

Embedding Equity into Climate Resilience Planning: Panel Discussion

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What does equitable climate resilience and adaptation look like in your organization and the work that you do?

- Just like all other agencies, as we better understand the climate challenge, we are looking at initiatives that help us plan and prepare for these risks as opposed to just respond...
 - o We're taking a more **collaborative approach** across different departments, sectors and jurisdictions whether it developing policies, programs or even building projects.
 - Flood resilience program: taking a multi-jurisdictional approach and working with multiple cities and agencies - becoming a Countywide effort through the Flood and Sea Level Rise Resilience Agency
 - Mainstreaming Resilience Planning: Within our department, we're working with our other departments to develop policies that will help us mainstream consideration for climate impacts in our capital planning, development plans, etc.
 - A Countywide Climate Collaborative of government and non-government stakeholders that focuses on being inclusive from the start by,
 - increasing stakeholder buy-in,
 - building on existing community tools and knowledge and
 - empowering the leadership of traditionally underserved communities within a diverse group of leaders.

Important to remember that community engagement comes on a spectrum: at the level of **informing**, **consulting** on a menu of strategies or **involving** through participation in working groups.

A key issue:

- Current model of government being the problem-solver.
 - o We still look upon our residents as customers/clients and not as citizens or partners. This impacts the way the problem is defined and the solutions that are identified.
 - o We do not see the community or community leaders as experts. We still believe we as the government have the solve the problem.
 - o We haven't figured out the model to build the capacity of the community and empower them to take on solutions.

What are examples of different types of approaches local governments can take to embed equity into adaptation planning?

- Process: **inclusive process**
 - Use the spectrum of community engagement:
 - Work towards moving into the collaborate and co-lead side of the spectrum. This requires us to share or place final decision-making into the hands of the stakeholders so they drive decisions and implementation.
 - Provide opportunity for CBO leadership – through facilitation and agenda setting. This is not easy to do. We need a put a process for this in place, so that the input is sought early on and not after the fact.
 - Inclusive Language:
 - Resilience and climate adaptation is confusing as groups see the issue differently
 - No technical jargon – using accessible language in public documents and events
 - Multimedia materials
 - Visuals: Consider the diversity of representation: when using visuals and quotes: incorporate diverse faces, bodies and voices.
 - Also, consider having diverse people look through slides, photos and other resources to make sure you haven't accidentally included imagery or language that might offend someone.
- Offer **capacity building training for residents to participate in planning efforts**, nurturing a **culture of civic participation**, and ensuring **transparency** in how decisions get made. Partner with a local trusted organization for this work and **offer stipends**. Stipends to participate in meetings
- **Ecosystem mapping**: take the time to map the landscape. Who's missing from your list based on sectors. Take the time to build relationship. **Sometimes you might need an intermediary**. When you approach these group – go simply with the aim to learn and understand. Don't focus on them understanding your efforts.
- **Hiring contractors with experience in this work**. Pushing our usual consultants to develop diverse teams. Including language in your RFP that calls for sub-consultants with experience in this work. These are the ones that often do not carry the insurances and other requirements we as government agencies have.
- **A whole government approach**: embed equity within organizations practices
 - Every strategy you identify ways in which you can help address the **root causes** in addition
 - Examples include:
 - Weatherization projects: includes job training AND preserving housing affordability
 - Cooling centers: location and access; trusted places for community to participate
 - Locate centers in neighborhoods with the residents most at risk

- Select locations that are trusted places and are run by trusted service providers
- Offer transportation assistance in specific neighborhoods or to residents with limited mobility or transportation access

- **Social and Health Vulnerability Assessments**