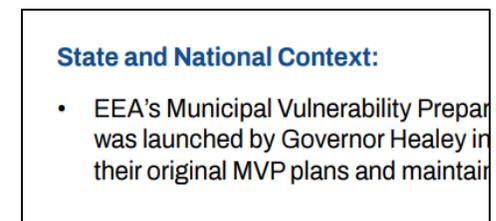


*Implementation blueprints detail how implementation may vary by community type and size*

Integrate resilience components into required and ongoing projects and processes (e.g., HMP)



*Implementation Blueprint about how to integrate resilience into common processes*



*Implementation blueprints detail related state, local, and national planning processes*



# Tool Demo

# Who is the Playbook for? How would someone use it?

A community-based organization (CBO) is working on a project related to **green infrastructure** and looking for examples of how other CBOs have worked with **municipal partners in the past on similar projects.**

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# Demo Use Cases

An **environmental planner in an MVP 2.0 community** is developing ideas for a seed project to help reduce the urban heat island effect. Through the MVP 2.0 process, community members have identified **urban heat islands** as a key concern. They are particularly interested in how the municipality and its partners can help reduce heat impacts in the places where people spend most of their time — **at home and at work**.

A **Conservation Commission** has received feedback from community members that **inland and riverine flooding** are causing significant problems in a certain section of Town. The Commission is aware the local watershed council and Regional Conservation Partnerships have already begun to address this challenge through volunteer efforts and is now exploring municipal actions to help address these concerns.

Feel free to follow along!

<https://resilienceplaybook.mapc.org/>



# A living, evolving resource!

...clear so that projects can withstand climate conditions throughout their intended lifespan. Proactive help to avoid the costs of reactive repairs, which will grow in cost and frequency with projected chronic and and studies show that investing \$1 in resilience can save up to \$13 during a disaster.

...nd advance climate resilience can better safeguard the health and safety of residents, especially as climate ...-sensitive and business municipalities can take a range of approaches to ensure identification of

Playbook Actions    Planning Resources    **Playbook Feedback**    Website/Bug Report

## Got Feedback and Suggestions for the Playbook?

The Climate Resilience Playbook is a living, evolving resource! We hope to continue updating its content when we can. With the development of the Playbook, we know there are more that can be done to make it comprehensive. Thank you in advance for your input.

Please share any general feedback on the Playbook content.

Do you have suggestions for additional climate resilience actions to be included in the Actions Tool?



**Alignment with  
state efforts & resources**

# How does the Playbook relate to other state efforts to support local resilience?

- **ResilientMass Plan**

- Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP) Program
- ResilientCoasts



**ResilientMass**



**MVP**  
Municipal Vulnerability  
Preparedness



**ResilientCoasts**

- **ResilientMass Finance Strategy**

*(under development)*

- Making projects easier to implement through clear best practices, standards, and streamlining



## 4 Strategic Priorities:



**Make Projects  
Easier to Implement**



**Implement  
Financing  
Mechanisms**



**Streamline and  
Expand Access to  
Funding**



**Build Regional and  
Organizational  
Capacity**



# Guides for Equitable and Actionable Resilience (GEAR)

GEAR provides Massachusetts communities access to data and guidance to assess climate change impacts, as well as actions and case studies for building community resilience. Provide feedback: [info.resilientma@mass.gov](mailto:info.resilientma@mass.gov).

- [GEAR Tool](#) “Actions to Consider” → links directly to relevant Resilience Playbook actions
- Resilience Playbook includes options to search actions by ResilientMass Metrics, MVP Community Systems, and other relevant state categories.

## Actions to Consider

Communities can take a number of steps to build resilience to the impacts of drought on food and water systems.

The Climate Resilience Playbook can provide a filtered set of actions related to this GEAR guide. You may also toggle additional filters to find additional actions most relevant for your community.



**Climate Resilience Playbook**  
Implementation Guidance and Resources for Massachusetts Municipalities

Playbook  
Actions

Planning  
Resources

### Filters

Priority Climate Threats ?  
Drought x

Project Types ?  
Select...

Climate Resilience Themes ?  
Select...

Has Relevant Case Study  ?

Has Implementation Blueprint  ?

Implementation Effort ?  
Any

**Apply Filters**

Search by Key Terms

**About Climate Actions**

? Note: Actions with an implementation blueprint are marked with an icon in the top right corner. Click the icon to view the blueprint.

Showing 6 of 6 actions

TITLE	DESCRIPTION	THEMES	IM
Community Food Assessment	Incorporate climate resilience and emergency planning considerations into a Community Food Assessment. As part of this	Communities and Governance Natural Environments and Ecosystems Economy	

# How does the Playbook connect with other state work and tools? (continued)

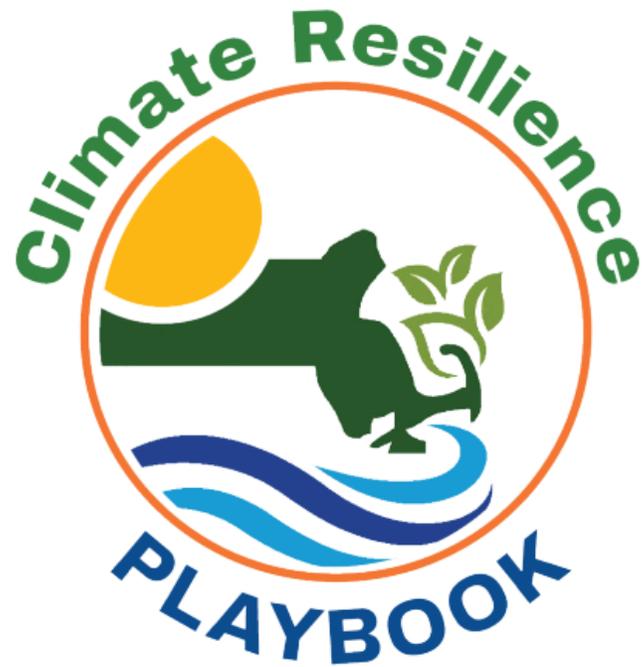
Implementation blueprints identify potential funding opportunities, including state, federal, and other sources

## Potential Funding and Technical Assistance:

- [District Local Technical Assistance](#)
- [Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs Planning Assistance Grant](#)
- [Municipality Vulnerability Preparedness \(MVP\) Action Grant](#)



Q&A



# Thank You!

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