

Supporting Community Resilience: Minneapolis Health Department

The Minneapolis City Council first established goals for greenhouse gas emissions in 2012 (now updated to an 80% reduction by 2050). The 2013 [Minneapolis Climate Action Plan](#) (CAP) focused on energy efficiency, renewables, reducing vehicle miles traveled and developing active transport infrastructure, and reducing the overall waste stream. However, the City did not start to actively consider adaptation and resilience until 2016 when the Minneapolis Health Department (MHD) and the Office of Sustainability (OoS) partnered with the University of Minnesota School of Public Affairs to conduct a climate, health, and equity vulnerability assessment. The goal of the assessment was to identify neighborhoods most vulnerable to climate-related heat and flooding, and work with local residents to develop community-driven strategies to increase resilience to climate-related changes and extreme events. Using indicators of social vulnerability as well as risk factors in the built and natural environments, the MHD/OoS team identified neighborhoods with underlying vulnerabilities that increase the risks due to climate impacts.



Bringing Science to People

The team then reached out to existing and new community partners in three vulnerable neighborhoods, and contracted with groups in each to work with City staff to organize a community climate and health workshop. Staff of the community based organizations (CBO) were compensated for their time spent working with MHD to plan, recruit for, and facilitate the community workshops, each of which included an overview of the health impacts of climate change, the specific climate, health, and social vulnerabilities of the neighborhood, a discussion of residents' experiences and ideas, and specific requests for LHD support and action.

CBO staff provided community connections, insight into issues of concern and community assets, and historical knowledge about prior events that impacted the neighborhoods. The success of the workshops was attributed in part to the willingness of the city team to share resources and decision-making with community residents. The workshops—and the process—increase both community capacity and social cohesion critical components of community climate resilience.

Building on the information from the CHEVA and the community engagement process, the MHD/OoS team contributed to the City's Comprehensive Plan to ensure that climate, health, and equity are prominently featured throughout and elevated as priorities across the City.



Future Work and Lessons Learned

The MHD/OoS team plans to provide continued financial and technical assistance to partner CBOs to organize additional community workshops focused on parental and family preparedness during extreme weather events. MDH is now participating in drafting and reviewing the City of Minneapolis Strategic Plan. For the first time, the plan will include information about the health impacts of climate change and the health and equity benefits of climate action, and an action step to increase community resilience through strategies that enhance social cohesion and build community capitals (See Section [6.5—Preparedness](#)).

Learn More

Minneapolis Health Department - [Climate Change Resiliency](#)

Key Action Steps:

- Conduct a climate and health vulnerability assessment including climate and social vulnerabilities (See Section [7.1—Surveillance](#)).
 - Reach out to other LHD programs/divisions and other city and county agencies to compile data (e.g. asthma ED visits, air quality, heat indexes, tree cover).
- Partner with local community-based organizations to hold workshops to review the CHEVA and brainstorm community-based solutions.
 - Provide funding to CBO partners and use their expertise to shape the workshops and expand resident capacity and engagement.
- Use resident insights and recommendations to inform LHD action on climate, health, and equity.
- Engage in local, regional, and LHD planning processes (e.g. climate action plans, strategic plans, community health improvement plans) to integrate health into climate planning and climate change into health planning.