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RESILIENT

**CITIES
NETWORK**

GUIDEBOOK FOR COMMUNITY RESILIENCE

_INTERFACE STUDIO

IMPRINT

Guidebook for Community Resilience

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Use this section to advocate with your local government and other stakeholders to improve the conditions for building community resilience. As examples show from across the network, cities can be active partners in resilience by streamlining processes, strengthening partnerships, and providing resources strategically.

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WHAT IS COMMUNITY RESILIENCE?

As extreme weather events become more frequent, communities face growing risks to their health, safety and daily life. Building **community resilience**—the ability of a community to prepare for, withstand and recover from these challenges—is critical. The **Guidebook for Community Resilience** offers practical, actionable steps that help communities prepare for disasters, stay protected during emergencies and recover more quickly after an event. While every community faces unique climate challenges, this guidebook centers on **extreme heat and flooding**, two of the most common and damaging hazards but provides guidance that can be applicable to a variety of climate related shocks and stresses. Similarly, while this guidebook is written with a North American audience in mind and most references included are specific to the US/ Canadian context, it draws inspiration from cities and all around the world and aims to be widely applicable for all communities seeking to build resilience. The focus is on providing you and your neighborhood with the tools needed to keep each other safe and to survive, adapt and thrive in the face of a changing climate.

NEIGHBORHOOD COMMUNICATION

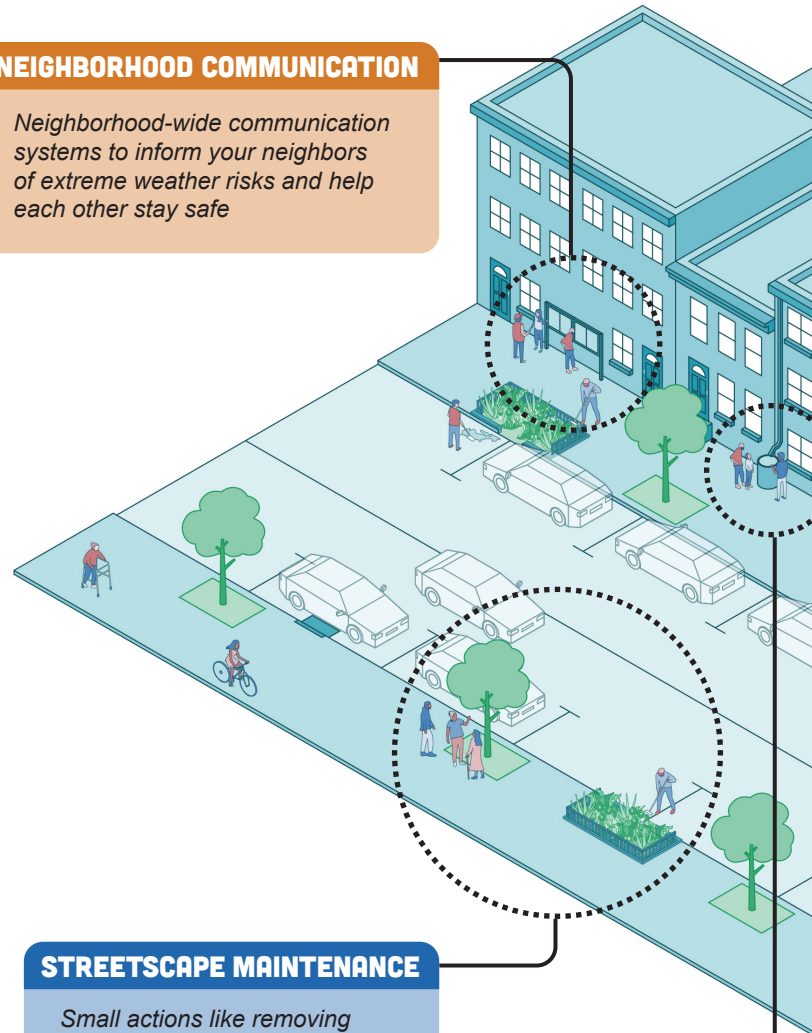
Neighborhood-wide communication systems to inform your neighbors of extreme weather risks and help each other stay safe

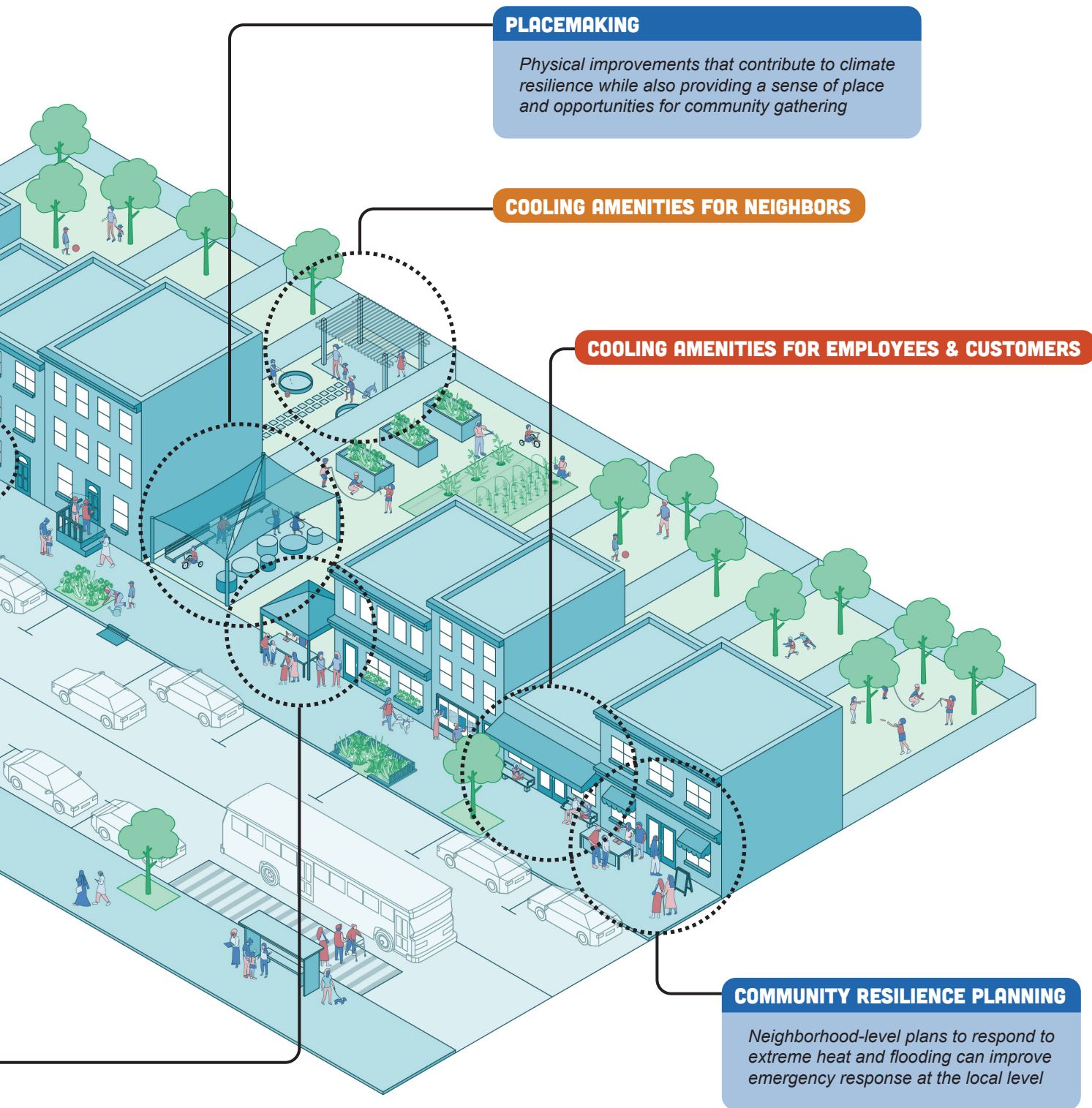
STREETSCAPE MAINTENANCE

Small actions like removing leaves and debris before storms can reduce street flooding and property damage

PROPERTY IMPROVEMENTS

OUTREACH EVENTS





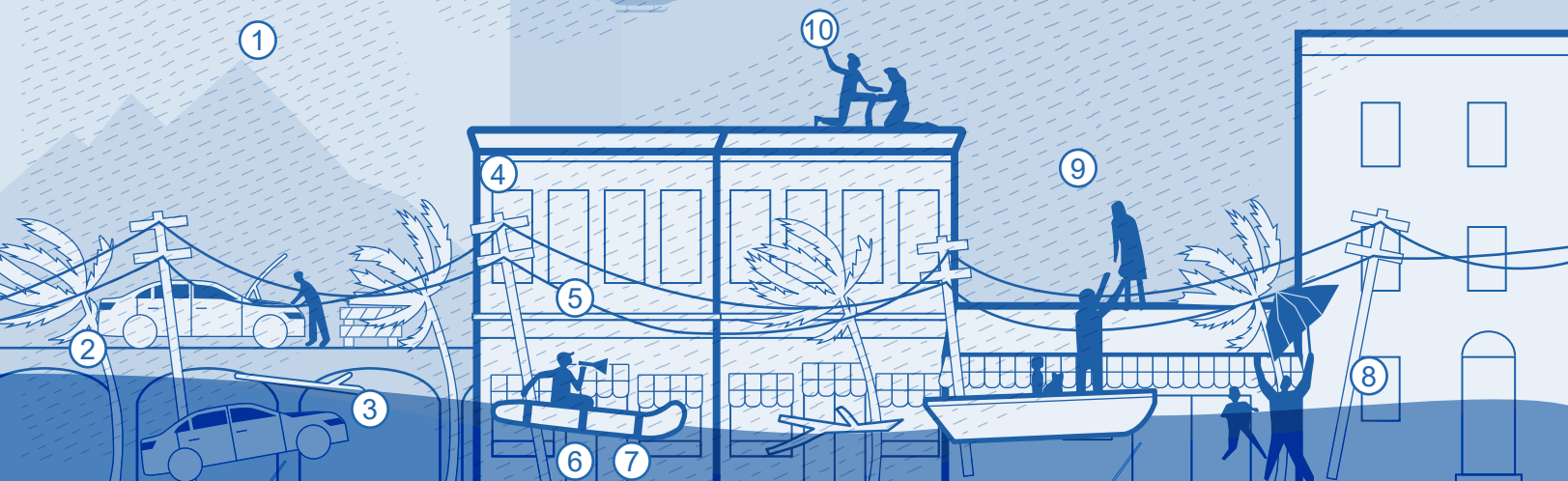
HOW DO

FLOODING & EXTREME HEAT

AFFECT CITIES AND THEIR RESIDENTS?

EXTREME RAINFALL AND FLOODING

Flooding can manifest as a chronic stress or an acute shock—but the most damaging floods are those that occur quickly, when heavy rainfall, storm surge or some other climate event causes a large amount of water to be released in a short window of time, overwhelming local infrastructure. Floods can quickly cover roads, streets and land with water, often without much warning.



Risks to your community

- ① Erosion and landslides that lead to debris flows
- ② Destruction of bridges and roadways
- ③ Inaccessible streets due to submerged vehicles and transportation

- ④ Disruption of digital services (wifi, local data centers, etc.)
- ⑤ Inundated businesses and stores
- ⑥ Contamination of water sources that leads to loss of clean water

Risks to you and your neighbors

- ⑦ Risk of disease from water-related mold or overflowing sewage
- ⑧ Property damage (homes, cars, etc.)
- ⑨ Risk of displacement
- ⑩ Risk of injury and death

EXTREME HEAT

What qualifies as extreme heat varies from place to place—but you know it when you feel it. It's weather that is much hotter than normal for a long period of time—usually several days in a row. Extreme heat often happens during summer and can be made worse by the urban heat island effect as well as high humidity levels.



Risks to your community

- 1 Reduced air quality & Increased energy cost
- 2 Frequent closure of schools and necessary businesses/ services
- 3 Damage to roads and pavements and strain on power grids

Risks to you and your neighbors

- 4 Increased internal body temperatures caused by extreme heat increase risk of exhaustion, stroke and death.
- 5 Unsafe conditions for outdoor activity (construction, exercise, delivery, etc.)
- 6 Dehydration, heat exhaustion (dizziness, weakness, nausea, headache), heat stroke (confusion, fainting, seizures)
- 7 Exacerbate existing health issues (e.g. cardiovascular disease, diabetes, mental health, asthma)

WHO IS THIS GUIDEBOOK FOR?

Community resilience is built by **neighbors, businesses, place-based organizations and local governments** working together.

This guidebook focuses on four specific audiences, each having a unique role to play in building community resilience.

A section is devoted to each of the following groups: **(1) Neighbors**, **(2) Businesses** and **(3) Place-Based Organizations**, while recommendations on how local governments can support these actors are included throughout.

NEIGHBORS



Neighbors supporting neighbors

- » Building awareness, trust, and communication at the block or street level.
- » Engaging in small, everyday actions to directly reduce risks.

BUSINESSES



Protecting employees, customers, and the local economy

- » Protecting employees, adapting operations, and sharing information with their networks.
- » Providing vital goods and services the community depends on and ensuring they remain available during and after extreme weather events.

PLACE-BASED ORGANIZATIONS



Stewards of the public realm. Conveners and advocates.

- » Connecting community members with information, resources and support systems, while creating safe spaces and maintaining community assets
- » Facilitating collective action and providing a shared voice with city, state and federal officials.

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDEBOOK

This guidebook is divided into three sections—offering strategies and examples tailored for **Neighbors**, **Businesses** and **Place-Based Organizations**.

Each section consists of:

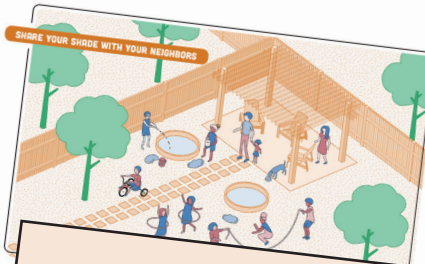
- » **Strategies and actions with corresponding illustrations**
- » **Strategies for local governments to support community-level efforts**
- » **Real world examples and additional resources** specific to each of the three groups and local governments
- » **A takeaway checklist** of strategies that can be used to guide and focus action

4

Just enough help may be right next door. Organize a neighborhood support system where you and your neighbors **share personal and public resilience resources** to ensure the most vulnerable in your community stay safe during extreme heat or flooding.

- Survey your neighbors to identify those most vulnerable to extreme weather.
- Coordinate to see who has cooling amenities, such as air conditioning, fans or pools—and is willing to share. Identify who needs cooling amenities during extreme heat. Additionally, ask your neighbors if they may need assistance right before or during flooding events, such as access to groceries and emergency supplies or a ride to a resilience hub to wait out a storm.
- If you have a car, offer a ride to your neighbors who may need assistance accessing resources or getting out of a dangerous situation.

SHARE YOUR SHADE WITH YOUR NEIGHBORS



NATURE VOLUNTEERING IN HIGHER FOLDS

Wigan, Greater Manchester, England



In Higher Folds, Wigan, residents are participating in a year-round nature volunteering program as part of the **Resilience for Communities** program's implementation in the Greater Manchester area. Activities are coordinated by local community-based organization HF-Works and range from litter-picking to surveying their neighborhood to better understand the local flora and identify areas that can be enhanced to improve neighborhood resilience.

Image Source: Resilient Cities Network

21 | NEIGHBORS

CHECKLIST FOR NEIGHBORS

- 1 Assess extreme weather risks** to your property and local infrastructure. resources to understand the main climate threats to your area, such as flooding, wildfire, or extreme heat.
- ☐ Regularly check your insurance coverages to ensure you are adequately prepared in the event of a loss. Ensure your coverages match your climate risk profile—such as flood or wildfire insurance if you are in an impacted area.
 - ☐ Document your home's belongings and record the various of large assets in the event you need to make an insurance claim.
 - ☐ Keep important documents and other valuables in water-proof containers that can be easily accessed during an emergency.

- 2 Collaborate with your neighbors to better understand your collective vulnerability to extreme weather and develop potential mitigation strategies.**
- ☐ Develop checklists and other forms of risk assessment to empower your neighbors to learn about potential risks to their homes and properties.
 - ☐ Use existing networks such as neighborhood associations or homeowner/condominium associations to distribute checklists and promote awareness of extreme weather risks.
 - ☐ Form committees or working groups with your neighbors to coordinate your efforts. Pool resources and work together to develop potential mitigation strategies.

- 3 Tap into simple and efficient neighborhood-wide communication systems** that can be used for extreme weather events and other emergencies.
- ☐ If one hasn't already been identified, designate an "official" communication medium—such as WhatsApp, an email chain, or a group text.
 - ☐ Identify which resources you'll pull emergency alerts and information from, such as local emergency management offices or national weather agencies.
 - ☐ Decide whether to communicate in a large group text or send out one-way alerts to many people at once (e.g. WhatsApp's Broadcast feature).
 - ☐ Figure out who needs a phone call or a knock on their door in addition to text alerts.

GUIDEBOOK FOR COMMUNITY RESILIENCE

WHAT IS THE ROLE OF LOCAL GOVERNMENTS IN BUILDING COMMUNITY RESILIENCE?

Local governments play a critical role in supporting community efforts by providing and maintaining the systems that communities rely on, such as streets and transportation, waste management, energy infrastructure and emergency services. They also provide foundational services that allow neighborhoods and communities to function before, during and after an extreme weather event. Beyond these core and essential services, local governments also have the ability to play critical support roles in strengthening community resilience and encouraging residents, businesses, and organizations to take action. Listed here are specific actions local governments can take to encourage and promote community resilience.



Streamlining city processes to encourage and support community-led responses.

Continually learn from communities lived experience and identify (and co-design) interventions alongside local resilience champions.



Implement community supporting infrastructure projects (such as green stormwater management, cool pavement treatments and spraygrounds) to mitigate the impacts of extreme heat and flooding.



Conduct citywide assessments for extreme weather risks. Partner with residents and small businesses when conducting these assessments.



Provide funding and incentives to support community-led resilience projects.



Fund and empower place-based organizations to conduct local assessments of property, infrastructure and other community assets.

Track and document extreme weather events to better understand patterns and plan for solutions. Disseminate findings effectively to the community groups that can use this information in tangible ways.



Coordinate across city departments and agencies to deliver a unified, efficient response. Build and maintain trust with residents through clear communication, transparency and ongoing engagement.

Develop reliable information-sharing systems to communicate extreme weather alerts and preparedness guidance to local organizations and residents.





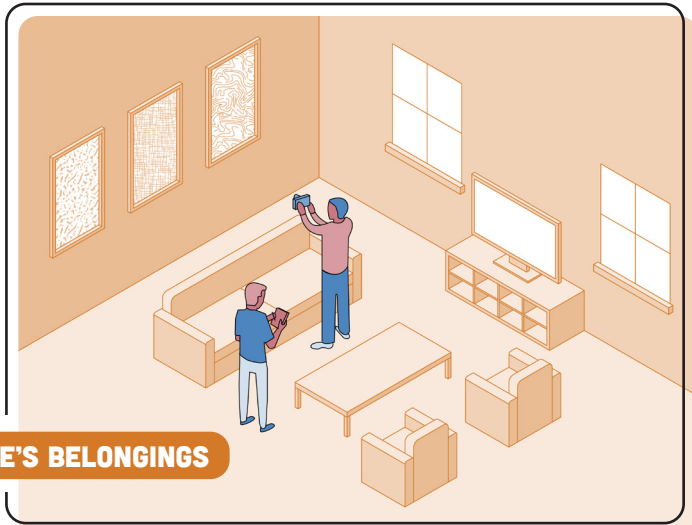
STRATEGIES FOR **NEIGHBORS**

RISK ASSESSMENT

1

Be prepared in the event of a future insurance claim. Assess extreme weather risks to your property and local infrastructure.

- a. Learn about specific risks to your home and community. You can use online tools and resources to understand the main climate threats to your area, such as flooding, wildfire or extreme heat.
- b. Regularly check your insurance coverages to ensure you are adequately prepared in the event of a loss. Ensure your coverages match your climate risk profile—such as flood or wildfire insurance if you are in an impacted area.
- c. Document your home's belongings and record the various of large assets in the event you need to make an insurance claim.
- d. Keep important documents and other valuables in water-proof containers that can be easily accessed during an emergency.



DOCUMENT YOUR HOME'S BELONGINGS

RESOURCES

[FEMA National Risk Index](#) is a database and interactive online mapping tool developed by FEMA to assess risk in every U.S. county and census tract. This tool evaluates each geographical area against 18 recognized climate hazards such as earthquake, flooding and extreme heat.

[ClimateCheck](#) is an online database that allows you to search your property by address and assess its risks against climate hazards such as drought, extreme heat, flood and fire.

[Wildfire Risk to Communities](#) is an easy-to-use website featuring interactive maps, charts and resources to help communities understand, explore and reduce wildfire risk.

— STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS & COORDINATION —

2

Work together on managing risks and finding solutions. Collaborate with your neighbors to better understand your collective vulnerability to extreme weather and develop potential mitigation strategies.

- Develop checklists and other forms of risk assessment to empower your neighbors to learn about potential risks to their homes and properties.
- Use existing networks such as neighborhood associations or homeowner/condominium associations to distribute checklists and promote awareness of extreme weather risks.
- Form committees or working groups with your neighbors to collectivize your efforts. Pool resources and work together to develop potential mitigation strategies.



BE A BUDDY PROGRAM

New York, NY, USA

[Be a Buddy Program](#) is a community-based resilience initiative in New York City that matches vulnerable residents (especially older, isolated people with health risks) with trained local volunteers who perform wellness check-ins and connect them to municipal services, including food and air conditioning.

Image Source: New York City Health



BERKELEY DISASTER PREPAREDNESS NEIGHBORHOOD NETWORK

Berkeley, CA, USA



Berkeley Disaster Prep Neighborhood Network (BDPNN)
FREE Emergency Go Kits for Seniors and AFN Community
www.bdpnnetwork.org

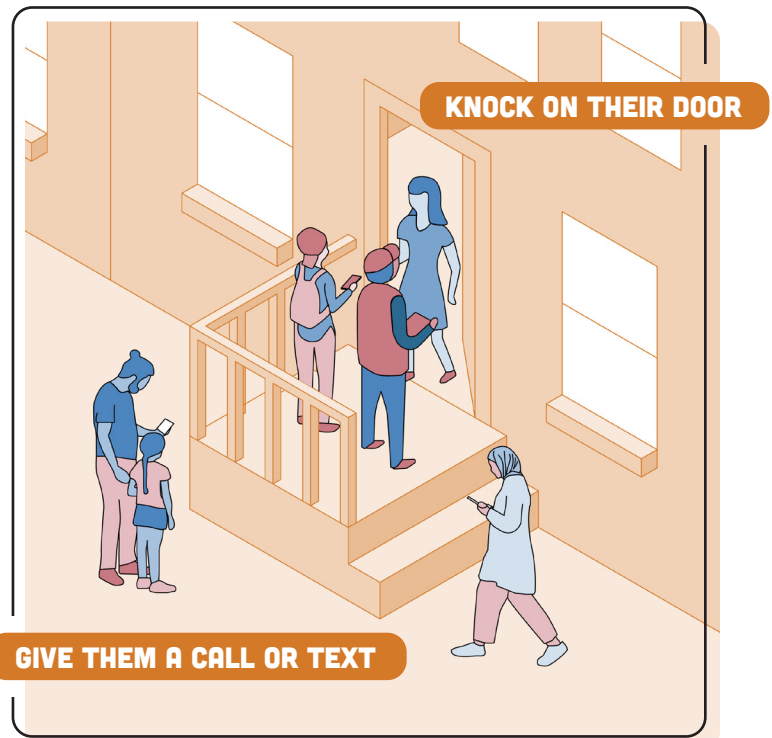
[Berkeley Disaster Preparedness Neighborhood Network \(BDPNN\)](#) is a volunteer-run organization dedicated to helping neighborhoods prepare collectively for potential disasters. Also known as “The Network”, the organization encourages the residents and neighbors to form a neighborhood group that fosters collaboration and uses communication tools to educate and support each other in emergency preparedness, especially seniors and people with disabilities. One of the initiatives includes an emergency go-kit that is provided freely to the neighborhood.

Image Source: Berkeley Disaster Preparedness Neighborhood Network

3

*Extreme weather events are worse when people are isolated and can't access available assistance. Tap into **simple and efficient neighborhood-wide communication systems** that can be used for extreme weather events and other emergencies.*

- If one hasn't already been identified, designate an "official" communication medium—such as WhatsApp, an email chain, or a group text.
- Identify which sources you'll pull emergency alerts and information from, such as local emergency management offices or national weather agencies.
- Decide whether to communicate in a large group text or send out one-way alerts to many people at once (e.g. WhatsApp's Broadcast feature).
- Figure out who needs a phone call or a knock on their door in addition to text alerts.



RESOURCES

[Fairfax County's 5 Steps to Neighborhood Preparedness: A Neighbor Survey](#) provides a one-page survey to gather neighbors' information preparing for climate disasters including family members with special needs. Multiple packing lists are also included to be used by neighbors during disasters.

Image Source: County of Fairfax, VA



NEIGHBOR SURVEY

Are you really prepared? How prepared we are now, before a disaster, will determine what our lives will be like afterwards.

Help us build a Neighborhood Disaster Plan! To complete the plan, we need to know what extra help you might need in a disaster, and what special skills or supplies you have that can help all of us. (All information should be kept confidential by the neighborhood and is only for neighborhood disaster planning.) Please complete one form per household, business, or organization and return it to your neighborhood contact. This information is voluntary.

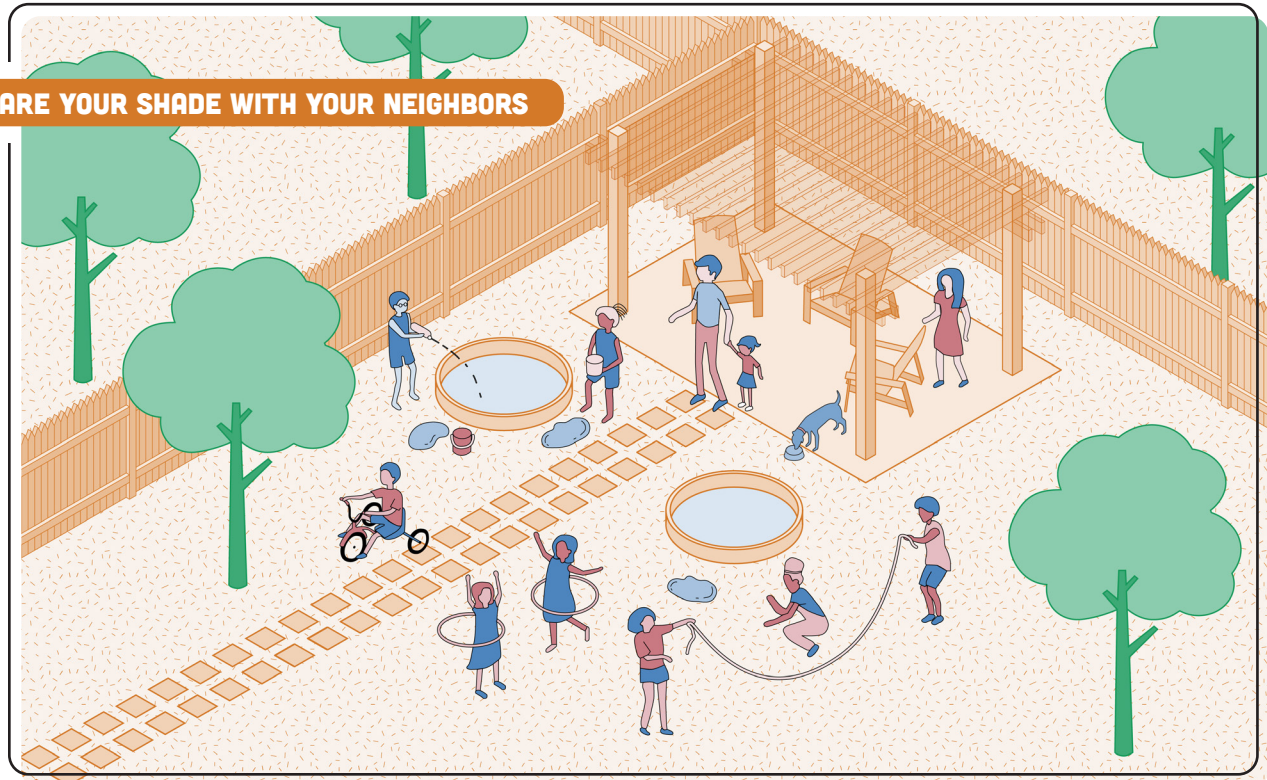
1. What is your name, telephone, e-mail, and address?

4

Just enough help may be right next door. Organize a neighborhood support system where you and your neighbors **share personal and public resilience resources** to ensure the most vulnerable in your community stay safe during extreme heat or flooding.

- a. Survey your neighbors to identify those most vulnerable to extreme weather.
- b. Coordinate to see who has cooling amenities, such as air conditioning, fans or pools—and *is willing to share*. Identify who needs cooling amenities during extreme heat. Additionally, ask your neighbors if they may need assistance right before or during flooding events, such as access to groceries and emergency supplies or a ride to a resilience hub to wait out a storm.
- c. If you have a car, offer a ride to your neighbors who may need assistance accessing resources or getting out of a dangerous situation.

SHARE YOUR SHADE WITH YOUR NEIGHBORS



– PHYSICAL IMPROVEMENTS

5

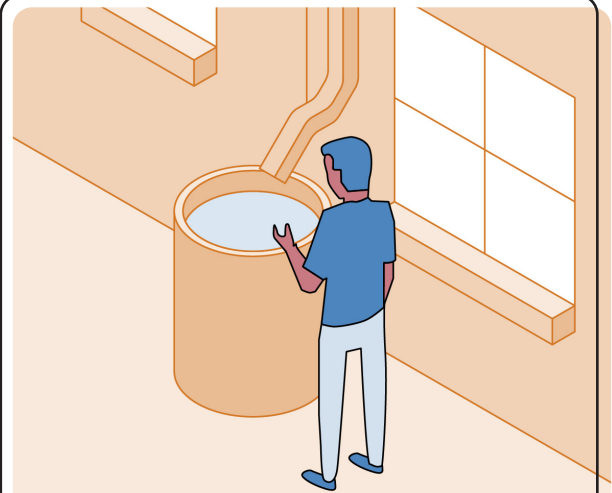
*Improvements to individual properties can lead to an overall greener and cooler community. **Upgrade and perform regular maintenance** to your home and property to reduce stormwater runoff and add more shade.*

- a. Regularly clear your gutters, downspouts, and any storm drains near your property to ensure that water can flow unobstructed during heavy rain.
- b. Connect your downspouts to rain barrels and collect rainwater to reduce stormwater runoff and provide a source of water for your yard.
- c. Plant native plants and trees for stormwater gardens and replace pavement with permeable materials to increase overall permeability around your property.
- d. Add shade structures to create a cooler backyard for warmer months.

CLEAR STORM DRAINS



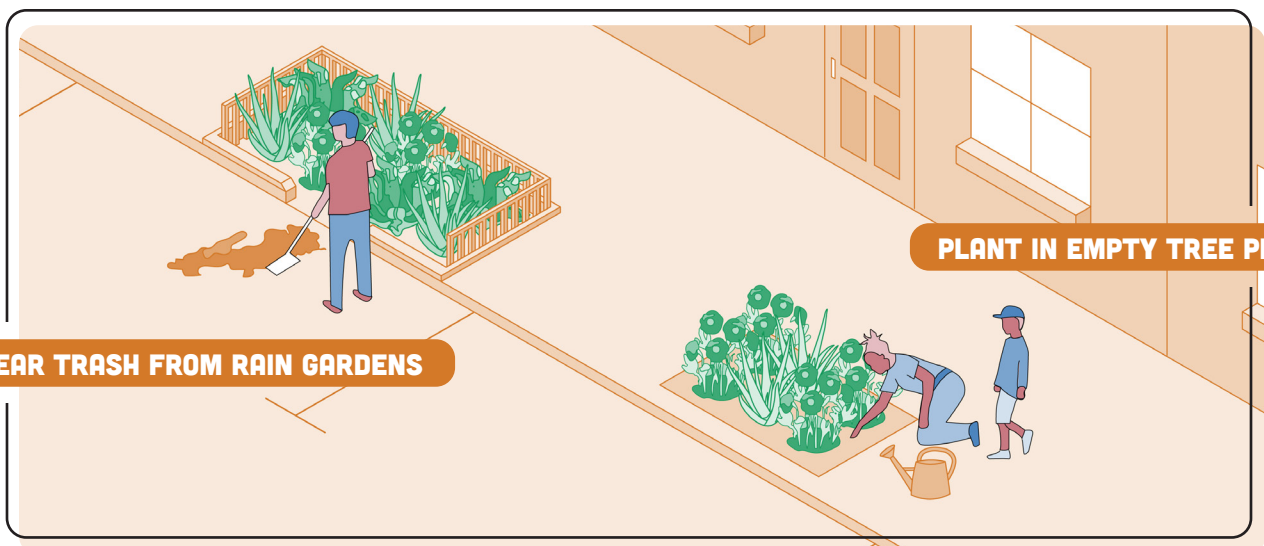
CONNECT YOUR DOWNSPOUT TO A RAIN BARREL



6

More paving means more heat and more stormwater runoff, leading to more trash clogging sewers, more flooding and more pollution entering our rivers when it rains. Reclaim underutilized spaces in your neighborhood to **add more greenery and open space**, and host regular **block clean up days** with your neighbors to strengthen community bonds and keep new spaces clean.

- a. Survey your neighborhood for underutilized spaces such as empty tree pits or dirt patches on sidewalks.
- b. Plant trees or low-maintenance shrubs/flowers that require little watering and care in empty tree pits.
- c. Organize a rotation of neighbors to help with upkeep.
- d. Gather contact information from your neighbors and spread the word (including a date, time, and meeting place) through flyers, social media, community boards, and word of mouth.
- e. Collect supplies ahead of time, including shovels, rakes, gloves, trash bags, recycling bins, watering cans and wheelbarrows.
- f. Split volunteers into groups for different jobs, such as trash pick-up, planting flowers or shrubs, pruning trees or clearing storm drains, and assign team leads to keep each group on track.
- g. Decide in advance how trash and yard waste will be disposed of (hauling to the local dump, arranging a city pick-up, etc.)
- h. End the day with a potluck or block party to celebrate everyone's hard work.
- i. Determine future frequency of clean up days based on neighbor interest and availability.



ALIEF POCKET PRAIRIE PROJECT

Houston, TX, USA



Alief is located at the southwest edge of Houston and faces frequent flooding and extreme heat throughout the year. [Alief Pocket Prairie Project](#) targets these climate issues by transforming a vacant land into a community garden, which can improve stormwater management and mitigate urban heat island effect while providing an outdoor space for residents to grow their vegetables. The project promotes community ownership through volunteer opportunities and youth education, building local capacity to continue implementing resilience projects. Additionally, Alief organizations distribute dry bags containing emergency kits during community meetings to support immediate disaster preparedness.

Image Source: Houston Chronicle

NATURE VOLUNTEERING IN HIGHER FOLDS

Wigan, Greater Manchester, England



In Higher Folds, Wigan, residents are participating in a year-round nature volunteering program as part of the [Resilience for Communities program](#)'s implementation in the Greater Manchester area. Activities are coordinated by local community-based organization HFWorks and range from litter-picking to surveying their neighborhood to better understand the local flora and identify areas that can be enhanced to improve neighborhood resilience.

Image Source: Resilient Cities Network

WHAT CAN LOCAL GOVERNMENTS DO?

1

Streamline permitting processes and approvals to encourage residents and resident groups to take on community resilience projects, like planting trees or installing rain gardens.



2

Create and distribute multilingual guides, infographics and short videos explaining local risks (e.g. floods, heatwaves, hurricanes) and clear, actionable steps for staying safe.

3

Create a community warning system or public notification system for natural hazards (especially for extreme heat and potential flooding events) and utilize trusted communication channels to better reach residents.



4

Run seasonal public awareness campaigns through social media, local TV/radio, text alerts and community events to share timely safety tips before and during high-risk periods.

5

Provide funding and resources for resident-led volunteer initiatives, such as supplying tools and trash collection for clean-up events.



6

Empower residents, homeowners associations, and condominium associations to conduct risk assessments and audits of their property and local infrastructure.

7

Revise regulations to incentivize homeowners to make resilient modifications, such as adding shade structure, painting roofs white or installing high-efficiency appliances.



LANDLORD PROVIDED COOLING SPACE

Oregon, USA



Landlord Provided Cooling Space is a cash incentive program funded by Energy Trust of Oregon encouraging landlords of multifamily properties and manufactured home parks to create a shared cooling space. Some examples of a shared cooling space include a meeting room and a community club house with board games. After the extreme heat in 2021, Oregon passed a legislation to protect the population lacking cooling measures to beat the heat.

Image Source: EnergyTrustofOregon.org

PARIS PERMIT TO PLANT

Paris, France

[Paris Permit to Plant](#) is a program that enables groups of residents, community organizations, and businesses to garden in public spaces throughout Paris by simplifying permitting processes. Gardening can include planting flowers at the bottom of a tree pit. Each permit is valid for three years and can be renewed for up to 12 years. This program promotes community stewardship and invites anyone interested in making Paris greener and more vibrant.



Image Source: Ville de Paris



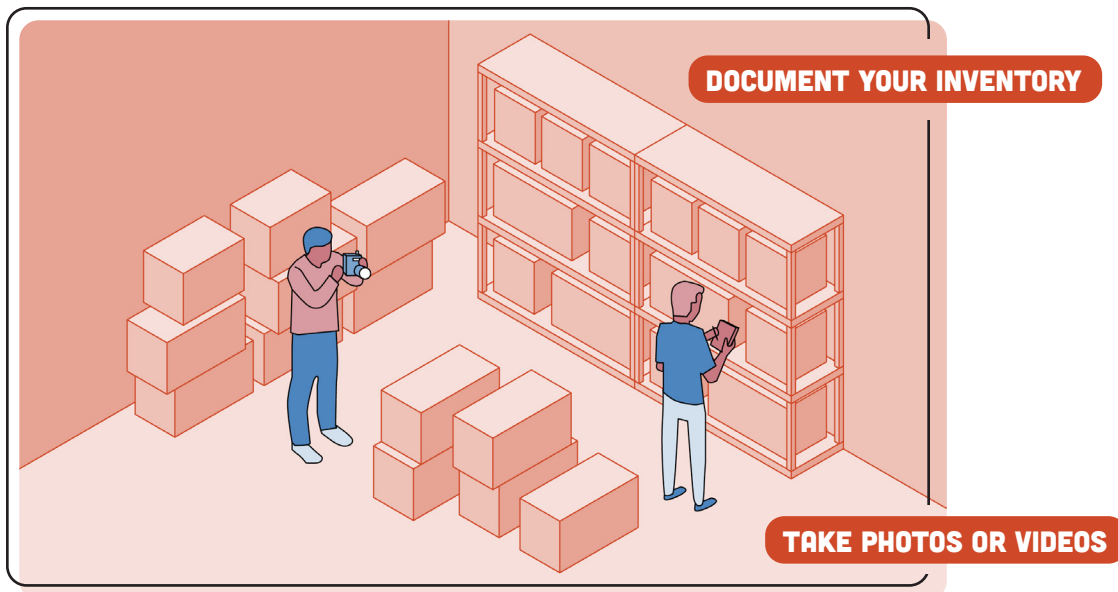
STRATEGIES FOR **BUSINESSES**

- RISK ASSESSMENT

1

Get to know your risks. **Conduct a climate risk assessment** of your business and/or property to identify potential hazards that could disrupt your operations.

- a. Determine the specific climate hazards to which your business may be vulnerable, and identify how these hazards might impact your assets, supply chains and operations.
- b. Review your insurance coverage and consider additional policies, such as business interruption coverage or ancillary flood insurance, to better protect against extreme weather impacts.
- c. Take inventory and photos of your equipment, supplies and other items in case of future damage and insurance claims.



RESOURCES

[FEMA National Risk Index](#) is a database and interactive online mapping tool developed by FEMA to assess risk in every U.S. county and census tract. This tool evaluates each geographical area against 18 recognized climate hazards such as earthquake, flooding and extreme heat.

[ClimateCheck](#) is an online database that allows you to search your property by address and assess its risks against climate hazards such as drought, extreme heat, flood and fire.

[Wildfire Risk to Communities](#) is an easy-to-use website featuring interactive maps, charts, and resources to help communities understand, explore and reduce wildfire risk.

— STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS & COORDINATION —

2

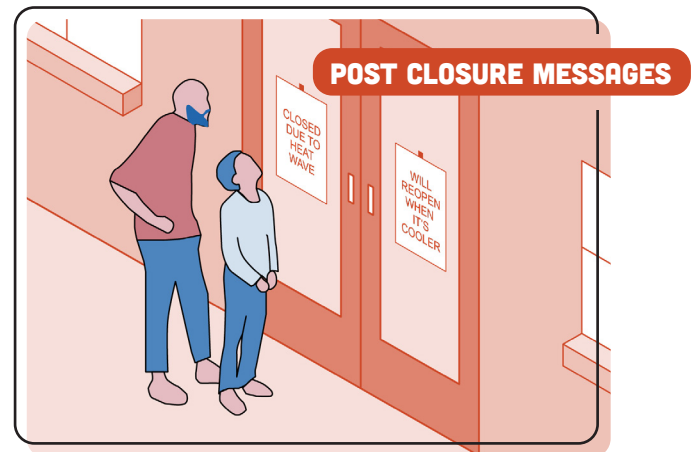
A little prep goes a long way. Be better prepared with a **business emergency plan** that outlines what to do before and after extreme weather events and helps all employees understand responsibilities.

Before

- a. Determine your thresholds: when does the business close and when do alternative business hours or schedules get used?
- b. Identify what actions need to take place right before extreme weather hits.
- c. Create an alternative work schedule to use during extreme weather events that don't meet the closure threshold.
 - » During a heatwave, it may make sense to avoid being open during the hottest times of the day and to schedule more employees at once to accommodate more breaks.
 - » Develop protocols for other relevant disruptions, such as weather-related school closures that may disrupt employees schedules, and make a plan for how to adjust work schedules accordingly.
- d. Contact employees about schedule changes or closures.
- e. Contact suppliers to reschedule deliveries.
- f. Take inventory.
- g. Post pre-made closure messages.
- h. Adjust the number of employees and shift length based on emerging forecasts.

After

- i. Determine what actions are needed to get back to business and stay prepared for the next emergency.
- j. Inspect your business for damage.
- k. Document damages with photos for insurance claims.
- l. Restock emergency supplies.
- m. Debrief with staff to identify lessons learned.



RESOURCES

[London Fire Brigade's Flooding Safety Guide](#) is a list of key actions that are applicable for your business to take before and during flood events.

[Heat Illness Prevention Guide](#) is an information guidebook that can be used to identify and mitigate heat hazards in workplaces.

3

*Coordinate to leverage impact. **Work with other small businesses, chambers of commerce, main street organizations, local municipal staff and other relevant partners** to maximize impact for community resilience and stay engaged when disaster strikes.*

- a. If one doesn't exist already, form a resilience committee with local business and economic development stakeholders to identify business-led resilience initiatives.
- b. Register with your local chamber of commerce and connect with financial institutions that can help you identify loans, insurance policies and capital specifically designed to support climate adaptation investments.
- c. Register your business as a cooling site or a food access point through local government websites to help your community stay safe and healthy, while also generating positive publicity for your business.
- d. Coordinate with adjacent businesses to co-create shade structures or share cooling amenities for customers and staff to minimize the resources needed.
- e. Use your storefronts and bulletin boards to advertise emergency information and raise awareness about extreme weather risks.
- f. Use your social media pages and/or newsletters to inform your customers about resources available through local municipalities, chambers of commerce and other relevant partners.



GREATER MIAMI CHAMBER OF COMMERCE RESILIENCE COMMITTEE

Greater Miami Region, Florida, USA



[The Greater Miami Chamber of Commerce](#) established the Resilience Committee to bring together private sector stakeholders and key government officials in an effort to protect natural resources and enhance climate readiness across the Greater Miami region. Emphasizing collaboration, the Committee develops and promotes strategies focused on freshwater protection and the prevention of saltwater intrusion. It also partners closely with local government agencies to advocate for funding and implementation of a range of resilience-focused programs.

Image Source: Rolling Stone, CNS Maryland, Circle of Blue (from left to right)

- PHYSICAL IMPROVEMENTS

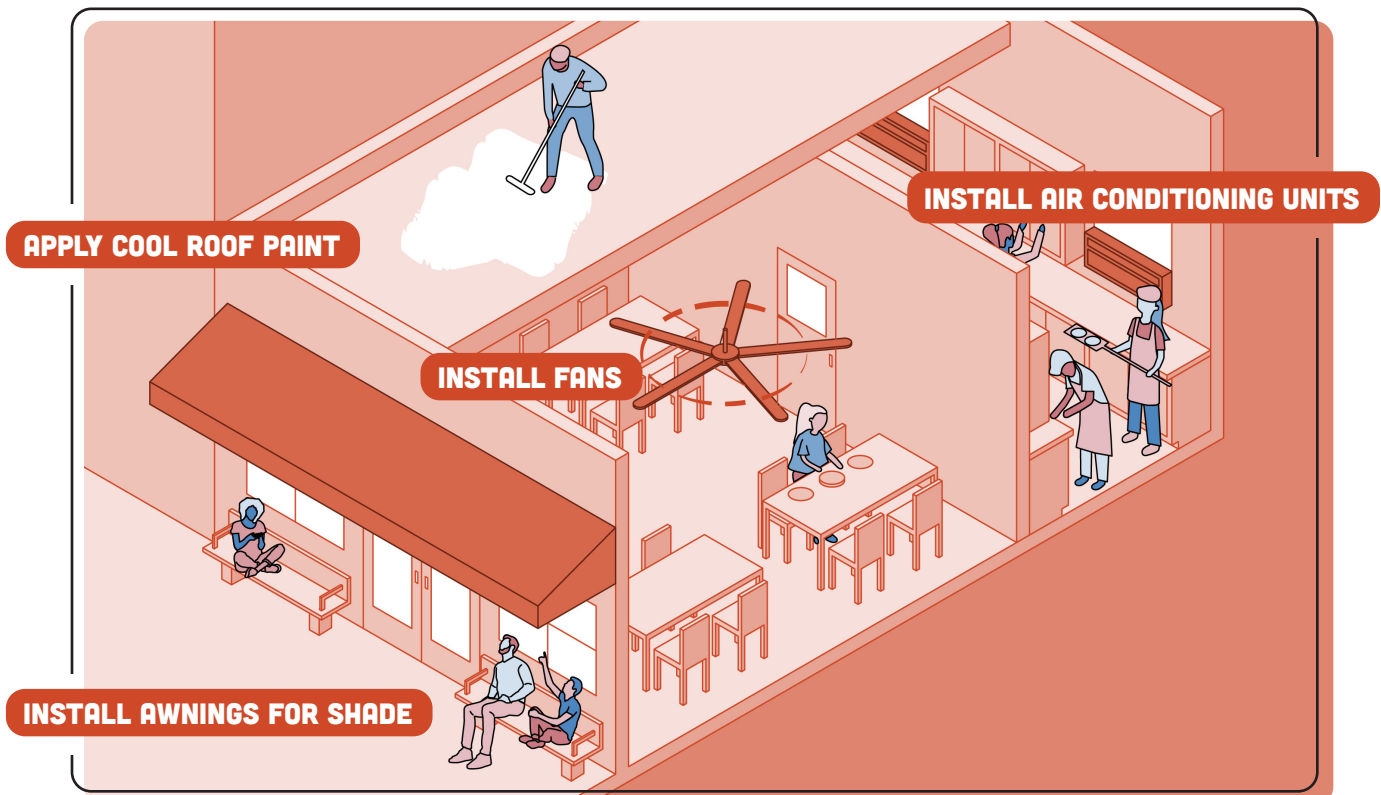
4

*Small investments can help keep your business cool and running even during extreme heat events. Make physical improvements to **keep your employees and customers comfortable**.*

- Install blinds, curtains or reflective film on sunny windows to reduce heat buildup and use insulating or sealing tape to keep the cool air in.
- Create shade structures outside your business to provide a cool place for staff and customers to rest.
- Move large furniture or displays away from vents, windows and fans to create clear pathways for air to flow.
- Install cooling systems like fans and AC units strategically to maximize their benefit. Position fans next to windows and doors, with one facing inward to draw in cool air and another facing outward to expel warm air.

RESOURCES

[Shade structure and its benefits](#) are explained in this link to help you improve your businesses' climate resiliency.



SMALL BUSINESS MICRO-GRANT FOR HEAT RESILIENCE

Boston, MA, USA



As a part of the Cool Down Chinatown initiative in Boston, [Small Business Micro-grants for Heat Resilience](#) assists local businesses with portable cooling and air quality improvement devices, such as fans and cooling kits, and in other heat modifications to the physical building structure. The initiative has also convened several business partners as part of a series of working groups to coordinate response in the event of a heat emergency.

Image Source: Boston Globe

RESOURCES

[Commercial Buildings' Flood Preparedness](#) is a useful resource that provides a checklist to help you better prepare your buildings for potential flood damage.

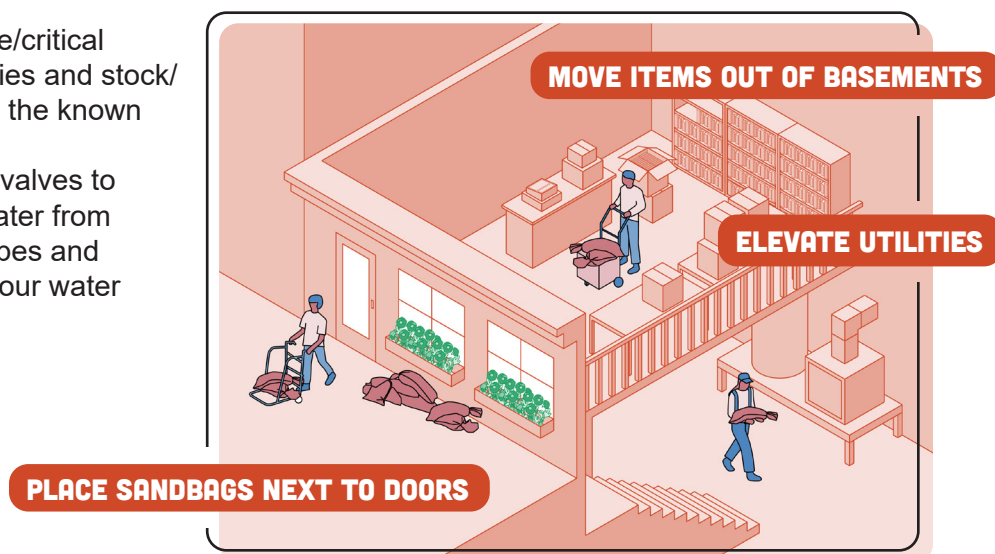
[Flood-proofing Tips](#) explains the importance of waterproofing your building above foundation structure and how it can be done to prevent flood damage.

Developed by EPA, [Soak Up the Rain](#) gives you a rain garden installation guide tailored to the Northeast climate, including planning and design strategies.

5

*Flood-proof your business before disaster strikes. Prepare your workplace against flooding through **short-term and long-term infrastructure improvements**.*

- a. Prepare your business right before heavy storms through short-term interventions that can minimize potential damage caused by flooding:
 - » Have supplies on-hand, such as plastic sheeting, plywood, tape and sandbags, to be ready for quick deployment.
 - » Move important items such as important documents, computers, and essential equipment to a higher floor if possible. For items that cannot be moved, cover with plastic sheetings or store in dry bags.
 - » Use temporary barriers such as water filled barriers, sandbags or flood gates/panels at doors and windows. Shut off gas, water and electrical power in anticipation of flooding.
 - » Install sump pumps to remove water that has accumulated in below-ground spaces, such as basements.
 - » Use water-resistant materials during any renovations or new construction for your business/property.
 - » Seal cracks and openings in your building to prevent water from getting in.
 - » Improve drainage around your business/property so that water drains away from your foundation.
 - » Install rain gardens or permeable pavement on your property to absorb stormwater and reduce stress on public sewer systems.
- b. Invest in capital improvements that will flood-proof your business in the long-term, such as:
 - » Elevate sensitive/critical equipment, utilities and stock/inventory above the known flood level.
 - » Install backflow valves to prevent stormwater from entering your pipes and contaminating your water supply.
- c. Perform regular maintenance for equipment and systems that mitigate flooding.



WHAT CAN LOCAL GOVERNMENTS DO?

1

Offer preparedness guidance and toolkits—including simple checklists, templates and training—to help small businesses protect property, safeguard inventory and maintain operations during extreme weather.



2

Connect businesses with local chambers and emergency managers to develop continuity plans and share best practices for weather resilience for businesses.

3

Provide funding and financial incentives for business owners to:

- » Take on risk assessments.
- » Make upgrades to their businesses and properties, such as installing AC units and floodproofing.
- » Repair damage and reopen after weather-related disruptions.



4

Support main street organizations, chambers of commerce and other place-based organizations working to assess and organize important neighborhood commercial areas ahead of disasters.

BUSINESS PREPAREDNESS AND RESILIENCY PROGRAM (BPREP) GRANT

New York NY, USA

The [BPREP Grant](#) provides up to \$5,000 to support small businesses located in New York City floodplains with climate-resilient infrastructure upgrades, such as generators and flood barriers. In addition, the grant offers free risk assessment to help identify the vulnerabilities and prepare the businesses for future flooding events. NYC Emergency Management also provides the Community Risk Assessment Dashboard that is easily accessible by business owners and stakeholders.

More info [HERE](#)



Image Source: Vox

FLOOD RESILIENT SUBURBS – BUSINESS RESILIENCE PROGRAM

Brisbane, Queensland, Australia

Flood Resilient Suburbs - [Business Resilience Program](#) is a City of Brisbane initiative targeted to help businesses and property owners in preparing for and recovering from frequent flooding. As a part of the initiative, business owners receive an on-site assessment of the property, followed by a report outlining the mitigation strategies that may include physical structural improvement and practical, resilient-focused actions. The initiative also provides a tailored plan specific to the property that will enable them to respond quickly and recover effectively from future flood events.



Image Source: New York Times



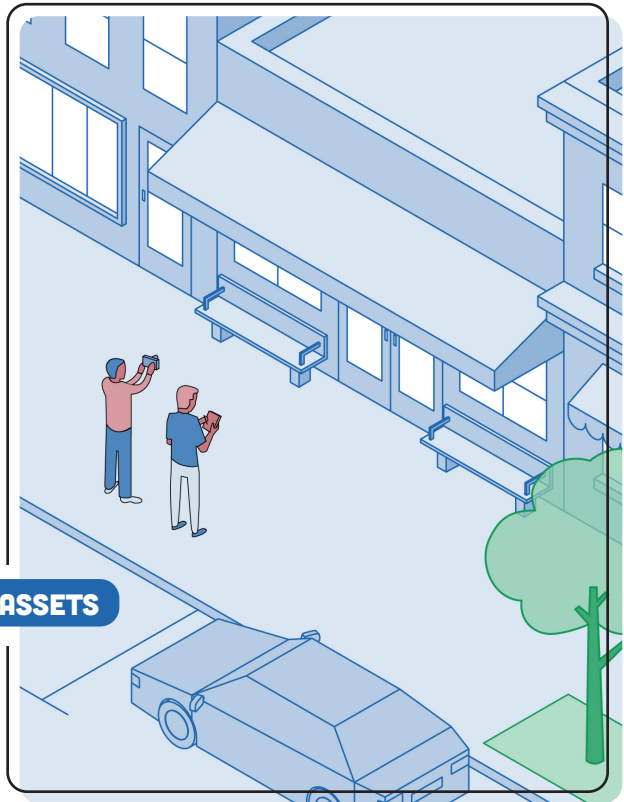
STRATEGIES FOR PLACE-BASED ORGANIZATIONS

— RISK ASSESSMENT & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT —

1

Know the risks to protect your community. Utilize **district-level risk assessments and inventories** to help small businesses and property owners in your community stay ahead of risks and hazards.

- a. If one doesn't exist already, work with local government actors to create an inventory spreadsheet that documents all of the assets within your community.
- b. Document these assets further through photos and videos, in case of future damage from extreme weather hazards.
- c. Coordinate with your local officials to understand the main climate threats to your community, such as flooding, wildfire or extreme heat.



DOCUMENT COMMUNITY ASSETS

RESOURCES

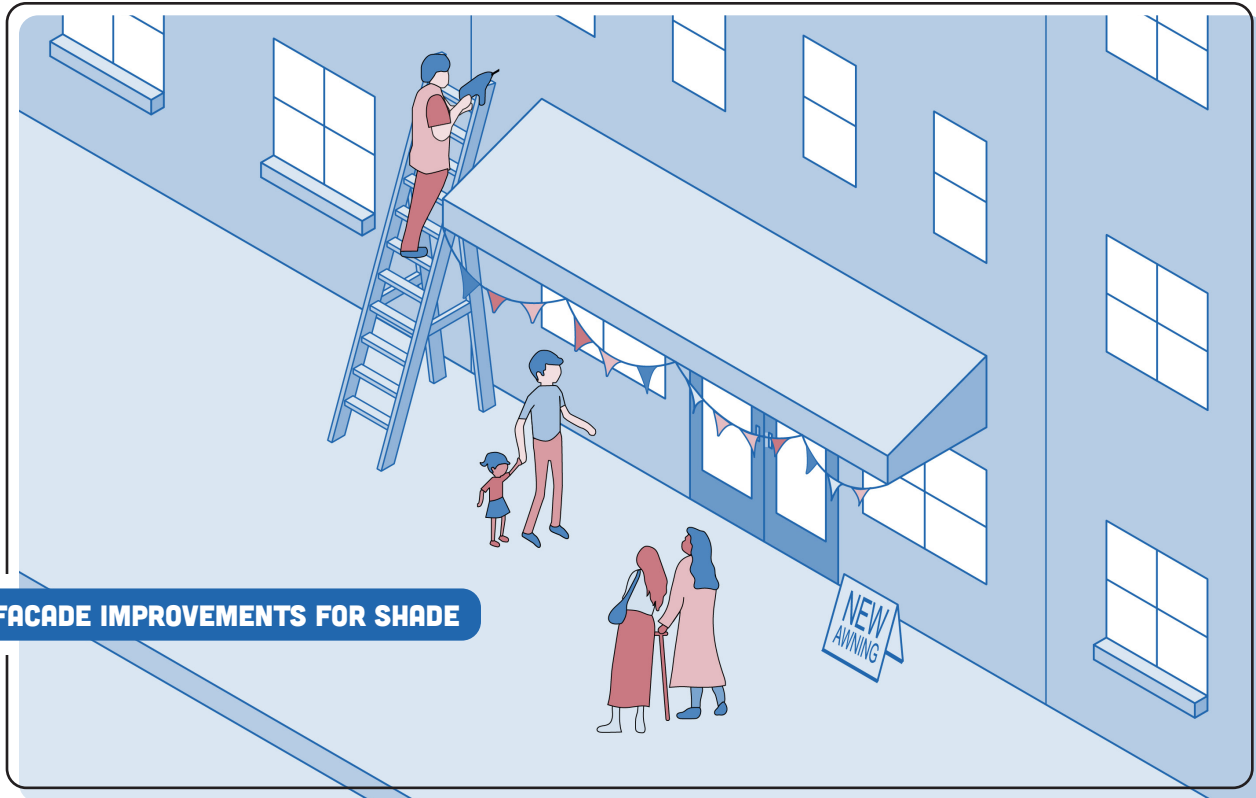
The [Main Street America's Main Street Disaster and Resilience Toolkit](#) is designed to help Main Street and commercial districts understand climate risks and their vulnerabilities, develop plans to mitigate the impact of disasters, strengthen climate preparedness and protect historically marginalized communities from unequal impacts.

[Community Risk Assessment](#) (CRA) is a participatory process in which local community members collect risk-relevant data to empower the local communities and organizations in addressing environmental risks.

2

*Sometimes we need a little help to overcome challenges. **Grant programs and financial incentives** can be used to encourage small businesses and nonprofits to make investments to become more resilient.*

- a. Work with the city to develop a resilience improvement grant program for small businesses to take on infrastructure upgrades.
- b. Identify funding sources and determine which businesses/organizations and what types of improvements are eligible for the program.
- c. If an existing facade improvement grant program exists, advocate to include resilience projects as eligible expenses, such as adding a storefront canopy, upgrading cooling equipment or adding misters to an outdoor seating area.
- d. Explore a supplementary emergency grant program to help small businesses in your area bounce back faster after a disaster.



FACADE IMPROVEMENTS FOR SHADE

HEART ON MAIN STREET GRANT PROGRAM

Atlanta, GA, USA

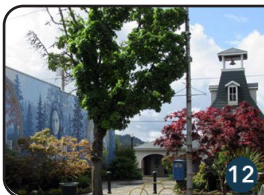


Main Street America's recently launched "[Heart on Main Street Grant Program](#)" supports small businesses impacted by natural disasters. Through grants up to \$10,000, small business owners are able to access funds to repair the damage, replace essential equipment, and resume operations faster.

Image Source: Main Street America

COTTAGE GROVE MAIN STREET DISASTER INVENTORIES REPORT

Cottage Grove, OR, USA



ADDRESS: 709 EAST MAIN
ALL AMERICAN CITY SQUARE



ADDRESS: 803-811 EAST MAIN
DATE OF CONSTRUCTION: 1911
HISTORIC NAME: COTTAGE GROVE
HOTEL

[Cottage Grove Main Street Disaster Inventories Report](#) outlines the Disaster Resilience Plan for Heritage Resources in Cottage Grove. The purpose of the plan is to protect, manage and help the recovery of heritage assets during the emergencies and climate disasters. Beginning with an inventory of heritage sites and their vulnerabilities, the report highlights the importance of regularly updating this information and fostering collaboration with stakeholders to ensure long-term preservation and resilience.

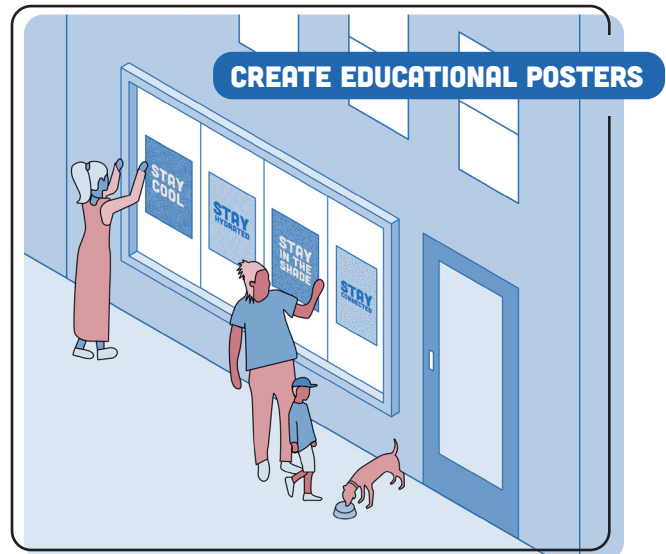
Image Source: State of Oregon

— STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS & COORDINATION — (MARKETING AND EVENTS)

3

*Knowledge is powerful in helping communities become more resilient. **Develop educational content** about flooding and extreme heat that can be shared through community newsletters, social media, local radio and word-of-mouth networks.*

- a. Coordinate with public health, emergency management and public works agencies to align with official guidance and create materials that outline the risks as well as simple, everyday actions that residents can take.
- b. Advocate to have materials translated into the languages spoken in your community.
- c. Schedule regular distribution, especially before high-risk seasons (summer heat, rainy season).
- d. Collect community feedback and update materials to improve clarity and usefulness.



BOSTON CHINATOWN'S HEAT ACTION PLAN

Boston, MA, USA

[Boston Chinatown's Heat Action Plan](#) is a roadmap for the community to prepare for and respond to heat emergencies. The plan was developed in collaboration with residents, local community organizations, partners and city agencies that worked together to improve coordination and communication, developing targeted resources and culturally-appropriate materials to raise awareness and enhance local capacity to prepare and respond to heat emergencies.

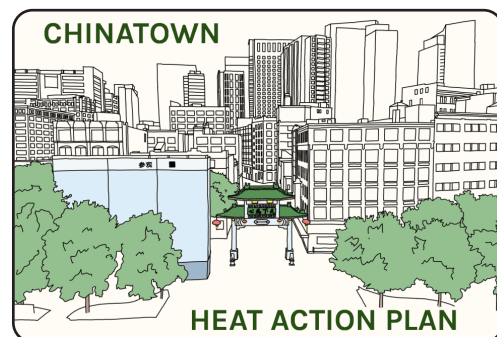
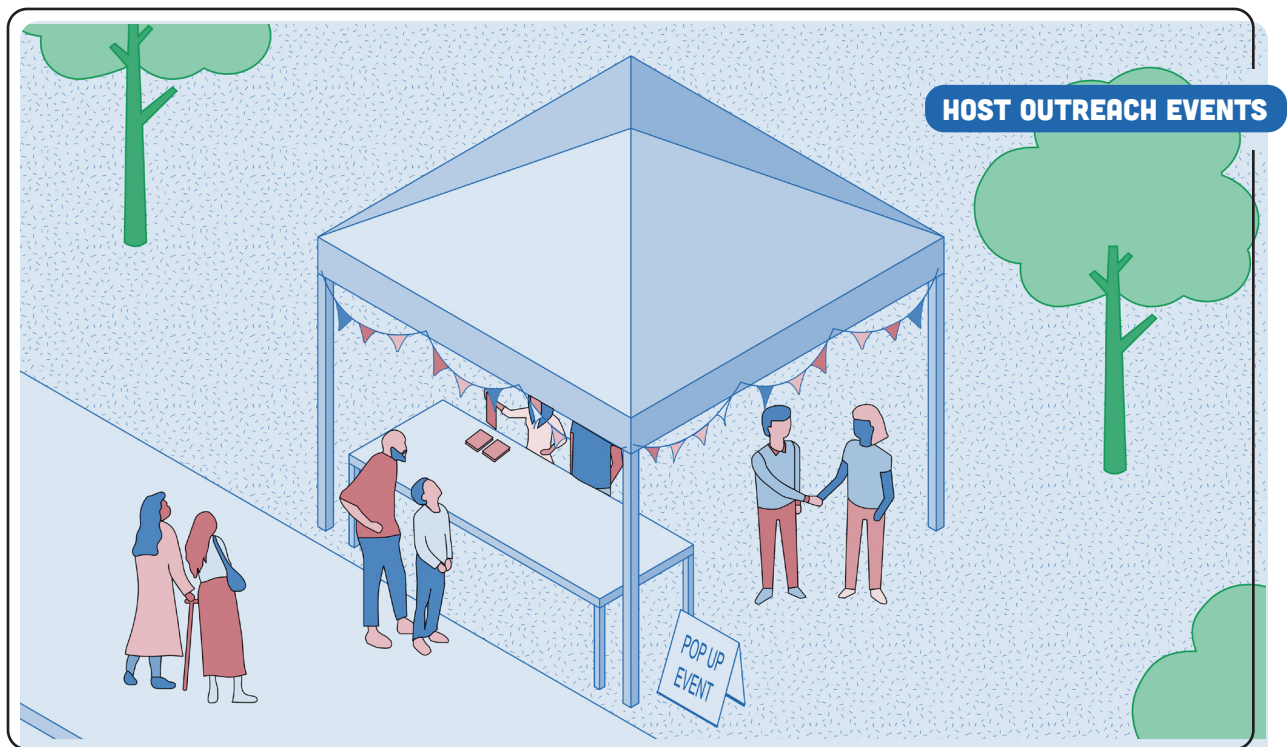


Image Source: Resilient Cities Network

4

*Important information needs to be tailored to different audiences. **Organize outreach events** that promote awareness of local heat and flooding risks in clear, culturally relevant ways.*

- a. Develop an engagement plan that identifies critical communities in your communities and how best to reach them.
- b. Partner with city departments and relevant private sector actors to host workshops on specific topics that may be difficult for community members to navigate on their own.
- c. Create marketing materials to advertise your events, and partner with local organizations, businesses and government departments to further spread the word.
- d. Provide translation services at all events, if possible.
- e. Share take-home resources, such as a resilience checklist or emergency contacts list.



– ADVOCACY & PLANNING

5

*Community action is more effective when everyone is working together toward a larger, shared vision. **If one doesn't already exist, support the development of a community resilience plan** for a safer and greener neighborhood.*

- a. Ensure a diverse planning team that includes residents, businesses, community organizations and local officials as well as representation from groups that are most vulnerable to extreme weather such as seniors.
- b. Provide input on community risks and resources by identifying local hazards, mapping critical and non-traditional assets and gathering community input that reflects resident's lived experience.
- c. Help community members develop shared goals and an overall vision that define what a resilient future looks like for your community.
- d. Host events for community feedback on the strategies and projects developed and help identify appropriate local partners for actions where possible.



GATHER COMMUNITY FEEDBACK

RESOURCES

[EPA Flood Resilience Checklist](#) provides a series of questions to help you and your community ensure the built environment is flood-resilient and that future developments are directed away from flood-prone areas. The checklist also offers guidance on implementing stormwater management strategies in watershed areas to further protect people, businesses and infrastructure.

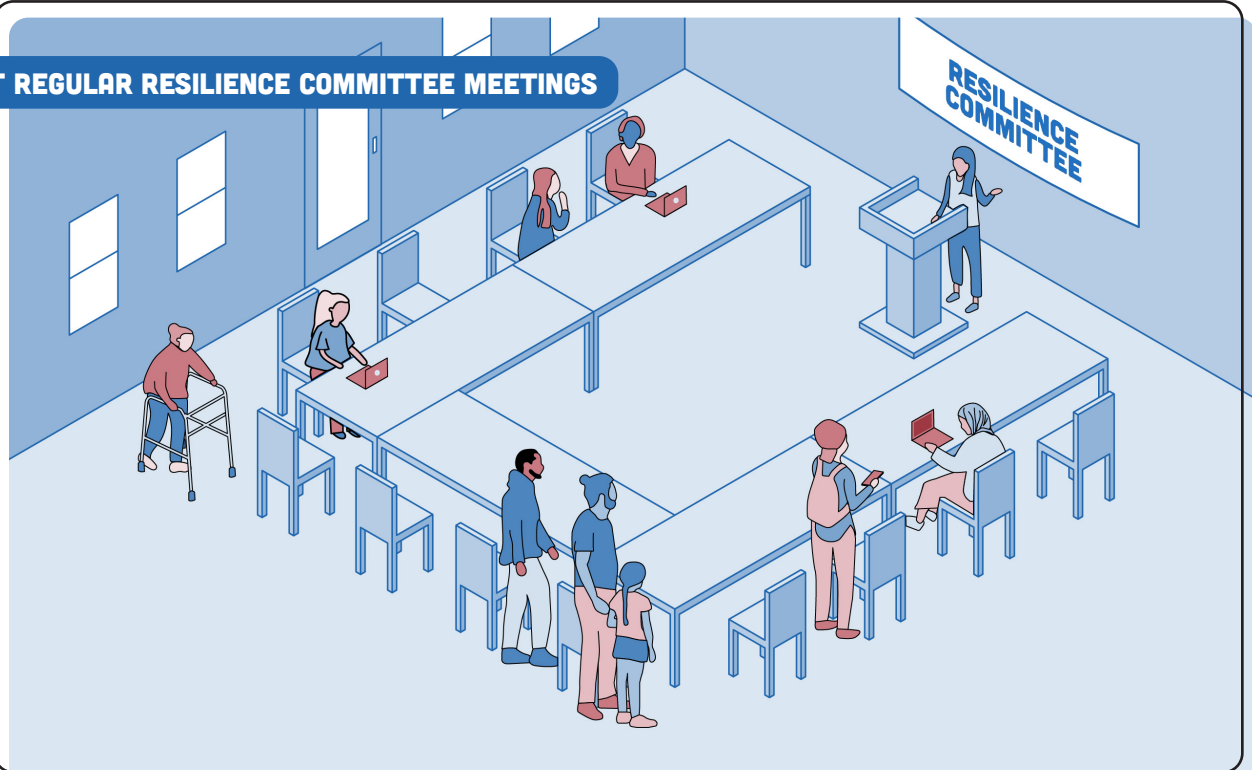
6

Progress requires consistent and dedicated attention to the issues at hand.

Create a community resilience committee to help keep these issues top of mind and central to the planning of your community.

- a. Identify important stakeholders who are already doing work related to community resilience and invite them to join the committee. Also include a path for interested community members to get involved in the committee and its work.
- b. Explore participation from local elected officials or multiple city departments working on resilience to ensure collaboration and break down silos.
- c. Determine the roles, responsibilities and initial priorities of the committee.
- d. Host regular meetings to advance initiatives and provide a platform for outside community members to express concerns and issues they're experiencing related to resilience.
- e. Review progress regularly to analyze which projects and initiatives are doing well and which need more support.

HOST REGULAR RESILIENCE COMMITTEE MEETINGS



SAN ANTONIO'S CLIMATE READY NEIGHBORHOOD'S POD PROGRAM

San Antonio, TX, USA

[Climate Ready Neighborhood's POD program](#) supports neighborhoods in San Antonio to foster climate resilience together as a community. Through this program, an individual or a neighborhood POD, which is a community-led group built to support each other towards climate readiness, are able to receive information and education, connected partnerships and resources and funding can be provided. Each POD has access to various resources including microgrants up to \$5,000.



Image Source: City of San Antonio

MAIN STREET DISASTER AND RESILIENCE TOOLKIT

Various Main Streets Around the World

The [Main Street America's Main Street Disaster and Resilience Toolkit](#) is designed to help Main Street and commercial districts understand climate risks and their vulnerabilities, develop plans to mitigate the impact of disasters, strengthen climate preparedness and protect historically marginalized communities from unequal impacts.

Image Source: Main Street America



- PHYSICAL IMPROVEMENTS & PLACEMAKING

7

*Proactively invest to protect local residents and grow a sense of community. Tap into existing grants to implement **physical improvements as part of an overall placemaking strategy** for the public realm that contributes to climate resilience, while also reinforcing a sense of community and place.*

- Explore the range of options available for resilience improvements, such as short-term tactical urbanism projects, quick, low-cost solutions during peak summer months and permanent interventions that are maintained year-round. Focus on interventions that both improve community resilience and create a better public realm.
- Identify appropriate locations in your community where these resilience improvements can be implemented, either as a new stand-alone space or adding on to an existing community space to become a more complete resilience hub during extreme weather events.
- Secure necessary permissions from property owners and local government to use the spaces.
- Coordinate programming and events that can activate these spaces and bring the community together.
- Gather feedback from community members and accessibility, comfort and services offered through these projects.
- Review and adapt the placemaking strategy annually before peak summer heat and flooding season(s).

RESOURCES

[A Tactical Guide to Urban Cooling Infrastructure Toolkit](#) is a guide for implementing cooling strategies in urban environments, particularly in low-income neighborhoods. This provides creative solutions to include essential elements to beat the heat including water, shade and ventilation while adding playful aspects to utilize the space.

CREATE A COOLING STATION

SHADE SAILS

WATER MISTERS

PLAY STRUCTURES

LOWER ROXBURY COOLING STATION DEVELOPMENT / CONSTRUCTION

Boston, MA, USA

In the Lower Roxbury neighborhood of Boston, YouthBuild has provided residents with access to [four new cooling stations and a design toolkit aimed at supporting the implementation of cooling strategies](#) in underserved urban areas. These cooling stations not only offer relief from extreme heat but also serve as community hubs, educational workshops and initiatives that empower residents to build climate resilience.



Image Source: YouthBuild Boston

CENTER CITY DISTRICT'S DILWORTH PARK

Philadelphia, PA, USA

Splash pads and playgrounds with sprinkler areas are great places to cool down during extreme heat days. Built to provide fun while bringing the neighbors together, these cooling areas can serve both as an attraction and a tool to build resiliency during summer's hottest days.



Image Source: Center City District

CHINATOWN MAIN STREET'S MISTING TENT

Boston, MA, USA

As part of its strategy to combat extreme heat, Boston Chinatown installs [misting tents](#) on emergency heat days. These tents provide immediate relief from dangerous temperatures, particularly for vulnerable residents such as young children and the elderly.

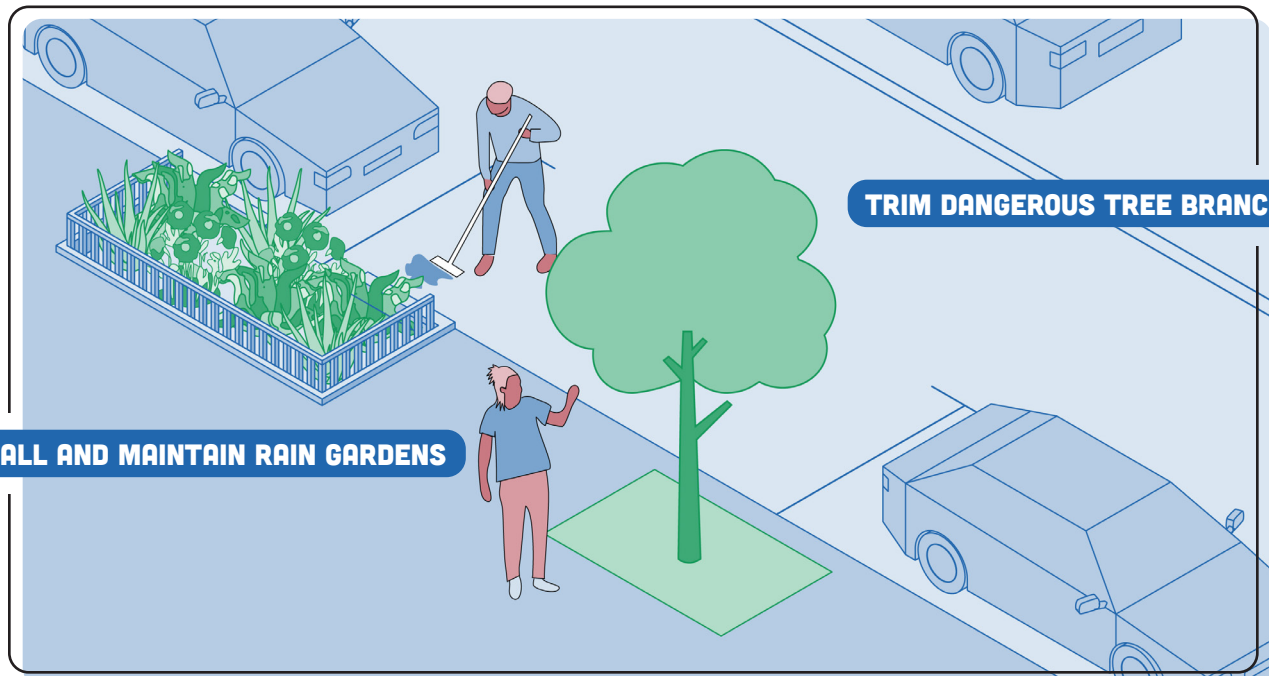


Image Source: Chinatown Main Street

8

*Regular maintenance keeps our rivers clean and our parks in top shape to absorb stormwater and cool our communities. **Create a dedicated team responsible for ongoing maintenance** and cleaning of the corridor/neighborhood.*

- a. Identify the duties and responsibilities of this maintenance team (collecting trash, clearing storm drains and rain gardens, trimming trees, etc.)
- b. Determine the boundaries of the service area.
- c. Establish a small budget (grants, fundraising, business sponsorships) for ongoing needs.
- d. Hire staff and/or recruit volunteers.
- e. Designate a team coordinator or captain to manage schedules and communication.
- f. Decide on frequency (weekly, monthly, seasonally).
- g. Post schedules publicly (community bulletin boards, group chat or email list).
- h. Coordinate with city sanitation or public works for bulk trash pick-up or support.
- i. Report bigger infrastructure issues (broken sidewalks, downed trees, blocked drains) to the city.



WHAT CAN LOCAL GOVERNMENTS DO?

- 1** Offer grants, stipends or in-kind resources such as printed materials, equipment, and meeting space to strengthen community-based outreach efforts.



- 2** Provide information about local, regional and national grant and funding opportunities to implement infrastructure upgrades for community resilience.

- 3** Coordinate with place-based organizations to produce multilingual educational materials and align content with official municipal guidance.



- 4** Give organizations access to localized weather alerts, hazard maps and risk assessments so they can deliver accurate, actionable information to residents.

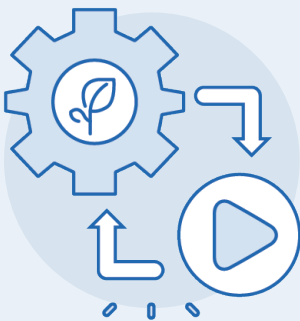


5

Implement larger infrastructure projects (green stormwater infrastructure, cool pavements, increased tree canopy/street trees, spraygrounds/other recreational water features, bus shelters, etc.) in coordination with place-based organizations.

6

Identify vacant publicly-owned lots that can be used by place-based organizations to implement placemaking and climate resilience interventions.

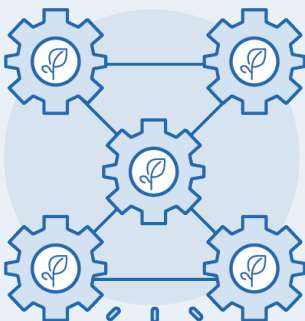


7

Simplify permitting and approvals processes for infrastructure improvements such as rain gardens, solar panels, backup power systems or stormwater management features.

8

Activate and provide access to public facilities to support residents' safety during extreme weather, such as designating libraries as cooling/warming centers and extending hours at public pools.



9

Coordinate community-led infrastructure upgrades with municipal climate adaptation and capital improvement plans to ensure alignment and long-term maintenance.



POLICY CONSIDERATIONS FOR COMMUNITY RESILIENCE

Building community resilience requires action at every level—from you and your neighbors, local businesses, placed-based organizations and your local government.

While the strategies in this guide provide practical steps for you and your community to prepare, protect and recover from extreme weather, they are most effective when supported by broader policies that link efforts across scales.

The following cross-cutting recommendations highlight system-wide actions that can strengthen resilience, ensure equity and create lasting structures of support for any community facing the growing risks of climate change.



Strengthen Communication Channels and Information Sharing

Build multilingual, accessible communication systems to deliver timely emergency alerts and preparedness information to your community members across multiple platforms.

Build and Support Social Infrastructure

Invest in your neighborhood networks, volunteer groups and partnerships that connect people and resources before, during, and after emergencies.



Promote Climate-Resilient Physical Infrastructure

Expand green infrastructure and upgrade buildings and systems in your community to better handle heat, flooding and other hazards.

Protect Neighbors At Risk During Heat Waves and Floods

Prioritize the needs of your elderly neighbors, children, outdoor workers and people with disabilities by ensuring safe access to cooling, clean water and emergency resources.



Integrate Preparedness into Everyday Life

Make resilience part of your daily routines through seasonal clean-ups, education and co-benefits like lower utility bills and healthier neighborhoods.

Foster Business and Economic Resilience

Encourage your local businesses to prepare continuity plans, upgrade facilities and share resilience practices to safeguard workers and the local economy.



Linking Social Capital

Create vertical connections between different levels of power and influence—from neighbors to place-based organizations to local governments to access aid more quickly and coordinate efforts and resources.

Ensure Ongoing Maintenance and Accountability

Establish regular upkeep of social and physical systems in your community, share responsibility across sectors and track progress with clear goals.



APPENDIX

CHECKLIST FOR NEIGHBORS

1

Assess extreme weather risks to your property and local infrastructure.

- ☐ Learn about specific risks to your home and community. You can use online tools and resources to understand the main climate threats to your area, such as flooding, wildfire or extreme heat.
- ☐ Regularly check your insurance coverages to ensure you are adequately prepared in the event of a loss. Ensure your coverages match your climate risk profile—such as flood or wildfire insurance if you are in an impacted area.
- ☐ Document your home's belongings and record the various of large assets in the event you need to make an insurance claim.
- ☐ Keep important documents and other valuables in water-proof containers that can be easily accessed during an emergency.

2

Collaborate with your neighbors to better **understand your collective vulnerability to extreme weather and develop potential mitigation strategies.**

- ☐ Develop checklists and other forms of risk assessment to empower your neighbors to learn about potential risks to their homes and properties.
- ☐ Use existing networks such as neighborhood associations or homeowner/condominium associations to distribute checklists and promote awareness of extreme weather risks.
- ☐ Form committees or working groups with your neighbors to collectivize your efforts. Pool resources and work together to develop potential mitigation strategies.

3

Tap into **simple and efficient neighborhood-wide communication systems** that can be used for extreme weather events and other emergencies.

- ☐ If one hasn't already been identified, designate an "official" communication medium—such as WhatsApp, an email chain or a group text.
- ☐ Identify which sources you'll pull emergency alerts and information from, such as local emergency management offices or national weather agencies.
- ☐ Decide whether to communicate in a large group text or send out one-way alerts to many people at once (e.g. WhatsApp's Broadcast feature).
- ☐ Figure out who needs a phone call or a knock on their door in addition to text alerts.

4

Organize a neighborhood support system where you and your neighbors **share personal and public resilience resources** to ensure the most vulnerable in your community stay safe during extreme heat or flooding.

- ☐ Survey your neighbors to identify those most vulnerable to extreme weather.
- ☐ Coordinate to see who has cooling amenities, such as air conditioning, fans or pools—and is willing to share. Identify who needs cooling amenities during extreme heat. Additionally, ask your neighbors if they may need assistance right before or during flooding events, such as access to groceries and emergency supplies or a ride to a resilience hub to wait out a storm.
- ☐ If you have a car, offer a ride to your neighbors who may need assistance accessing resources or getting out of a dangerous situation.

5

Upgrade and perform regular maintenance to your home and property to reduce stormwater runoff and add more shade.

- ☐ Regularly clear your gutters, downspouts and any storm drains near your property to ensure that water can flow unobstructed during heavy rain.
- ☐ Connect your downspouts to rain barrels and collect rainwater to reduce stormwater runoff and provide a source of water for your yard.
- ☐ Plant native plants and trees for stormwater gardens and replace pavement with permeable materials to increase overall permeability around your property.
- ☐ Add shade structures to create a cooler backyard for warmer months.

6

Reclaim underutilized spaces in your neighborhood to **add more greenery and open space**, and host regular **block clean up days** with your neighbors to strengthen community bonds and keep new spaces clean.

- ☐ Survey your neighborhood for underutilized spaces such as empty tree pits or dirt patches on sidewalks.
- ☐ Plant trees or low-maintenance shrubs/flowers that require little watering and care in empty tree pits.
- ☐ Organize a rotation of neighbors to help with upkeep.
- ☐ Gather contact information from your neighbors and spread the word (including a date, time and meeting place) through flyers, social media, community boards and word of mouth.
- ☐ Collect supplies ahead of time, including shovels, rakes, gloves, trash bags, recycling bins, watering cans and wheelbarrows.
- ☐ Split volunteers into groups for different jobs, like trash pick-up, planting flowers or shrubs, pruning trees or clearing storm drains, and assign team leads to keep each group on track.
- ☐ Decide in advance how trash and yard waste will be disposed of (hauling to the local dump, arranging a city pick-up, etc.)
- ☐ End the day with a potluck or block party to celebrate everyone's hard work.
- ☐ Determine future frequency of clean up days based on neighbor interest and availability.

CHECKLIST FOR BUSINESSES

1 Conduct a climate risk assessment of your business and/or property to identify potential hazards that could disrupt your operations.

- ☐ Determine the specific climate hazards to which your business may be vulnerable, and identify how these hazards might impact your assets, supply chains and operations.
- ☐ Review your insurance coverage and consider additional policies, such as business interruption coverage or ancillary flood insurance, to better protect against extreme weather impacts.
- ☐ Take inventory and photos of your equipment, supplies and other items in case of future damage and insurance claims.

2 Work with other small businesses, chambers of commerce, main street organizations, local municipal staff, and other relevant partners to maximize impact for community resilience and stay engaged when disaster strikes.

- ☐ If one doesn't exist already, form a resilience committee with local business and economic development stakeholders to identify business-led resilience initiatives.
- ☐ Register with your local chamber of commerce and connect with financial institutions that can help you identify loans, insurance policies and capital specifically designed to support climate adaptation investments.
- ☐ Register your business as a cooling site or a food access point through local government websites to help your community stay safe and healthy, while also generating positive publicity for your business.
- ☐ Coordinate with adjacent businesses to co-create shade structures or share cooling amenities for customers and staff to minimize the resources needed.
- ☐ Use your storefronts and bulletin boards to advertise emergency information and raise awareness about extreme weather risks.
- ☐ Use your social media pages and/or newsletters to inform your customers about resources available through local municipalities, chambers of commerce and other relevant partners.

3

Be better prepared with a **business emergency plan** that outlines what to do before and after extreme weather events and helps all employees understand responsibilities.

Before

- ☐ Determine your thresholds: when does the business close and when do alternative business hours or schedules get used?
- ☐ Identify what actions need to take place right before extreme weather hits.
- ☐ Create an alternative work schedule to use during extreme weather events that don't meet the closure threshold.
- ☐ During a heatwave, it may make sense to avoid being open during the hottest times of the day and to schedule more employees at once to accommodate more breaks.
- ☐ Develop protocols for other relevant disruptions, such as weather-related school closures that may disrupt employees schedules, and make a plan for how to adjust work schedules accordingly.
- ☐ Contact employees about schedule changes or closures.
- ☐ Contact suppliers to reschedule deliveries.
- ☐ Take inventory.
- ☐ Post pre-made closure messages.
- ☐ Adjust the number of employees and shift length based on emerging forecasts.

After

- ☐ Determine what actions are needed to get back to business and stay prepared for the next emergency.
- ☐ Inspect your business for damage.
- ☐ Document damages with photos for insurance claims.
- ☐ Restock emergency supplies.
- ☐ Debrief with staff to identify lessons learned.

4

Make physical improvements to **keep your employees and customers comfortable**.

- ☐ Install blinds, curtains, or reflective film on sunny windows to reduce heat buildup and use insulating or sealing tape to keep the cool air in.
- ☐ Create shade structures outside your business to provide a cool place for staff and customers to rest.
- ☐ Move large furniture or displays away from vents, windows and fans to create clear pathways for air to flow.
- ☐ Install cooling systems like fans and AC units strategically to maximize their benefit. Position fans next to windows and doors, with one facing inward to draw in cool air and another facing outward to expel warm air.

5

Prepare your workplace against flooding through short-term and long-term infrastructure improvements.

- ☐ Prepare your business right before heavy storms through short-term interventions that can minimize potential damage caused by flooding:
 - ☐ Have supplies on-hand, such as plastic sheeting, plywood, tape and sandbags, to be ready for quick deployment.
 - ☐ Move important items such as important documents, computers and essential equipment to a higher floor if possible. For items that cannot be moved, cover with plastic sheetings or store in dry bags.
 - ☐ Use temporary barriers such as water filled barriers, sandbags, or flood gates/panels at doors and windows. Shut off gas, water, and electrical power in anticipation of flooding.
- ☐ Invest in capital improvements that will flood-proof your business in the long-term, such as:
 - ☐ Elevate sensitive/critical equipment, utilities and stock/inventory above the known flood level.
 - ☐ Install backflow valves to prevent stormwater from entering your pipes and contaminating your water supply.
 - ☐ Install sump pumps to remove water that has accumulated in below-ground spaces, such as basements.
 - ☐ Use water-resistant materials during any renovations or new construction for your business/property.
 - ☐ Seal cracks and openings in your building to prevent water from getting in.
 - ☐ Improve drainage around your business/property so that water drains away from your foundation.
 - ☐ Install rain gardens or permeable pavement on your property to absorb stormwater and reduce stress on public sewer systems.
- ☐ Perform regular maintenance for equipment and systems that mitigate flooding.

CHECKLIST FOR PLACED-BASED ORG'S

1

Utilize district-level risk assessments and inventories to help small businesses and property owners in your community stay ahead of risks and hazards.

- ☐ If one doesn't exist already, work with local government actors to create an inventory spreadsheet that documents all of the assets within your community.
- ☐ Document these assets further through photos and videos in case of future damage from extreme weather hazards.
- ☐ Coordinate with your local officials to understand the main climate threats to your community, such as flooding, wildfire or extreme heat.

2

Grant programs and financial incentives can be used to encourage small businesses and nonprofits to make investments to become more resilient.

- ☐ Work with the city to develop a resilience improvement grant program for small businesses to take on infrastructure upgrades.
- ☐ Identify funding sources and determine which businesses/organizations and what types of improvements are eligible for the program.
- ☐ If an existing facade improvement grant program exists, advocate to include resilience projects as eligible expenses, such as adding a storefront canopy, upgrading cooling equipment or adding misters to an outdoor seating area.
- ☐ Explore a supplementary emergency grant program to help small businesses in your area bounce back faster after a disaster.

3

Develop educational content about flooding and extreme heat that can be shared through community newsletters, social media, local radio and word-of-mouth networks.

- ☐ Coordinate with public health, emergency management, and public works agencies to align with official guidance and create materials that outline the risks as well as simple, everyday actions that residents can take.
- ☐ Advocate to have materials translated into the languages spoken in your community.
- ☐ Schedule regular distribution, especially before high-risk seasons (summer heat, rainy season).
- ☐ Collect community feedback and update materials to improve clarity and usefulness.

4

Organize outreach events that promote awareness of local heat and flooding risks in clear, culturally relevant ways.

- ☐ Develop an engagement plan that identifies critical communities in your communities and how best to reach them.
- ☐ Partner with city departments and relevant private sector actors to host workshops on specific topics that may be difficult for community members to navigate on their own.
- ☐ Create marketing materials to advertise your events, and partner with local organizations, businesses and government departments to further spread the word.
- ☐ Provide translation services at all events, if possible.
- ☐ Share take-home resources, such as a resilience checklist or emergency contacts list.

5

Support the development of a community resilience plan for a safer and greener neighborhood.

- ☐ Ensure a diverse planning team that includes residents, businesses, community organizations and local officials as well as representation from groups that are most vulnerable to extreme weather such as seniors.
- ☐ Provide input on community risks and resources by identifying local hazards, mapping critical and non-traditional assets and gathering community input that reflects resident's lived experience
- ☐ Help community members develop shared goals and an overall vision that define what a resilient future looks like for your community.
- ☐ Host events for community feedback on the strategies and projects developed and help identify appropriate local partners for actions where possible.

6

Create a community resilience committee to help keep these issues top of mind and central to the planning of your community.

- ☐ Identify important stakeholders who are already doing work related to community resilience and invite them to join the committee. Also include a path for interested community members to get involved in the committee and its work.
- ☐ Explore participation from local elected officials or multiple city departments working on resilience to ensure collaboration and break down silos.
- ☐ Determine the roles, responsibilities and initial priorities of the committee.
- ☐ Host regular meetings to advance initiatives and provide a platform for outside community members to express concerns and issues they're experiencing related to resilience.
- ☐ Review progress annually regularly to analyze which projects and initiatives are doing well and which need more support.

7

Tap into existing grants to implement **physical improvements as part of an overall placemaking strategy** for the public realm that contributes to climate resilience, while also reinforcing a sense of community and place.

- ☐ Explore the range of options available for resilience improvements, such as short-term tactical urbanism projects, quick, low-cost solutions during peak summer months and permanent interventions that are maintained year-round. Focus on interventions that both improve community resilience and create a better public realm.
- ☐ Identify appropriate locations in your community where these resilience improvements can be implemented, either as a new stand-alone space or adding on to an existing community space to become a more complete resilience hub during extreme weather events.
- ☐ Secure necessary permissions from property owners and local government to use the spaces.
- ☐ Coordinate programming and events that can activate these spaces and bring the community together.
- ☐ Gather feedback from community members and accessibility, comfort and services offered through these projects.
- ☐ Review and adapt the placemaking strategy annually before peak summer heat and flooding season(s).

8

Create a dedicated team responsible for ongoing maintenance and cleaning of the corridor/neighborhood.

- ☐ Identify the duties and responsibilities of this maintenance team (collecting trash, clearing storm drains and rain gardens, trimming trees, etc.)
- ☐ Determine the boundaries of the service area.
- ☐ Establish a small budget (grants, fundraising, business sponsorships) for ongoing needs.
- ☐ Hire staff and/or recruit volunteers.
- ☐ Designate a team coordinator or captain to manage schedules and communication.
- ☐ Decide on frequency (weekly, monthly, seasonally).
- ☐ Post schedules publicly (community bulletin boards, group chat or email list).
- ☐ Coordinate with city sanitation or public works for bulk trash pick-up or support.
- ☐ Report bigger infrastructure issues (broken sidewalks, downed trees, blocked drains) to the city.

