Achieving Equitable Recovery

A Post-Disaster Guide for Local Officials and Leaders

November 2023

FEMA

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Foreword

"Achieving Equitable Recovery: A Post-Disaster Guide for Local Officials and Leaders" is part of FEMA's commitment to **support the diverse communities that we serve in our nation and help them rebuild stronger than ever.**

At FEMA, we are working hard to **instill equity as a foundation of emergency management**, and this guide is part of our ongoing efforts. This Guide provides strategies for local officials and leaders to help rebuild their communities equitably, with the needs of different populations in mind.

Inside, local officials will find tools to help them identify needs, establish critical partnerships, leverage new opportunities, conduct strategic public engagement, and pursue recovery in an equitable manner. The Guide is organized around eight goals to help leaders **design and execute a more inclusive and equitable recovery planning process.**

The Guide includes community examples, a case study, toolkits, and resources for state, local, tribal, and territorial leaders to use as they embark upon the difficult process of restoring and rebuilding communities after a disaster. This document highlights best practices and lessons learned that we can all reference as we strive to **ground our work in equity and meet communities where they are.**

"Achieving Equitable Recovery" follows on the heels of another guide we released in February, titled "A Guide to Community Engagement." Together, these two documents, which were created with feedback from community partners, FEMA components and regions, provide an **accessible roadmap to equity** for readers to follow, and leaders to implement in their jurisdictions.

I want to thank all the staff across the FEMA Family who contributed to this Guide and extend my appreciation to our state, local, tribal, and territorial partners who commented on the draft. We would not have been able to create this Guide without this ongoing collaboration, and I look forward to continuing to work with all of you as we address climate change and post-disaster recovery management in communities across America.

Deanne Criswell

Deanne Criswell

FEMA Administrator
November 2023

"Rebuild stronger than ever."

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Executive Summary

1. Introduction

Disaster recovery begins shortly after a disaster when survivors start to rebuild their community. The disaster recovery process creates opportunities for communities to rebuild thoughtfully, equitably, and resiliently. *Achieving Equitable Recovery: A Post-Disaster Guide for Local Officials and Leaders* (hereafter the "Guide") helps communities focus their efforts on forming relationships, holding conversations about equity, and prioritizing post-disaster recovery projects and resources that meet the needs of each community member.

> Equity is the consistent and systematic, fair, just, and impartial treatment of all individuals, including individuals who belong to underserved communities of color; persons who belong to communities that may face discrimination based on sex, sexual orientation, and/or gender identity (including members of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer [LGBTQ+] community); persons with disabilities; persons who may face discrimination based on their religion and/or, national origin; persons with limited English proficiency; and persons who live in rural areas that have been systematically denied a full opportunity to participate in aspects of economic, social, and civic life.[1]

Equitable recovery is when policies, practices, communications, and distribution of resources are impartial, fair, just, and responsive to the needs of all impacted community members. Local officials, community leaders, and partners can achieve equity by taking action to address systematic recovery barriers and ensuring that all community members can meaningfully participate in, and benefit from, recovery planning processes, projects, and decision-making.

2. Eight Equity Goals

This Guide identifies eight goals that organize actions to work towards achieving equitable recovery outcomes through an accessible, inclusive, and equitable recovery planning process. These goals are action-oriented to better provide local recovery officials with strategies for implementing focused and system-wide changes to the disaster recovery process. The goals, shown in **Figure 1**, are not in any specific order.

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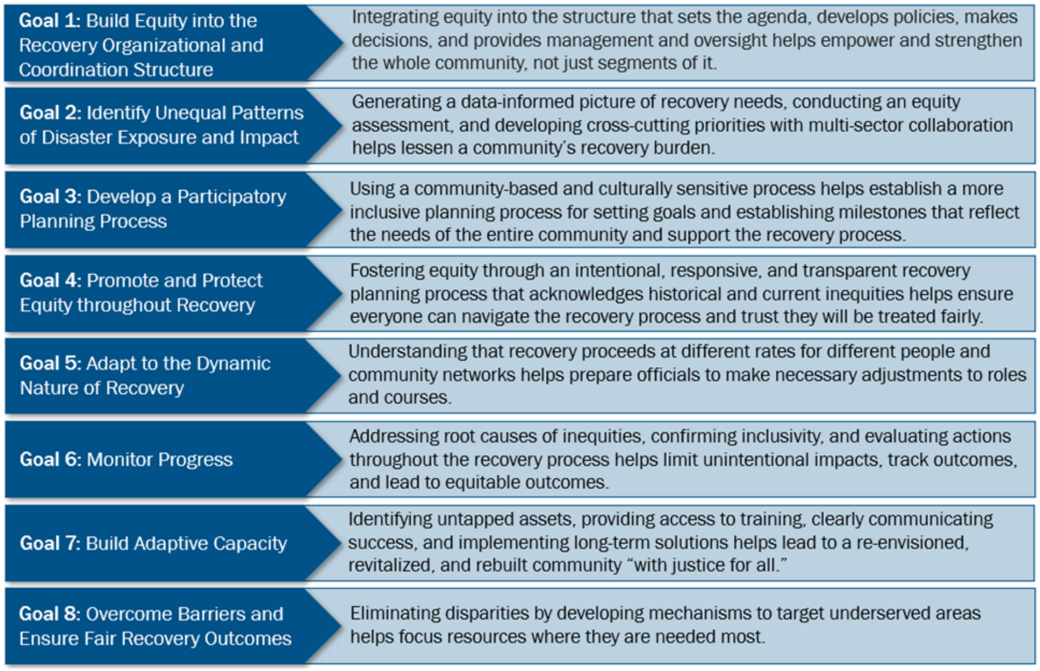
[1] Executive Order 13985.



Goal 1: Build Equity into the Recovery Organizational and Coordination Structure	Integrating equity into the structure that sets the agenda, develops policies, makes decisions, and provides management and oversight helps empower and strengthen the whole community, not just segments of it.
Goal 2: Identify Unequal Patterns of Disaster Exposure and Impact	Generating a data-informed picture of recovery needs, conducting an equity assessment, and developing cross-cutting priorities with multi-sector collaboration helps lessen a community's recovery burden.
Goal 3: Develop a Participatory Planning Process	Using a community-based and culturally sensitive process helps establish a more inclusive planning process for setting goals and establishing milestones that reflect the needs of the entire community and support the recovery process.
Goal 4: Promote and Protect Equity throughout Recovery	Fostering equity through an intentional, responsive, and transparent recovery planning process that acknowledges historical and current inequities helps ensure everyone can navigate the recovery process and trust they will be treated fairly.
Goal 5: Adapt to the Dynamic Nature of Recovery	Understanding that recovery proceeds at different rates for different people and community networks helps prepare officials to make necessary adjustments to roles and courses.
Goal 6: Monitor Progress	Addressing root causes of inequities, confirming inclusivity, and evaluating actions throughout the recovery process helps limit unintentional impacts, track outcomes, and lead to equitable outcomes.
Goal 7: Build Adaptive Capacity	Identifying untapped assets, providing access to training, clearly communicating success, and implementing long-term solutions helps lead to a re-envisioned, revitalized, and rebuilt community "with justice for all."
Goal 8: Overcome Barriers and Ensure Fair Recovery Outcomes	Eliminating disparities by developing mechanisms to target underserved areas helps focus resources where they are needed most.

Figure 1. Summary of Eight Equity Goals

3. Key Takeaways

The Guide will help community leaders identify and address barriers historically found throughout the disaster recovery process by providing advice, checklists, toolkits, case studies, and community examples on how to incorporate equity through the recovery management process and how to achieve equitable outcomes. It is important to remember that some communities have experienced substantial and pervasive historical inequities, which can pose challenges to building trust and establishing relationships. Consequently, the whole community must be engaged in recovery initiatives. When disasters strike, communities can lose everything. From homes and critical infrastructure systems to cultural identity, storms can dismantle both physical and social structures. However, if restored thoughtfully, resiliently, and equitably, disasters can provide opportunities to rebuild long-lasting inclusivity in all areas of society. For a quick reference resource guide, see Appendix A.

The resources, examples, and information provided in this document, including appendices, are meant solely for informational purposes, and are not intended to endorse any non-federal entity by the Federal Emergency Management Agency, U.S. Department of Homeland Security, or the U.S. Government.

This document is intended to provide guidance only and does not supersede or modify any existing law, regulation, policy, or program.

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Introduction

Instilling equity as a foundation of emergency management is Goal 1 of the *2022-2026 FEMA Strategic Plan*. This document outlines a process to help local government officials, local leaders, Tribal Nations, and their partners facilitate equitable recovery outcomes. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has created the *Achieving Equitable Recovery: A Post-Disaster Guide for Local Officials and Leaders* (hereafter the "Guide") to help communities build relationships, hold conversations about equity, and prioritize post-disaster recovery projects and resources that meet the needs of all groups in the community. The Guide can also help communities enhance planning for previously unaffected populations who are now at risk of adverse outcomes. This Guide outlines eight equity goals and provides resources and examples to inform an equitable recovery process. In addition to the eight equity goals, an overarching goal of this document is to provide resources to state, local, tribal, and territorial (SLTT) leaders about legal, policy, and cultural aspects of engaging with and providing resources to Tribal Nations. See **Appendix D** for a list of resources.

Equitable recovery is when policies, practices, communications, and distribution of resources are impartial, fair, just, and responsive to the needs of all impacted community members. Local officials, community leaders, and partners can achieve equitable recovery by addressing systematic recovery barriers and ensuring that all groups in the community can meaningfully participate in and benefit from recovery planning processes, projects, and decision-making. **Disaster equity** is the provision of community-specific services and resources for disaster survivors that are accessible, and culturally and linguistically tailored to mitigate disparities in health and well-being and support resilience.[2]

This Guide provides local officials and leaders with concepts, strategies, examples, and resources to:

1. Build Equity into the Recovery Organizational and Coordination Structure;
2. Identify Unequal Patterns of Disaster Exposure and Impact;
3. Develop a Participatory Planning Process;
4. Promote and Protect Equity Throughout Recovery;
5. Adapt to the Dynamic Nature of Recovery;
6. Monitor Progress;
7. Build Capacity; and
8. Overcome Barriers and Ensure Fair Recovery Outcomes.

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[2] Disaster Equity Plan Statement | The Administration for Children and Families, HHS.

1. Why Equity Matters in Post-Disaster Recovery

Recovery begins shortly after a disaster when local officials and leaders perform roles such as rebuilding quickly, communicating with stakeholders, resolving conflicts, and seeking funding from multiple agencies by responding to new grant, contract, and financial requirements. Every community is different and likely includes persons who may have been historically marginalized, disadvantaged, or underserved. Local officials can work to identify and eliminate any such inequities and strengthen disaster recovery outcomes through the incorporation of diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility (DEIA) data and principles. Building capacity to achieve equitable recovery begins with establishing an understanding of equity and inclusion principles.

Excerpt From Executive Order On Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government (EO 13985)

"For purposes of this order: (a) The term **"equity"** means the consistent and systematic fair, just, and impartial treatment of all individuals, including individuals who belong to underserved communities that have been denied such treatment, such as Black, Latino, and Indigenous and Native American persons, Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders and other persons of color; members of religious minorities; lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ+) persons; persons with disabilities; persons who live in rural areas; and persons otherwise adversely affected by persistent poverty or inequality.

(b) The term **"underserved communities"** refers to populations sharing a particular characteristic, as well as geographic communities, that have been systematically denied a full opportunity to participate in aspects of economic, social, and civic life, as exemplified by the list in the preceding definition of "equity."

This Guide provides tools and information to help local officials and leaders create an equitable process for all, including people of color and others who have been historically underserved, marginalized, or adversely affected by persistent poverty and inequality as described in the above Executive Order (EO).[3]

1.1. Why Equitable Recovery is not Always Equal Recovery?

Equality means that each individual or group receives the same resources and opportunities. Equity recognizes that each person has different circumstances and allocates resources and opportunities accordingly to reach the optimal outcome. The illustration in **Figure 2** provides a literal depiction of how a health promotion campaign could equally provide exercise equipment in the form of one size of bicycle. With no alternative options for those who wish to participate but require a different size or device, they do not benefit from the same bicycle. This differs from equity, where people receive bicycles that meet their needs. While the motorized wheelchair may cost more than a bicycle, this outcome was equitable.

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[3] This Guide utilizes a variety of terms to refer to populations of focus during equitable recovery activities, as partners across the recovery space employ a variety of terminology to address communities. For example, some sources use disadvantaged, marginalized, underserved, or disproportionately impacted interchangeably. Where the Guide addresses legislation or policy for specific communities, the Guide will utilize the terminology used by the source.

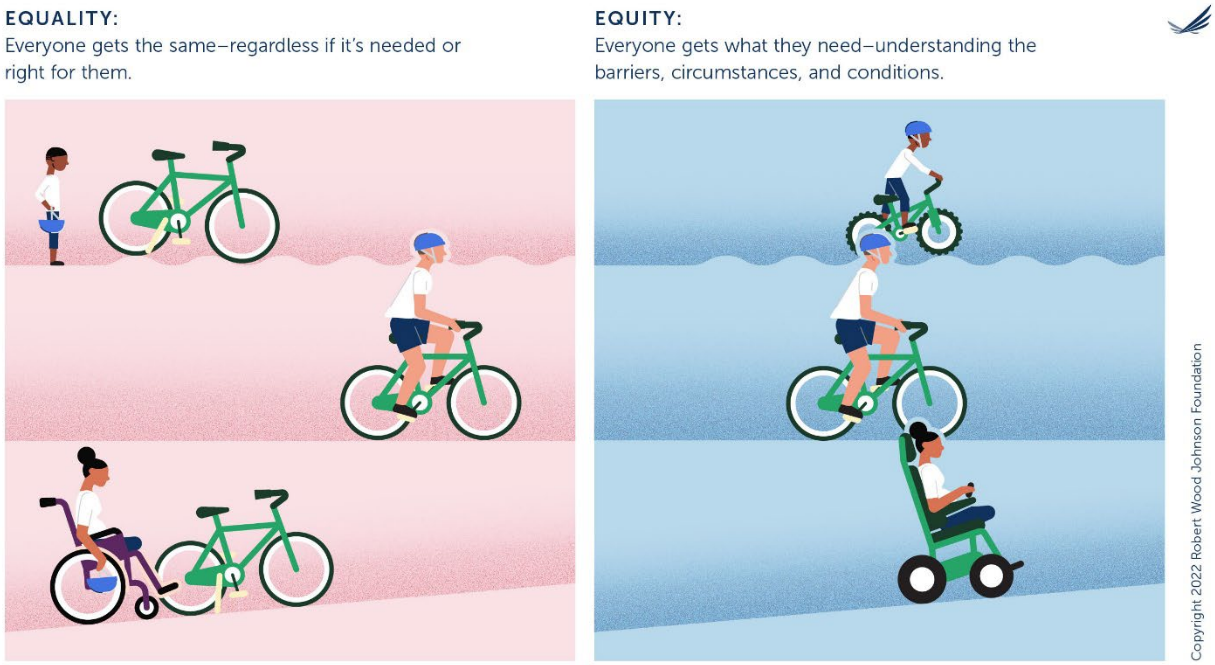
EQUALITY:
Everyone gets the same–regardless if it's needed or right for them.
EQUITY:
Everyone gets what they need–understanding the barriers, circumstances, and conditions.
Copyright 2022 Robert Wood Johnson Foundation

Figure 2. Difference between Equality and Equity (Copyright 2022 Robert Wood Johnson Foundation)[4]

An example of equality in disaster recovery programs is to provide recovery program information only in a print flyer written in the English language, using size 12 font and a cursive style design that is only available at the recovery center. While the recovery leaders provide the information equally, where everyone has the same information, survivors who cannot read English, are blind or experience low vision, have dyslexia, or lack transportation to the recovery center would have difficulty accessing the program information. In this example, achieving equitable outcomes in accessing recovery program information could take the form of verbally communicating the contents of the flyer; making the information available on a website; or developing a large print version, a braille version, and a pictograph. While the information would be the same, the equitable outcome would be achieved through all survivors being able to access the information in a manner that meets their individual needs.

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[4] Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, 2022.

Connecting the Dots: Climate Equity

Climate change does not equally impact all people. Social vulnerabilities influence how different individuals and communities are impacted by climate change. The United States (U.S.) Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) describes the need to integrate equity into efforts to address impacts of climate change.

Climate equity is the goal when recognizing and addressing the unequal burdens and vulnerabilities communities face surrounding climate change while ensuring that all people benefit from climate protection efforts. Climate equity is a component of larger environmental justice work and provides a framework for understanding where environmental actions must account for existing social vulnerabilities to meet whole community goals of climate action.

EO 14091: Further Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government and EO 14008: Tackling the Climate Crisis at Home and Abroad both emphasize taking a climate equitable approach to addressing climate change and environmental justice efforts, EO 14008 establishes the Justice40 Initiative that publishes recommendations on how certain federal investments can be made to meet a goal of 40% of overall benefits flowing to disadvantaged communities. Additional federal actions, notably by the EPA and the National Institute of Food and Agriculture’s Climate Adaptation & Resilience Plan provide support for climate equitable approaches and methods of climate equity integration into existing practice.

Integrating climate equity in climate adaptation, hazard mitigation, and resilience plans supports larger goals on equitable disaster recovery.

A successful recovery relies on a well-coordinated management process, actively incorporating equity at each step and leveraging a whole community approach to achieve equitable recovery outcomes. Incorporating equity considerations throughout the recovery management cycle by identifying and tracking recovery issues for historically marginalized, disadvantaged, or underserved populations can help mitigate a disaster’s adverse impact on vulnerable communities. These communities are often at the highest risk from the impacts of climate change due to a combination of social, economic, physical, and geographic conditions. Further, those same conditions sometimes impede opportunities to mitigate challenges. A starting point for engaging equity in recovery options can be building a common vocabulary and developing a vision for equitable recovery.

Connecting the Dots: Vulnerable Communities

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) defines vulnerable populations in their Citizen Participation & Equitable Engagement (CPEE) Toolkit as a group or community whose circumstances present barriers to obtaining or understanding information or accessing resources.

Vulnerable populations include, but are not limited to, women, racial or ethnic minorities, low-income individuals and families, individuals who are or have been incarcerated, individuals with disabilities, individuals with mental health conditions, children, youth and young adults, seniors, immigrants and refugees, individuals with limited English proficiency, and LGBTQ+ communities, or combinations of these populations.

These factors, also known as social vulnerability, create barriers to a community's or individual's ability to effectively respond to and recover from a disaster. As a result, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), together with the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR), used U.S. census data to identify the social vulnerability of each census tract, using 16 social factors, to help local officials such as emergency managers and public health officials plan, prepare for, and respond to disasters. The Social Vulnerability Index (SVI) supports local officials by providing data to inform the location of communities vulnerable to disproportionate impacts of disasters, as a result of social vulnerability. The SVI is just one of many sources of data for local officials to use in recovery planning. **17** highlights additional data sources to complement and inform equitable recovery.

Why Focus on Equitable Recovery?

By incorporating DEIA into the planning process when prioritizing projects and distributing resources, local officials and leaders can:

- Address longstanding recovery issues for the people and places most in need;
- Conscientiously identify and correct any prior underinvestment and pre-existing inequities;
- Intervene to lessen recovery disparities experienced by underserved populations;
- Build recovery leadership capabilities within disadvantaged, underserved, and historically marginalized populations and communities;
- Reduce or mitigate the impact of recurring disasters on communities where the historical allocation of resources has been scarce;
- Mitigate long-standing climate impacts among at-risk groups or vulnerable populations;
- Encourage citizens to actively engage in recovery planning and implementation in ways that best support their communities;
- Ensure compliance with Section 308 of the Stafford Act, Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, and other applicable federal civil rights laws; and
- Promote inclusion into the recovery process for people with disabilities.

FEMA's Equity Action Plan Summary outlines a "methodical, multilayered, and systematic approach" to analyze accessibility impacts and invest in resources to advance civil rights in underserved communities.[5] Researchers have proven the value of resiliency, social support, and social capital, with researchers from many disciplines having studied equity since the 1970s and developed ideas and methods for achieving equity, including procedural justice and distributive justice. Procedural and distributive justice are two concepts that fundamentally inform equity by evaluating 'fairness' and considering whether both processes and resource distribution are conducted equally for all.

Considerations for Evaluating Fairness in Recovery Activities

To assess whether policy and decision-making are fair and just, a few examples of questions that should be considered are as follows:

- Are the components of the systems making fair distributions of post-disaster recovery resources? Who was selected to make recovery distribution decisions? Do the decision-makers have reliable information about the recipients?
- Are there clearly defined goals and evaluation criteria?
- Does the structure and process include everyone?
- Is there a way to appeal decisions? Are there safeguards and monitoring of decision-makers? Are there mechanisms in place to change the process if it is unfair?
- Are structural and social conditions present that prevent equality in recovery outcomes across all impacted communities?
- Is there a baseline to determine the resource gaps that exist between the community members with the fewest resources and the common standard of living across all impacted communities?
- Are recovery leaders distributing resources based on community needs where underserved communities may receive a greater number of resources to achieve parity across all impacted areas?
- Are recovery leaders building capacity to address the pre-existing structural and social conditions to sustain improvements in parity of standards of living as a result of achieving equal recovery outcomes?

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[5] Equity Action Plan Summary: FEMA, 2022.

1.2. Authorities Governing Equitable Recovery

Federal laws, including Section 308 of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster and Emergency Assistance Act (Stafford Act), Title VI of The Civil Rights Act of 1964, and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act as applicable, require that recipients of federal assistance, including localities, ensure that their programs and activities do not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin (including limited English proficiency), sex, age, disability, or economic status. In addition, the *National Disaster Recovery Framework* (NDRF) cites DEIA authorities, including but not limited to the Fair Housing Act of 1968, Architectural Barriers Act of 1968, Communications Act of 1934, Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 1975, and The Age Discrimination Act of 1975, all as amended.

Several federal agencies, including the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS), collaborated with the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) to issue Guidance to State and Local Governments and Other Federally Assisted Recipients Engaged in Emergency Preparedness, Response, Mitigation, and Recovery Activities on Compliance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. This guidance provides an overview of the application of Title VI in emergency and disaster management and provides examples of promising practices to ensure nondiscrimination on the basis of race, color, and national origin. This guidance also identifies other statutes prohibiting discrimination on the basis of disability and other bases, including but not limited to, the Stafford Act, 42 U.S.C. § 5121 et seq. (2013) (as amended by the Post-Katrina Emergency Management and Reform Act of 2006), the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990, 42 U.S.C. § 12101, and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

Additional guidance for state and local emergency managers on meeting civil rights obligations regarding people with disabilities can be found in Chapter 7 of the DOJ's ADA Best Practices Tool Kit for State and Local Governments and DHS's Recommendations for Emergency Managers for Improving the Delivery of Disaster Assistance to Disaster Survivors with Disabilities. Civil rights laws must also be followed and are a requirement for projects funded partially or fully with federal assistance. It is important to be familiar with laws and regulations such as Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing, fair housing laws, and other civil rights and equity requirements when using federal assistance.

When thinking about vulnerable populations, a factor for both engagement and resource distribution includes immigration status. FEMA outlines who qualifies for disaster assistance. Should individuals not meet the criteria for FEMA assistance, there are resources accessible through volunteer organizations. Since recovery resource eligibility may change, local leaders should stay attuned to eligibility qualifications for federal assistance.

2. Eight Equity Goals

This Guide identifies eight goals that organize action for engaging and identifying the needs of all the various groups in a community to create an accessible, inclusive, and equitable recovery planning process.

The goals listed in **Figure 3** are action-oriented to provide strategies for implementing-focused and system-wide changes during the disaster recovery process.

1. Build equity into the recovery organizational and coordination structure
2. Identify unequal patterns of disaster exposure and impact
3. Develop a participatory planning process
4. Promote and protect equity throughout recovery
5. Adapt to the dynamic nature of recovery
6. Monitor progress
7. Build adaptive capacity
8. Overcome barriers and ensure fair recovery outcomes

Figure 3. Eight Equity Goals

These goals are not listed in a specific order based on chronology or importance. Rather, they provide overarching key categories to guide the reader on how to incorporate and build equity throughout the recovery management process.

The remainder of the Guide contains community examples, case studies, checklists, lessons learned, and a list of federal and non-federal resources to help advance an equitable recovery process for the whole community. The subsequent sections of this Guide are organized around each of the eight goals described above.

Goal 1: Build Equity into the Recovery Organizational and Coordination Structure

1. Leading and Managing Recovery

Leaders at any level who create or promote inclusive environments throughout the emergency management cycle should signal to everyone that they prioritize an equitable recovery process. It is important that recovery leaders continually build the skills to perform negotiations and correctly analyze and understand the needs of their community. Local Disaster Recovery Managers (LDRM) have diverse backgrounds and wear many different hats; they may work in a variety of positions in the community. LDRMs may be found in the mayor's office, city manager's office, regional planning districts, or the emergency management department. LDRMs could also be volunteers, consultants, economic development specialists, or urban planners. LDRMs can encourage local policy changes to support lasting equity advances in the community.

Communities can choose key stakeholders to lead elements of recovery or form an equity committee to address cross-cutting issues affecting underserved populations. This allows for one person or a small team to coordinate and embed equity in all recovery activities across the community. In cases where there are community divisions or conflict, it is crucial to identify a leader who can negotiate a common ground and help present a new vision of the community, informed by a diverse group of stakeholders. Support from outside of the community may also be helpful in filling roles when there is significant conflict or distrust.

LDRMs (whether an individual or a committee) should identify vulnerable populations, new champions, and allies, and empower existing local leaders already working towards equity in the community to form stronger coalitions. Local officials, community leaders, and residents can provide valuable insight, diverse perspectives, and expertise regarding affected communities. To facilitate, implement, and sustain equity initiatives and community engagement, LDRMs should dedicate resources to help advance the recovery management initiatives.

When possible, communities should designate a full-time LDRM to champion management efforts and organize equitable recovery projects. LDRMs also need the community's help to champion projects and coordinate with the broader recovery network. Some state or federal agencies can provide funding to hire or appoint LDRMs to oversee the coordination, management, and administration of recovery process efforts and challenges. However, disaster funding for an LDRM is not guaranteed for every community recovering from a disaster. It is a best practice to include a LDRM as a permanent role under local governments to help coordinate recovery support after disasters.

Options for Local Governments to Fund a Local Disaster Recovery Manager

FEMA provides resources for LDRMs, such as a list of roles and responsibilities, job descriptions, and guidance on how to coordinate with non-profit partners. FEMA also has a list of options for local governments to fund a LDRM:

- Utilize HUD's Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Annual Program and CDBG Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR) Program.
- Engage Community Foundations and other philanthropic partners.
- Combine administrative line items, such as grant administration funding.
- Pursue U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA) funds.
- Reference Planning for Recovery Management from the American Planning Association for more information.

2. Authority and Governance

A recovery ordinance or policy can help ensure a focus on equity during recovery. Ordinances and policies can speed up the establishment of working groups, committees or leadership positions that can manage longer-term recovery challenges.[6] Sometimes, local organizations are tasked with providing recommendations for long-term recovery plans and projects. Recovery ordinances may define how the output of these organizations will be used in local decision-making. The recovery management resources listed below include guidance on the roles, responsibilities, and scope of recovery leadership. In addition to recovery ordinances and federal laws, local leaders should be familiar with state and local authorities that address recovery.

3. Coordination

Successful recovery requires accessing a full range of federal, SLTT, private, and non-governmental resources, including volunteer, cultural, and faith-based resources. It is essential that the recovery management process includes historically marginalized, disadvantaged, and underserved populations to help ensure these communities can participate in resource conversations and increase their access to recovery tools. Groups or populations who have been historically discriminated against and are systematically denied access to resources, and as a result are unable to participate in the recovery management process, should be of particular focus in coordinating recovery efforts.

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[6] Adopt a Pre-Event Recovery Ordinance, American Planning Association, 2014.

FEMA-funded resources for community recovery from a disaster (e.g., Individual Assistance, Public Assistance, and the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program [HMGP]) may be available following incidents that receive a disaster declaration under the Stafford Act.[7] However, since most incidents are not federally declared disasters, it is important to look beyond FEMA assistance for recovery. **Figure 4** displays the role of federal and non-federal resources and planning partners in recovery. Communities may coordinate with federal and state agencies or Tribal Nations for guidance to connect with recovery resources.

Recovery Management Resources

- National Disaster Recovery Framework, FEMA.
- Disaster Financial Management Guide: Guidance for State, Local, Tribal & Territorial Partners (SLTT), FEMA.
- Effective Coordination of Recovery Resources for State, Tribal, Territorial and Local Incidents (SLTT), FEMA.
- Investment Priorities, EDA.
- Addendum to Hazard Mitigation Assistance Guidance: Program Administration by States Pilot, Hazard Mitigation Program – For States, Tribes, and Territories, FEMA.
- Hazard Mitigation Assistance Cost Share Guide, FEMA.
- Mitigation Assistance, U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA).
- Single Family Housing Repair Program in Presidentially Declared Disasters, U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA).

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[7] FEMA offers financial assistance through other hazard mitigation programs that do not require federally declared disasters to trigger assistance. These programs include Building Resilient and Infrastructure Communities, Flood Mitigation Assistance, Safeguarding Tomorrow Revolving Loan Fund Program, and HMGP - Post-Fire Grant. With assistance from these programs, communities can increase their resilience to disasters when they happen and reduce the risk of harm from disasters.

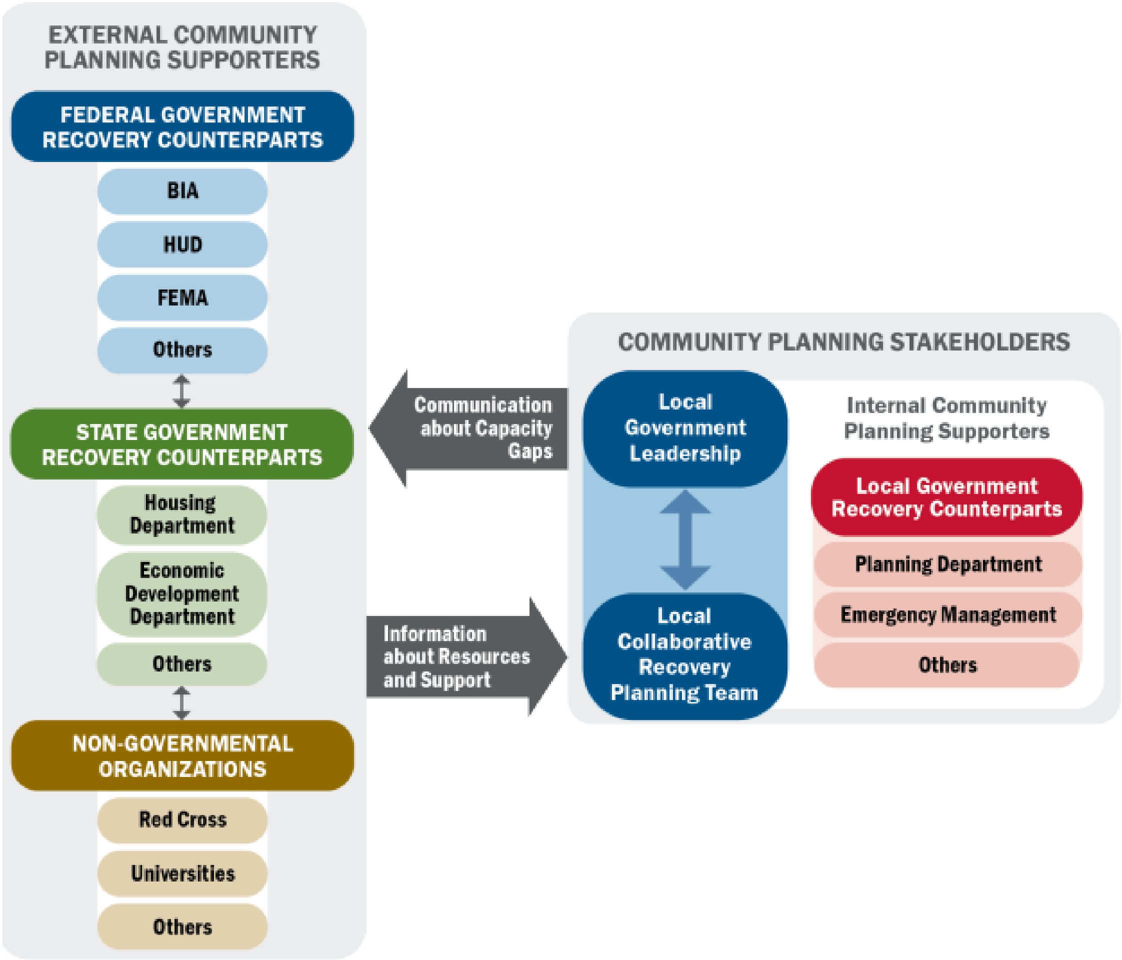
EXTERNAL COMMUNITY PLANNING SUPPORTERS
FEDERAL GOVERNMENT RECOVERY COUNTERPARTS
BIA
HUD
FEMA
Others
STATE GOVERNMENT RECOVERY COUNTERPARTS
Housing Department
Economic Development Department
Others
NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS
Red Cross
Universities
Others
Communication about Capacity Gaps
Information about Resources and Support
COMMUNITY PLANNING STAKEHOLDERS
Local Government Leadership
Local Collaborative Recovery Planning Team
Internal Community Planning Supporters
Local Government Recovery Counterparts
Planning Department
Emergency Management
Others

Figure 4. Information and Resource Coordination Flow of External Planning Supporters

In addition to the planning partners listed in **Figure 4**, additional external supporting entities include, but are not limited to:

- **Federal Government Recovery Counterparts**: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), EPA, USDA/Natural Resources Conservation Service, SBA, EDA, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers; Bureau of Indian Affairs;
- **SLTT Government Recovery Counterparts**: Planning Department, Public Health Department, Public Works/Engineering Department, Housing Department; and
- **Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO)**: Voluntary Organizations Active in Disasters (VOAD), community-based organizations (CBO), science-based organizations (e.g., National Science Foundation), institutions of higher education (IHE) and research organizations, professional associations, private sector partners, housing and homeless services organizations, and independent subject-matter experts.

3.1. Coordinating Resources, Partners, and Stakeholders for Community-Wide Recovery

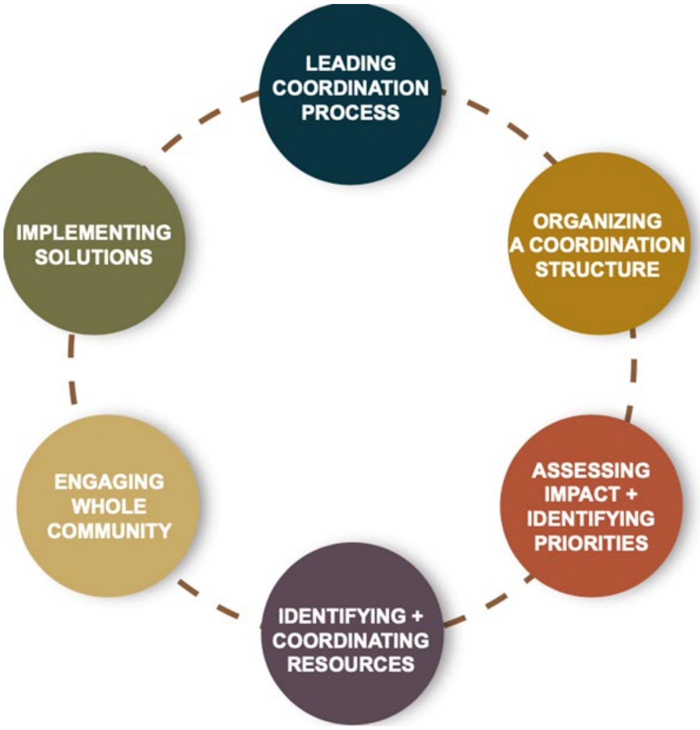
LEADING COORDINATION PROCESS
ORGANIZING A COORDINATION STRUCTURE
ASSESSING IMPACT + IDENTIFYING PRIORITIES
IDENTIFYING + COORDINATING RESOURCES
ENGAGING WHOLE COMMUNITY
IMPLEMENTING SOLUTIONS

Figure 5. Components of the Recovery Coordination Process[8]

To coordinate and identify the needs and resources required for community-wide recovery activities, it is important to create an organized committee or structured group of stakeholders that represents a cross-section of all those affected by the disaster. **Figure 5** displays components of the recovery coordination process. The activities that require community input include recovery projects, changes in community services, and new community initiatives. Full representation of historically disadvantaged and underserved stakeholders in these efforts provides these populations with an opportunity to have a voice in structured community decision-making and aids in local outreach to federal, state, and other funding organizations.

In some cases, these efforts are organized solely by the local government. In other cases, the local government works with existing community groups and groups that organically emerge from the community. Typical models for organizing structured community-wide coordination include recovery committees, recovery task forces, recovery commissions, or advisory groups. **Figure 6** outlines key supporting partners in creating a local recovery committee.

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[8] Effective Coordination of Recovery Resources for State, Tribal, Territorial and Local Incidents, FEMA, 2015.

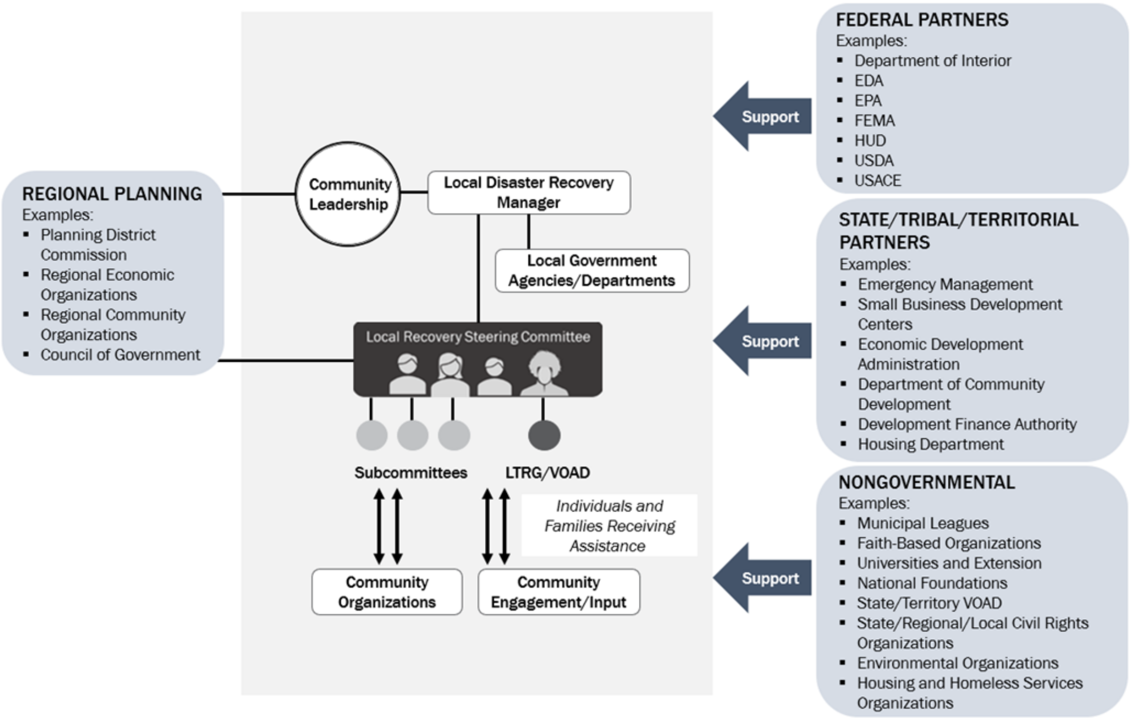
REGIONAL PLANNING
Examples:
Planning District Commission
Regional Economic Organizations
Regional Community Organizations
Council of Government
Community Leadership
Local Disaster Recovery Manager
Local Government Agencies/Departments
Local Recovery Steering Committee
Subcommittees
LTRG/VOAD
Individuals and Families Receiving Assistance
Community Organizations
Community Engagement/Input
Support
FEDERAL PARTNERS
Examples:
Department of Interior
EDA
EPA
FEMA
HUD
USDA
USACE
Support
STATE/TRIBAL/TERRITORIAL PARTNERS
Examples:
Emergency Management
Small Business Development Centers
Economic Development Administration
Department of Community Development
Development Finance Authority
Housing Department
Support
NONGOVERNMENTAL
Examples:
Municipal Leagues
Faith-Based Organizations
Universities and Extension
National Foundations
State/Territory VOAD
State/Regional/Local Civil Rights Organizations
Environmental Organizations
Housing and Homeless Services Organizations

Figure 6. Local Recovery Committee Structure with Supporting Partners

One mechanism to build equity into the recovery structure is to specifically approach community groups, professional association memberships, and equity task forces that are already working on equity initiatives and ask them to join the recovery coordination structure. For example, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) has published work in this area that may be a useful reference for recovery leaders.[9, 10] Other organizations include but are not limited to faith-based groups, neighborhood associations, senior populations, or disability organizations. This section outlines potential partners for equitable engagement, not an exhaustive list of all partners or organizations. Additional examples of possible representatives are outlined in **Figure 7**.

In some cases, reaching those who are historically disadvantaged or underserved calls for an alternative approach, requiring outreach to both formal and informal networks that already support those communities. For example, faith-based leaders can reach populations that are isolated due to language barriers. Local officials and leaders should actively cultivate relationships and build trust through close coordination with advocacy organizations and service providers operating in underserved communities.

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[9] In the Eye of the Storm: A People's Guide to Transforming Crisis & Advancing Equity in the Disaster Continuum, NAACP, 2023.

[10] As of September 2023, FEMA established a memorandum of agreement with the NAACP, an example of a non-governmental partnership that helps to incorporate equity before, during, and after disasters.

- Community-Based Organizations Representing Low-Income Populations
- Local Community Recovery Groups
- Health and Human Services Departments
- Schools
- Emergent Groups and Helpers Engaging in Altruistic Behavior
- Regional and State Representatives
- Faith-Based Organizations
- Neighborhood Coalitions
- Representatives Holding Equity or Resilience Positions in the Community
- Legal Aid Organizations
- Centers for Independent Living and Other Disability-Led Organizations
- Small Businesses
- Local Advocates and Non-Profit Organizations
- Technical Assistance Representatives Active Post-Disaster
- Arts and Cultural Organizations
- Disability Organizations
- Farmers and Landowners
- Private Sector
- Civil Rights Organizations
- Representatives from Underserved Communities or Heavily Impacted Areas
- LGBTQ+ Representatives
- Older Adult Populations
- Colleges and Universities
- Youth Leadership Groups
- Volunteer Disaster Response Groups
- Health Centers

Figure 7. Examples of Representatives in an Equitable Coordination Structure (Not an Exhaustive List)

Many small and low-resourced communities have leaders who fill multiple roles. For example, a mayor may also be the fire chief; a Tribal Nation Governing Leader may also be the finance or budget director. These situations create challenges for personnel who have numerous responsibilities as the community shifts from short-term recovery into intermediate and long-term recovery. Their limited capacity can prevent these personnel from leveraging all the resources available to them, which may not allow for the ability to foster lasting change in community equity.

3.2. Coordinating Resources for Individuals and Families

Local non-profits often organize a Long-Term Recovery Group (LTRG) or Unmet Needs Committee to provide coordinated case management for resources to impacted individuals and families. These groups can partner with VOADs. Communities that do not have a VOAD group may reach out to their state or national VOAD organization, using information on the National VOAD website. Local or tribal governments can coordinate with VOADs to support their engagement with the community. FEMA Voluntary Agency Liaisons support community leaders to establish LTRGs after disasters. For example, after hurricanes Irma and Maria impacted St. Croix, St. John, and St. Thomas, LTRGs formed to address unmet community needs.[11]

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[11] Long-Term Recovery Groups Help Address Unmet Needs, FEMA, 2018.

4. Policy

Local officials can adopt an "Equity in All Policies" approach to address inequities when working with leaders and partners across sectors and when setting up recovery processes, planning distribution of resources, and developing recovery plans. An equity policy clarifies what is expected from everyone and improves accountability. This allows for the inclusion of underserved groups and places, advancing a route to apply for resources more successfully, such as grants.[12] Community groups can also inform policies that advance equity and mitigate long-term vulnerabilities. For example, the Hawaii Broadband and Digital Equity Office was established in July 2021 by a state law that requires broadband development strategies and investments to ensure that all communities have information technology capacity, among other goals.

Health equity assessments use a similar process, with a focus on removing barriers to health care and increasing opportunities for healthy choices. Some states, Tribal Nations, and local communities have incorporated equity assessments into specific sector planning such as public health. The following questions to consider when conducting an equity impact assessment for local policies were adapted from the Annie E. Casey Foundation:[13]

- Are all groups who are affected by the policy, practice, or decision at the table? Who is missing from the discussion?
- How will the proposed policy, practice, or decision affect each group? How will each group perceive the proposed policy, practice, or decision?
- Does the policy, practice, or decision ignore or worsen existing disparities?
- Based on the above responses, what revisions are needed in the policy, practice, or decision under discussion?

Assessment and Policy Resources

- Planning for Equity Policy Guide, American Planning Association.
- A Racial Equity Framework for Assessing Health Policy, The Commonwealth Fund.
- Annie E. Casey Foundation provides expert guidance on equity impact assessments.
- Community Health Assessments & Health Improvement Plans, CDC.
- Community Health Assessment and Improvement Planning, National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO).

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[12] Making Equity Real, The Greenlining Institute, 2019.

[13] Race Equity and Inclusion Action Guide, Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2014.

Goal 2: Identify Unequal Patterns of Disaster Exposure and Impact

> "For low-income families and persistently poor communities, there are fewer resources to prepare for, adapt to, and cope with the consequences of climate change and flooding. Both chronic flooding and one-time flood events can have devastating consequences for financial well-being, with residual consequences on mental and physical health."[14]

1. Generate a Data-Informed Picture of Recovery Needs

Inequities that existed prior to a disaster are often exacerbated by the disaster (e.g., disparities caused by racism or poverty) and may result in further concentrations of vulnerable populations in hazardous areas with lower incomes and access to fewer services. Those who are most vulnerable prior to a disaster (e.g., children, older adults, single parents, individuals with disabilities and other access and functional needs, survivors of abuse/human trafficking, individuals experiencing social isolation, individuals experiencing homelessness, migrant workers) face even tougher challenges during recovery due to displacement, economic disruption, disproportionate health impacts (e.g., problems with health maintenance due to power outages), suspension of community-based service providers (e.g., childcare), food security, sexual violence in the aftermath of disasters, and others.

Resources on Human Trafficking Post-Disaster

- Human Trafficking in the Wake of a Disaster, CDC.
- Human Trafficking: The Hidden Aftermath of U.S. Natural Disasters, Naval Postgraduate School.
- Natural Disasters and the Increased Risk for Human Trafficking, Polaris Project.
- How Natural Disasters Can Affect Human Trafficking, ICF.

Using readily available national databases can quickly and easily indicate communities that may be under-resourced and overburdened and may require additional support and resources to help facilitate equity during the disaster recovery process. **Figure 8** is a geographical information system map taken from the CDC/ATSDR's SVI database of all counties in the 50 U.S. states indicating only their level of vulnerability, not their risk exposure to hazards.[15] This graphic also serves as an example of how community mapping can provide information about unmet needs and pre-existing inequitable conditions. It is important to remember that while national databases provide readily available data, the information required to inform an assessment of the community need is unlikely to be captured by a single dataset. Therefore, the use of national data, consistent with applicable law, does not supplant the usefulness of field-derived information generated from a variety of sources that may be updated on an iterative basis throughout the recovery period.

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[14] D. Rhubart, "Flooding negatively affects health, and rural America is not immune. Data Slice #28."

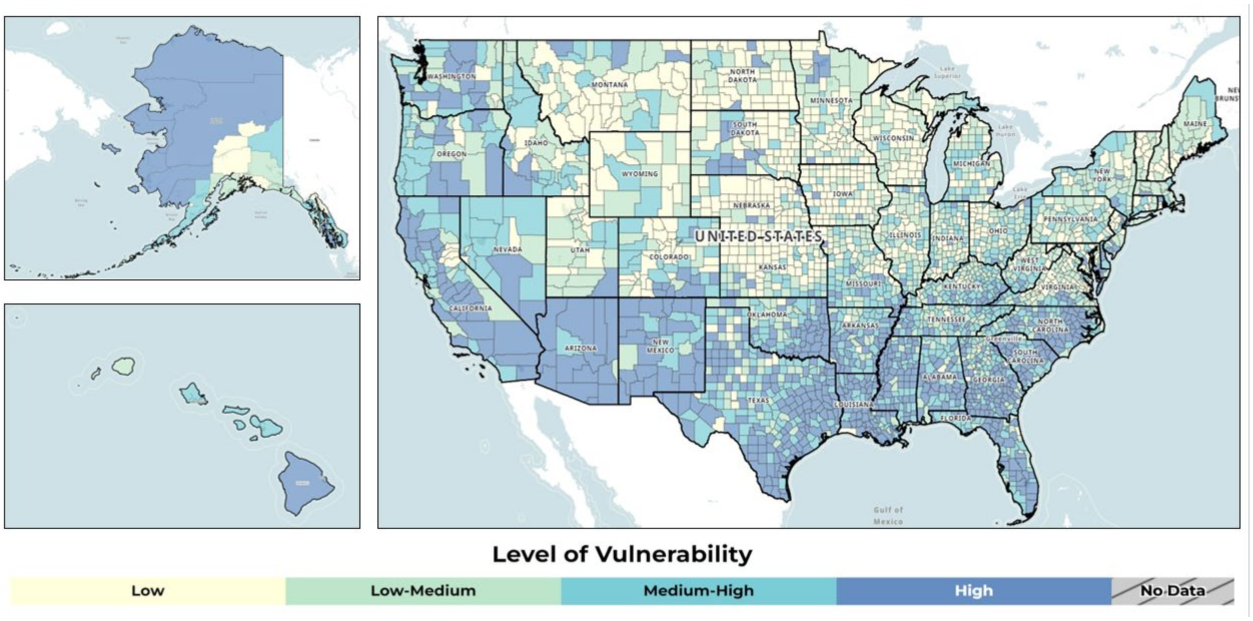
UNITED STATES
WASHINGTON
MONTANA
NORTH DAKOTA
MINNESOTA
SOUTH DAKOTA
WISCONSIN
MICHIGAN
MAINE
OREGON
IDAHO
WYOMING
NEW YORK
IOWA
NEBRASKA
PENNSYLVANIA
OHIO
ILLINOIS
INDIANA
NEVADA
UTAH
COLORADO
KANSAS
MISSOURI
WEST VIRGINIA
KENTUCKY
VIRGINIA
CALIFORNIA
OKLAHOMA
TENNESSEE
NORTH CAROLINA
ARKANSAS
SOUTH CAROLINA
ARIZONA
NEW MEXICO
ALABAMA
GEORGIA
TEXAS
LOUISIANA
FLORIDA
Gulf of Mexico
Level of Vulnerability
Low
Low-Medium
Medium-High
High
No Data

Figure 8. Adapted from Social Vulnerability Index by County[16]

To address the needs of the underserved populations, it is critical to analyze the pre-existing conditions of these populations and evaluate how the event impacted communities. This assessment needs to be communicated among local and tribal governments and interested stakeholders to inform outreach, planning, and decisions. Different individuals can be affected by the same disaster in very different ways over different time horizons. These factors inform responses tailored to those specific needs. Other tools that can support these efforts include the EPA's EJScreen: Environmental Justice Screening and Mapping Tool and The White House Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool.

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[15] CDC/ATSDR Social Vulnerability Index Map, 2020.

[16] CDC/ATSDR Social Vulnerability Index, 2020.

"Communities and individuals may have multiple, overlapping vulnerabilities—a concept Dr. Kimberlé Crenshaw calls 'intersectionality,' which is 'a lens, a prism, for seeing the way in which various forms of inequality often operate together and exacerbate each other. We tend to talk about racial inequality as separate from inequality based on gender, class, sexuality, or immigrant status. What's often missing is how some people are subject to all of these, and the experience is not just the sum of its parts.'"[17]

Figure 9 presents a simplified representation of the concept of intersectionality where stressors present in households and communities during steady state converge to potentially exacerbate impacts on populations in a disaster context. Equitable disaster recovery involves recognizing that "everyone is vulnerable to a disaster, but it is increasingly evident that some people, groups and communities are more at risk of serious negative impacts than others" and that "the higher the number of "isms" you face (i.e., racism, sexism, ageism), the higher your risks before, during and after a disaster. When you have fewer areas of vulnerability, it is more likely that you will have lower risks and more resources to help you evacuate and recover."[18] Additional information about intersectionality in disaster recovery can be found on the Center for Disaster Philanthropy website.

Except from 'Intersectionality: Amplifying Impacts on Health Equity"

"Additional information about intersectionality in disaster recovery can be found here. Intersectionality is a framework to describe how systems of power and oppression (e.g., racism, sexism, heterosexism) interlock to shape people's lived experiences, health, and well-being, based on their multiple identities (e.g., race, gender, and sexual orientation, respectively). For example, Black women can experience gendered racism (that is, discrimination based on race and gender) when engaging with health care providers and systems; these experiences multiply to exacerbate health inequities."[19]

Figure 9 brings attention to the fact that local leaders must consider the potential overlapping effects of multiple inequities and identities when working in post-disaster recovery. It is important to note that the figure does not encompass all aspects of intersectionality and the sample characteristics presented are not an exhaustive list.

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[17] U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, "Citizen Participation & Equitable Engagement (CPEE) Toolkit."

[18] Tanya Gulliver-Garcia, "Intersectionality in Disasters."

[19] Eli Michaels, et al., "Intersectionality: Amplifying Impacts on Health Equity."

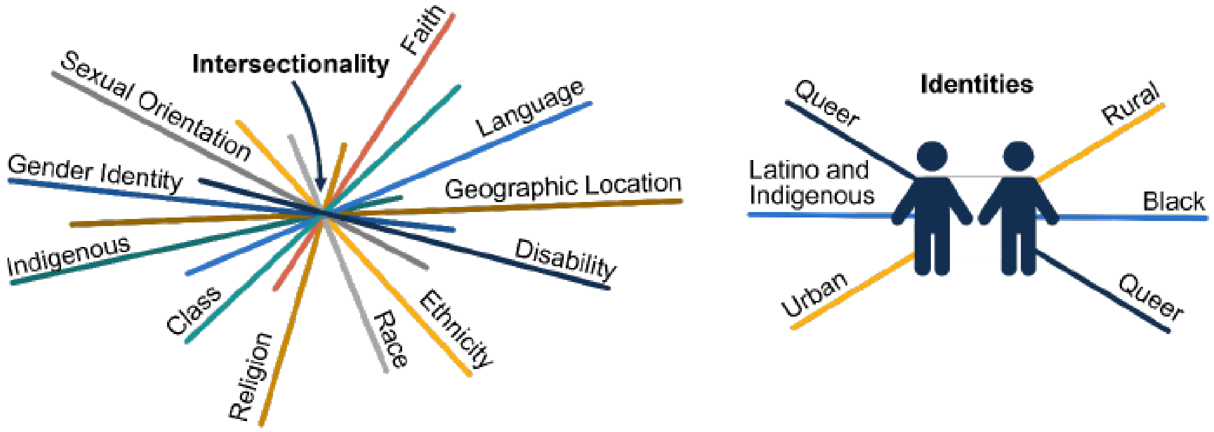
Intersectionality
Faith
Sexual Orientation
Language
Gender Identity
Geographic Location
Indigenous
Disability
Class
Religion
Race
Ethnicity
Identities
Queer
Rural
Latino and Indigenous
Black
Urban
Queer

Figure 9. Visualizing Intersectionality[20]

Qualitative data, including information generated from interviews with disadvantaged and underserved populations, coupled with broader quantitative and qualitative datasets available from other agencies and organizations, can inform recovery leaders of community needs before, during, and after a disaster. Recovery leaders can work with CBOs and representative groups to involve disadvantaged and underserved populations in data collection opportunities. The Asset Based Community Development approach builds on the resources and expertise that are already in the community and recognizes the strength and value of all individuals.

Disaster-related data informing equitable recovery can include:

- Event hazard and damage characteristics, including the identification of disaster severity, impact, and damage across key community facilities, assets, systems, and services, and who has been affected by those impacts;
- Duration and projection of services lost or services that require relocation;
- Impacts to the informal economy, arts, and cultural institutions, and to local healthcare or community services that focus on underserved populations;
- Displacement of disadvantaged populations;
- Disaster-related short and long-term comprehensive impacts on “Whole Health” (e.g., physical, behavioral, spiritual, and socioeconomic);
- Cascading effects of multiple events (e.g., a natural disaster becoming a technological disaster) or recurrent losses;
- The extent to which climate factors compounded the disaster, including disease vectors;

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[20] Advancing Equity by Incorporating Intersectionality in Research and Analysis, HHS.

- The extent to which impacts in this event compound one another, particularly on impacts to disadvantaged residents (e.g., an impact to a school further places stress on disadvantaged neighborhoods served by the school);
- Effects of the disaster on support systems and disaster workers;
- Impacts on natural systems that supported community ecosystems such as urban canopies and natural stormwater management; and
- Impacts of the lack of available housing on rates of homelessness and housing burden.

The federal government has released guidance on priorities to address climate change and ensure those efforts reach disadvantaged communities that are marginalized, underserved, and overburdened by pollution.

- Justice40 Initiative: Through this initiative, the White House expressed the federal government's commitment to ensure 40% of the overall benefits of certain federal investments flow to disadvantaged communities. The categories of investment that fall under this initiative include climate change, clean energy and energy efficiency, clean transit, affordable and sustainable housing, training and workforce development, remediation and reduction of legacy pollution, and the development of critical clean water and wastewater infrastructure.

Sources of Data

- Resilience Analysis and Planning Tool, FEMA.
- National Risk Index, FEMA.
- Social Vulnerability Index (SVI), CDC/ATSDR.
- Community Resilience Estimates, U.S. Census Bureau.
- Equity and Inclusion in HUD Sustainable Communities Grantees, HUD.
- EJScreen: Environmental Justice Screening and Mapping Tool, EPA.
- Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool, CEQ.
- U.S. Census American Community Survey, U.S. Census Bureau.
- Environmental Justice Index, CDC.

It is critical for local officials and leaders to advance equity in recovery by leveraging available data to inform the recovery process. Sharing commonly requested data from grants or other resources with multiple agencies and organizations reduces duplicative efforts of data collection. In addition to the data generated through emergency management efforts, a variety of departments and local organizations will conduct their own assessments or have data resources that local officials can access.

> "Health is a product of multiple determinants. Disparities in health are shaped more by social, economic, environmental, and structural factors—and their unequal distribution—than by health care."[21]

For example:

- **Health partners** use data to address health inequities, which commonly occur along lines of socioeconomic status, race/ethnicity, disability status, and citizenship status. One way health partners address health inequity is by collecting data on conditions within a community that measure health risk factors and outcomes. This is referred to as Social Determinants of Health. Collecting and analyzing this data serves as an opportunity to identify and improve root causes of health challenges and to address the roots of health inequities, such as housing affordability. Health departments and their partners use Community Assessment for Public Health Emergency Response (CASPER) and Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) to collectively identify data related to abuse, neglect, and other potentially traumatic experiences affecting people under the age of 18. The CDC provides additional information on ACEs in this resource. Following a disaster, CASPER and ACEs may inform efforts to address health inequities and to provide information to traumatized communities who often lack resources to effectively navigate mental health, wellness, and potential escalation of violence.
- **Planning departments** have data that can be used to advocate for disaster funding. One example is the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission's Equity and Access Project, which seeks to improve economic and social opportunity in the greater Philadelphia region by expanding access to essential services for vulnerable populations, specifically those that are critically impacted by barriers and gaps in infrastructure, service coordination, and policies.
- **Schools** may also have valuable data and insight related to equity. Some schools conduct "Social Work Family Needs Assessments" that ask about areas of need (e.g., food, housing, clothes, hygiene, household products, school supplies, mental health, and other community services), and whether students identify as displaced, doubled up, or unaccompanied. These assessments may also provide data indicating the percentage of the student population at or below the poverty level.
- **Regional Organizations** such as Council of Governments or Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPO) are often tasked with performing specific functions that require periodic county or regional-level reviews of current and future needs. For example, California state law requires that MPOs and local jurisdictions conduct the Regional Housing Needs Allocation process and plan for their respective "fair share" of housing units at all affordability types, which can incorporate local factors such as transit connectivity, job availability, and sustainability.
- **Disability Organizations** such as Administration for Community Living, National Institute on Disability, Independent Living, and Rehabilitation Research, and National Council on Disability

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[21] National Academies of Science, Engineering, and Medicine.

are tasked with conducting or funding research and data acquisition from multiple other disability organizations. Disability organizations are often the sole custodians for disability-centered data and connections to smaller and more local disability resources to ensure equitable recovery.

- **Housing partners** such as Public Housing Authorities often have data on available assisted units and other demographic data on the residents of federal- and state-assisted housing units. Every January, HUD-funded Continuum of Care conducts a Point-In-Time count of both sheltered and unsheltered individuals experiencing homelessness within their service area. While this method will not provide an entirely accurate number of those experiencing homelessness within a community, it can be a useful indicator of how many individuals currently live in conditions not intended for continuous human habitation. Non-governmental groups that provide local housing and homeless services maintain data on the capacity at shelters and rehousing programs within the area as well as national housing advocacy organizations maintain data on housing needs and availability.
- **IHEs and Research Institutions** often collect and maintain region-specific data, as well as subscribe to a variety of private databases, used in teaching and research during steady state. Many IHEs will support their faculty, staff, and students in assisting with disaster recovery efforts and in some cases allow use of university resources for that purpose. Additionally, recent academic trends have begun prioritizing equity as a major subject of research, providing an opportunity for partnerships during the recovery process such sharing access to existing pre-disaster data, support in collecting data post-disaster, and personnel to provide analysis to assist recovery officials in their community-mapping efforts.

2. Develop a Whole Community Picture of Needs and Inequities

Local officials, community leaders, CBOs, and other stakeholders know their community best. In times of disaster, these groups must work together to develop a clear, coordinated picture of their community’s population and demographics. State and federal agencies often use public databases (e.g., income, employment, disabilities, age, vehicle ownership), to assess needs, determine funding allocations, and identify barriers to equity (as discussed further in **Section 8.1**). However, local officials and community leaders should aim to augment public data with detailed, community-level data to provide a more complete analysis of the population and demographics, economic condition, and historical context. When local officials combine these datasets, they can develop a more accurate picture of needs and resource gaps in the post-disaster recovery planning process.

Local CBOs, neighborhood associations or groups, regional planning commissions and economic development districts, local universities, state community development agencies, and national nonprofits can provide additional resources and technical assistance at the local level. Identifying pre-disaster conditions helps local leaders identify challenges that could lead to disaster scenarios if local leaders and government officials fail to act. Multiple pre-disaster conditions can foreshadow imminent emergency situations that may arise during a disaster. **Table 1** highlights examples of pre-disaster conditions that impact the vulnerability of communities that disasters exacerbate. Some of the criteria in the table below overlap with what is called a Medically Underserved Area/Population, a designation utilized by some federal programs to inform resource distribution.

Table 1. Examples of Community-Disaster Conditions Creating Vulnerabilities[22]

Community-Disaster Condition	Characteristic
Connection to Community	▪ Below average presence of civic and social organizations. ▪ Below average population with religious affiliation. ▪ Above average percentage of inactive voters. ▪ An ongoing negative net change in area population.
Economic	▪ Above average population below poverty level. ▪ Below average median household income. ▪ Above average unemployed labor force. ▪ Above average unemployed women labor force. ▪ Above average level of income inequality. ▪ High percentage of local workforce employed in a single economic sector.
Healthcare	▪ Below average quantity of hospitals in vicinity. ▪ Below average medical professional capacity for the area. ▪ Above average population without health insurance.
Household	▪ Above average quantity of households without a vehicle. ▪ Above average quantity of households with limited English proficiency. ▪ Above average quantity of single-parent households. ▪ Above average quantity of households without a smartphone.
Housing	▪ Above average quantity of mobile homes as percentage of housing. ▪ Below average quantity of owner-occupied housing.
Population	▪ Above average population without a high school education. ▪ Above average population 65 and older. ▪ Above average population with a disability.

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[22] Adapted from Community Resilience Indicator Analysis (CRIA).

Disasters disproportionally impact marginalized communities. Local leaders and government officials should work together to identify and support such groups throughout disaster. **Table 2** identifies examples of populations likely to be disproportionately impacted by disasters. This list of examples is not exhaustive.

Table 2. Examples of Populations Likely to Be Disproportionately Impacted by Disaster

Examples of Populations Likely to be Disproportionately Impacted	
▪ Those displaced due to the disaster ▪ People of color ▪ Tribal Nations ▪ Women ▪ The LGBTQ+ community ▪ Rural communities ▪ Infants, children, youth, and older adults ▪ People with disabilities ▪ Those with limited English proficiency	▪ Service workers, seasonal workers, and migrant laborers ▪ Institutionalized populations, such as those in hospitals, nursing homes, and prisons ▪ Veterans ▪ Victims of trafficking ▪ People experiencing homelessness ▪ Renters ▪ Single mothers

> “Environmental justice research and disaster vulnerability scholarship coalesce around a large body of evidence indicating that disparities in race/ethnicity and socioeconomic status shape unequal risks across all phases of the disaster cycle and that disasters often reveal and reinforce existing inequalities.”[23]

There are resources available to local leaders listed throughout this Guide to inform disaster recovery efforts for vulnerable populations. Federal resources are available to support local leaders in supporting populations disproportionately impacted by disasters such as individuals with disabilities and those with access and functional needs.

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[23] Bullard and Wright, 2009; Mohai et al., 2009; Pellow and Brehm, 2013; Gotham and Greenberg, 2014; Tierney, 2014 as stated in Flores et al., 2021.

FEMA Disability Integration[24]

FEMA has Disability Integration staff across the country that engage with SLTT governments, NGOs, and public sector partners to provide tools, training, resources, and strategies to ensure people with disabilities can participate and benefit from emergency management programs and services throughout the disaster lifecycle. To connect with the Disability Integration team in your region, email: FEMA-Disability-Integration-Coordination@fema.dhs.gov.

Local leaders should be mindful that families with young children, infants, and people who are pregnant are especially vulnerable after a disaster. Caring for infants and children is a significant responsibility pre-disaster. After a disaster, local leaders and officials should consider the unique needs of this population. Infants and young children are especially vulnerable during emergencies when various exposures can lead to higher risk for illness and infections, especially as resources and supplies are limited. Ensuring information, support, and resources are available to parents and caregivers during the recovery management process is critical to preserving the health and well-being of this vulnerable population. For leaders who serve populations that include families unable to breastfeed, there are many local, state, and federal resources to address infant feeding during disasters. Federal partners such as HHS and CDC have resources to address this population. HHS publishes resources on infant feeding during disasters, with **Figure 10** as one example.

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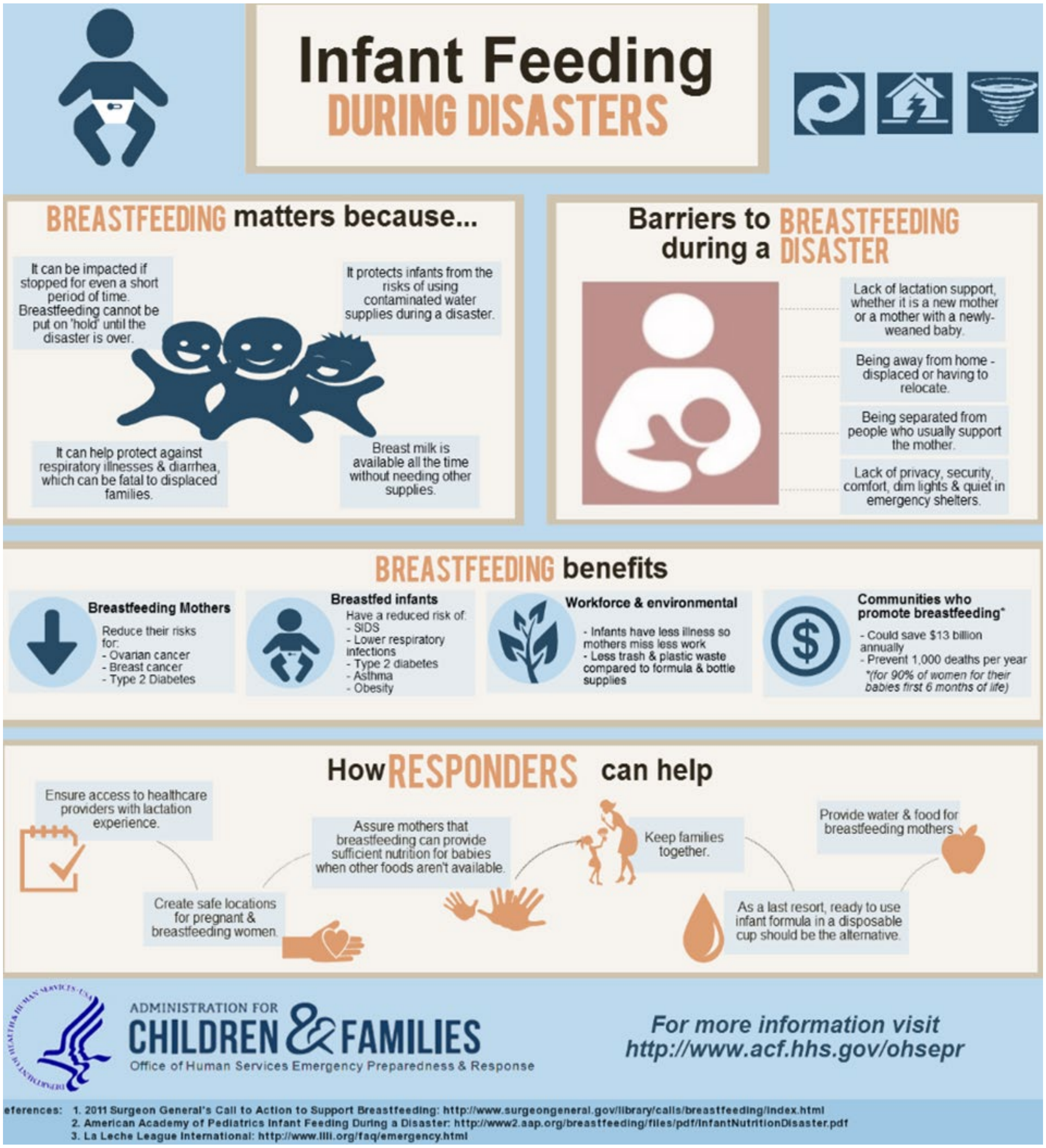
[24] Office of Disability Integration and Coordination, FEMA, 2023.



Infant Feeding DURING DISASTERS

BREASTFEEDING matters because...

It can be impacted if stopped for even a short period of time. Breastfeeding cannot be put on 'hold' until the disaster is over.

It protects infants from the risks of using contaminated water supplies during a disaster.

It can help protect against respiratory illnesses & diarrhea, which can be fatal to displaced families.

Breast milk is available all the time without needing other supplies.

Barriers to BREASTFEEDING during a DISASTER

Lack of lactation support, whether it is a new mother or a mother with a newly-weaned baby.

Being away from home - displaced or having to relocate.

Being separated from people who usually support the mother.

Lack of privacy, security, comfort, dim lights & quiet in emergency shelters.

BREASTFEEDING benefits

Breastfeeding Mothers

Reduce their risks for:
- Ovarian cancer
- Breast cancer
- Type 2 Diabetes

Breastfed infants

Have a reduced risk of:
- SIDS
- Lower respiratory infections
- Type 2 diabetes
- Asthma
- Obesity

Workforce & environmental

- Infants have less illness so mothers miss less work
- Less trash & plastic waste compared to formula & bottle supplies

Communities who promote breastfeeding*

- Could save $13 billion annually
- Prevent 1,000 deaths per year

(for 90% of women for their babies first 6 months of life)

How RESPONDERS can help

Ensure access to healthcare providers with lactation experience.

Create safe locations for pregnant & breastfeeding women.

Assure mothers that breastfeeding can provide sufficient nutrition for babies when other foods aren't available.

Keep families together.

Provide water & food for breastfeeding mothers.

As a last resort, ready to use infant formula in a disposable cup should be the alternative.

ADMINISTRATION FOR CHILDREN & FAMILIES
Office of Human Services Emergency Preparedness & Response

For more information visit http://www.acf.hhs.gov/ohsepr

eferences:
1. 2011 Surgeon General's Call to Action to Support Breastfeeding: http://www.surgeongeneral.gov/library/calls/breastfeeding/index.html
2. American Academy of Pediatrics Infant Feeding During a Disaster: http://www2.aap.org/breastfeeding/files/pdf/InfantNutritionDisaster.pdf
3. La Leche League International: http://www.llli.org/faq/emergency.html

Figure 10. Infant Feeding During Disasters[25]

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[25] Infant Feeding During Disasters, HHS.

Maternal and Infant Health Resources

- Infant Feeding During Disasters, HHS.
- Infant and Young Child Feeding in Emergencies (IYCF-E) Toolkit, CDC.
- Maternal-Child Emergency Planning Toolkit, HHS.
- Resources for Infant Feeding in Emergencies (Multilingual), La Leche League International.
- Joint Statement on Infant and Young Child Feeding in Emergencies (IYCF-E) in the U.S., U.S. Breastfeeding Coalition.
- Find a Milk Bank, Human Milk Banking Association of North America.

3. Assess Equity Status and Develop a Baseline

To inform an equitable recovery, it is important to assess the existing landscape in a community. Two important concepts to understand or anticipate barriers to recovery include the following terms defined by the HUD CPEE Toolkit:[26]

- **Cultural Competency**: Behaviors and actions that reflect and respond effectively to the racial, ethnic, cultural, and linguistic experiences of the communities involved with a particular program, policy, or procedure.
- **Trauma-Informed Approach**: A trauma-informed approach recognizes the widespread impact of trauma and understands potential paths for recovery; acknowledges the signs and symptoms of trauma in stakeholders; and responds by fully integrating knowledge about trauma into policies, procedures, and practices while seeking to actively resist re-traumatization.

Some communities conduct equity scans in the pre-disaster environment to establish a baseline for measuring the community's progress in achieving equity goals. Equity scans ask questions such as:

- What are the pre-existing inequities? Where are the populations and places of concern?
- What is the current cultural context of the community? Are there coalitions recently organized around specific issues (e.g., fighting hate crimes, decreasing homelessness, promoting environmental and social justices, harm reduction, and advocating for affordable housing)?
- Has the community experienced a prior disaster? Was there an equitable response then?
- How can the community expand baseline recovery needs to prepare for a future disaster?
- Has any partner already used a Public Health Risk Assessment Tool that identified populations of concern to address health disparities?

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[26] CPEE Toolkit: Glossary of Terms, HUD, 2023.

- Has there been an equity assessment performed as part of the application for a specific grant or certification the community has received?

To work towards equity within a community, stakeholders should identify who already has momentum by reviewing existing plans, inventories, projects, and pre-existing cross-cutting priorities. In addition to identifying priorities, examining plans will help officials to understand the planning process (e.g., outreach, engagement) for the community, methods to prioritize projects, and the partners already involved in planning and implementation. To prepare for multi-sector stakeholder collaboration, ask questions such as:

- Did reviewers use an accessible process?
- Did disadvantaged and underserved communities have representation?

Equity Assessment Resources

- Natural Hazards Center Disaster Justice for All: The Need for a More Equitable and Just Recovery Lens, University of Colorado Boulder.
- Plan Integration: Linking Local Planning Efforts, FEMA.
- Tribal Equity Field Tool: Inter-Regional COVID-19 Tribal Recovery Toolkit, FEMA.

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Goal 3: Develop a Participatory Planning Process

The post-disaster recovery planning process is an opportunity for communities to envision a better future by setting aspirational goals, identifying key recovery objectives and needs, and establishing realistic, and resourced plans to work towards those goals. A recovery plan results in actionable, timely strategies and projects to address community needs.

Some communities may already engage in periodic long-term planning through tools like Comprehensive Plans or General Plans. A recovery plan is similar but involves a structured process which provides the whole community an opportunity to participate and contribute, organize, and think through many difficult decisions while experiencing highly stressful conditions. FEMA provides resources for groups involved in Hazard Mitigation Planning. There may be pressure at the local level to quickly make decisions, which could impact the utility of early recovery and general planning. Developing a recovery plan using an inclusive, participatory process can help a community evaluate their priorities and be inclusive of a variety of perspectives and ideas to create a roadmap for the future. This approach can help prioritize recovery projects by determining the most urgent community needs, identifying projects that can be started with little to no prerequisite work, and exploring funding opportunities to support recovery efforts.

What is an Inclusive Planning Process?

The following themes of inclusive planning are adapted from Building Alliances for Equitable Resilience:[27]

- Provide everyone with what they need; that might not be the same for everyone.
- Understand how people get information to tailor a plan to reach the whole community.
- Approach problems with questions to inform potential solutions.
- Planning should benefit the whole community.
- Identify what you do not know and make efforts to learn from different perspectives.

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[27] Building Alliances for Equitable Resilience, FEMA, 2021.

By using an inclusive planning process, the equitable recovery plans can identify the needs of disproportionately impacted individuals more accurately and may result in more appropriate solutions and enhanced buy-in from all stakeholders. This helps to address civil rights-related concerns upfront and demonstrates strategically designed and community supported projects to funders.

Sources of Guidance and Data

- Local Leader Disaster Recovery Guide: Key Considerations for County Managers and Elected Officials, Centralina Regional Council Regional Resilience Collaborative.
- Leadership and Professional Local Government Managers: Before, During, and After a Crisis, International City/County Management Association.
- Disaster Recovery Guide for Planning Practitioners, American Planning Association.
- Strategies for Inclusive Planning in Emergency Response, Los Angeles County.

1. List Multi-Sector Collaboration Activities and Partners

The following actions can help local officials begin developing a participatory planning process:

- Begin to develop a local recovery committee (e.g., list partners, meeting schedules, topics, action items, community engagement strategy) to highlight opportunities for collaboration.
- Ask partners and community stakeholders to provide updates about the communities and identify where inequities exist.
- Use a stakeholder analysis guide to ensure the process involves a representative group.

Table 3 aggregates the types of partners and examples of how local leaders can leverage existing federal and non-federal partners to promote health, social, and economic recovery.

Table 3. Partner Types and Examples (Not an Exhaustive List)

Partner Type	Examples
Economic	▪ Community development (e.g., community foundations, philanthropic organizations). ▪ Economic development (e.g., business leaders, Chamber of Commerce). ▪ Donated fund managers (e.g., corporate donors, nongovernmental organizations, crowdsourced funding). ▪ Small businesses.

Partner Type	Examples
Environmental	▪ Environmental justice advocates and researchers. ▪ Climate change and sustainability advocates. ▪ National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and National Weather Service local representatives and volunteers. ▪ Agricultural community (e.g., farmers, ranchers, forest landowners).
Health	▪ Healthcare coalitions. ▪ Hospitals and healthcare centers (e.g., urgent care centers). ▪ Food banks. ▪ Behavioral health providers. ▪ Disability services providers.
Local Government Services	▪ Police. ▪ Health departments. ▪ Human service departments. ▪ Housing departments. ▪ Chief operating officers/finance departments. ▪ Neighboring jurisdictions. ▪ Tribal governments.
Social	▪ Community advocates, organizations, and their networks. ▪ Neighborhood associations. ▪ Social service organizations (e.g., domestic violence shelters). ▪ Faith-based organizations. ▪ Civil rights organizations. ▪ Housing and homeless service organizations. ▪ Disability organizations. ▪ Survivors as Experts. ▪ Historic preservation organizations. ▪ Cultural organizations. ▪ Community spaces (e.g., libraries, bookstores, restaurants, nail salons, beauty supply stores, barber shops, corner stores, laundromats).

Partner Type	Examples
Youth	▪ Schools, colleges, and universities. ▪ Child Protective Services. ▪ Neighborhood organizations. ▪ Youth mentorship and leadership organizations (e.g., Big Brothers Big Sisters of America). ▪ Childcare providers (e.g., non-commercial daycare centers, home daycare registries).

Addressing Resource Challenges

Small or rural communities without access to local resources or without the capacity to engage in a recovery management process can request assistance from recovery partners including:

- State departments of emergency management, health and human services, and planning;
- State FEMA representative that can provide support from federal resources such as the Recovery Support Functions (RSF);
- The FEMA Tribal Affairs program and Regional Tribal Liaisons and can connect Tribal Nations with resources;
- National organizations like the NAACP, National VOAD, The Partnership for Inclusive Disaster Strategies, or The Association of Programs for Rural Independent Living;
- Volunteer subject matter experts from professional associations, relevant private sector partners and NGOs, and persons no longer in the workforce;
- Nearby academic institutions, state extension programs, state environmental protection departments, state natural resource departments, federal agencies (such as the USDA and Rural Local Initiatives Support Corporation [LISC]); and
- HUD and USDA's Office of Rural Housing.

2. Build a Community View of Equity

Equity needs are unique to each community. Therefore, recovery planners will need to develop a community definition of equity and identify community needs through an inclusive recovery planning process. Inclusive planning is defined by the American Planning Association as processes that "ensure all community members feel welcome to participate and are confident that their participation can positively affect outcomes" and is critical during the recovery management process.

How Do You Build and Restore Community Trust?

- Have the necessary difficult conversations.

- Listen before you act or talk.
- Bring resources, not words.
- In the absence of appropriate resources, provide compassion.
- Identify and engage diverse stakeholders and engage them firsthand.
- Do not make promises you cannot keep and keep the promises you do make.
- Celebrate small wins.
- Stay engaged with the community.

As a community begins to build trust, it is important to incorporate community members in the recovery planning process. To do so, LDRMs should ask guiding questions to help inform the process, such as:

- How are those without power or authority going to be included in decision making?
- How will we collect and respond to feedback?
- How are we ensuring these partnerships do not exploit the communities we seek to engage?
- How will recovery planning be organized going forward? (e.g., working groups, task forces, Long-Term Community Recovery Committee).
- How can we identify and coordinate with other committees who are addressing similar issues? (e.g., Unmet Needs Committees).

Community Mapping Technique, Puerto Rico

Disaster Type: Hurricane

Focus: Lessons Learned from the 2017 Hurricane Season

In 2017, hurricanes Irma and Maria devastated many communities across Puerto Rico and left them in critical need of support to plan for recovery. The Community Assistance Recovery Support Function (CA RSF, formerly Community Planning and Capacity Building) team, led by FEMA, was deployed in the summer of 2018 to provide technical assistance to highly impacted communities without significant experience in recovery planning. The CA RSF team used their Community Conditions Assessment to process data; prioritize communities with unmet needs; and provide mapping support, tabletop exercises, and recovery resources. FEMA Voluntary Assistance Liaisons identified CBOs that provided aid and capacity support to the highest priority communities. The CA RSF team met with these organizations to learn about the unmet needs of these communities.

One organization, Corporacion de Servicios de Salud Primaria y Desarrollo Socioeconomico (COSSAO [the Corporation of Primary Health Services and Economic Development]) served multiple municipalities in Puerto Rico including Ciales. Ciales is in the middle of Puerto Rico in the Central Mountain Range. As a result, the population is spread among difficult and rural terrain. At the initial workshop, COSSAO discussed challenges Ciales was facing in delivering food, medicine, childcare, and other resources due to the absence of standard names for residential addresses. Residents might refer to the road differently than other organizations and maps did not necessarily capture that name.

Based on this need, the CA RSF team worked with COSSAO and Ciales to agree upon and create a map with the names of smaller roads to prevent confusion and ensure timely support. The CA RSF team worked with the community to teach residents how to use the mapping services and chose free, simple software that works on a cellphone. Using software compatible with mobile devices ensured that the community could update the map as needed and manage the project without additional assistance. These maps are applicable to additional concerns like economic development and grant and funding assistance applications.

In September 2022, Hurricane Fiona hit Puerto Rico and caused widespread damage and a critical need for additional recovery support. The CA RSF team worked with some of the same communities to meet their recovery needs and focus on lessons learned from prior hurricanes.

For more information, see FEMA's website for the full case study.

Guidance for Community Resources

- Building Alliances for Equitable Resilience: Advancing Equitable Resilience through Partnerships and Diverse Perspectives, FEMA.
- Roadmap to Federal Resources for Disaster Recovery, FEMA.
- Community Leadership, LISC.
- Community Mediation Centers, National Association for Community Mediation.

3. Advocate to Ensure Everyone Has a Voice

Equitable recovery uses DEIA principles to identify pathways to communicate needs and improve representation throughout the recovery planning process. Recovery planners can reach previously unheard from members of the community by organizing listening tours, using established techniques such as story circles, and canvassing to reach homes and businesses. Local officials and leaders should utilize partners to help ensure that community engagement is equitable and inclusive, and to understand community needs. Representatives who advocate on behalf of underrepresented groups may include but are not limited to community and religious leaders, activists, social workers, diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) officers, or professional associations. Local officials can also distribute recovery information resources to advise the community on what stage the planning process is in, and how they can be involved in recovery activities.

To do so, recovery planners may:

- Engage affected populations and stakeholders to continue to identify recovery needs and foster inclusivity;
- Actively work to engage those historically kept from resources, those who have had negative experiences and distrust of local planning policies, the already underserved populations, those underrepresented at the government level, and the socially excluded and isolated;
- Use partnerships to reach those who may otherwise be left out of the recovery process because of mistrust of the government or barriers to access;
- Consider establishing an Independent Oversight Advisory Board or similar group to serve as an objective entity to monitor recovery progress, interventions, and help address conflict; and
- Use data to inform outreach and ensure all populations in the community are represented in the recovery process.

Lessons Learned to Ensure Equitable Engagement

- Have meetings at locations where everyone will feel welcome.
- Select locations that are on public transportation routes or close to the community.
- Ask for feedback throughout the recovery planning process, especially on draft recovery strategies and plans.
- Provide multiple opportunities and ways to provide input both privately and publicly.
- Provide a way to vote on recovery projects.
- Compensate for time and provide transportation if possible.
- Use translation services and be culturally appropriate.
- Provide childcare services.
- Involve youth and older adults in care facilities.
- Confirm that the process is inclusive and incorporates diverse populations.
- Ensure meetings and communications comply with the ADA and Section 504 of Rehabilitation Act as applicable. Additional resources for steps to improve inclusive access can be found here.
- Be flexible in scheduling.
- Provide different engagement platforms.
- Ensure leadership position opportunities are advertised to communities that may have role models who have firsthand experience navigating the identity and intersectional challenges.

- Promote a variety of engagement strategies to increase access to important learning opportunities.
- Ensure that any deadlines for community feedback or comments incorporate sufficient lead time to allow the affected survivors the opportunity to meaningfully participate.
- Develop a process where trusted members of the community can be available to assist commenters in capturing and presenting their feedback to reduce barriers to participation such as limited capacity to participate, apathy, or fear of reprisal.

Resources for Equitable Engagement

- Engaging Faith-based and Community Organizations: Planning Considerations for Emergency Managers, DHS.
- Assessing Social Equity in Disasters, Eos.
- Community Recovery Management Toolkit, FEMA.
- Citizen Participation and Equitable Engagement (CPEE) Toolkit, HUD.
- How To Improve Your Cross-Cultural Communication for Risk Reduction, U.S. Fire Administration.
- Cultural Awareness: Children and Disasters, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA).
- Preparing for Disaster for People with Disabilities and other Special Needs, FEMA and American Red Cross.
- Capacity-Building Toolkit for Including Aging and Disability Networks in Emergency Planning, HHS.
- An ADA Guide for Local Governments: Making Community Emergency Preparedness and Response Programs Accessible to People with Disabilities, DOJ.
- People with Functional and Access Needs and Disasters, SAMHSA.

Advancing Equity, Ouachita Parish, LA

Disaster Type: Flooding

Focus: Leveraging an Inclusive Recovery Planning Process

Within days after what is now known as the "Great Flood of 2016," Ouachita Parish leaders knew they needed to take a different approach to recovery than what had been used in the past. They determined that the best way to organize the recovery was to have a weekly conference call with key partners including the Concerned Clergy of Monroe, Public Works, United Way, the NAACP, engineers, Ouachita Parish Homeland Security, FEMA, the Governor's Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness (GOHSEP), and other government officials.

Local officials partnered with FEMA, the State Office of Community Development and the GOHSEP. Based on this partnership, parish leaders adopted the NDRF to manage recovery efforts and identified disaster resilience as a community goal in fall of 2017.

In 2018, the Ouachita Council of Governments established the Ouachita Parish Executive Long-Term Recovery Committee, which then established the Ouachita Parish Long-Term Recovery Steering Committee. The Steering Committee established a subcommittee consisting of subject matter experts for each of the six RSFs as prescribed in the NDRF. The most recent NDRF highlights cross-cutting priorities for each RSF, with equity leading the list of priorities to ensure RSFs focus on equitable recovery outcomes for vulnerable groups.

The Concerned Clergy of Monroe and the NAACP provided important insights and feedback, and they ensured that community leaders were communicating with and listening to the whole community. Their participation in the Economic RSF was critical to ensure discussions and approaches were grounded in equity.

Strong partnerships grew out of the Great Flood. The community leveraged the partnerships, resources, and capacity built through the equitable disaster recovery process to collaboratively address other community risks and to mobilize to protect the youth. Ouachita Parish implements this resilience strategy and has been awarded multiple flood mitigation grants from HUD's Community Development Block Grant Mitigation (CDBG-MIT), FEMA's HMGP, and the EDA.

4. Develop Recovery Equity Objectives

Depending on how a community structures its recovery, the needs, resources, and voices at the table will influence the breadth and depth of recovery objectives and benefits. To the degree possible, communities should choose objectives with multiple benefits for greater recovery outcomes. **Table 4** provides ideas for actions to meet recovery objectives. The full table can be found in the equity section of the Community Recovery Management Toolkit.

Table 4. Examples of Equity Actions by Theme

Theme	Sample Equity Actions
Community Planning	▪ Develop a recovery plan and a resilience strategy. ▪ Take advantage of re-design opportunities. ▪ Create or re-develop ADA Accessible Communities. ▪ Re-develop communities with ADA accessibility requirements and in accordance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. ▪ Create opportunities for meaningful engagement and prioritize the needs of vulnerable and disadvantaged communities in recovery planning. ▪ Plan for community spaces (e.g., resilience hub, cooling center).
Cultural	▪ Encourage cultural heritage preservation. ▪ Align with ancestral systems of social organization. ▪ Support financially burdened sites.
Environmental	▪ Protect and restore coastal ecosystems by considering nature-based solutions that provide health co-benefits. ▪ Advance conservation, agriculture, and reforestation. ▪ Choose building designs and materials that have lower embodied carbon or last longer to reduce carbon emissions. ▪ Seek clean and local energy alternatives to reduce air pollution and increase energy security.
Economic	▪ Increase economic security. ▪ Determine how much of your economy is exposed to hazards and who would feel the impact in the community. ▪ Encourage economic development for underserved populations. ▪ Invest in the operating costs over the lifespan of critical infrastructure. ▪ Promote economic diversification to ensure communities do not solely rely on a single economic source.
Health	▪ Encourage greater health care access. ▪ Mitigate dangers from technological disasters. ▪ Promote low-carbon infrastructure to reduce carbon emissions and mitigate health impacts of climate hazards. ▪ Utilize clean energy alternatives to reduce air pollution and associated health impacts. ▪ Build counseling services and community health organizations. ▪ Explore environmental justice strategies to mitigate public health risks. ▪ Integrate behavioral health considerations and assessments into disaster preparedness, response, and recovery activities.

Theme	Sample Equity Actions
Housing	▪ Increase supply of new and affordable housing to prevent displacement. ▪ Improve housing quality and preserve housing affordability. ▪ Protect homeowners susceptible to displacement, fraud, and scams. ▪ Create avenues for marginalized communities to relocate out of high-risk areas. ▪ Update zoning regulations and building codes. ▪ Use and enforce most recent building code as a minimum for rebuilding efforts. ▪ Confirm new or renovated housing is sustainable and resilient. ▪ Use scientifically based data to develop resilient housing during recovery. ▪ Increase supply of new, affordable, and accessible housing to prevent displacement. ▪ Leverage federal housing resources (e.g., HUD’s 203(k) Rehab Mortgage Insurance).
Infrastructure	▪ Improve access to transportation. ▪ Build a transit infrastructure (e.g., bus rapid transit lanes, bike lanes). ▪ Provide improved roads and broadband to rural areas. ▪ Consider future conditions when planning infrastructure to prioritize climate resilience and reduce future damage and repair costs.
Social	▪ Invest in social capital and social support systems. ▪ Encourage participation and include residents from the community with diverse experiences. ▪ Increase trust and form bonds between community members. ▪ Identify and address community concerns and interests and specify the needs of marginalized members of the community. ▪ Explore non-traditional outreach methods to reach underserved communities (e.g., partner with informal community gathering spaces such as nail salons). ▪ Build trust with populations that do not feel safe sharing their personal information with government agencies (e.g., non-citizens).

Equitable Managed Retreat to Address Natural Hazards

In 2020, Georgetown Climate Center published a report entitled Managing the Retreat from Rising Seas that outlines lessons and tools from 17 case studies across the country. These case studies describe how states, local governments, Tribal Nations, and communities explored managed retreat to address natural hazards. The report defines managed retreat as a coordinated process of voluntarily and equitably relocating people, structures, and infrastructure away from vulnerable coastal areas in response to episodic or chronic threats to facilitate the transition of individual people, communities, and ecosystems inland with the goal of addressing risk prior to disasters to maximize benefits and minimize costs to communities and ecosystems.[28]

5. Options for Documenting Planning Activities

Planning for equity helps communities focus limited local resources on recovery priorities and increases the chance of getting external funding. Equity planning demonstrates to resource providers that the community has engaged in an inclusive planning process and identified recovery needs. Documenting the process will help identify critical planning tasks, prioritize actions, determine responsibilities, and identify and seek funding.

Resources to Inform Planning

- Local Solutions Guide for COVID-19 and Beyond: Adaptive Design, FEMA.
- Building Community Resilience with Nature-Based Solutions. A Guide for Local Communities, FEMA.
- A Guide to Equitable, Community-Driven Climate Preparedness Planning, Urban Sustainability Directors Network (Under "Innovation Lab – Refinement" on landing page).
- Healthcare Coalition Recovery Plan Template, HHS.

Table 5 aggregates examples of equitable projects in real-world post-disaster recovery plans.

Table 5. Examples of Equitable Projects in Post-Disaster Plans

Theme	Equity in Post-Disaster Plans
Cultural	▪ Repair, fortify, and preserve historical and cultural archives and arts assets (e.g., arts facilities, artwork, art documentation).

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[28] Managing the Retreat from Rising Seas, 2020.

Theme	Equity in Post-Disaster Plans
Disability	▪ Provide support services for disability populations following disasters. ▪ Explore improving facilities and disaster housing options to be supportive of disability needs. ▪ Provide support services to restore lost or damaged durable medical equipment, assistance devices, prescription medications, medical gases, and medical supplies. ▪ Provide assistance in filling any gaps for those who require home health aide or nursing care assistance. ▪ Coordinate access for special diets. ▪ Provide support to address loss of transportation to facility based medical services such as dialysis. ▪ Assist in repair and restoration of accessible housing or making accessible existing housing stock. ▪ Develop a recovery assistance team familiar with needs of persons with disabilities to assist in identifying and accessing recovery services specific to persons with disabilities such as coordination with Social Security Disability Insurance and Supplemental Security Income. ▪ Ensure that communications with applicable populations is provided in accessible means such as Braille, large font, closed captions, TTY/TDD telephone support, and sign language interpreters.
Economic	▪ Increase the market for local farmers, crafters, and artisans. ▪ Increase options for purchasing fresh and nutritional produce. ▪ Support Main Street District businesses by increasing activity in the area. ▪ Connect local producers to consumers. ▪ Promote mixed-use construction of businesses and residential units. ▪ Minority Women Business Enterprises can be supported through catering opportunities. ▪ Release community recovery grants from local government budgets.
Environmental	▪ Protect coral reefs, beaches, and heritage trees through triage, restoration, reduction of debris, and land use management. ▪ Establish a Sustainable Development Resource Office with sustainable building programs and identify and utilize energy alternatives. ▪ Work with mitigation officers to maximize funding for projects that will protect communities from future climate impacts. ▪ Adopt local ordinance to expedite debris cleanup.
Health	▪ Create mobile or community-based health centers to improve accessibility. ▪ Tailor health services outreach to vulnerable populations (e.g., older adult-buddy programs to monitor health conditions). ▪ Improve access to client-centered healthcare.

Theme	Equity in Post-Disaster Plans
Housing	▪ Incorporate affordable, accessible, and resilient housing, offering housing options for all ages, abilities, income levels, and incarcerated individuals.
Infrastructure – Stormwater Management	▪ Regulate future development and redevelopment to ensure that changes to the built environment will not create flooding hazards. ▪ Participate in regional stormwater solutions. ▪ Enhance mobility systems through developing a Transit Citizen Advisory Group for public mobility. Utilize the Transit Citizen Advisory to plan for bike lanes, sidewalks, and transit routes and repair and rebuild accessible bus shelters. ▪ Improve stormwater infrastructure such as septic tanks, culverts, and waste disposal in rural areas.
Older Adults	▪ Improve health and social support programs for disadvantaged or underserved older adult populations.
Planning	▪ Update and enforce new comprehensive land use plans.
Social	▪ Develop a system to quickly mobilize post-disaster food distribution. ▪ Create a resilient food system by conducting a community food assessment, implementing farming best practices, and developing a local farm revolving fund to sustain growth. ▪ Provide guidance to food providers on culturally respectful food distribution and resources initiatives. ▪ Identify and involve community gardens to help with post-disaster food distribution.
Youth	▪ Explore options for improving facilities supporting youth services or involvement (e.g., community centers, recreation centers, outdoor sports complexes). ▪ Provide more support services for youth following disaster through engagement (e.g., leadership opportunities, summer programs, training, support networks).

Goal 4: Promote and Protect Equity Throughout Recovery

> "Free and informed choices, all options understood, timely, and accessible."[29]

1. Use Evidence-Informed Decision Making

In addition to involving civil rights, faith-based, and CBOs already addressing inequitable conditions, it is important to include researchers and universities in the recovery process. These groups are often in the forefront of disaster-related system changes and can inform the recovery process through the inclusion of evidence derived from peer reviewed research. For example, the development of the Social Vulnerability Analysis Tool, led by Dr. Susan Cutter, Director of the Hazards Vulnerability and Resilience Institute at the University of South Carolina, provided the first widely used method for local communities to map and understand the effects of disasters on underserved populations. Other examples of ongoing work by academics and research institutions to monitor disaster recovery outcomes include the Disaster Resilient Florida initiative at the University of Florida and the Institute for a Disaster Resilient Texas at Texas A&M University. Sources such as FEMA's OpenFEMA can also be valuable for accessing reports and data. In addition to academic institutions, private or public sector partners such as the Insurance Institute of Business & Home Safety, provides effective, achievable, and affordable mitigation actions and construction and repair approaches that can inform disaster recovery projects.

While the tendency of scientific research is to use an orderly and statistically valid data collection process, not every community has the resources to capture data in this manner. Universally accepted data collection techniques also include the use of interviews, focus groups, and informal surveys that may be performed using methodologies that are not deemed statistically valid, yet yield actionable guidance. These techniques are especially conducive to capturing survivors' lived experiences and anecdotal information that can provide ground truth on the actual progress in implementing equitable practices. In addition, there are no-contact methods of data collection which include remote monitoring of feedback and utilizing crowd-sourced information through mechanisms such as social media. Access is an important consideration throughout the data collection process, as some areas or segments of communities might not have access to broadband and other communication mechanisms post-disaster.

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[29] A. Jerolleman, "Disaster Justice for All: The Need for a More Equitable and Just Recovery Lens."

2. Develop Accessible Communications and Outreach

Local officials and leaders should ensure everyone is receiving complete and truthful explanations about the recovery process to build informational equity. Informational equity rises when people have sufficient information about the process (e.g., about how it operates and their role at each stage of the process) and about the resources available to them. Interpersonal equity, which refers to how people are treated during recovery and recovery planning, is also important. Community members must be treated with respect, sensitivity, true concern, and empathy.[30]

Equitable Outreach and Recovery: Arts and Cultural Organizations[31]

Arts and cultural agencies or councils, particularly local organizations, may be a resource to support community engagement, improve understanding of the complex recovery process, and provide an outlet for disaster related stress and trauma. Developing relationships with arts and cultural organizations can support the recovery process, enabling local leaders to leverage additional networks and connections to the community and reach populations they may not have reached otherwise. Some examples of positive impacts of involving art and cultural organizations in recovery include channeling post-traumatic stress and anxiety into creative and productive community outcomes and reducing feelings of isolation. Public art, music, performance art, forum theater, and creative placemaking are examples of art mediums that can convey risk reduction to communities.

Resources and Information on Arts and Cultural Organizations and Disasters

- Guide to Expanding Mitigation, FEMA.
- Disaster Quilts and Quilters, Natural Hazards Center.
- Arts and Health, National Endowment for the Arts.

Recovery requires partnership among the affected community, broader community, governments, faith-based institutions, aid organizations, and the private sector. Effective recovery relies upon successful communication between these key stakeholders. After a disaster, recovery leaders must identify the most reliable methods of community outreach, recognizing that not every community member has dependable internet or cellular service. Radio, newspaper, social media posts, flyers, and town halls are examples of ways to inform the community about recovery efforts. Community bulletin boards can also be found in local coffee shops, schools, fitness clubs, gas stations and in various community centers. Local jurisdictions posting information on community bulletin boards should ensure the information is kept current by returning to the community bulletin board to remove outdated information.

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[30] J. Greenberg, “Stealing in the name of justice: Informational and interpersonal moderators of theft reactions to underpayment inequity.”

[31] Guide to Expanding: Making the Connection to Arts and Culture, FEMA.

Recovery leaders must ensure compliance with laws and regulations regarding equal access to all public information. Written and verbal information needs to be available in languages other than English, as well as in American Sign Language, and print information needs to be available in braille. Internet-based information needs to be formatted to be accessible by screen readers and compliant with ADA standards. Recorded and live video streaming should include closed captioning with simultaneous American Sign Language interpretation. Additionally, recovery officials need to prepare to provide non-English language interpreters for verbal communication in public, individual meetings, and telephone communications. All services must be provided by qualified personnel and any technology used must meet or exceed accessibility standards.

Any information provided to the community (including live meetings and public hearings) must be accessible in accordance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 to allow meaningful access by persons with limited English proficiency. Similarly, effective communication access must be provided to persons with disabilities in accordance with the ADA and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act as applicable. For example, use plain language for all written materials and ensure that videos and recordings have captions or a transcript and embedded American Sign Language interpretation. Be sure that any graphics or images in outreach materials have text descriptions and create documents an accessible format.

It is important for local officials and leaders to communicate a wide variety of recovery information to the community. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Notice of local meetings and how to access them;
- Recovery resources available to the community;
- How to access recovery resources;
- Accommodations for disability or language needed to interact with staff or access resources;
- Information on any required public hearings (such as CDBG-DR);
- Availability of interpreter services during meetings;
- Availability of childcare during meetings; and
- Information on transportation resources to meetings.

Specific communities have their own needs, practices, and mechanisms for engagement. Non-Tribal state and local leaders should be familiar with the legal, policy, and cultural aspects of engaging with and providing resources to Tribal Nations.

Considerations for Equitable Engagement with Tribal Nations

- Recognize and respect the sovereignty and self-governance of federally recognized Tribal Nations and uphold the federal government-to-government trust responsibility.[32]
- Understand the relationship between the federal government and Tribal Nations (nation-to-nation relationship).[33]
- Ensure or facilitate the equitable distribution of funds to Tribal Nations, especially when disasters permeate various jurisdictional boundaries and Tribal Nations may be subrecipients under state funding. The Sandy Recovery Improvement Act of 2013 amended the Stafford Act to provide Tribal Nations the authority to directly request emergency and presidential disaster declarations implemented through FEMA's Tribal Declarations Pilot Guidance.[34] Recovery funds should be allocated to states, local officials, leaders, and tribal groups equitably, including as it relates to public health and safety.
- Educate yourself on Native American history.
- Remember that every Tribal Nation is different (e.g., cultures, languages, and values).
- Listening is crucial (learn about them, ask questions, and let them learn about you).
- Consider hiring a tribal consultant or Indigenous storyteller to help you navigate cultural sensitivities in the absence of expertise in your organization.
- Analyze mechanisms to support tribal citizens of landless Tribal Nations in your community.
- Remember the importance of storytelling to build community and utilize cultural etiquette.
- Identify the unique needs of citizens of Tribal Nations in your community that are living outside of their sovereign territory.
- Develop relationships with Tribal Nations prior pre-disaster to become familiar with the relevant Tribal Nation personnel to coordinate with during recovery. Establishing these relationships will also ensure that cultural sensitivity and competency is integrated in local disaster and emergency response plans.
- Coordinate with Tribal Nations when large population areas of their citizens reside in neighboring localities outside of their jurisdictional boundaries. FEMA's Pre-Disaster Recovery Planning Guide for Tribal Governments emphasizes the importance of identifying outside recovery partners to engage throughout the recovery lifecycle.[35]

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[32] FEMA Tribal Policy (Rev. 2), 2020.

[33] Memorandum on Tribal Consultation and Strengthening Nation-to-Nation Relationships, 2021.

[34] 2022-2026 FEMA National Tribal Strategy, 2022; Sandy Recovery Improvement Act of 2013, FEMA, 2021; Tribal Declarations Pilot Guidance, FEMA, 2017.

[35] Pre-Disaster Recovery Planning Guide for Tribal Governments, FEMA, 2020.

Resources for Equitable Engagement

- Citizen Participation & Equitable Engagement (CPEE) Toolkit, HUD.
- A Guide to Supporting Engagement and Resiliency in Rural Communities, FEMA.
- The Do's and Don'ts of Talking Respectfully about and with Native People, IllumiNative.
- The Research for Indigenous Social Action and Equity Center, University of Michigan.
- Land Acknowledgement Project Overview and Resource Guide, Maryland State Arts Council.
- Native Land Digital.
- Native American Organizations Serving the Community, National Institutes of Health (NIH).
- Tribal Drought Engagement Strategy, National Integrated Drought Information System.
- 2022-2026 FEMA National Tribal Strategy, FEMA.
- FEMA Tribal Policy, FEMA.
- Pre-Disaster Recovery Planning Guide for Tribal Governments, FEMA.
- Tips for Disaster Responders: Cultural Awareness When Working In Indian Country Post-Disaster, SAMHSA.
- Tips for Disaster Responders: Understanding Historical Trauma and Resilience When Responding to an Event in Indian Country, SAMHSA.

3. Emphasize Respect and Trust

Local officials and leaders have an important role in advocating for informational and interpersonal equity in the post-disaster planning environment through transparency and effective communication methods (e.g., multiple languages, clear information). Virtual engagement requires access to technology and funding to buy devices and pay monthly fees. Even for those who have access, virtual engagement is often difficult. Local officials must employ a combination of strategies to be certain that all community members receive information.

Ensuring equity means building trust, learning, identifying, and overcoming intentional and unintentional barriers arising from bias or systemic structures. For example, social protection systems help individuals and families, especially the marginalized, cope with crises and shocks, find jobs, improve productivity, and protect the aging population. Social protection programs, a vital concept for successful post-disaster recoveries, boost respect and trust by empowering people to be healthy, pursue education, and seek economic advancement. HHS defines social safety net programs as programs crucial for successful individual and household post-disaster recovery, as they can empower survivors to engage in healthier lifestyles, advance their career skills and education, and improve their financial capacity in a more sustainable manner.[36] Partnering with federal and non-federal social service providers is critical post-disaster.

4. Raise Awareness of Disaster-Related Laws and Regulations

The federal government creates laws and regulations that affect post-disaster recovery management. Building awareness of new disaster-related rules and regulations, such as climate change and emergency waivers of health, safety, and environmental rules, helps communities understand what new resources are available and how to better address inequitable problems that arise immediately after a disaster. Recovery leaders should consider the requirements under federal law as a minimum level of service to provide to the community. Additionally, states and localities may have legal requirements that go beyond that of federal law. Lastly, some sources of recovery funding may also require services that exceed federal law. It is important for recovery leaders to be familiar with all legal and funding requirements in this area.

Several key considerations when reviewing federal laws and regulations include:

- What is the subject matter or outcome that is being legislated or regulated? Is this subject matter or outcome related to a documented disparity faced by low-income communities or communities of color (e.g., disparate exposure to environmental toxins)?
- Does the proposed legislation or regulation directly mitigate that disparity or source of inequity?
- What are the costs of the legislation or regulation? Who bears the direct cost? How likely is it that the costs get shifted to other parties? If so, to whom?
- Does the legislation or regulation impact communities’ ability to share concerns?
- What is the long-term health impact of this law or regulation? Does it fall disproportionately on low-income households? If so, are there practical ways of mitigating or offsetting those impacts?[37]

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[36] Program Participation, U.S. Social Safety Net.

[37] G. Schrock, “Equity scan for the 2013 Portland/Multnomah County Climate Action Plan.” See The integration of equity in the Portland/Multnomah County 2015 Climate Action Plan for more information.

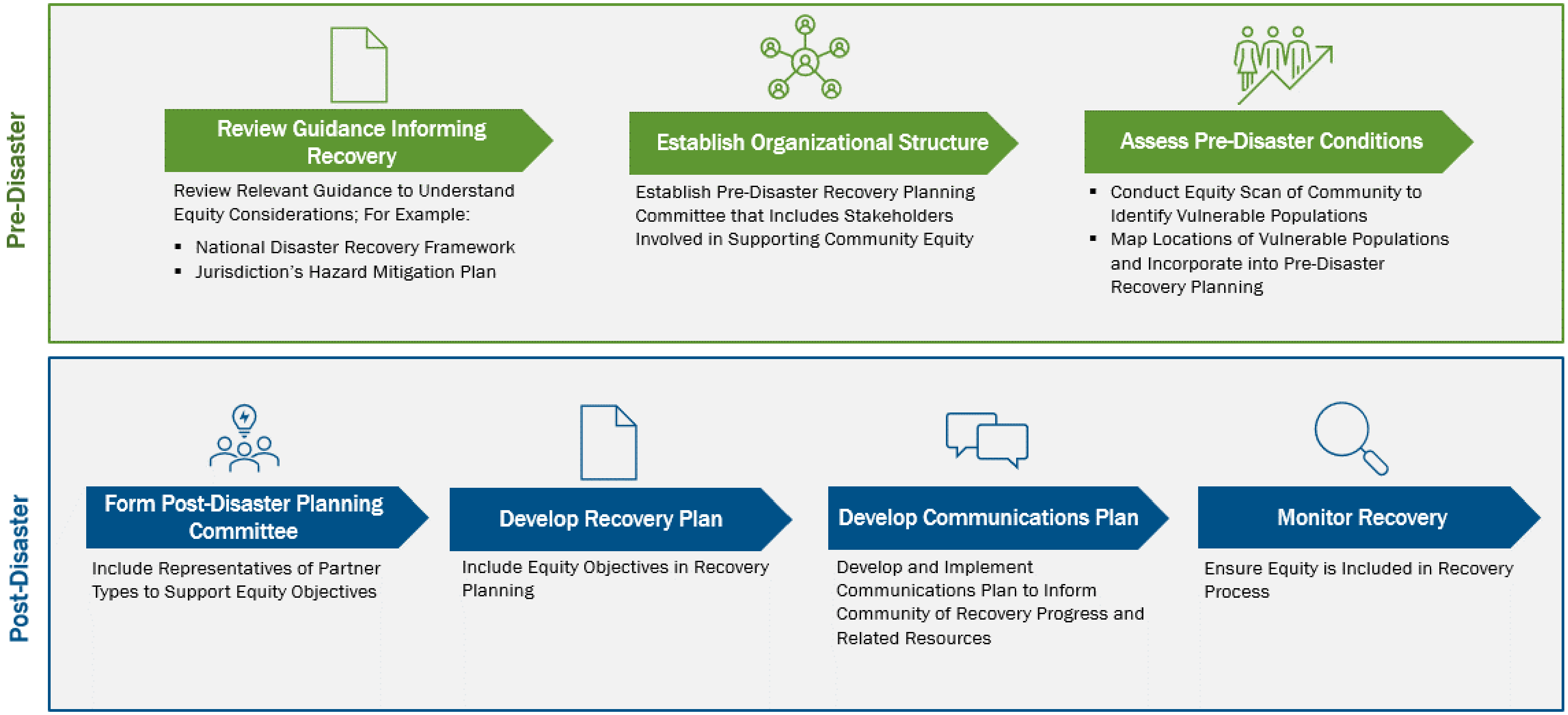
Resources to Review and Monitor Legislation and Regulations

- Congress.gov is the official website for U.S. federal legislative information presented by the Library of Congress.
- Congressional Budget Office is the nonpartisan body within the legislative branch that produces independent analyses of budgetary and economic issues at various points in the legislative process.
- Federal Register is a daily publication for agency rules, proposed rules, and notices of federal agencies and organizations, as well as for EOs and other presidential documents published by the National Archives and Records Administration and the Government Publishing Office.
- Regulations.gov provides public access to regulatory materials and an opportunity to participate in the rulemaking process.
- Reginfo.gov displays regulatory actions and information collections currently under review by the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs. The Unified Agenda provides uniform reporting of data on regulatory and deregulatory activities under development throughout the federal government.
- The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) sets and enforces standards to ensure safe and healthful working conditions. OSHA also has resources and information on safety for workers involved in response and recovery operations.

In addition to federal legislation, it is important to review state and local laws and regulations relevant to the community. One tool to stay on top of emerging legislation is to track the state legislative session to maintain awareness of the most up-to-date information.

5. Opportunities to Incorporate Equity in the Recovery Process

Figure 11 displays the relationship between the equity principles discussed thus far. Local officials and leaders should familiarize themselves with applicable recovery guidance such as the most current version of the NDRF and the jurisdiction's FEMA-approved Hazard Mitigation Plan. The NDRF includes general areas of opportunity to enhance equity in recovery, while the FEMA-approved Hazard Mitigation Plan may inform development of pre-disaster mitigation plans by providing information on community hazards and vulnerabilities.



Pre-Disaster

Review Guidance Informing Recovery

Review Relevant Guidance to Understand Equity Considerations; For Example:

- National Disaster Recovery Framework
- Jurisdiction's Hazard Mitigation Plan

Establish Organizational Structure

Establish Pre-Disaster Recovery Planning Committee that Includes Stakeholders Involved in Supporting Community Equity

Assess Pre-Disaster Conditions

- Conduct Equity Scan of Community to Identify Vulnerable Populations
- Map Locations of Vulnerable Populations and Incorporate into Pre-Disaster Recovery Planning

Post-Disaster

Form Post-Disaster Planning Committee

Include Representatives of Partner Types to Support Equity Objectives

Develop Recovery Plan

Include Equity Objectives in Recovery Planning

Develop Communications Plan

Develop and Implement Communications Plan to Inform Community of Recovery Progress and Related Resources

Monitor Recovery

Ensure Equity is Included in Recovery Process

Figure 11. Roadmap to Equitable Recovery for Local Officials and Leaders

Local officials can then develop a Pre-Disaster Recovery Planning Committee, as outlined in **Section 1.1** that is charged with planning ahead for disasters that may occur in the community. Officials can use the guidance found in **Goal 1** with examples of representatives that may provide subject matter expertise and guidance to ensure local officials include equity in development of Pre-Disaster Recovery Plans. The committee can also consider the recommendation this Guide provides in **Goal 2** in conducting an equity scan of the community. This scan will identify the disadvantaged and underserved populations that are experiencing pre-existing inequities that create additional vulnerabilities to disasters and additional challenges for recovery. The committee may engage in mapping these communities to ensure they receive resources that address their needs and rapidly reach those communities.

When local officials stand up Post-Disaster Planning Committees, they should include and engage partners that represent the concept of the Whole Community.

Whole Community Concept[38]

As a concept, the Whole Community is a means by which residents, emergency management practitioners, organizational and community leaders, and government officials can collectively understand and assess the needs of their respective communities and determine the best ways to organize and strengthen their assets, capacities, and interests. As such, the concept forms the basis for the inclusion of everyone into the National Preparedness Goal and is incorporated into each of the National Planning Frameworks. By doing so, a more effective path to societal security and resilience is built.

Goal 3 of this Guide provides a list of potential partners who may help the local government deepen its understanding of the Whole Community. There are many opportunities for the committee to include equity objectives within its equitable recovery plan. This Guide contains example objectives in **Goal 3**.

The committee may engage in communications and outreach strategies outlined in **Goal 4** to solicit input from disadvantaged and underserved communities to help assess the progress of recovery in these communities and opportunities to improve coordination.

Lastly, committee members may refer to **Appendix C** which contains a checklist for monitoring equitable recovery programs. This tool is not one-size-fits-all and should be tailored to the needs of the specific jurisdiction. It is a starting point for establishing a monitoring program to help inform the committee on its progress as it achieves equitable recovery outcomes.

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[38] Whole Community, FEMA.

Region 10 Interagency Recovery Coordination Equity Officer, Oregon

Disaster Type: Wildfire

Focus: Equity in Action: FEMA Equity Advisor

In 2020, wildfires burned over 1.2 million acres across Oregon leaving communities to repair homes, businesses, and livelihoods. A Major Disaster Declaration was declared on September 15, 2020, and from the outset the state of Oregon and field leadership expressed a desire to ensure equity was central to the recovery operation. In response, FEMA deployed the first ever Interagency Recovery Coordination (IRC) Equity Advisor in the summer of 2021.

FEMA deployed the Equity Advisor to promote equity in FEMA's recovery operation. The Advisor also worked closely with Oregon to incorporate equity into their recovery planning efforts and identify communities with unmet needs. As a result, the Oregon Office of Emergency Management created a new permanent equity position within their steady-state recovery team. In addition, FEMA activated the CA RSF team to help Lane County develop an equity framework in response to their high-level of impact and lack of affordable housing.

Creating a dedicated equity position during the disaster made it easier for Oregon and FEMA to focus on meeting survivor and community needs and work to promote internal agreement about the meaning of equity for this disaster. There were many positive outcomes, and it set a precedent for future FEMA deployments. The state suggested that FEMA should have brought on the Equity Advisor closer to the start of the disaster when recovery officials set up their goals for recovery.

Goal 5: Adapt to the Dynamic Nature of Recovery

> "Pre-disaster inequality is exacerbated by differentials in disaster impacts and institutional and social responses... A multidimensional—social, spatial, and temporal—understanding of housing and population recovery after a disaster reveals that there are different mechanisms driving recovery for different segments of the population. By identifying these mechanisms, researchers can more clearly explain inequality in recovery, which would allow disaster recovery policies to be fine-tuned to meet the needs of all members of the population."[39]

1. Compounding Effects of Disasters

Disasters often result in compounding effects on underserved populations. Individuals with more resources do not have the same stressors before a disaster or the same exposure during a disaster as historically underserved, marginalized, and disadvantaged individuals. Low-income and under-resourced communities reside in areas with low tax bases that often lack infrastructure resilient to disaster impacts. A low inventory of temporary and short-term housing options prevents survivors from working or staying in their preferred locations, which can further delay individual recoveries and potentially impede community recovery.

Compounding Effects Resources

- Greater Impact: How Disasters Affect People of Low Socioeconomic Status, SAMHSA.
- Women and Disasters, SAMHSA.
- Resilience for Compounding and Cascading Events, National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine.

2. Pace of Recovery

The recovery process can be broken into short-term, intermediate, and long-term recovery. Actions taken in the short-term can influence the intermediate and long-term (e.g., not involving displaced populations in the recovery decision-making processes of their community).

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[39] E. Fussell, "The long-term recovery of New Orleans' population after Hurricane Katrina."

Intermediate and long-term recovery frequently moves at a slower pace than the recovery activities occurring immediately following the disaster. Addressing systemic inequities over an extended time frame requires planning efforts to be deliberate, intentional, and long-term. Following a disaster, recovery funding can come into a community from many sources. However, everyone in the community simultaneously seeks access to scarce resources, and those with better access are often able to capture these finite resources before others.[40]

Additionally, low-resourced communities may have to engage in recovery work in phases occurring over several years due to difficulty meeting recovery grant cost match requirements or lack of trained staff to support the efforts. It is important for communities to maintain awareness and visibility of recovery progress within vulnerable communities so that former inequities do not arise as time passes and when there are transitions of recovery leadership.

Considerations for the Pace of Recovery:

- Recovery proceeds at different rates for different people.
- Identifying and incorporating new resources.
- Re-prioritization of projects as new needs are identified.

3. Environmental Influences

> "Environmental justice is the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin, or income, with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations and policies."[41]

Disaster impacts can cause damage to ecosystems and the broader environment such as silting up dams or decreasing fish populations due to debris or flooding. Officials can often become overwhelmed by grant applications and face personal impacts from the disaster, forcing them to prioritize their own safety over protecting ecosystems and marginalized communities. After Hurricane Katrina in 2005, many Vietnamese people and the African American community did not return to the Gulf Coast because of impacts on fishing populations that they relied on. In some areas, jobs did not return. Rebuilding costs, insurance costs, and taxes became unaffordable for many along with increasing rent prices. Local officials struggled with leadership during rebuilding. In this changing environment, it is essential to build a recovery system that can adapt, track, and transfer information. Creating a monitoring system to track progress toward equity will assist communities in achieving equity and identifying their equity needs.

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[40] R.B. Olshansky, et al., "Disaster and recovery: Processes compressed in time."

[41] Environmental Justice, EPA.

Changing Circumstances and their Influences Include:

- Unintended consequences of recovery efforts;
- Errors in the recovery planning and implementation process;
- Changing culture of the affected communities;
- New legislation that affects recovery work;
- New partners that engage in recovery efforts;
- New funding streams to support projects;
- Changes in staffing and leadership within the recovery coordination structure; and
- Changes in contacts of partner organizations (e.g., those deployed to work disasters).

Combining green building practices with economic and social equity action can provide long-term resilience for communities and reduce the impacts and vulnerabilities they face due to climate change. It is crucial to communicate the economic and health benefits of embracing green construction early in recovery, when mitigation funds are available and can be easily included in recovery planning. Advocating for an inclusive decarbonized economy by shifting to renewables, investing in carbon capture, or optimizing tax credits may accelerate support for groups most vulnerable to the impacts of environmental degradation and promote environmental justice.

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Goal 6: Monitor Progress

> “Examine those who profit from the current system. Many current efforts to address inequity rely entirely on community consultation. This practice is necessary, but not sufficient. It can, perversely, place the burden of overcoming problems on the shoulders of marginalized people themselves. And it ignores the role of those with power and resources—the people who can investigate and reform policies and practices.”[42]

1. Assess Conditions Before Implementing a Project

Below are four examples of resources available to assess how recovery planners address equity and measure project impacts. See also **Goal 2** of this document.

- Key Questions to Ask When Conducting a Systems Analysis of Root Causes of Inequities:[43]
    - What are the racial inequities, barriers, or negative outcomes involved in the problem? Who bears the heaviest burden? Who benefits most?
    - What institutions are involved? What unfair policies or practices promote inequities?
    - What social conditions or determinants contribute to the problem (such as poverty, housing segregation, education)?
    - What other compounding dynamics are involved (such as income or gender inequities)?
    - What cultural norms, myths, or popular ideas justify or maintain the problem?
    - What are the cumulative impacts of allowing inequities to build up over time?
    - What are the key causes or contributing factors of inequalities?
    - What solutions or interventions could eliminate the inequities?
    - What can LDRMs learn from prior efforts to fix inequities or change the system?
    - What strategies could result in systemic change and advance equitable solutions?
    - What social protection programs are in place in your community? What programs are missing?
- Public officials may require developers to complete a Social Impact Assessment to improve understanding of a project’s consequences on the surrounding community.

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[42] M. Hino, and E. Nance, “Five ways to ensure flood-risk research helps the most vulnerable.”

[43] Race Equity and Inclusion Action Guide, Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2014.

  - "Any local strategy to address social equity must be informed by local planning history, the equity landscape, and the input of diverse stakeholders."[44]
- Public officials should utilize the Health Impact Assessment, a process that helps evaluate the potential health effects of a plan, project, or policy before it is built or implemented.[45]
- Organizations should perform Privacy Impact Assessments to identify and mitigate potential risks to personally identifiable information.[46]

Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility Resources

- Empowering Local Governments, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Resources for Local Governments, Municipal Research and Services Center.
- DEI Resources for Municipal Governments, Metropolitan Mayors Caucus.
- County Resources on Diversity, Equity & Inclusion, National Association of Counties.
- **Appendix C: Checklist for Monitoring Equitable Recovery Progress**, FEMA.

2. Track and Evaluate Equity Outcomes

Tracking the inclusion of equity in recovery programs is critical to understanding if efforts to ensure recovery programs are implementing equitable outcomes successfully. Four key evaluation questions that provide the best measurable information on the effectiveness of the efforts include:

1. Is the recovery organizational structure diverse, equitable, inclusive, and accessible?
2. Is the process to decide who gets the recovery resource fair (e.g., procedural justice)?
3. Are all people and places achieving desired recovery outcomes (e.g., distributive justice)?
4. Are people and places receiving the recovery resources they need (e.g., distributive justice)?

To assess the effectiveness of efforts to achieve equitable outcomes, local officials should build an evaluation system that establishes a process to collect, analyze, and employ data to inform the evaluation. Developing this system should ideally begin by forming an evaluation design team prior to a disaster using the guidance found in **Goal 3**. The evaluation design team can include parties such as those described in **Table 3** who are actively involved in the equity planning process described in **Goal 3**. Additionally, including ideas and feedback from members of vulnerable communities such as those listed in **Table 2** may help inform the development of the system and ensure the recovery process addresses the whole community. Working together, this design team should define what constitutes successful implementation for the indicators above.

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[44] Social Equity, American Planning Association, 2023.

[45] Health Impact Assessment, CDC, 2016.

[46] Privacy Impact Assessments, DHS, 2022.

A logic model is a helpful tool that can guide local officials in the development of the evaluation system. A logic model supports the recovery process by developing and visualizing linkages between the indicators identified at the beginning of this section. Mapping out this process helps local officials identify appropriate outcomes that will demonstrate achievement of equity during recovery.

The following is a summary of CDC guidance on developing a logic model; the bolded terms are defined in the full guidance document. A logic model begins with the identification of resources, also known as **inputs**, which are used by local officials to perform **activities** that produce tangible results called **outputs**, to achieve desired equitable recovery **outcomes.**[47] The equitable outcomes fall into three categories:

- **Short-term outcomes** which are the immediate effects of the program activities;
- **Intermediate outcomes** which are the intended effects occurring the middle of the recovery period; and
- **Long-term outcomes** that ultimately lead to lasting impacts in the survivors' community.

> "Account for inequities and geographies: Indicators that do not account for inequalities may actually serve to make inequality worse. For example, 'number of houses with air conditioners,' if not segmented by income, does not help decision-makers identify who is most at-risk during heat waves. Similarly, some populations have lower tolerance for or higher sensitivity to some climate impacts than others. For example, 'elderly residents may be at higher risk of heat-related health problems.'"[48]

Since the recovery process takes many years, local officials should analyze recovery projects to evaluate progress on a regular basis to determine who benefited and what projects are being implemented, and to confirm that outcomes are on track. In addition, it is essential to ask members of vulnerable populations if they believe equity is being achieved throughout the recovery process; the perception of these communities is also important.

Evaluation systems allow programs to measure the effectiveness and efficiency of efforts to achieve equitable outcomes. The NDRF includes resources to assist in developing a system to evaluate, measure, and prioritize recovery outcomes, such as leveraging pre-disaster conditions data or continuously evaluating the effective of recovery activities. To obtain additional data or metrics to evaluate equitable recovery outcomes, local officials can ask academic, non-governmental, or private sector partners to help develop a data-informed evaluation methodology. It is best to develop this capability as part of the pre-disaster planning process to have a validated evaluation system available immediately post-disaster. In addition, to promote equitable engagement, qualitative indicators are a useful tool to incorporate in monitoring recovery efforts to ensure local knowledge and context is utilized. Being transparent with the community by making tracking and evaluation information accessible to the public may support community engagement and feedback on activities. Additionally, some federal funding opportunities, such as HUD's CDBG-DR, require grantees to obtain data through data sharing agreements to meet reporting requirements.

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[47] Logic Model Example, CDC, 2020.

[48] S. Mohnot, et al., "Making equity real in climate adaptation and community resilience policies and programs: A Guidebook."

While data transparency and data sharing agreements are important, local leaders must also consider the privacy implications of releasing data. Access to data is critical to the work of partners such as academic and research institutions, CBOs, and the public. An example of a data sharing platform during an ongoing recovery project is the Puerto Rico Department of Housing's interactive transparency reports on the use of CDBG-DR funds.

FEMA does not collect information regarding immigration status or that of any member of an applicant's household and does not proactively provide personal information to U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) for immigration enforcement. However, in rare circumstances, based on a specific request, ICE or CBP could request this information if a person poses a current threat to national security or public safety based upon an articulable risk of death, violence, or physical harm to any person.

Key Questions to Consider When Monitoring Recovery Efforts[49]

- How much post-disaster equity work did we accomplish?
- How well did we accomplish our equity objectives?
- Are historically disadvantaged, underserved, and marginalized communities better off?
- How does the community feel about the outcomes of the recovery effort?

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[49] Government Alliance on Race and Equity, Local and Regional Resource Guide, 2017.

Data Supporting Equity, Nebraska

Disaster Type: Winter Storm

Focus: Developing an Inclusive Long-term Recovery Plan

In March 2019, Winter Storm Ulmer made history as one of the worst winter storms in Great Plains history. The blizzard caused multiple road closures, resulting in massive travel delays. It produced destructive straight-line winds and record-breaking flooding. It also set new low-pressure records due to the development of a bomb cyclone. The impacts of Winter Storm Ulmer, combined with the conditions from the rainy fall season, resulted in significant losses across the state. Given the widespread scale of the disaster, Nebraska not only needed to assess damage quickly, but also to determine how best to deploy resources efficiently and equitably.

Nebraska contracted a consulting firm to help create a Long-Term Recovery Plan to guide the process of rebuilding. To ensure an equitable response, the plan set detailed objectives and incorporated equity-based actions throughout the recovery process.

A Baseline Conditions and Impact Assessment sought to catalog, measure, and communicate disaster impacts to communities and families in Nebraska. This report focused on vulnerable populations and included a Social Vulnerability Assessment to identify communities that would face disproportionate impacts.

A Local Impacts Group (LIG) helped connect advocacy groups and other community organizations throughout the state with state and local agencies and the RSFs to ensure that all communities had an opportunity to influence the recovery planning process. The group included representatives from organizations with a strong understanding of local realities, such as the Nebraska Association of County Officials, the League of Nebraska Municipalities, and the state's active long-term recovery groups. Examples of other actions Nebraska took to ensure an equitable response include:

- Addressing several equity objectives and strategies in the recovery plan, such as ensuring that it addresses considerations for people with disabilities and other access and functional needs throughout disaster response, recovery, and preparedness;
- Promoting available services such as deconflicting information about insurance, legal rights and responsibilities, grant programs, and other funding and services available to vulnerable populations;
- Conducting the assessments and implementing the LIG helped to inform the objectives in the plan and the inclusion of equitable principles and practices; and
- Sharing information and connecting groups defined a clearer path and set of objectives.

From these inputs, Nebraska created objectives to protect vulnerable, disadvantaged, and underserved populations. Through codifying and promoting accessible and available services and programs, Nebraska safeguarded its most vulnerable citizens.

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Goal 7: Build Adaptive Capacity

> "The social dynamics that underlie the disproportionate environmental hazards faced by low-income communities and minorities also play out in the arena of disaster prevention, mitigation, and recovery. In a sense, environmental justice is about slow-motion disasters – and disasters reveal environmental injustice in a fast-forward mode. Both revolve around the axes of disparities of wealth and power."[50]

Adaptive capacity refers to the conditions that enable people to anticipate and respond to change, minimize consequences, recover from setbacks, and take advantage of new opportunities. An approach to building adaptive capacity includes five domains: the assets that people can draw upon in times of need, the flexibility to change strategies, the ability to organize and act collectively, learning to recognize and respond to change, and the agency to determine whether to change or not.[51]

1. Organize and Empower Underserved Groups

To build adaptive capacity for disaster recovery in a community, local officials and leaders can help empower under-served groups by:

- Identifying untapped resources and assets not previously offered or accessible to groups due to historical and current discriminatory practices and regulations;
- Discussing ways to work together to ensure equitable access to resources and assistance needed to fully recover;
- Impacting recovery decisions and managing their own recovery;
- Building collective efficacy to influence what people choose to do as a group, how much effort they put into it, and their staying power when group efforts fail to produce results.[52] Communities with a high amount of efficacy will be empowered to act;
- Working with under-resourced communities to access training and perform community-wide jobs available in post-disaster environments;
- Mitigating disaster risks to homes and neighborhoods by evaluating youth human needs, involving youth in the recovery process, including youth in equity objectives, providing youth valuable resources, and empowering youth to stop the cycle of disasters they experience;

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[50] M. Pastor, et al., "Environment, disaster, and race after Katrina. Race, Poverty, & the Environment."

[51] J. Cinner, et al., "Building adaptive capacity to climate change in tropical coastal communities."

[52] A. Bandura, "Self-efficacy mechanism in human agency."

- Integrating youth groups and youth community leaders in the recovery process. For example, local officials and leaders can facilitate "working tables'' with these groups and consider their recommendations as part of the community outreach component required. Education aimed at younger populations can also be beneficial; and
- Establishing intergenerational equity and ensuring the actions taken now do not impair or impede the options of future generations.[53]

2. Provide Ongoing Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility Training and Education

Recovery leaders can build local capacity for incorporating equity during the recovery management process through on-going DEIA training opportunities on equity and emergency management. Cultivating equity is part of FEMA's long-term planning initiatives, as captured in the 2022-2026 FEMA Strategic Plan, Goal 1: Instill Equity as a Foundation of Emergency Management. A DEIA initiative requires ongoing learning to understand what equity is (e.g., fairness and justice) and what it is not (e.g., giving away resources intended for underserved populations). Challenging bias in culture, being proactive, overcoming barriers, and learning to listen are all part of building an equitable recovery from disaster.

Training Resources

- Building Alliances for Equitable Resilience: Advancing Equitable Resilience through Partnerships and Diverse Perspectives, FEMA.
- Implicit Bias Training Course, NIH.
- Race, Equity and Leadership Training, National League of Cities.
- Governing for Equity: Implementing an Equity Lens in Local Government, International City/County Management Association.
- Health Equity and Social Justice 101, NACCHO.
- Unconscious Bias Training, FranklinCovey.
- Unconscious Bias Training & Mitigation, BiasSync.
- Governing for Racial Equity, Government Alliance on Race and Equity.
- Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Resources for Local Governments, Municipal Research and Services Center of Washington.
- Supporting U.S. Territories and Island Populations After Disasters, SAMHSA.

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[53] B. Philips, "Promoting social and intergenerational equity during disaster recovery."

Advice to Other Local Disaster Recovery Managers[54]

Advocate with your municipalities to create a fund to provide resources when disasters are not federally declared. Other resources for un-declared disasters include FEMA's Resource Roadmaps which provide information about federal and non-federal resources.

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[54] Recovery Resources, FEMA.

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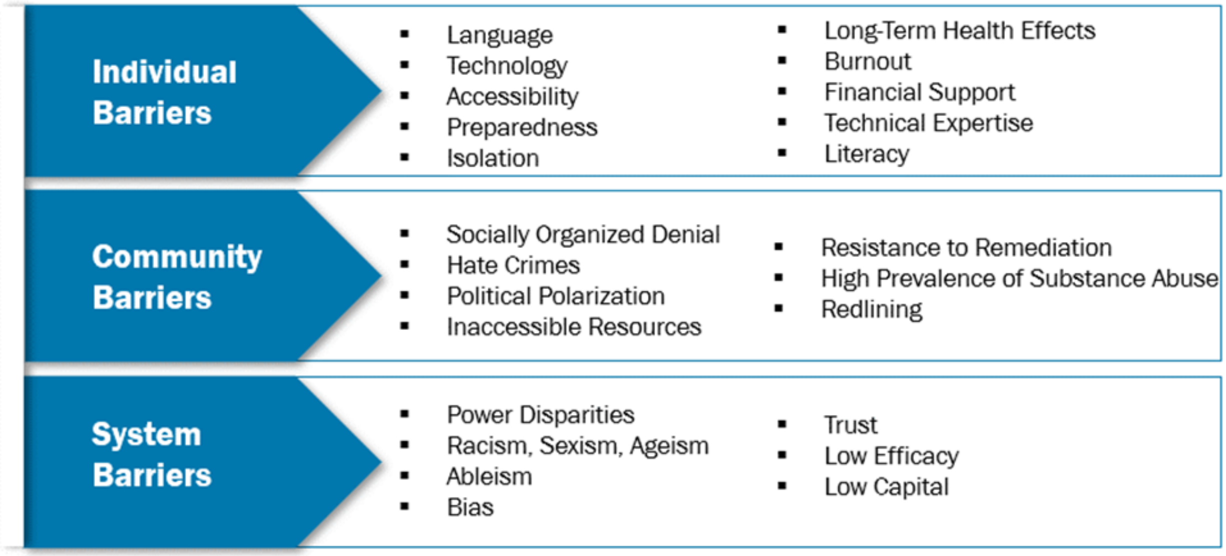
Goal 8: Overcome Barriers and Ensure Fair Recovery Outcomes

> "Ensuring social justice by addressing basic human rights, discrimination, exclusion, and powerlessness can remove enormous individual, familial, and communal stressors."[55]

1. Honestly and Openly Examine the Barriers to Equity

Understanding the environment in which recovery planning occurs helps communities remove equity barriers. There are barriers to equitable recovery at the individual, community, and system levels. Even with evidence of inequitable disaster impacts and risks, people often dismiss inequities because "that's the way it has always been," or ignore community hazards because of the benefits to the economy the hazard provides. Overcoming barriers to equity during disaster planning can strengthen a community and develop openness, solidarity, and greater resilience to future disasters. **Figure 12** lists examples of individual, community, and system barriers to equity. This is not an exhaustive list.



Individual Barriers

- Language
- Technology
- Accessibility
- Preparedness
- Isolation
- Long-Term Health Effects
- Burnout
- Financial Support
- Technical Expertise
- Literacy

Community Barriers

- Socially Organized Denial
- Hate Crimes
- Political Polarization
- Inaccessible Resources
- Resistance to Remediation
- High Prevalence of Substance Abuse
- Redlining

System Barriers

- Power Disparities
- Racism, Sexism, Ageism
- Ableism
- Bias
- Trust
- Low Efficacy
- Low Capital

Figure 12. Barriers to Equitable Recovery (Not an Exhaustive List)

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[55] J.A. Fairbank, et al., "Intervention options for societies, communities, families, and individuals. In Trauma Interventions in War and Peace: Prevention, practice, and policy."

The recent rise in hate crimes is just one indicator of the challenges facing local recovery officials. DOJ defines hate crimes as a crime motivated by bias against race, color, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, or disability. Individuals from historically marginalized, underserved, and disadvantaged communities are often the target of hate crimes, and survivors are some of the populations facing a disproportionate level of pre-disaster vulnerabilities. Lack of organized disaster management threatens vulnerable and marginalized populations, as better-established recovery programs may have a stronger basis to preserve equity in the face of community challenges.

For example, during the COVID-19 pandemic there was a dramatic increase in hate crimes and violence against Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders. Local leaders can use resources such as the Federal Bureau of Investigation's (FBI) Crime Data Explorer to infer the prevalence of equity challenges in a community through the number of hate crimes. **Table 6** highlights total hate crime incidents data from the FBI's Uniform Crime Reporting Program, another resource for local officials. There are also local sources from which to obtain this information. Local agencies and organizations focused on criminal justice, social justice, and human rights may collect and publicize this information. For example, the New York City Commission on Human Rights provides resources and information on hate crimes and their impacts to the community. If there are a large number of hate crimes in a disaster-impacted community, there is a possibility that equity challenges already exist and populations are present who may require additional recovery resources, such as security, conflict management, or community building.

Table 6. Rise of all Hate Crime Incidents Nationally (FBI Hate Crime Statistics)

Year	Total Number of Hate Crime Incidents
2016	6,063
2017	7,175
2018	7,120
2019	7,314
2020	8,263
2021	10,840

2. Incorporate an Intervention Component

Incorporating an intervention component in equitable recovery work focuses on identifying levels of support at one or more levels: societal, community, neighborhood, family, and individual. As local officials move from response to recovery, they may need to intervene if they determine community leaders are failing to support equitable recovery outcomes. Recovery leaders should work with their health, economic, environmental, legal, and cultural counterparts to identify additional resources and funding throughout the recovery process. The various levels and types of interventions are further outlined in **Figure 13**.

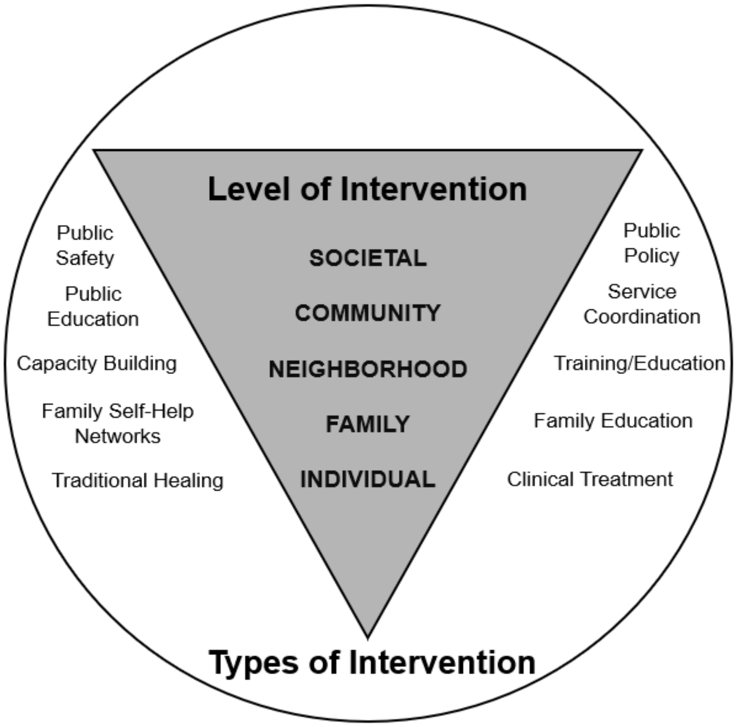
Level of Intervention
SOCIETAL
COMMUNITY
NEIGHBORHOOD
FAMILY
INDIVIDUAL
Public Safety
Public Education
Capacity Building
Family Self-Help Networks
Traditional Healing
Public Policy
Service Coordination
Training/Education
Family Education
Clinical Treatment
Types of Intervention

Figure 13. Types and Levels of Intervention[56]

As the recovery process progresses, LDRMs use the system their community created to adjust and intervene when necessary. By working together and following an intervention plan, local officials and leaders can help break barriers and achieve a successful and equitable recovery. The American Journal of Public Health defines structural interventions in the context of health disparities as attempts to change the social, physical, economic, or political environments that may shape or constrain health outcomes through targeting factors such as economic instability, limited educational and employment opportunity, societal racism, systemic discrimination, and lack of resources.[57] For example, local leaders may utilize the public education type of intervention, by implementing authentic community engagement and community-based participatory research to ensure equitable recovery outcomes.[58]

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[56] J.A. Fairbank, et al., “Intervention options for societies, communities, families, and individuals. In Trauma Interventions in War and Peace: Prevention, practice, and policy.”

[57] A. Brown, et al., "Structural Interventions to Reduce and Eliminate Health Disparities," 2019.

[58] A. Brown, et al., "Structural Interventions to Reduce and Eliminate Health Disparities," 2019.

A Health Perspective on Interventions[59]

Health inequities are, in large part, a result of poverty, structural racism, and discrimination. Interventions with the greatest promise target factors arising from root causes in two clusters:

- Intrapersonal, interpersonal, institutional, and systemic mechanisms that organize the distribution of power and resources differentially across lines of race, gender, class, sexual orientation, gender expression, and other dimensions of individual and group identity.
- The unequal allocation of power and resources—including goods, services, and societal attention—which manifests itself in unequal social, economic, and environmental conditions, also called the determinants of health.

When discussing intervention and accountability, local leaders must also consider the concepts of **access to justice** and **legal empowerment.** To ensure an equitable recovery and address systemic inequities, underserved populations should be empowered and supported in accessing legal information and services to address challenges such as discrimination in the disaster recovery system. The goal of access to justice efforts is to expand the delivery of laws, policies, and programs to serve people's greatest needs.[60] The White House tasked the Legal Aid Interagency Roundtable (LAIR) with improving coordination of federal programs and increasing the availability of meaningful access to justice for individuals and families, regardless of wealth and status. The LAIR published a 2022 report addressing simplification as a meaningful and achievable measure to increase access to justice.[61] Principles outlined in the document can support local leaders' efforts to expand access to justice and accessibility of recovery resources through mechanisms such as simplifying government forms and using plain language.

Efforts to enhance access to justice complement efforts to make the law work for everyone through legal empowerment.[62] The American Society of International Law defines legal empowerment in the context of supporting low-income individuals and families as 'transformations in structures, institutions, and processes' to achieve 'greater control of the factors influencing their livelihoods.' Further, they emphasize the goal of legal empowerment is to 'ensure legal protection and economic opportunity is the right of all and not the privilege of a few.'[63]

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[59] Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.

[60] Access to Justice in the Age of COVID-19: A Roundtable Report, 2021.

[61] Legal Aid Interagency Roundtable 2022 Report.

[62] N. Singh, "Legal Empowerment of the Poor: Making the Law Work for Everyone."

[63] N. Singh, "Legal Empowerment of the Poor: Making the Law Work for Everyone."

Resources on Access to Justice and Legal Empowerment

- Access to Justice in the Age of COVID-19, LAIR.
- Access to Justice through Simplification, LAIR.
- Efforts to Identify National Indicators on Access to Justice, LAIR.
- Remarks at the Summit for Democracy’s Advancing People-Centered Justice and Rule of Law Panel, DOJ.
- Necessary Condition: Access to Justice, United States Institute of Peace.
- Legal Empowerment of the Poor: Making the Law Work for Everyone, American Society of International Law.
- Initiatives on Legal Empowerment of the Poor, United Nations Development Programme.

Conclusion

Equity in post-disaster recovery relies on coordination and partnership between community leaders, organizations, governments, and the impacted populations themselves to ensure an inclusive and fair recovery process. The Guide helps community leaders overcome barriers historically found throughout the disaster recovery process by providing advice, checklists, toolkits, case studies, and examples on how to incorporate equity through the recovery process and how to achieve equitable outcomes.

Many communities have experienced substantial and pervasive historical inequities, which can pose challenges to building trust and establishing relationships. Consequently, it is critical for the whole community to be engaged in recovery initiatives. Our climate is changing at an unprecedented rate, resulting in diverse and dangerous disasters. Although no community is immune to the impacts of climate change, local officials must proactively engage with and protect vulnerable communities who often experience the brunt of its effects. As United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres has noted, with climate change, “as is always the case, the poor and vulnerable are the first to suffer and the worst hit.”[64]

The National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) states equity means recognizing that we do not all start from the same place and must acknowledge and make adjustments to account for imbalances.[65] The process is ongoing, requiring us to identify and overcome intentional and unintentional barriers arising from bias or systemic structures.

When disasters strike, communities can lose everything. From homes to critical infrastructure systems to cultural identity, disasters can dismantle both physical and social structures. However, if restored thoughtfully, resiliently, and equitably, they provide an opportunity for communities to re-build long lasting inclusivity into all areas of society.

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[64] Climate Justice - United Nations Sustainable Development, 2019.

[65] NACE’s Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Statement, 2023.

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Appendix A: Quick Reference Resource Guide

Table 7: Quick Reference Resources

Name of Resource	Issued By	Description of Resource
ADA Best Practices Tool Kit for State and Local Governments	Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)	The Tool Kit is designed to teach state and local government officials how to identify and fix problems that prevent people with disabilities from gaining equal access to state and local government programs, services, and activities.
Capacity-Building Toolkit for including Aging & Disability Networks in Emergency Planning	U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), National Association of County and City Health Officials, Association of State and Territorial Health Officials	This toolkit is geared towards the aging and disability network and provides guidance on planning and responding to public health emergencies and disasters for people.
Social Vulnerability Index	Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry	The SVI uses 16 U.S. census variables to help local officials identify communities that may need support before, during, or after disasters.
Citizen Participation & Equitable Engagement (CPEE) Toolkit	U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)	The CPEE Toolkit highlights the context of historic inequity in communities exacerbated by disasters and discrimination in the provision of disaster recovery resources, especially for the most vulnerable people.
Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool	White House Council on Environmental Quality	The tool has an interactive map and uses datasets that are indicators of burdens in eight categories: climate change, energy, health, housing, legacy pollution, transportation, water and wastewater, and workforce development. The tool uses this information to identify communities that are experiencing these burdens.

Name of Resource	Issued By	Description of Resource
Community Recovery Management Toolkit	Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)	This toolkit aggregates resources to help community leaders through the long-term disaster recovery process and are intended to be useful at any phase of recovery.
Community Resilience Estimates (CRE)	U.S. Census Bureau	The CRE provide an easily understood metric for how at-risk every neighborhood in the United States is to the impacts of disasters, including COVID-19.
Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Hub	Association of University Centers on Disabilities	The Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Hub provides resources, examples, and action steps that help enhance diversity, equity and inclusion and promote cultural humility and responsiveness.
EJScreen: Environmental Justice Screening and Mapping Tool	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency	This tool uses nationally consistent data to combine environmental and demographic indicators in maps and reports to screen for potential disproportionate environmental burdens and harms at the community level.
Infant and Young Child Feeding in Emergencies (IYCF-E) Toolkit	CDC	CDC’s IYCF-E Toolkit provides information and resources for emergency preparedness and response personnel, families, and the public to feed children safely during a disaster.
Inter-Regional COVID-19 Tribal Recovery Toolkit	FEMA	A series of questions were drafted for each Recovery Support Function to help identify the Tribal community’s COVID-19 needs. The list of questions was sent to tribal leaders to request feedback and ensure the questions were tribal friendly.

Name of Resource	Issued By	Description of Resource
Maternal-Child Emergency Planning Toolkit	HHS	The HHS Maternal-Child Health Emergency Planning toolkit is designed to improve the capacity of health care, public health, and social services professionals to address maternal and child health in emergency preparedness, response, recovery, and mitigation activities.
The Equity Impact Review Tool	King County	The Equity Impact Review tool is a process and a tool to identify, evaluate, and communicate the potential impact– both positive and negative– of a policy or program on equity.
The Public Health Risk Assessment Tool	The Drexel University School of Public Health	The Public Health Risk Assessment Tool guides planners through an analysis of the health-related impacts of various hazards that can occur in their jurisdictions and assesses the planning that is necessary to ensure access to emergency response and preparedness resources, based on the services provided by public health agencies and the healthcare system.
U.S. Climate Resilience Toolkit – Social Equity	National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration	The U.S. Climate Resilience Toolkit offers tools, information, and subject matter expertise from across the U.S. federal government on building climate resilience. The social equity page provides definitions, examples, and resources on social equity in the built environment.

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Appendix B: Glossary and Acronym List

Equitable Recovery: When policies, practices, communications, and distribution of resources are impartial, fair, just, and responsive to the needs of all impacted community members. Local officials, community leaders, and partners can achieve equitable recovery by taking action to address systematic recovery barriers and ensuring that all the various groups in the community can meaningfully participate in and benefit from recovery planning processes, projects, and decision-making.

Equity: The consistent and systematic, fair, just, and impartial treatment of all individuals, including individuals who belong to underserved communities of color; persons who belong to communities that may face discrimination based on sex, sexual orientation, and/or gender identity (including members of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer [LGBTQ+] community); persons with disabilities; persons who may face discrimination based on their religion and/or, national origin; persons with limited English proficiency; and persons who live in rural areas that have been systematically denied a full opportunity to participate in aspects of economic, social, and civic life.

Disadvantaged Communities: Disadvantaged communities have been historically marginalized and overburdened that have experienced disproportionately high and adverse human health, environmental, climate-related, economic, and other impacts from climate change and historic underinvestment.[66]

Disaster Equity: Disaster equity is the provision of community-specific services and resources for disaster survivors that are accessible, and culturally and linguistically tailored to mitigate disparities in health and well-being and support resilience.[67]

Distributive Justice: Diminishing unequal social and economic conditions to achieve parity in standards of living are elements of distributive justice. To achieve distributive justice, equals must receive the same allocation of benefits. Distributive justice has the goal to determine whether everyone received the same outcome and got what they needed.[68]

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[66] The White House, Executive Order on Tackling the Climate Crisis at Home and Abroad, 2021.

[67] Disaster Equity Plan Statement, HHS.

[68] J.J. Patrick, “Understanding Democracy: A Hip Pocket Guide,” 2006.

Hate Crime: At the federal level, a crime motivated by bias against race, color, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, or disability.[69]

Healthcare Coalitions: Group of individual healthcare and response organizations in a defined geographic location that play a critical role in developing healthcare system preparedness and response capabilities. [70]

Inclusive Planning: Processes that ensure all community members feel welcome to participate and are confident that their participation can positively affect outcomes.[71]

Intersectionality: Intersectionality is, "a framework to describe how systems of power and oppression (for example, racism, sexism, heterosexism) interlock to shape people's lived experiences, health, and well-being, based on their multiple identities (for example, their race, gender, and sexual orientation, respectively).[72]

Long-Term Recovery Group (LTRG): These recovery groups are local teams committed to seeing their community through to full recovery. LTRGs are active in maintaining distribution centers to feed local families, providing much needed cleaning supplies, securing low-cost furniture and appliances for disaster survivors, and making repairs to disaster damaged homes.

Marginalized Communities: Those groups excluded from mainstream social, economic, educational, and/or cultural life. Examples of marginalized communities include, but are not limited to, groups excluded due to race, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, physical ability, language, and/or immigration status. Marginalization occurs due to unequal power relationships between social groups.[73]

Procedural Justice: Procedural justice entails fair opportunity and respectful treatment. Informational and interpersonal equity are elements of procedural justice.[74] To achieve procedural justice, the administration of fair and impartial procedures must occur equally to everyone.[75]

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[69] Hate Crimes, DOJ, 2023.

[70] General Overview of Healthcare Coalitions, HHS.

[71] Inclusive Planning Processes, American Planning Association, 2019.

[72] Eli Michaels, et al., "Intersectionality: Amplifying Impacts on Health Equity."

[73] CPEE Toolkit, HUD.

[74] G. Leventhal, "What should be done with equity theory? New approaches to the study of fairness in social relationships," 1973.

[75] J.J. Patrick, "Understanding Democracy: A Hip Pocket Guide," 2006.

Social Safety Net Program: Social safety net programs provide critical support to people during times of economic hardship.[76]

Underserved Populations: The term “underserved communities” refers to populations sharing a particular characteristic, as well as geographic communities, who have been systematically denied a full opportunity to participate in aspects of economic, social, and civic life.[77]

Vulnerable Populations: Vulnerable populations include, but are not limited to, low- to middle-income populations, individuals from racial or ethnic minority groups, renters, and populations poorly served and limited in access to roads, public transit, healthcare, employment resources, and other critical services.

Whole Community Concept: Whole Community is a means by which residents, emergency management practitioners, organizational and community leaders, and government officials can collectively understand and assess the needs of their respective communities and determine the best ways to organize and strengthen their assets, capacities, and interests. As such, the concept forms the basis for the inclusion of everyone into the National Preparedness Goal and is incorporated into each of the National Planning Frameworks. By doing so, a more effective path to societal security and resilience is built.

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[76] Program Participation, U.S. Social Safety Net, HHS.

[77] Federal Register: Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government.

Table 8. Acronym List

Acronym	Meaning
ACE	Adverse Childhood Experience
ADA	Americans with Disabilities Act
ASPR	Administration for Strategic Preparedness and Response
ATSDR	Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry
BCIA	Baseline Conditions and Impact Assessment
CASPER	Community Assessment for Public Health Emergency Response
CA RSF	Community Assistance Recovery Support Function
CBO	Community-Based Organization
CBP	United States Customs and Border Protection
CCA	Community Conditions Assessment
CDBG	Community Development Block Grant
CDBG-DR	Community Development Block Grant Disaster Recovery
CDBG-MIT	Community Development Block Grant Mitigation
CDC	United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
CEQ	The White House Council on Environmental Quality
COSSAO	Corporacion de Servicios de Salud Primaria y Desarrollo Socioeconomico (the Corporation of Primary Health Services and Economic Development)
CPEE	Citizen Participation & Equitable Engagement Toolkit
CRIA	Community Resilience Indicator Analysis
DEI	Diversity, equity, and inclusion
DEIA	Diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility
DHS	United States Department of Homeland Security
DOJ	United States Department of Justice
EDA	United States Economic Development Administration
EO	Executive Order
EPA	United States Environmental Protection Agency

Acronym	Meaning
FBI	Federal Bureau of Investigation
FCO	Federal Coordinating Officer
FEMA	Federal Emergency Management Agency
GIS	Geographical information system
GOHSEP	Governor’s Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness
HCC	Healthcare Coalition
HHS	United States Department of Health and Human Services
HMGP	Hazard Mitigation Grant Program
HPD	New York City Department of Housing Preservation and Development
HUD	United States Department of Housing and Urban Development
IAC	Interagency Council
ICE	United States Immigration and Customs Enforcement
ICMA	International City/County Management Association
IHE	Institutions of Higher Education
IRC	Interagency Recovery Coordination
IYCF-E	Infant and Young Child Feeding in Emergencies
JFO	Joint field office
LAIR	Legal Aid Interagency Roundtable
LDRM	Local Disaster Recovery Manager
LGBTQ+	lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer
LISC	Local Initiatives Support Corporation
LIG	Local Impacts Group
LTRG	Long-Term Recovery Group
MPO	Metropolitan Planning Organization
NACCHO	National Association of County and City Health Officials
NAACP	National Association for the Advancement of Colored People
NACE	National Association of Colleges and Employers

Acronym	Meaning
NASA	National Aeronautics and Space Administration
NCRC	National Community Reinvestment Coalition
NDRF	National Disaster Recovery Framework
NGO	Non-governmental organization
NIH	National Institutes of Health
NOAA	National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NYC	New York City
NYCHA	New York City Housing Authority
OEM	Office of Emergency Management
OSHA	Occupational Safety and Health Administration
RSF	Recovery Support Function
SAMHSA	Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration
SBA	United States Small Business Administration
SLTT	State, local, tribal, and territorial
SRF	State Recovery Function
Stafford Act	Robert T. Stafford Disaster and Emergency Assistance Act
SVA	Social Vulnerability Assessment
SVI	Social Vulnerability Index
U.S.	United States
USDA	United States Department of Agriculture
USDN	Urban Sustainability Directors Network
VAL	Voluntary Agency Liaison
VOAD	Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster

Appendix C: Checklist for Monitoring Equitable Recovery Progress

Table 9. Checklist for Monitoring Equitable Recovery Progress

Equity Goal 1: Build Equity into the Recovery Organizational Structure	Yes	No	Unsure	N/A
Is the recovery organizational structure diverse, equitable, inclusive, and accessible?				
Was an inclusive environment created?				
Is there an indicator to everyone that an equitable recovery is possible?				
Was a Local Disaster Recovery Manager (LDRM) with diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility (DEIA) training hired?				
Is the management representative of the community?				
Is the LDRM required to update their DEIA training?				
Is the coordination structure representative of DEIA communities?				
Is the disaster federally declared?				
Are you using a formal structure to organize recovery activities (e.g., task force, committee)?				
Are you using an informal structure to organize recovery activities (e.g., using alternate networks to make sure no one is left behind)?				
Is equity included in the agenda every time there is a meeting?				
Were new people working towards equity in the community included and empowered?				
Were existing local leaders already working towards equity in the community included and empowered?				
Is there a recovery ordinance?				
Does the recovery ordinance include equity in the language?				
Was an Equity Impact Assessment conducted?				

Did you choose meeting locations where everyone felt comfortable?				
Are DEIA confirmed throughout the structure?				
Equity Goal 2: Identify Unequal Patterns of Disaster Exposure and Impact	**Yes**	**No**	**Unsure**	**N/A**
Was a data-informed picture of recovery needs generated?				
Were the needs of disproportionally affected groups identified?				
Are all disproportionately affected groups accounted for?				
Were inequitable neighborhood conditions assessed?				
Was a baseline established?				
Were pre-existing inequities documented?				
Did partners work together to generate a Whole Community picture of needs and inequities?				
Were local data sets shared and incorporated?				
Was the health department present?				
Were other departments present?				
Were school representatives present?				
Was the current cultural context of the community assessed?				
Were pre-disaster cross-cutting priorities identified?				
Were planning processes (e.g., outreach, engagement) used in the past with the community identified?				
Were the methods used to prioritize past projects identified?				
Were past partners already involved in planning and implementation identified?				
Equity Goal 3: Develop an Equitable Recovery Process	**Yes**	**No**	**Unsure**	**N/A**
Did you develop an equity committee?				
Did you reach out to a wide variety of groups?				
Was the community engagement process inclusive?				
Was the process sensitive to community experiences?				

Was the process culturally appropriate?				
Did you define equity?				
Did you include those without power or voice?				
Did you conduct a listening tour?				
Did you choose meeting locations where everyone felt comfortable?				
Did you provide support to make participation easier (e.g., childcare, transportation, compensation for time, scheduling different times and days)?				
Did you create recovery objectives?				
Did those objectives have multiple benefits across themes?				
Did you prioritize projects democratically?				
Was the post-disaster outreach inclusive?				
Did you use the Stakeholder Analysis Guide?				
Did you begin discussing how implementation of the plan will lead to equitable outcomes?				
Did you learn about how your partners implement their own plans?				
Equity Goal 4: Promote and Protect Equity throughout Recovery	**Yes**	**No**	**Unsure**	**N/A**
Is the system making fair distributions of post-disaster recovery resources?				
Was DEIA used in selecting the person/group making recovery decisions?				
Are there clearly defined goals and evaluation criteria?				
Do the decision makers have reliable information?				
Does the recovery structure and process include all?				
Is there a way to appeal decisions and a chance to explain?				
Are there safeguards and monitoring of decision makers?				
Are there mechanisms in place to change the allocation process regarding recovery if it is judged to be unfair?				
Is everyone receiving complete and truthful explanations of the recovery process?				

Does everyone understand how recovery planning operates and what their role is throughout the process?				
Does everyone understand about the resources available to them during recovery?				
Is everyone treated with respect, true concern, and empathy?				
Is the recovery planning process transparent?				
Are communication methods and materials (e.g., multiple languages, understandable information) available that will make the recovery planning process understandable and accessible?				
If virtual engagement is being used, are there strategies to reach the underserved?				
Is trust being developed?				
Was there open and honest communication about the history of the community any past or current discriminatory processes?				
Was there discussion about the role of bias, hate, and stereotypes?				
Is the community engagement process on-going?				
Is there new disaster related legislation?				
Were disability organizations present?				
Equity Goal 5: Adapt to the Dynamic Nature of Recovery	**Yes**	**No**	**Unsure**	**N/A**
Is there awareness of the compounding stress of disaster on the marginalized, underserved, and/or disadvantaged?				
Are you recognizing that groups recover at different rates at different times?				
Are you identifying and incorporating new needs?				
Are you communicating that planning is condensed but that receiving recovery resources takes time?				
Are you considering the effect of ecological changes (e.g., cultural shifts, subsequent disasters, additional resources, unintended consequences)?				
Are you considering leadership changes and setting up a system to transfer any knowledge?				

Are you considering changes in population?				
Were there changes in the recovery structure?				
Are you considering the effect of changes in disaster related legislation?				
Equity Goal 6: Adapt to The Impacts of The Dynamic Nature of Recovery	**Yes**	**No**	**Unsure**	**N/A**
Did you assess the impact of a project or process before implementation?				
Was a Systems Analysis of Root Causes of Inequities conducted?				
Was a Social Impact Assessment conducted?				
Was a Health Impact Assessment conducted?				
Is on-going DEIA training and education provided?				
Did you work with your partners to develop a system for evaluating equitable outcomes?				
Did you continuously evaluate effectiveness and adapt strategies?				
Did you establish a system to track outcomes over time?				
Did you use the data gathering, participatory processes, and the monitoring and evaluation system you developed to focus resources where they are most needed?				
Equity Goal 7: Build Adaptive Capacity	**Yes**	**No**	**Unsure**	**N/A**
Have you organized underserved groups?				
Have you empowered underserved groups?				
Have you identified untapped resources and assets not included due to historical and current racist and discriminatory practices and regulations?				
Have you built collective efficacy?				
Have you leveraged jobs available in the post-disaster environment?				
Have you taken action to make sure any actions taken now do not impede and choices future generations may have?				
Were you able to provide learning opportunities?				
Was success communicated, how?				

Equity Goal 8: Overcome Barriers and Ensure Fair Recovery Outcomes	**Yes**	**No**	**Unsure**	**N/A**
Did you use your data assessment and equity scan to have open and honest discussions about the barriers to recovery?				
Did you incorporate an intervention component to ensure equitable recovery?				
Did you speak about interventions with your partners?				
Were you able to intervene in the recovery process and make necessary adjustments to ensure equity?				
Equity Goal: Additional goals as you develop them	**Yes**	**No**	**Unsure**	**N/A**

Appendix D: Additional Resources

Table 10. Category – Climate Change

Name of Resource	Issued By	Description of Resource
Building Community Resilience with Nature-Based Solutions	Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)	This guide aims to help local communities identify groups and resources for use in developing and implementing nature-based solutions.
Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities	FEMA	Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities will support states, local communities, Tribal Nations, and territories as they undertake hazard mitigation projects, reducing the risks they face from disasters and natural hazards.
California's Adaptation Clearinghouse	The State of California	The Adaptation Clearinghouse is the State of California's consolidated searchable database of resources for local, regional, and statewide climate adaptation planning and decision-making.
Climate Resilience Trainings	Urban Sustainability Directors Network (USDN)	The USDN released climate resilience training tools for local governments and their partners to support climate resilience. This resource aggregates various trainings on topics of interest to local governments such as extreme heat and sea level rise.
Community Disaster Resilience Zones	FEMA	These designated Resilience zones will receive targeted support to access federal funding to plan for resilience projects that will help them reduce impacts caused by climate change and natural hazards.
Comprehensive Climate Action Guide	FEMA and National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA)	Data from NASA's Earth-observing satellites offer partner organizations and research scientists a powerful tool to deepen their discovery and support their success.
Environmental Justice Index	U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)	This webpage describes what environmental justice is and how to utilize the Environmental Justice Index tool.

Name of Resource	Issued By	Description of Resource
Fighting Redlining & Climate Change with Transformative Climate Communities	The Greenlining Institute	This evaluation aggregates interviews from nearly 50 stakeholders including residents, community-based organizations, non-profit organizations, local governments, and other stakeholders that focus on community-led solutions to climate change. Through these interviews, the Greenlining Institute identified challenges and provided recommendations for addressing the impacts of climate change at the community level.
A Guide to Equitable, Community-Driven Climate Preparedness Planning	USDN	This guide aims to provide local governments with the tools and guidance to conduct a more inclusive and equitable climate preparedness planning through inclusive community engagement and addressing the root causes of climate inequity. The Racial Equity Evaluation Tool accompanies this guide and allows local governments to assess racialized power in climate preparedness planning.
Making Equity Real in Climate Adaptation and Community Resilience Policies and Programs: A Guidebook	The Greenlining Institute	This Guidebook addresses specific community resilience needs of frontline communities who suffer the greatest impacts of climate change as well as how to operationalize social equity in actions related to climate adaptation.
National Risk Index	FEMA	The National Risk Index is a dataset and an interactive mapping platform and data-based interface with datasets focusing on communities' risks to climate hazards.
Overview of White House Environmental Justice Interagency Council	Interagency Council (IAC)	The IAC replaced the Federal Interagency Working Group on Environmental Justice. It is focused on developing a strategy to address current and historical environmental injustice.
Resilience Analysis and Planning Tool	FEMA	FEMA's Resilience Analysis and Planning Tool provides users with data and geographic information systems (GIS) mapping layers focused on community resilience indicators, census tract demographic data, layers on climate predictions and equity, and analysis tools.

Name of Resource	Issued By	Description of Resource
U.S. Climate Resilience Toolkit – Social Equity	National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)	The U.S. Climate Resilience Toolkit offers tools, information, and subject matter expertise from across the U.S. federal government on building climate resilience. The social equity page provides definitions, examples, and resources on social equity in the built environment.

Table 11. Category – Disasters

Name of Resource	Issued By	Description of Resource
2022-2026 FEMA National Tribal Strategy	FEMA	The National Tribal Strategy aggregates tribal perspectives shared with FEMA to ensure FEMA achieves what Tribal Nations need and deserve.
Addendum to the Hazard Mitigation Assistance Guide	FEMA	This document supplements the Hazard Mitigation Assistance (HMA) Guidance by providing direction on the Program Administration by States provision in the Sandy Recovery Improvement Act, Section 1104(b). This resource provides details about revisions to programs and what has not changed.
Adopt a Pre-Event Recovery Ordinance	American Planning Association	This briefing paper outlines how communities can prepare before a disaster by creating a pre-event recovery ordinance to advance short- and long-term recovery.
CDC/ATSDR Social Vulnerability Index (SVI)	Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR)	The Vulnerability Index uses 16 U.S. census variables to help local officials identify communities that may need support before, during, or after disasters.
Community Recovery Management Toolkit	FEMA	This toolkit aggregates resources to help community leaders through the long-term disaster recovery process and are intended to be useful at any phase of recovery.
Community Resilience Estimates (CRE)	U.S. Census Bureau	The CRE provide an easily understood metric for how at-risk every neighborhood in the United States is to the impacts of disasters, including COVID-19.
Community Resilience Indicator Analysis (CRIA)	FEMA	This document summarizes the 2018 and 2022 CRIAs and reviews methodologies for the 2022 CRIA.
Cultural and Population Sensitivity in Disaster Behavioral Health Programs	Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)	This article outlines technical assistance case studies on cultural and population sensitivity for disaster behavioral health programs.

Name of Resource	Issued By	Description of Resource
Disaster Behavioral Health	U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS)	This website provides links to resources and guidance for planners, public health leaders and policymakers, responders and healthcare workers, and others on behavioral health post-disaster.
Disaster Quilts and Quilters	Natural Hazards Center	This article outlines the purpose of giving and receiving disaster quilts and the impacts it provides in supporting community recovery.
The Dos and Don'ts of Talking Respectfully about and with Native People	IllumiNative	This resource provides education and awareness on communicating with native people in a respectful way.
Effective Coordination of Recovery Resources for State, Tribal, Territorial, and Local Incidents	FEMA	This guide highlights the critical tasks and coordination challenges that state, tribal, territorial, or local governments most commonly address when managing a recovery process. It describes the processes, considerations, and interdependencies of recovery coordination, including leading, organizing, assessing, informing, engaging, and implementing.
Engaging Faith-based and Community Organizations	U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS)	This guide provides a foundation for emergency managers to engage with faith-based and community organizations that can be partners in building a culture of preparedness and enhancing the security and resiliency of our nation.
Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Hub	Association of University Centers on Disabilities	The Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Hub provides resources, examples, and action steps that help enhance DEI and promote cultural humility and responsiveness.
The Equity Impact Review (EIR) Tool	King County	The Equity Impact Review tool is a process and a tool to identify, evaluate, and communicate the potential impact–- both positive and negative–- of a policy or program on equity.
FEMA Tribal Policy	FEMA	The FEMA Tribal Policy outlines a commitment by the Agency to enhance its nation-to-nation relationship with Tribal Nations, and to ensure FEMA works with Tribal Nations to build, sustain, and improve their capacity to prevent, protect against, mitigate, respond to, and recover from all hazards.
Guide to Expanding Mitigation	FEMA	This guide explores ways for community officials to work with the arts and culture sector to support hazard mitigation, including the planning process.

Name of Resource	Issued By	Description of Resource
How Natural Disasters Can Affect Human Trafficking	ICF	This article outlines what human trafficking is and how disasters exacerbate vulnerability to human trafficking.
Human Trafficking in the Wake of a Disaster	CDC	This resource provides printouts and general information on safety, shelters, and toolkits to protect populations vulnerable to trafficking post-disaster.
Human Trafficking: The Hidden Aftermath of U.S. Natural Disasters	Naval Postgraduate School	This thesis explores common factors associated with both victims of human trafficking and vulnerable populations in post-natural-disaster environments.
Land Acknowledgement Project Overview and Resource Guide	Maryland State Arts Council	This guide defines and explains what a land acknowledgement is and provides resources and case studies for conducting land acknowledgement activities.
Leadership Before, During, and After a Crisis	International City/County Management Association (ICMA)	In this leading-edge research report, ICMA captures the ideas, feelings, and stories of the professional managers who were involved in different crises to better understand the lessons learned from managers and identify leading or promising practices that can be adopted by others.
Local Leader Disaster Recovery Guide	Regional Resilience Collaborative	The Local Leader Disaster Recovery Guide provides key considerations for county managers and elected officials for a successful recovery. This guide advocates for building recovery capacity pre-disaster, using recovery as an opportunity to rebuild resiliently, and developing partnerships in recovery.
Long-Term Recovery Groups Help Address Unmet Needs	FEMA	This case study outlines the use and outcomes of long-term recovery groups om the aftermath of hurricanes Irma and Maria.
Managing the Retreat from Rising Seas	Georgetown Climate Center	This report outlines lessons and tools from 17 case studies across the country that describe how states, local governments, Tribal Nations, and communities explored managed retreat to address natural hazards.

Name of Resource	Issued By	Description of Resource
National Disaster Recovery Framework (NDRF), Second Edition	FEMA	The NDRF provides a recovery framework focused on preparing for recovery prior to disasters to accelerate the community recovery process and achieve long-term recovery goals. Released in 2016, the second edition NDRF identifies a common platform for the whole community on building, sustaining, and coordinating the delivery of recovery capabilities.
Native American Organizations Serving the Community	National Institutes of Health	This webpage aggregates some national native American organizations that serve the community.
Native Land Digital	Native Land	This website is a GIS map that demonstrates Indigenous territories, treaties, and languages across the world.
Natural Disasters and the Increased Risk for Human Trafficking	Polaris Project	This webpage describes the risks and vulnerabilities of human trafficking after natural disasters and shares organizations that support survivors of human trafficking.
Pre-Disaster Recovery Planning Guide for Tribal Governments	FEMA	This guide provides a basic framework and guidance for tribal leadership and stakeholders as they plan for recovery and recognizes that different Tribal Nations have different levels of capacity and different ways of planning.
The Research for Indigenous Social Action and Equity Center	University of Michigan	This academic center publishes research and information on indigenous action and social equity to inform equitable recovery efforts.
Resilience Hubs	USDN	Resilience Hubs are community-serving facilities augmented to support residents, coordinate communication, distribute resources, and reduce carbon pollution while enhancing quality of life.
Single Family Housing Repair Program in Presidentially Declared Disasters	U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA)	This webpage outlines grants and loans available to very-low-income homeowners whose homes were damaged by Presidentially Declared Disasters to help repair disaster-related damage to their home.
Strategies for Inclusive Planning in Emergency Response	Los Angeles County	This document provides resources and tools to facilitate inclusive planning throughout the disaster lifecycle for people with access and functional needs, including people with disabilities and other groups disproportionately impacted in emergencies.

Name of Resource	Issued By	Description of Resource
Tribal Drought Engagement Strategy	National Integrated Drought Information System	This document outlines a tribal engagement strategy for the Missouri River Basin and Midwest Drought Early Warning Systems and provides guiding principles of engagement.
Wildfire Planning Resources	State of California	This website contains case studies and planning guides geared towards local agencies for planning and implementing wildfire solutions.

Table 12. Category – Economic Initiatives

Name of Resource	Issued By	Description of Resource
Addendum to Hazard Mitigation Assistance Guidance: Program Administration by States Pilot, Hazard Mitigation Program– For States, Tribes and Territories	FEMA	This document supplements the HMA guidance by providing direction on the Program Administration by States provision in the Sandy Recovery Improvement Act, Section 1104(b).
The American Rescue Plan Act: Promoting Equity Through ARPA Implementation	The Kresge Foundation	This report shows the unprecedented response of the COVID-19 pandemic and its negative economic impact on low- and moderate-income people and communities of color.
Community Leadership Programs	Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC)	LISC helps community development programs to become more effective change-makers through distributing operating grants and working capital. Leadership programs also receive support via staff training programs and learning opportunities.
Hazard Mitigation Assistance Cost Share Guide	FEMA	The Cost Share Guide provides a brief overview for grant applicants on making cost share decisions and meeting federal cost share requirements in the context of Hazard Mitigation Assistance grant programs.
Investment Priorities	U.S. Economic Development Administration	This document defines terminology related to equity investment priorities including underserved populations, geographies, Green Products, Green Processes, Green Buildings, and Well-Paying, Quality Jobs.

Name of Resource	Issued By	Description of Resource
Local Government Solutions for COVID-19 and Beyond: Grants Management Capacity	FEMA	This guide seeks to simplify the process of building local government capacity for grants management through this comprehensive explanation of a grant's entire lifecycle. It also highlights considerations that can help smaller governments compete for larger grants.
Mitigation Assistance	U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA)	The SBA offers mitigation assistance to protect homes and business against disasters in the form of disaster loans for projects such as wind or flood mitigation.
Rural LISC	LISC	LISC provides technical assistance, resources, and strategies to rural communities to meet local needs.
Single Family Housing Repair Program in Presidentially Declared Disasters	USDA	The USDA offers home repair loans and grants to very-low-income homeowners in Presidentially Declared Disasters to repair disaster-related damage to their homes.

Table 13. Category – Equitable Housing Practices

Name of Resource	Issued By	Description of Resource
Citizen Participation & Equitable Engagement (CPEE) Toolkit	U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)	The CPEE Toolkit highlights the context of historic inequity in communities exacerbated by disasters and discrimination in the provision of disaster recovery resources, especially for the most vulnerable people.
Fair Housing and Equity Assessment / National Equity Atlas	HUD	This document provides an overview of strategies for improving equity in the housing system, the Fair Housing and Equity System, and the National Equity Atlas.
Redlining and Neighborhood Health	National Community Reinvestment Coalition (NCRC)	This paper examines historical redlining in cities across the United States as it relates to neighborhood health outcomes. NCRC provides four recommendations for housing, economic, and social policies to address and eliminate risks resulting from greater historic redlining.
VA Homeless Programs	U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs	This document provides an overview of resources and services listed that are available for Veterans in need of assistance during a natural disaster or other emergency.

Name of Resource	Issued By	Description of Resource
Where We Live NYC Plan	City of New York	Where We Live NYC Plan is New York City's (NYC) comprehensive plan to advance fair housing through 2025. This plan defines fair housing and provides resources on fair housing rights in NYC.

Table 14. Category – Land Use Planning

Name of Resource	Issued By	Description of Resource
A Guide to Supporting Engagement and Resiliency in Rural Communities	FEMA	Recognizing that rural communities face a unique set of challenges given their lower population density and larger amounts of undeveloped land, this guide aims to help communities in designing outreach and engagement activities that are authentic and right sized for a particular community to make every community more resilient.
Local Government Solutions Guide for COVID-19 and Beyond: Adaptive Design	FEMA	This Adaptive Design Local Government Solutions Guide covers three sub-topics that describe short and long-term approaches to community revitalization and development: public space, building, and zoning.
Plan Integration: Linking Local Planning Efforts	FEMA	This tool is intended to help communities analyze current levels of integration and where hazard mitigation principles could be further integrated into local planning mechanisms.

Table 15. Public Health/Healthcare

Name of Resource	Issued By	Description of Resource
Arts and Health	National Endowment for the Arts	The National Endowment for the Arts invests in the convergence of health and arts through grants, research, and special programs.
Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool	White House Council on Environmental Quality	The tool has an interactive map and uses datasets that are indicators of burdens in eight categories: climate change, energy, health, housing, legacy pollution, transportation, water and wastewater, and workforce development. The tool uses this information to identify communities that are experiencing these burdens.
Community Health Assessment and Improvement Planning	National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO)	This article outlines the various components of community health assessments and provides resources and examples on completing a community health assessment.

Name of Resource	Issued By	Description of Resource
Community Health Assessments & Health Improvement Plans	CDC	This webpage defines community health assessments and provides resources and examples on developing and utilizing the assessments.
EJScreen: Environmental Justice Screening and Mapping Tool	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)	This tool uses nationally consistent data to combine environmental and demographic indicators in maps and reports to screen for potential disproportionate environmental burdens and harms at the community level.
Federal Long-Term Recovery and Resilience Plan Development: Mid-Course Update	Thriving Together	The purpose of the Long-Term Resilience and Recovery plan currently being developed by the Interagency Workgroup is to align federal actions, outlining strategies to improve vital conditions, support community and individual recovery from the impacts of COVID-19, and positively impact health and well-being over the next 10 years and beyond.
Health Effects and Views of COVID-19 in Hawai'i	Economic Research Organization at the University of Hawai'i	Due to the significant adverse impact COVID-19 pandemic has had on Hawai'i, the University of Hawai'i is developing infrastructure to inform the design and execution of public health programs in the state for COVID-19 and other disasters while providing valuable data to our communities to make informed decisions.
Health Equity Guiding Principles for Inclusive Communication	CDC	CDC's Health Equity Guiding Principles for Inclusive Communication emphasizes the importance of addressing all people inclusively and respectfully.
Healthcare Coalition Recovery Plan Template	Administration for Strategic Preparedness and Response (ASPR)	ASPR Technical Resources, Assistance Center, and Information Exchange (TRACIE) developed this template to help healthcare coalitions develop/organize their recovery plan.
Infant and Young Child Feeding in Emergencies (IYCF-E) Toolkit	CDC	CDC's IYCF-E Toolkit provides information and resources for emergency preparedness and response personnel, families, and the public to feed children safely during a disaster.
Infant Feeding During Disasters	HHS	The Infant Feeding During Disasters factsheet outlines why breastfeeding during disasters matters, barriers to breastfeeding during a disaster, benefits of breastfeeding, and how responders can help.

Name of Resource	Issued By	Description of Resource
Inter-Regional COVID-19 Tribal Recovery Toolkit	FEMA	A series of questions were drafted for each Recovery Support Function to help identify the Tribal community's COVID-19 needs. The list of questions was sent to tribal leaders to request feedback and ensure the questions were tribal friendly.
Joint Statement on Infant and Young Child Feeding in Emergencies (IYCF-E) in the U.S.	U.S. Breastfeeding Coalition	This statement from the U.S. Breastfeeding Committee calls for equitable disaster response for infants and young child food safety and security and provides recommended practices to address infant and child food security post-disaster.
Learn About Heat Islands	EPA	The EPA published this webpage to inform the public on urban heat islands throughout the United States. This resource reviews the definition, causes, characteristics, and impacts of heat islands and strategies to cope and reduce the severity of the heat island effect.
Maternal-Child Emergency Planning Toolkit	HHS	The HHS Maternal-Child Health Emergency Planning toolkit is designed to improve the capacity of health care, public health, and social services professionals to address maternal and child health in emergency preparedness, response, recovery, and mitigation activities.
Medically Underserved Area/Population	Health Resources & Services Administration	This webpage defines and outlines various shortage designations, which are areas, populations, or facilities experiencing a shortage of health care services.
National Integrated Heat Health Information System	NOAA	HEAT.gov provides planning, education, and health information regarding extreme heat and its impacts on health, the economy, and infrastructure. This portal contains tools, risk factors, health outlooks, heat trackers, and heat news to improve federal, state, and local information and capacity to reduce the impacts of extreme heat.
The Public Health Risk Assessment Tool	The Drexel University School of Public Health	The Public Health Risk Assessment Tool (PHRAT) guides planners through an analysis of the health-related impacts of various hazards that can occur in their jurisdictions and assesses the planning that is necessary to ensure access to emergency response and preparedness resources, based on the services provided by public health agencies and the healthcare system.

Name of Resource	Issued By	Description of Resource
A Racial Equity Framework for Assessing Health Policy	The Commonwealth Fund	Establishes a conceptually nuanced, empirically informed, and practically useful framework for analyzing the racial equity implications of health policies.
Resources for Infant Feeding in Emergencies (Multilingual)	La Leche League International	La Leche League International aggregates resources for infant feeding in emergencies in multiple languages on their webpage.
The Use of Cooling Centers to Prevent Heat-Related Illness	CDC	This report provides a summary of evidence and strategies for implementation for using cooling centers to prevent heat-related illness.

Table 16. Category – Social Services

Name of Resource	Issued By	Description of Resource
Access to Justice in the Age of COVID-19	Legal Aid Interagency Roundtable (LAIR)	This report outlines the COVID-19 pandemic's impacts on access to justice in civil and criminal legal systems and analyzes how the pandemic exacerbated existing equity gaps.
Access to Justice through Simplification	LAIR	This document provides a roadmap for people-centered simplification of federal government forms, processes, and language to improve access to justice.
ADA Best Practices Tool Kit for State and Local Governments	Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)	The Tool Kit is designed to teach state and local government officials how to identify and fix problems that prevent people with disabilities from gaining equal access to state and local government programs, services, and activities.
An ADA Guide for Local Governments: Making Community Emergency Preparedness and Response Programs Accessible to People with Disabilities	U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ)	This guide outlines issues in emergency planning and response activities that impact people with disabilities and provides actions to make programs more accessible.
ADA Requirements: Effective Communication	ADA	This publication is designed to help title II and title III entities ("covered entities") understand how the rules for effective communication, including rules that went into effect on March 15, 2011, apply to them.

Name of Resource	Issued By	Description of Resource
Advancing Equity by Incorporating Intersectionality in Research and Analysis	HHS	This tool is intended to support those who design, conduct, manage, fund, or oversee research and analysis, to help them advance equity by improving their understanding of why and how to examine intersectionality when conducting research and analysis.
Annie E. Casey Foundation	Annie E. Casey Foundation	The Annie E. Casey Foundation provides expert guidance directly to policy makers and public system administrators on developing an Equity Impact Assessment.
Assessing Social Equity through Social Vulnerability Modeling	Eos: Science News by the American Geophysical Union	This resource selects demographic variables representing socially vulnerable groups and combines them to construct spatial indicators and indexes that enable comparisons of social vulnerability across places.
Capacity-Building Toolkit for including Aging & Disability Networks in Emergency Planning	HHS, NACCHO, Association of State and Territorial Health Officials	This toolkit is geared towards the aging and disability network and provides guidance on planning and responding to public health emergencies and disasters for people.
Civil Rights in Emergencies and Disasters	DHS	This resource outlines the various information about civil rights and civil liberties to support individuals and communities in emergency contexts.
Core Principles of Equity and Emergency Management	National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)	The NAACP's Core Principles of Equity and Emergency Management provides guiding principles to conduct emergency management in a just and equitable manner. The list of core principles should be included in every aspect of the emergency management process to meet the needs of all communities.
County Resources on Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (DEI)	National Association of Counties	This list of resources is for counties to reference when implementing DEI into county operations to ensure all county residents have the resources to reach their fullest potential.
Crime Data Explorer	Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI)	The FBI's Crime Data Explorer provides transparency, creates easier access, and expands awareness of criminal, and noncriminal, law enforcement data sharing for incidents such as hate crimes.

Name of Resource	Issued By	Description of Resource
Cultural and Religious Literacy Tip Sheets	FEMA	This resource aids in improving cultural and religious literacy by providing engagement guides to ensure appropriate terms, etiquette, and greetings are used for different groups.
Cultural Awareness: Children and Disasters	SAMHSA	This resource assists disaster behavioral health responders in providing culturally aware and appropriate disaster behavioral health services for children, youth, and families affected by natural and human-caused disasters.
DEI Resources for Municipal Governments	Metropolitan Mayors Caucus	This website provides links to resources to support Chicago-area municipalities in striving for better DEI in their communities.
Disaster Justice for All: The Need for a More Equitable and Just Recovery Lens	Natural Hazards Center	This framework outlines four principles for just recovery that includes the ability to exercise agency, beginning recovery with equality, harnessing community capacity, and requiring equal access.
Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Resources for Local Governments	Municipal Research and Services Center of Washington	This website aggregates resources, tools, and templates for local governments in Washington State.
Efforts to Identify National Indicators on Access to Justice	LAIR	This document explores LAIR’s efforts to identify indicators on access to justice to measure the impacts of efforts to improve access to justice.
Evaluating Transportation Equity: Guidance for Incorporating Distributional Impacts in Transportation Planning	Victoria Transport Policy Institute	This report provides practical guidance for evaluating transportation equity. It defines various types of equity and equity impacts and describes practical ways to incorporate equity evaluation and objectives in transport planning.
Hawai’i Broadband Strategic Plan	State of Hawai’i	The Hawai’i Broadband Strategic Plan provides guidance to identify and remove barriers to accessing broadband internet for underserved populations.
How To Improve Your Cross-Cultural Communication for Risk Reduction	U.S. Fire Administration	This website provides a number of tips and perspectives for communicating effectively with different cultures.

Name of Resource	Issued By	Description of Resource
The Human Milk Banking Association	Human Milk Banking Association of North America	This organization advances the field of nonprofit milk banking through member accreditation, development of evidence-based best practices, and advocacy of breastfeeding and human lactation to ensure an ethically sourced and equitably distributed supply of donor human milk.
Initiatives on Legal Empowerment of the Poor	United Nations Development Programme	This document provides case studies on legal empowerment projects in various counties.
In the Eye of the Storm: A People's Guide to Transforming Crisis & Advancing Equity in the Disaster Continuum	NAACP	This Toolkit provides modules on each of the four phases of emergency management to guide readers on how to implement and achieve equity throughout the emergency management cycle.
Legal Empowerment of the Poor: Making the Law Work for Everyone	American Society of International Law	This document defines the concept of legal empowerment and identifies mechanisms to promote legal empowerment and access to justice.
Necessary Condition: Access to Justice	United States Institute of Peace	In its guiding principles for stabilization and reconstruction, the United States Institute of Peace outlines the concept of access to justice and why it is a necessary condition.
People with Functional and Access Needs and Disasters	SAMHSA	This journal discusses inclusion of individuals with disabilities and other function and access needs throughout disaster preparedness, response, and recovery.
PlainLanguage.Gov	General Services Administration	This webpage outlines the laws and requirements of plain language and provides resources and training materials regarding plain language requirements.
Planning for Equity Policy Guide	American Planning Association	This guide outlines equitable policymaking and planning recommendations for leaders at the local, state, and federal levels.
Preparing for Disaster for People with Disabilities and other Special Needs	FEMA and American Red Cross	This resource provides disaster preparedness and planning guidance for individuals with physical, medical, sensory, or cognitive disabilities, the elderly, and other special needs populations.

Name of Resource	Issued By	Description of Resource
Racial Equity: Getting to Results	Government Alliance on Race & Equity	This resource guide models advancing racial equity at local levels of government to promote an inclusive and effective democracy. This resource guide lists a six-part strategic approach to achieve institutional and policy change at all levels.
Remarks at the Summit for Democracy's Advancing People-Centered Justice and Rule of Law Panel	DOJ	The Director of DOJ's Office for Access to Justice delivered remarks on the importance of people-centered justice and rights to legal aid.
Support Strategies for Socially Marginalized Neighborhoods Likely Impacted by Natural Hazards	Coastal Resilience Center	This report provides methods to address equity in emergency management mitigation efforts to ensure programs and policies equitably distribute funds to marginalized communities.
Turning the Tide: Advancing Racial Justice in Federal Flood Infrastructure Projects	NAACP	This report analyzes the Army Corps of Engineers planning process to determine if the process is equitable as well as covers the pursuit of racial justice in disaster preparedness and recovery, specifically focusing on equitable flood protection for Black communities.
Working with People: Stakeholder Analysis Exercise	NOAA	This quick reference worksheet is a stakeholder analysis exercise that outlines how to address a community issue through community engagement.

Appendix E: Case Studies and Community Examples

1. Introduction

Appendix E includes case studies and community examples of incorporating equity in the recovery process. These examples summarize the information discussed within this Guide by presenting various actions and experiences used successfully in real-world events. The selected examples represent a variety of disaster types and include impacted tribal governments, states, and localities, thus providing potential starting points and ideas for incorporating equity into other communities' recovery operations. These examples are not intended to reflect mandatory requirements for other communities, but are simply case studies which highlight innovative practices in areas such as:

- Historic and cultural awareness to inform planning;
- Intentional building of community trust;
- Understanding of differing impacts on vulnerable communities;
- Planning for equity using federal advisors;
- Using technology to leverage data for inclusive long-term recovery planning; and
- Incorporating equity principles from recovery initiation and throughout long-term community planning.

2. Case Study Summaries

- **Managing the Retreat from Rising Seas — Queens, New York: Resilient Edgemere Community Plan.** This case study focuses on the recovery after Hurricane Sandy in 2012. This example shows how the government invested in a previously ignored population and created more resilient infrastructure in the process.
- **Winter Storm Ulmer, Nebraska, 2019: Data Supporting Equity.** The State of Nebraska used equity-focused data from different studies to identify communities impacted by severe winter weather, with special attention to those considered highly vulnerable prior to the event. This information was used to map out relief efforts and inform stakeholder engagement activities.
- **Equity in Action: The Interagency Recovery Coordination Equity Advisor.** This document provides content and learning exercises that can be tailored to the needs of various Interagency Recovery Coordination cadre courses. It highlights a wildfire recovery effort and one approach taken by field leadership to advance equity in disaster recovery operations.

- **Puerto Rico Community Mapping Collaboration: Empowering Risk-Informed Resilience in Underserved Communities: Hurricane Maria DR-4339-PR.** This case study examines Puerto Rico's recovery following hurricanes Irma and Maria. This example shows the importance of relationship building and capacity building in underserved communities.
- **Focus: Leveraging an Inclusive Recovery Planning Process – Advancing Equity in Ouachita Parish Flood Recovery.** This case study focuses on the Ouachita Parish flood recovery in 2016. This example highlights the importance of an inclusive emergency management planning team that reflects the needs of the community.

Managing the Retreat from Rising Seas — Queens, New York: Resilient Edgemere Community Plan

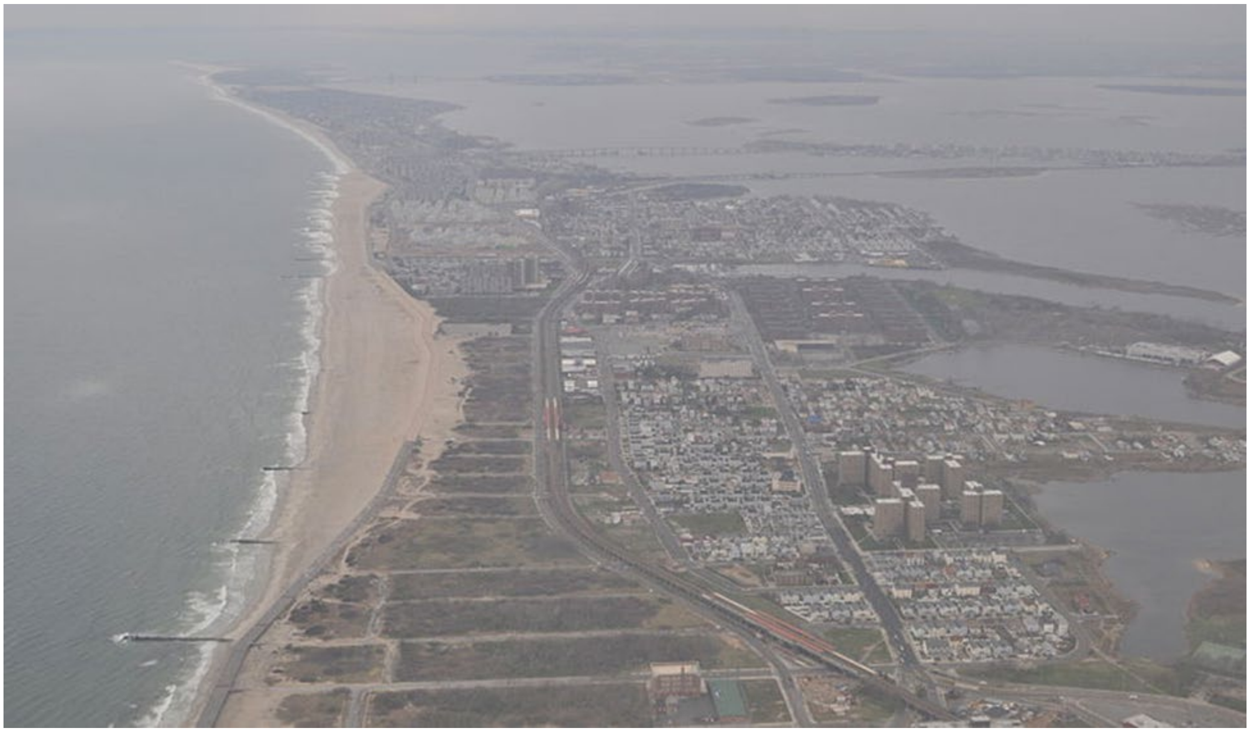

Figure 14. Rockaway Peninsula, Queens, New York (Joe Mabel/Creative Commons)

1. Background

In 2012, the low-lying urban neighborhood of Edgemere, on the Rockway Peninsula (**Figure 14**) within the borough of Queens in New York City (NYC), experienced severe wave action and storm surge from Hurricane Sandy. Widespread damage and regular tidal floods, coupled with longstanding public ownership of vacant land in the neighborhood, presented an opportunity to plan for a stronger, more resilient future. After Hurricane Sandy, NYC engaged in a community-driven planning process and implemented multiple voluntary relocation projects in Edgemere to reduce flood risks and move people out of harm’s way.[78]

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[78] Managing the Retreat from Rising Seas: Queens, New York: Resilient Edgemere Community Plan, Georgetown Climate Center, 2020.

2. Challenges

Hurricane Sandy resulted in extensive loss for the Edgemere community, as it was an often overlooked and long-neglected neighborhood in Queens. The following factors posed challenges during the recovery:

- Edgemere was an underserved and ignored neighborhood (e.g., the paved roads became dirt roads due to no infrastructure investment).
- Residents expressed distrust of the NYC Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD) and city government.
- There were conflicting perspectives and tension between homeowners and NYC Housing Authority (NYCHA) residents. The NYCHA development was not one of the better developments, housing a very poor resident base in substandard conditions.
- In the past, the government presented a plan and discussed new ideas for redevelopment but failed to follow up on actions.

3. Actions

The HPD launched the Resilient Edgemere Community Planning Initiative in October 2015 as a collaboration between city agencies, community members, elected officials, and local organizations. The Resilient Edgemere Community Plan lays out a long-term vision for achieving a more resilient neighborhood with improved housing, transportation access, and neighborhood amenities. The plan was created in parallel with Build It Back, a citywide housing recovery program funded by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). One of the 65 distinct projects included in the plan was a “land swap” pilot project to provide buyout and relocation assistance to residents within a “Hazard Mitigation Zone,” an area of Edgemere at risk of destructive wave action during storms. Through the land swap pilot project, Edgemere residents within a “Hazard Mitigation Zone” were eligible to receive a newly built, elevated home on safer ground. In exchange, residents would transfer title of their damaged, original homes to the city. The damaged homes would be demolished, and the lots maintained as open space that enhances Edgemere’s future flood resilience and may become part of passive recreational amenities in the future.

The plan is notable because HPD developed the plan through an 18-month public engagement process that placed residents, who best understand their community, at the center of an open and transparent neighborhood planning process. Edgemere provides an example of how local governments can transition affected residents away from vulnerable areas by helping people relocate nearby, while simultaneously building community resilience and helping to maintain community cohesion and local tax bases.

4. Outcomes

HPD’s actions in response to Hurricane Sandy resulted in the following outcomes, which will help NYC in hurricane response and recovery moving forward:

- HPD and NYC dedicated resources to areas that were neglected in the past.
- NYCHA residents were provided opportunities to participate as leaders, despite the tensions and the influence of homeowners.
- There were concerns about investing in a low-lying area after Hurricane Sandy, but instead of abandoning the neighborhood, the focus shifted to protecting unsafe areas.

5. Lessons Learned

HUD and NYC gained valuable lessons from Hurricane Sandy, including the following items:

- During initial presentations to the community, there was intentional framing of the history of racism in planning and urban renewal. It helps build trust when the city or a government entity recognizes past discriminatory and institutionalized racist practices.
- Very low-lying marsh land is unfit for housing. NYCHA development on substandard land was a past error.

Winter Storm Ulmer, Nebraska, 2019: Data Supporting Equity

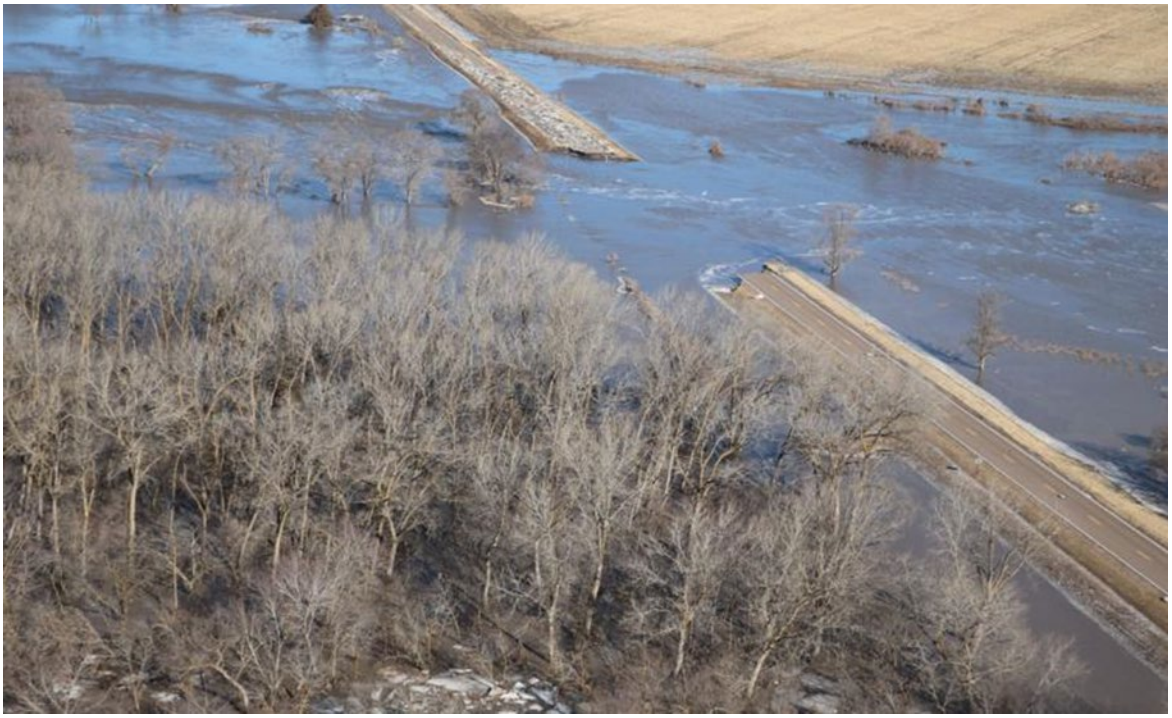

Figure 15. Highway 39 Bridge South of Genoa, Nebraska (State of Nebraska)

1. Background

In March 2019, Winter Storm Ulmer made history as one of the worst winter storms in Great Plains history. The blizzard resulted in massive delays in travel due to multiple road closures and produced destructive straight-line winds and record-breaking flooding. The storm also set new low-pressure records due to bomb cyclone development.

In Nebraska (**Figure 15**), losses were widespread and devastating across the entire state. Damage to infrastructure was significant in southeastern regions where much of the population is concentrated. Damage to agriculture and related infrastructure was centralized in the western regions of the state. The storm effects were also exacerbated due to the state having experienced the fifth wettest rainfall on record prior to this event. This contributed to record flooding because of a high-water table, saturated snowpack, and heavy frost. Seven different rivers experienced floods that were the worst the region had experienced in 50 years. All interstates in the Nebraska panhandle were shut down, including parts of I-80, I-70, and I-76.

The entire state continued to see the impacts of the storm for nine months after the blizzard; furthermore, it was the coldest winter on record reported in the last 100 years. As with every disaster, however, some areas were affected more than others. This was a catalyst in the state conducting a Baseline Conditions and Impact Assessment (BCIA) as well as a Social Vulnerability Assessment (SVA) to map out the damage across the state.

2. Challenges

The impacts of Winter Storm Ulmer, combined with the conditions from the rainy fall season, resulted in significant losses across the state. Given the widespread scale of the disaster, Nebraska not only needed to assess damage quickly, but the state also needed to determine how best to deploy resources efficiently, fast, and equitably. The following factors posed a challenge to this effort:

- **Scale of Event:** Winter Storm Ulmer severely impacted all of Nebraska. State and local governments needed to identify where damage occurred quickly. Due to the widespread nature of this storm, information was needed on where the most severe impacts were located along with insights into how these impacts affected vulnerable populations. This information was vital to prioritizing recovery efforts and resources. As this storm impacted critical travel and communication infrastructure, this information was challenging to obtain.
- **Multiple and Varied Stakeholders:** The widespread damage throughout the state affected many groups and populations in different ways. The state recognized that communities faced different impacts depending on a variety of factors, such as urban versus rural areas, income level, and other factors such as age. There were numerous stakeholders that supported the unique challenges (e.g., housing support, food banks) of vulnerable and underserved populations, such as community groups, non-governmental organizations, and volunteer organizations. Being able to understand and specifically address these challenges proved to be a complex task.
- **Confusion Around Grant Guidelines:** Due to the severity of the storm damage, there were many different grants for which communities were eligible to apply. However, the number, type, and guidelines for application were often confusing. Additionally, many local counties were overwhelmed by the storm and had limited capacity to navigate the application processes and associated requirements.

3. Actions

The State of Nebraska contracted a consulting firm to help create a Long-Term Recovery Plan to guide the process of rebuilding. Further, to ensure an equitable recovery, certain objectives were set, and certain actions were taken throughout the recovery process. Specific actions included:

- The state conducted a BCIA, which sought to catalogue and measure disaster impacts to communities and families in Nebraska. This report focused on vulnerable populations and included an SVA to identify communities that would face disproportionate impacts.

- In addition to standing up the Recovery Support Function (RSF), Nebraska also established a Local Impacts Group (LIG). This group helped connect advocacy groups and other community organizations throughout the state with state and local agencies and the RSFs. This helped ensure that a variety of voices were heard and that all communities had an opportunity to influence the recovery planning process. The group included representatives from organizations with a strong understanding of local realities such as the Nebraska Association of County Officials, the League of Nebraska Municipalities, and the state's active Long-Term Recovery Groups.
- Several of the recovery objectives and strategies included in the recovery plan directly addressed equity, such as:
    - Ensuring that considerations for people with disabilities and other access and functional needs are addressed throughout disaster response, recovery, and preparedness; and
    - Promoting available services and deconflicting information about insurance, legal rights and responsibilities, grant programs, and other funding and services available to individuals, including vulnerable populations.

The **BCIA** and **SVA** provided data to help define the recovery strategies.

The **LIG** ensured that communities' immediate and long-term concerns were understood.

4. Outcomes

The work of the BCIA and the SVA provided a clearer picture of the communities' characteristics throughout the state by combining impacts and cross-referencing data regarding socioeconomic vulnerability. As a result of this data, the state and its partners could more efficiently identify the communities that were considered highly vulnerable before the disaster or the communities that may have been impacted disproportionally by the disaster. This also allowed the state to begin strategizing where and how to allocate resources according to socioeconomic impact and not just according to damage assessments. This was particularly helpful due to the blizzard's statewide impact. For example, learning where there were renters versus homeowners allowed for the state to consider interventions that would be more beneficial to that population, as many federal programs for rebuilding are focused on homeowners.

This work also helped inform the formation and purview of the LIG. Winter Storm Ulmer was the first time that Nebraska implemented the RSFs. The LIG worked with the RSFs and served as the link between communities, organizations, and officials across the state. It ensured that local communities gained insight and influence throughout the recovery planning and implementation process. Furthermore, the LIG helped connect RSFs with non-profit entities who could assist with recovery efforts, as they were able to communicate the impact realities facing communities on the ground. As a result, non-profit disaster organizations were able to identify and plan for the most strategic use and deployment of their resources, which were often from outside the state.

Conducting the assessments and implementing the LIG helped inform the objectives in the plan and the inclusion of equitable principles and practices. The sharing of information and connection of groups defined a clearer path and set of objectives. From this input, the state created objectives to ensure that considerations for vulnerable, disadvantaged, and underserved populations were addressed, through codifying the promotion of accessible and available services and programs.

5. Lessons Learned

Nebraska gained valuable lessons from Winter Storm Ulmer, including the following items:

- The data gathered in reports such as a BCIA and SVA can be further analyzed to provide a more robust picture of disaster impacts and should be completed as early as possible in the disaster recovery planning process.
- Integrating the understanding of the disaster impacts with social vulnerability helps decision makers gain further insights into how to effectively deploy resources based on the potential impact to communities. Leveraging social vulnerability concepts helps to provide a different lens for how to view providing community recovery support.
- Having a LIG, in addition to the RSFs, was key to communities feeling included in the recovery planning process. Communities should be encouraged to develop similar groups/organizations for future disasters.

Additional Resources

- Long-Term Recovery, Nebraska Emergency Management Agency.
- Baseline Conditions and Impact Assessment Report, Nebraska Emergency Management Agency.

Equity in Action: The Interagency Recovery Coordination Equity Advisor

1. Background

In 2020, wildfires burned over 1.2 million acres across the State of Oregon, decimating forests, communities, and thousands of homes and businesses. The state received a Major Disaster declaration on September 15, 2020, with eight counties eligible for FEMA Individual Assistance, 20 counties eligible for FEMA Public Assistance, and all counties statewide eligible for Hazard Mitigation assistance. Both state and joint field office (JFO) leadership expressed a desire to apply an equity lens to DR-4562-OR recovery efforts, building off recent efforts to provide equitable COVID- 19 assistance. This led to the Federal Coordinating Officer (FCO) requesting and deploying FEMA's first Interagency Recovery Coordination (IRC) Equity Advisor to the operation in the summer of 2021.

Executive Order on Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government (EO 13985)

In January 2021, President Biden signed the Executive Order (EO) 13985 on Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government. It ordered the federal government to "pursue a comprehensive approach to advancing equity for all." This EO requires agencies to "recognize and work to redress inequities in their policies and programs that serve as barriers to equal opportunity."

The EO defines equity as "the consistent and systematic fair, just, and impartial treatment of all individuals, including individuals who belong to underserved communities that have been denied such treatment, such as Black, Latino, and Indigenous and Native American persons, Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders and other persons of color; members of religious minorities; lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ+) persons; persons with disabilities; persons who live in rural areas; and persons otherwise adversely affected by persistent poverty or inequality."

2. Challenges

This was the State of Oregon's first activation of its state recovery framework. State leaders wanted to ensure that impacted populations had equitable access to federal and state assistance and that state programs were closing gaps in survivors' needs that were not eligible for federal assistance. The state was committed to equity and sought assistance in turning that commitment into concrete operational decisions and actions. The agencies leading the State Recovery Functions (SRF) had limited prior experience with disaster recovery management and lacked practical experience incorporating equity considerations into the state's approach to disaster recovery.

FEMA and the State of Oregon faced a challenging disaster environment amid the COVID-19 pandemic. Traditional in-person engagement with survivors, agencies, and local partners remained limited, creating barriers to disseminating information about available recovery resources and engaging community members in the recovery process.

Data and information sharing between state agencies and federal partners was another key challenge. Concerns about privacy and data sharing with state, local, and non-governmental organizations impacted FEMA's ability to use the best data to inform decision making, provide adequate support for unmet needs, and reduce duplication of effort between recovery partners. Officials noted that more streamlined data and information sharing processes, consistent datasets, and accessible tools were needed to better understand and target community-level issues to deliver, monitor, and measure equitable recovery.

3. Actions

The IRC Equity Advisor pursued a multi-pronged approach to advance understanding of equity and to embed equity at the heart of operational decisions. The advisor held brown-bag sessions on equity to assist FEMA personnel with understanding their role in advancing equitable recovery outcomes, engaged the SRFs and unified their efforts to identify vulnerable communities with unmet needs, provided technical assistance to state agencies on how to incorporate equity into recovery objectives, and engaged with external partners to connect resources and build partnerships to improve outcomes for future disasters.

The IRC Equity Advisor used an "appreciative inquiry" approach based on listening and partnership building with internal and external partners. Appreciative inquiry is a strengths-based, positive approach that helped partners recognize and pursue a shared vision for Oregon's recovery.

The IRC Equity Advisor was part of a Disaster Operations Coalition for Equity in coordination with the FCO, Civil Rights Advisor, Disability Integration Advisor, Alternative Dispute Resolution, Operations Section Chief, and program leads. The IRC Equity Advisor engaged with leaders from key program areas across the JFO and held IRC "teach-backs" with discussion topics such as language access, tribal affairs, or disability integration. Internal engagement focused on supporting a greater understanding of equity, collaboration and resource sharing across program areas, and improved outcomes through the application of the equity lens. The FCO and IRC Equity Advisor cultivated an equity "Lunch and Learn" series that provided an open forum for cross-program engagement that helped the workforce ask questions and understand how they could apply equity into their day-to-day program areas to achieve tangible results. The "Lunch and Learn" series was highly successful, with at least 50 employees engaging at each session and staff from other JFOs, regions, and headquarters participating as word spread across disaster operations.

The IRC Equity Advisor directly collaborated with state leadership from all SRF agencies to assess the unique needs of each impacted community and determine the scope required to achieve equitable outcomes. The SRFs worked with the IRC Equity Advisor in applying an equity lens to existing state/county-level demographic and impact data and qualitative information gained through coordination with local partners. This approach helped them identify especially hard hit and vulnerable populations, and potential recovery barriers those populations were facing. The advisor provided final recommendations for state leadership to incorporate equity into the Integrated Strategic Recovery Plan that set the foundation for operational decisions throughout the disaster recovery phase.

4. Outcomes

The IRC Equity Advisor and the partnerships they formed advanced implementation of equity objectives and were crucial in addressing disparities in the delivery of disaster assistance for survivors.

- **The State of Oregon has enhanced adoption and coordination of equity efforts in disaster management.**
  - Within the first few months of the event, the FEMA IRC team and Senior Policy Advisor coordinated the adoption of the state and federal Integrated Strategic Recovery Plan, which aligned SRFs to identified goals related to equity and reinforced the integrated operations approach to support outcome-driven recovery solutions across all program areas. Examples of some of the SRF goals and activities were:
    - SRF 1: Help local governments plan for strategic rebuilding to create a more healthy, equitable, resilient, and prosperous future;
    - SRF 1: Help local governments engage a diverse population with a focus on historically marginalized communities throughout the recovery planning; and
    - SRF 4: Stabilize and seek resources to maintain sheltering and feeding activities for population that do not qualify for federal relief and housing benefits.
  - As a result of the IRC Equity Advisor’s work, state agencies also report having greater awareness of how they can leverage each other’s ongoing efforts to maximize effectiveness on recovery efforts moving forward. The Oregon Office of Emergency Management (OEM) is incorporating recommendations from the IRC Equity Advisor and its own lessons learned on equity and inclusivity into its revision of the state’s Integrated Strategic Recovery Plan and intends to present the findings to the governor. The Oregon OEM and SRF leads developed a shared understanding of equity for adoption in the state recovery plan. In addition, the state’s Climate Adaptation Framework now focuses on equity and will be incorporated into the State Hazard Mitigation Plan.
- **Oregon built significant recovery capacity because of its partnership with FEMA on DR-4562-OR.** In partnership with FEMA Region 10, Oregon OEM is standing up a steady-state recovery team, a

permanent philanthropic advisor, and an equity advisor position to continue the recovery work initiated during this operation.

- **Local governments are pursuing equity frameworks for their recovery planning efforts.** For example, Lane County was one of the communities most impacted by the 2020 wildfires. The wildfires destroyed 615 homes within nine unincorporated rural river communities in the burn scar. According to a U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development impact report, 57% of Lane County renters were experiencing rent burden before the wildfires, which is well above average in Oregon. Rent burden is defined as paying more than 30% of a household's income for housing. The county also has the highest population of people in Oregon experiencing homelessness before the wildfires, with 2,165 individuals affected in 2019. Accessing affordable housing was a pre-existing challenge exacerbated by the wildfires and remains a top priority for the county government. As a result of the IRC Equity Advisor's engagement and embedding FEMA Community Assistance (formerly Community Planning and Capacity Building) staff early in communities, the Community Assistance Recovery Support Function partnered with Lane County in January 2022 to help the government establish an equity framework for its recovery efforts, to include improving housing access for those most affected by the wildfires.

5. Lessons Learned

Oregon gained valuable lessons from the wildfires, including the following items:

- **Equity efforts are most successful when there is a coalition among field leaders and a focus on partnerships.** The IRC Equity Advisor notes that the support of the Disaster Operations Coalition for Equity—including the FCO, Civil Rights Advisor, Disability Integration Advisor, Alternative Dispute Resolution, Operations Section Chief, Equity Advisor, and program leads for this operation—was key to success. The partnerships the IRC Equity Advisor built with dozens of non-governmental, non-profit, and community-based organizations were crucial to help address unmet needs at the local level. The IRC Equity Advisor cannot be successful alone.
- **FEMA should deploy IRC Equity Advisors to assist state recovery functions in defining their goals, objectives, and needs and in implementing planned actions.** The IRC Equity Advisor role was deployed 10 months into the operation, when most SRFs were preparing to stand down. The SRFs noted that had an Equity Advisor been available earlier—such as when they were first assessing needs and forming recovery objectives—there would have been greater success in achieving the state's goal of making equity an explicit priority in recovery objectives, strategies, and program distribution/scopes of work.
- **JFO staff need to have a common definition and understanding of what equity is and how it can be applied to day-to-day operations before equity can be integrated into disaster recovery efforts.** An Equity Advisor can play a key role in starting the conversation among teams to build understanding of what equity means to them. Thus, the IRC Equity Advisor needs to be someone who can communicate with and educate internal and external partners on what equity is and how it applies to their role as they support disaster recovery.

- **The IRC Equity Advisor role greatly assisted in the roll-out of the integrated operations approach.** The use of an Equity Advisor increased collaboration among deployed FEMA teams and improved their understanding of both equity and the resources available from the JFO, federal agencies, and non-governmental partners to achieve equitable outcomes.

Puerto Rico Community Mapping Collaboration: Empowering Risk-Informed Resilience in Underserved Communities: Hurricane Maria DR-4339-PR

1. Background

Hurricanes Irma and Maria both impacted Puerto Rico in September 2017, causing catastrophic destruction across the island. The Community Assistance Recovery Support Function (CA RSF) team, led by FEMA, was deployed in January 2018 to provide recovery planning and technical support aimed at building communities' capacity and resilience through the long-term recovery process. The CA RSF team immediately conducted a Community Conditions Assessment (CCA), which pulls together holistic data on capacity, vulnerability, and impact conditions of all communities impacted by the disaster. The CCA identified 22 priority high-risk, low-resource municipalities in need of additional technical or recovery planning support. **Figure 16** displays how the CCA ranked all 78 municipalities in Puerto Rico to identify more vulnerable communities with larger capacity gaps and equity concerns, noted in dark blue, to prioritize delivery of technical assistance.

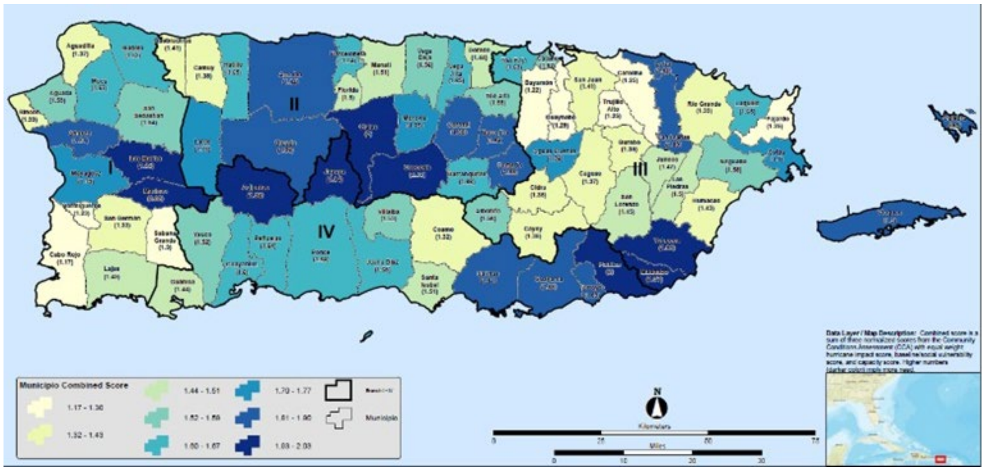

Figure 16. Identifying Vulnerable Municipalities in Puerto Rico

CA RSF Mission: CA RSF's mission is to support communities in their long-term recovery process after disasters, such as by providing planning, mapping, land use analysis, risk reduction, and capacity building services.

Voluntary Agency Liaison (VAL) Mission: The VALs' mission is to establish, foster and maintain relationships among government, voluntary, faith-based, and community partners to support the delivery of inclusive and equitable services and strengthen capabilities of communities to address disaster-caused unmet needs.

2. Challenges

Many Puerto Rican communities, especially those in the mountainous interior of the island, had very limited resources or technical capacity to navigate complicated federal or philanthropic grants eligibility and management requirements to get community-scale recovery projects off the ground. Additional challenges for isolated communities often included aging populations and limited connectivity or transportation options to urban hubs, creating a disconnect between neighborhoods and the nearest municipal government, which may be physically separated from each other by considerable distances.

The VALs identified nonprofit community-based organizations (CBOs) in underserved and isolated neighborhoods with unmet recovery needs. The VALs had developed trusted working relationships with these CBOs over several years of engagement and were interested in finding a way to better empower these small community-level organizations to build resilience in their communities.

3. Actions

The CA RSF team initiated the Community Recovery Mapping Project in April 2018 to help municipalities in Puerto Rico begin visualizing their vulnerabilities through mapped information, identifying recovery needs, and prioritizing long-term recovery projects. The CA RSF team prioritized initial outreach to the 22 high-risk, low-resource municipalities identified by the CCA. Mapping workshops helped local governments see where potential risks and opportunities were in their municipality and start to think about what long-term projects might be useful to reduce those risks or pursue community development opportunities. The CA RSF team was able to learn about the communities' unique needs and priorities. The team used this understanding to build municipalities' awareness of types of available assistance from across federal and philanthropic sources to realize long-term objectives.

The CA RSF team conducted the mapping exercise with a total of 65 local municipalities out of the 78 in Puerto Rico between July 2018 and November 2019. The demand for the mapping technical assistance workshops went well beyond the initial 22 municipal governments originally identified because communities recognized the usefulness of the exercise, which helped them visualize their risks and recovery opportunities more clearly.

The CA RSF team also provided Recovery Visualization Tools Training to over a dozen municipalities interested in learning how to build and maintain their own geographical information system-maps to support municipal activities, using ArcGIS or Google Earth.

Through internal coordination, the FEMA VAL learned about the Community Recovery Mapping Project and invited the CA RSF team to provide this type of tailored technical assistance to 10 nonprofit CBOs in high-risk, low-resource areas with enough internal capacity to receive the assistance. The community organization, Corporacion de Servicios de Salud Primaria y Desarrollo Socioeconomico (COSSAO [the Corporation of Primary Health Services and Economic Development]), proudly displays its maps in **Figure 17**. Shown from left to right—(left) the only map the community originally had access to, (middle) the map the community built after initial technical assistance, and (right) the final map the community received at the conclusion of the CA RSF workshops.

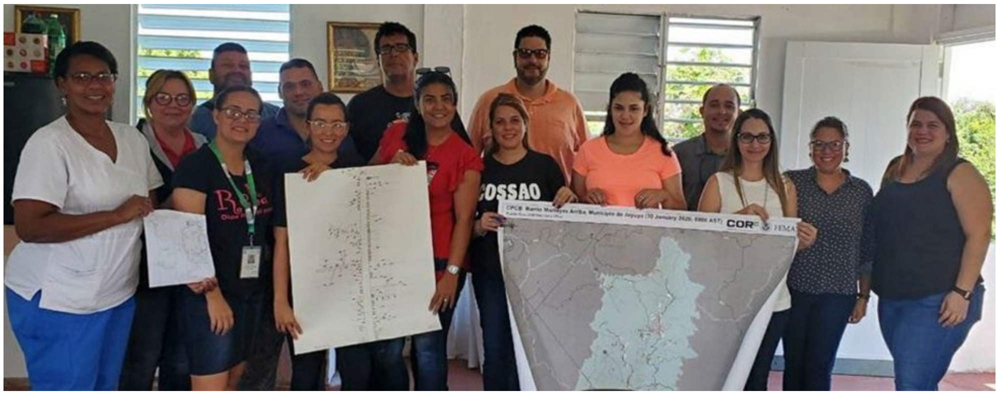

Figure 17. Community Organization COSSAO Displaying Maps

Outcomes Achieved by Municipalities

Several examples of the community development projects completed through the CA RSF team and FEMA's Interagency Recovery Coordination support included:

- Constructing flood control and drainage projects in Comerío;
- Supporting ecological preservation and education in Florida;
- Funding hazard mitigation and economic development in Las Marías;
- Restoring an elderly care center in Hormigueros;
- Providing training on green infrastructure in several municipalities;
- Installing flood mitigation projects in Yabucoa; and
- Funding several coastal erosion mitigation measures in communities on the island's southern coast through the FEMA PA 406 Hazard Mitigation program.

Beginning in 2019, the mapping initiative was adapted into the Community Mapping Collaboration Project, designed to fit the needs of these CBOs identified by the VALs. The CA RSF team maintained a flexible approach to meeting needs of community organizations with varying skills, access to technology, and resources to build the specific capacities the organization needed to achieve their long-term goals. The CA RSF team typically worked with the organization over several months to develop a trusted relationship, understand their needs, and find the right resources they could use in the future, which in some cases were paper-based maps.

4. Outcomes

Communities have been able to use the maps, products, and skills generated through the mapping initiative to inform their recovery efforts and successfully access additional financial resources for unmet recovery needs from philanthropic and federal sources. Mapped vulnerabilities and identified resilience projects have informed the FEMA mitigation grant program application process. The CA RSF team also identified FEMA Public Assistance projects in the mapped local areas to help officials identify collaboration opportunities among departments.

Outcomes Achieved by Community-Based Organizations

The CA RSF team and VAL collaboration project have built capacity in 10 CBOs, helping them map, prioritize, and fund their recovery and resilience needs. Examples of community projects supported by the mapping collaboration project include:

- Enhancing local schools' resilience, reforesting the Hacienda Sabanera in Cidra with native plants;
- Developing a QR-code connected map of tourism destinations to promote economic development in Barceloneta;
- Developing and sharing evacuation route maps with residents;
- Using the capacity built to create an incident command system in Ciales; and
- Several participating organizations successfully qualifying for funding to stand up and maintain resilience centers in their neighborhoods.

Due to the success of the mapping collaboration project, there was a backlog of requests for mapping assistance during one period in the process. The high demand is an indicator that this model of coordinating mapping assistance through the CA RSF team and VALs should be considered for replication in future disaster recovery operations.

5. Lessons Learned

Puerto Rico gained valuable lessons from hurricanes Irma and Maria, including the following items:

- The CA RSF team can provide a wide range of capacity building assistance post-disaster to fit the needs of CBOs and municipalities, helping to increase low-income and underserved communities' access to critical resources that enable equitable recovery.
- Collaboration between the CA RSF team and VALs team was vital to connecting communities with unmet needs with the resources they required to recover.
- FEMA successfully built trusted relationships with communities in underserved areas over several years by engaging them and listening to their needs. This helped FEMA better understand communities' recovery objectives and overcome barriers to holistically support them.

Additional Resources

- Hurricane Irma DR-4336-PR, FEMA.
- Hurricane Maria DR-4339-PR, FEMA.

Focus: Leveraging an Inclusive Recovery Planning Process-Advancing Equity in Ouachita Parish Flood Recovery

1. Background

Within days after what is now known as the "Great Flood of 2016," Ouachita Parish leaders knew they needed to take a different approach to recovery than what had been used in the past. **Figure 18** displays a map of the flooding, which caused record levels of damage and was very hard on the people of Ouachita Parish. Inter-governmental communications were also a major challenge.

In 2018, the Ouachita Council of Governments established the Ouachita Parish Executive Long-Term Recovery Committee, which then established the Ouachita Parish Long-Term Recovery Steering Committee. The Steering Committee established six subcommittees aligned with the Recovery Support Functions (RSF), as prescribed under the *National Disaster Recovery Framework* (NDRF). Each was populated with subject matter experts. The parish needed a framework that was strong enough to manage discourse but not so strong as to suppress new ideas.

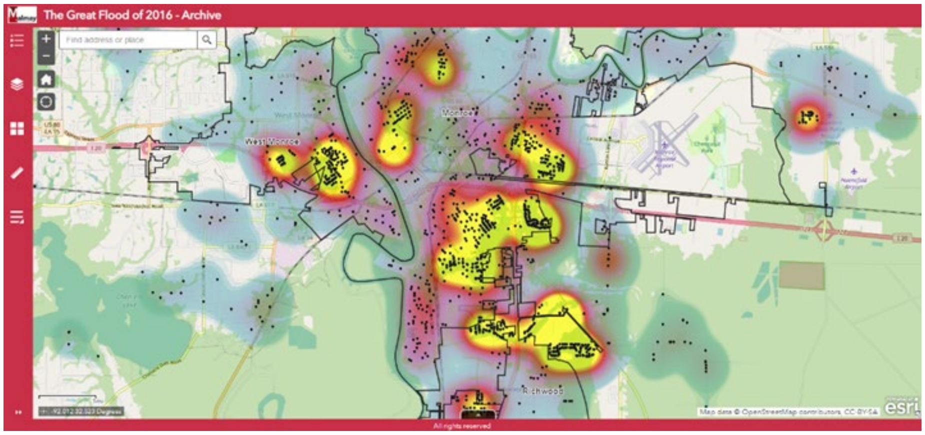
The Great Flood of 2016 - Archive
Find address or place
West Monroe
Monroe
Richwood
Map data © OpenStreetMap contributors, CC-BY-SA
esri
All rights reserved

Figure 18. The Great Flood of 2016

2. Challenges

The low-to-moderate income areas of the community were hit hard by the flood. Many households had no flood insurance in these areas. Many did not understand why they were being denied federal assistance. Cultural and generational differences in the way people communicate was a challenge, which created distrust.

3. Actions

The Concerned Clergy of Monroe and the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) became part of the recovery team to ensure recovery efforts were inclusive. They provided important insights and feedback and helped facilitate communication between the parish leaders and the community. Their participation in the Economic RSF (**Table 17**) was an important role, including dialogue on hard topics and establishing relationships that will serve the community well into the future.

Table 17. Recovery Support Functions[79]

Recovery Support Function Name	Coordinating Agency
Community Assistance	FEMA
Economic	U.S. Department of Commerce
Health and Social Services	U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Housing	U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
Infrastructure Systems	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Natural and Cultural Resources	U.S. Department of the Interior

4. Outcomes

The partnership with Concerned Clergy of Monroe (**Figure 19**) and the NAACP made communications more effective and built trust. It brought value to the community's resiliency planning efforts. In 2022, these relationships still yield value, from neighborhood engagements on job training and other community services to community planning to reduce violence.

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[79] NDRF, FEMA, 2016.

Figure 19. Concerned Clergy of Monroe

5. Lessons Learned

Ouachita Parish gained valuable lessons from the Great Flood of 2016, including the following items:

- Build partnerships with organizations like the NAACP, Black clergy, and others before the storm.
- Ensure the emergency management planning team is inclusive and reflects the demographics of the community.
- Increase the team’s knowledge of low-to-moderate income areas including how to incorporate the CDC/ATSDR Social Vulnerability Indexes into all phases of emergency management.
- Conduct planning to address cultural, generational, and language barriers.
- Conduct outreach into all parts of the community, including the low-to-moderate income areas.
- Invite workforce development and other organizations to partner and participate in recovery planning. Teach them to prepare, but also increase their resiliency by improving their job skills.