Finding the Time and Resources to Implement Community Resilience

Communities across the country often face challenges in planning for and responding to disruptions. Resilience is the ability to prepare for and recover from shocks and stressors, which can look different for every community. These challenges might include an aging population leading to workforce shortages, a severe storm disrupting local businesses, or unexpected economic changes affecting families and livelihoods.

Identifying the barriers that prevent municipal staff from effectively preparing for, responding to, recovering from, and mitigating disruptions is the first step toward building resilient communities. This document is designed to help community professionals and engaged residents address capacity challenges, foster a culture of collaboration, and empower community members to take ownership of resilience-building efforts. The goal is to support the integration of resiliency efforts without overloading individual staff members.

1. Increasing Staff Capacity

Collaborative Partnerships

Larger Michigan communities often have dedicated planning teams to address critical issues, but smaller municipalities face staffing and resource constraints, leading them to focus on immediate concerns rather than long-term strategies. This reactive approach can become unsustainable, increasing workloads and limiting their ability to plan for resilience. To overcome these challenges, municipalities can collaborate with non-profits, local businesses, and universities to expand capacity without increasing permanent staff. Universities with planning programs can provide valuable research support, while regional alliances allow multiple jurisdictions to share resources for larger-scale solutions. Engaging with professors and students can also offer practical experience while contributing to community resilience efforts.

ACTION ITEM: Collaborate with local non-profits, businesses, and universities to gain and share resources, increasing capacity without hiring additional staff.

Closing the Knowledge Gap

Identifying common goals and engaging key stakeholders are crucial for advancing resilience planning efforts. Partnering with organizations focused on civil rights, public health, sustainability, and disaster preparedness can provide valuable expertise and insight while expanding capacity. Bringing in outside experts helps municipalities navigate complex socioeconomic, environmental, and economic factors that influence resilience planning, especially when staff may lack the necessary technical skills. These collaborations also offer opportunities to educate the public, fostering informed engagement and support for policy changes. A well-informed community is more likely to back resilience initiatives and even contribute through grassroots efforts.

ACTION ITEM: Partner with organizations that are experts in a range of subjects that influence resilience planning.

2. Funding Resilience

Collaboration

- Communities can obtain funding for planning and implementing resilience strategies through state and federal grants.
- Universities and students are eager to help with the grant-writing process and can assist communities through the application stages.
- Many non-profit organizations also have access to funding opportunities that municipalities may not be eligible for, providing a pathway for advancing important initiatives.

Tips for Successful Applications:

1. Be sure you are following the grant directions and directly answering the prompt.
2. Reach out to the grant coordinator directly, early, and often. They are there to help guide and support you in developing a compelling application.
3. When possible, focus on implementable projects such as shoreline restoration, trails, housing developments, etc, which often have project-specific funding sources.
4. For larger-scale projects such as research, planning, and engagement, seek to form partnerships and apply with surrounding jurisdictions, tribes, or non-profits to build a more inclusive and compelling case.

Click **here** to learn more about available funding opportunities and grants.

3. Finding the Right Resources

Climate Mapping for Resilience and Adaptation

Tool to assess climate-related risks like heat, drought, flooding, and wildfire, with projections for early, mid-, and late century.

Michigan Housing Data Portal

This portal gathers the latest housing data, trends, and local benchmarks to develop reports about the status of housing for all Michigan communities.

US Census

Provides important demographic information, including data on population, employment, income and poverty, housing, race and ethnicity, education, and health.

RRC Resiliency Toolkit

Helps local leaders assess vulnerabilities and implement solutions through goal setting, action items, and metric tracking focusing on four key areas, People, Place, Economy, and Infrastructure.

MI Green Communities Challenge

Outlines action items and metrics for sustainability efforts like climate resilience, energy efficiency, land use, and water conservation.

FEMA National Risk Index
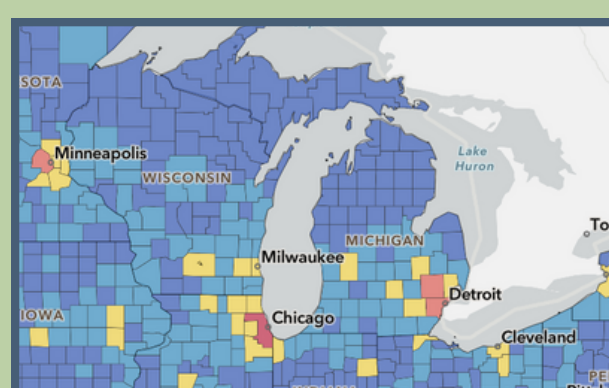
Measures natural disaster risk, social vulnerability, and resilience of US states. Provides a map and detailed data that helps highlight disparities between neighboring areas.

NOAA Implementing the Steps to Resilience Guide
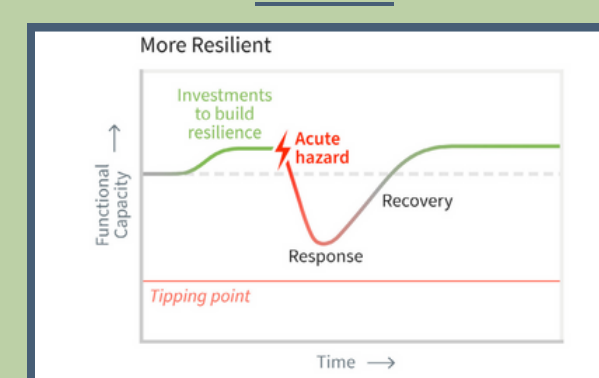
Outlines the full resilience planning process, from assessing exposure and risk to planning and implementation. Includes downloadable worksheets and resources to support each step.