

Equitable Community Resilience Evaluation Toolkit

Co-Development of Solutions

As you develop actions to address climate change impacts, empower your community to co-develop solutions. Co-developing solutions *with* socially vulnerable populations presents opportunities to link specifically identified inequities, challenges, visions, and priorities to potential resilience and adaptation projects. Throughout this planning stage, consider the following opportunities, principles and questions to equitably engage and lift the voices and experiences of socially vulnerable populations.

Opportunities for Equity

- ❑ **Collaborate** – This planning stage presents a key opportunity to collaborate with socially vulnerable populations in discussing resilience solutions. SVPs are community experts and are essential to conversations about enhancing their community’s resilience. Your team should encourage collaborative discussions with SVPs around linking inequities, vulnerabilities and community challenges to potential actions that address the underlying causes of inequities and prioritize SVPs needs.

- ❑ **Prioritize solutions with co-benefits** – Since inequities and vulnerabilities intersect across sectors, the planning team must broaden its resilience discussions to include social topics and issues to develop actions that enhance community resilience in multiple ways. Co-benefits are the added benefits a community gets when mitigating climate change beyond directly improving ecological resilience. When brainstorming solution ideas with the community, aim to craft solutions that optimize co-benefits for the community and address the needs of socially vulnerable populations. For instance, nature-based solutions are often installed to green and retrofit vacant land or built infrastructure to reduce extreme heat, but they can also supply other ecosystem services and result in co-benefits for community safety and cohesion (e.g., building a green park). Some examples of equitable resilience actions that result in co-benefits can be found in the Urban Sustainability Directors Network’s [Guide to Equitable Community-Driven Climate Preparedness Planning](#). Also see the Center for Climate and Energy Solutions’ [Maximizing Benefits: Strategies for Community Resilience](#) for guidance to compare co-benefits of resilience strategies.

Principles of Equity

Continually evaluate your planning process for the following principles. Consider how your team integrates these principles into the planning exercises, their preparation, information-sharing and engagement with socially vulnerable populations.

- **Empowerment and Inclusion**
- **Early and Ongoing Community Engagement**
- **Co-Development (of process and solutions)**
- **Whole Systems Thinking**
- **Continuous Evaluation**

Try to Avoid

- **One-way channels of communication** – Avoid simply presenting information to socially vulnerable populations and other community members with little opportunities to provide feedback. Strive for community-driven discussions and two-way channels of communication around resilience projects and actions in this stage.

- ❑ **Consider opportunities for and potential unintended consequences** – See the Evaluate Climate Adaptation Actions Worksheet for spaces to brainstorm how each resilience solution could positively or negatively impact SVPs and provide good opportunities for or unintended consequences for SVPs. The worksheet provides done out examples, example metrics and example positive and negative impacts.
- ❑ **Identify equity metrics** – Make sure to identify metrics and indicators to measure progress towards social equity goals and outcomes in tandem with co-development of resilience solutions. To start, try translating the vision developed with the community into outcome indicators that can be used to monitor and evaluate implementation of actions. To operationalize equity, there must be metrics or indicators in place to measure success, or lack thereof, and to hold responsible partners accountable for inaction to address equity or equity setbacks. Metrics could measure **participation** (e.g. Ratio of average percentages of registered voters who voted in local elections in high-income and low-income census tracts), **access to resources** (e.g. ratio of the percentages of minorities and whites without health insurance), **representation** (e.g. Ratio of percentages of male and female local government officials) or **environmental quality** (e.g. ratio of the percentages of white and black residents living within one-quarter of mile of a green space), among many other potential categories. Other qualitative indicators could include community knowledge, attitudes or awareness of disaster services, cultural identification or sense of place/community. For more equity-specific metrics and indicators, see the city of [Pittsburgh's Equity Indicators](#), [California's SB1000 Toolkit](#), the [City Resilience Index](#), and the [NAACP's Equity in Climate Adaptation Planning Resilience Indicators](#).
- ❑ **Evaluate** – In the Co-Development phase, your team should evaluate how and where the needs, challenges, experiences and priorities of socially vulnerable people are reflected in the resilience plan actions as well as how actions are being brainstormed. Any actions or potential solutions should not only be aligned with the community's vision and priorities, but they should also aim to address the underlying causes of inequities and improve conditions for socially vulnerable populations. See the Equitable Engagement Checklist for key ideas to ensure collaborative and meaningful engagement, as well as some questions below.

Some Questions to Keep Equity on Track

Keep the following questions in mind throughout the co-development step as you work with and engage socially vulnerable populations.

- ❑ Where are the priorities and/or needs of socially vulnerable populations reflected in the solutions options?
- ❑ Where geographically and in which sectors are you optimizing co-benefits? Which socially vulnerable populations will be most impacted (positively or negatively)?
- ❑ What engagement strategies will you use throughout this planning stage to ensure collaborative and meaningful conversations with socially vulnerable populations around solutions development and the resilience solutions impacts on equity?

- Which strategies and actions address the contributing causes of inequities (e.g., economic inclusion strategies for job creation, contracting and/or procurement)?
- What are the potential equity implications or concerns for the implementation of the resilience solutions?
 - Any unintended consequences? If so, what strategies might be incorporated into the plan to lessen the unintended consequences or to overcome other implementation hurdles?