Achieving Equitable Recovery

A Post-Disaster Guide for Local Officials

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FEMA

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128   The examples provided within this document are meant solely for informational purposes and
129   are not intended to be an endorsement of any non-federal entity by FEMA, the U.S.
130   Department of Homeland Security, or the U.S. Government.

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

Introduction

133

134 Instilling equity as a foundation of emergency management is Goal 1 of the 2022-2026 FEMA
135 Strategic Plan. The disaster recovery process creates opportunities for communities to rebuild
136 thoughtfully, equitably, and resiliently. This document outlines a process to help local government
137 officials, local leaders, Tribal Nations, and their partners facilitate equitable recovery outcomes. The
138 Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has created the **Achieving Equitable Recovery: A**
139 **Post-Disaster Guide for Local Officials** (the Guide) to help communities focus their efforts on building
140 relationships, holding conversations about equity, and prioritizing post-disaster recovery projects and
141 resources that meet the needs of all groups in the community.

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

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

149 1. Build Equity into the Recovery Organizational and Coordination Structure;

150 2. Identify Unequal Patterns of Disaster Exposure and Impact;

151 3. Develop a Participatory Planning Process;

152 4. Promote and Protect Equity Throughout Recovery;

153 5. Adapt to the Dynamic Nature of Recovery;

154 6. Monitor Progress;

155 7. Build Capacity; and

156 8. Overcome Barriers and Ensure Fair Recovery Outcomes.

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

Why Equity Matters in Post-Disaster Recovery

Recovery begins shortly after a disaster when local officials must accomplish multiple tasks such as rebuilding quickly, communicating with stakeholders, resolving conflicts, seeking funding from many different agencies through responding to new grant, contract, and financial requirements. Every community is different and likely includes a subset of 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 incorporation of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (DEIA) data and principles to identify and address the needs of everyone in their communities. Building capacity to achieve equitable recovery begins with establishing an understanding of equity and inclusion principles.

> **Ensure the needs of all community members are identified:**
>
> **Historically Disadvantaged** groups include, but are not limited to, seniors, individuals with disabilities, those with low literacy, low-income individuals, those with high/persistent poverty, the unemployed, those outside of the labor force, those who are cost-burdened, those facing disproportionate impacts from climate change, those facing hazard risks and environmental burdens, and residents of distressed neighborhoods.[1]
>
> **Underserved** populations include, but are not limited to, populations sharing a particular characteristic, as well as geographic communities, that may have been systematically denied a full opportunity to participate in aspects of economic, social, and civic life.[2] This also includes those who have not been able, present, or invited to use their voices.
>
> **Marginalized** groups include, but are not limited to, particular communities (such as minority groups and cultures) who have been forced by a dominant group to the edge of society by not allowing the marginalized community to have an active voice, identity, or place for the purpose of maintaining power.[3]

A successful recovery relies on a well-coordinated management process, actively incorporating equity at each step and leveraging a whole-of-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 the combination of social, economic, physical, and geographic conditions. Further, these same conditions sometimes impede opportunities to mitigate such challenges. A starting point for engaging equity in recovery options can be building a common vocabulary and developing a vision for equitable recovery.

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[1] Office of Management and Budget, Memorandum for the Heads of Departments and Agencies, "Interim Implementation Guidance for the Justice40 Initiative, July 20, 2021.
[2] Executive Order 13985 On Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government, January 20, 2021
[3] National Association of Counties (NACo) Diversity, Equity and Inclusion: Key Terms and Definitions [Adapted]

199	**Connecting the Dots: Vulnerable Communities**
200 201	The Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) defines vulnerable populations in their Citizen Participation & Equitable Engagement (CPEE) Toolkit.
202 203 204 205	**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.
206 207 208 209 210 211 212 213 214 215	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. **Section 2.1** highlights additional data sources to complement and inform equitable recovery.

216	💡 **Why Focus on Equitable Recovery?**
217 218	By incorporating diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility into the planning process when prioritizing projects and distributing resources, local officials can:
219	▪ Address longstanding recovery issues for the people and places most in need.
220	▪ Conscientiously identify and correct any prior underinvestment and pre-existing inequities.
221 222	▪ Intervene to lessen any recovery disparities experienced by historically disadvantaged and/or underserved populations.
223 224	▪ Build recovery leadership capabilities within disadvantaged, under-resourced, and historically neglected populations and communities.
225 226	▪ Reduce and/or mitigate the impact of recurring disasters on communities where the historic allocation of resources has been scarce.
227	▪ Mitigate long-standing climate impacts among at-risk groups or vulnerable populations.
228 229	▪ Encourage citizens to actively engage in recovery planning and implementation in ways that best support their communities.
230 231	▪ Ensure compliance with the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, and other applicable federal civil rights laws.
232	▪ Promote inclusion into the recovery process for people with disabilities.

Authorities Governing Equitable Recovery

234 235	Federal civil rights laws, including Section 308 of the Stafford Act, The Civil Rights Act of 1964, and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act as applicable, require that recipients of federal assistance

236 ensure that their programs and activities do not discriminate against individuals, and communities
237 affected by disasters do not face unlawful discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion,
238 nationality, sex, age, disability, English proficiency, or economic status, national origin (including
239 limited English proficiency), and disabilities. In addition, the National Disaster Recovery Framework
240 (NDRF) contains diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility authorities including but not limited to
241 the Fair Housing Act of 1968, Architectural Barriers Act of 1968, Communications Act of 1934,
242 Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) of 1975, and The Age Discrimination Act of 1975,
243 all as amended.

244 Several federal agencies collaborated with the Department of Justice to provide guidance to state,
245 tribal, local governments, and other recipients of federal financial assistance engaged in emergency
246 management and recovery activities. This will help ensure that all members of a community receive
247 equitable disaster recovery services, regardless of race, color, or national origin.

248 **Excerpt From Executive Order On Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved
249 Communities Through the Federal Government (EO 13985):** "This includes individuals who
250 belong to underserved communities that have been denied such treatment, such as Black,
251 Latino, Indigenous and Native American persons, Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders and
252 other persons of color; members of religious minorities; lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and
253 queer (LGBTQ+) persons; persons with disabilities; persons who live in rural areas; and persons
254 otherwise adversely affected by persistent poverty or inequality."

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

Eight Equity Goals

259

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

263 The goals, listed in **Figure 1**, are action-oriented to provide strategies for implementing-focused and
264 system-wide changes during the disaster recovery process. These goals are not listed in a specific
265 order based on chronology or importance. Rather, they provide overarching key categories to guide
266 the reader on how to incorporate and build equity throughout the recovery management 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

267   **Figure 1. Eight Equity Goals**

268   The remainder of the Guide contains community examples, case studies, checklists, lessons learned,
269   and a list of federal and non-federal resources to help advance an equitable recovery process for the
270   whole community. The remaining sections in this Guide are organized around each of the eight goals
271   described above. For each goal, there are resources to inform an equitable recovery process.

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

1.1 Leading and Managing Recovery

Leaders at any level who create and/or promote inclusive environments throughout the emergency management cycle 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 (LDRMs) 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, and/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 historically disadvantaged 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 neutral leader who can negotiate a common ground and help present a new vision of the community, informed by a diverse group of stakeholders. Support outside 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 resources to hire and/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.

308 **Options for Local Governments to Fund a LDRM**

309 FEMA provides resources for Local Disaster Recovery Managers, such as a list of roles and
310 responsibilities, job descriptions, and how to coordinate with non-profit partners. FEMA also
311 has a list of options for local governments to fund a LDRM:
312 ▪ Utilize HUD's Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Annual Program and CDBG-
313 Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR) Program.
314 ▪ Engage Community Foundations and Other Philanthropic Partners.
315 ▪ Combine administrative line-items, such as grant administration funding.
316 ▪ Pursue U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA) funds.
317 Reference Planning for Recovery Management from the American Planning Association for
318 more information.

319 # 1.2 Authority and Governance

320 A recovery ordinance and/or policy can help ensure a focus on equity during recovery. Ordinances
321 and policies can speed up the establishment of working groups, committees or leadership positions
322 that can manage longer-term recovery challenges.

323 Sometimes, local organizations are tasked with providing recommendations for long-term recovery
324 issues. Recovery ordinances may define how the output of these organizations will be used in local
325 decision-making. The recovery management resources listed below include guidance on the roles,
326 responsibilities, and scope of recovery leadership.

327 **Recovery Management Resources**

328 ▪ National Disaster Recovery Framework, FEMA
329 ▪ Disaster Financial Management Guide: Guidance for State, Local, Tribal & Territorial
330 Partners, FEMA
331 ▪ Effective Coordination of Recovery Resources for State, Tribal, Territorial and Local
332 Incidents, FEMA
333 ▪ Investment Priorities, U.S. Economic Development Administration

334 # 1.3 Coordination

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

342   FEMA-funded resources for community recovery from disaster (e.g., Individual Assistance, Public

343   Assistance, and the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program) may be included following incidents that are

344   declared a Major Disaster Declaration under the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency

345   Assistance Act.[4] However, since most incidents are not federally declared disasters, it is important to

346   look beyond FEMA assistance for recovery. **Figure 2** displays the role of federal and non-federal

347   resources and planning partners in recovery. Communities may coordinate with federal and state

348   agencies or Tribal Nations for guidance to connect with recovery resources.

349
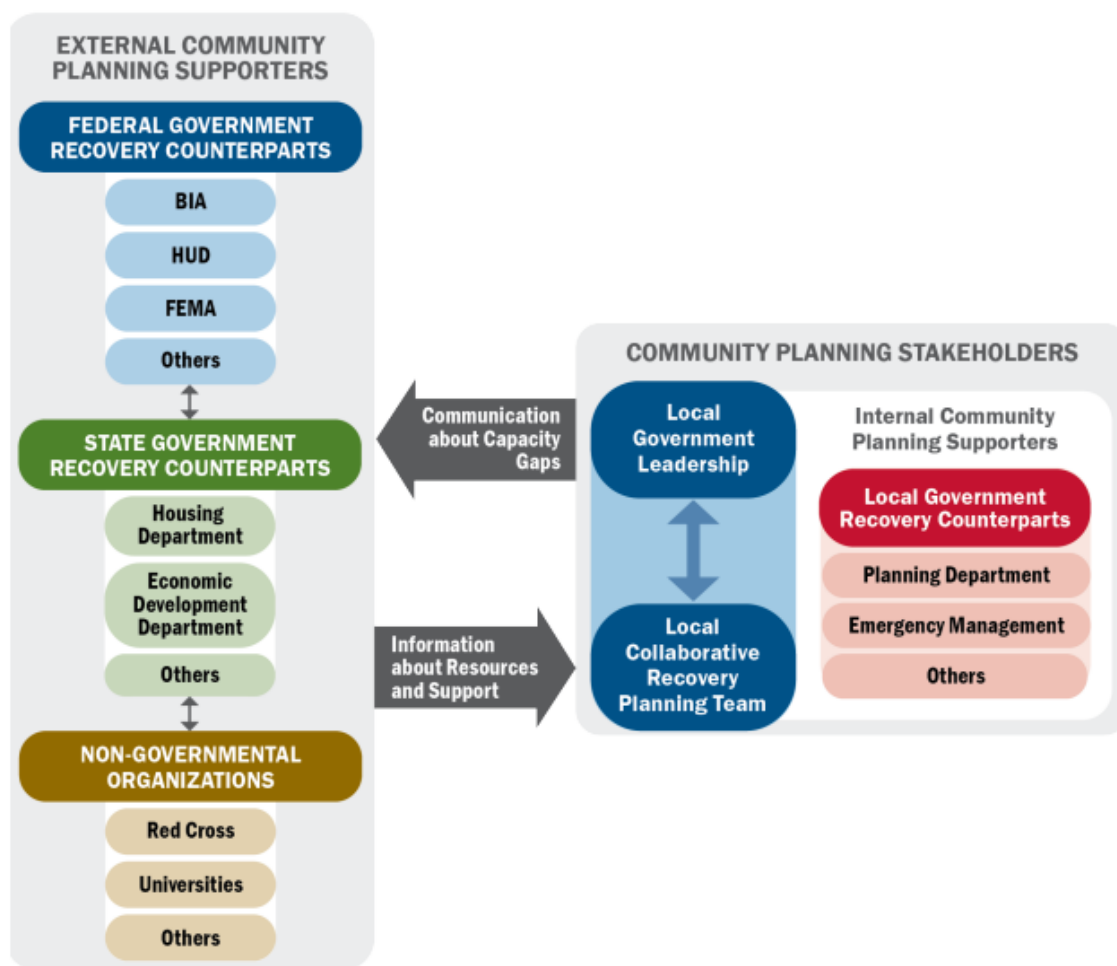
350   **Figure 2. Role of External Planning Supporters**

351   In addition to the planning partners listed in **Figure 2**, additional external supporters include, but are

352   not limited to:

353   ▪ **Federal Government Recovery Counterparts:** Health and Human Services (HHS), Environmental

354   Protection Agency (EPA), Department of Agriculture (USDA)/Natural Resources Conservation

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[4] 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 (BRIC), Flood Mitigation Assistance (FMA), Safeguarding tomorrow Revolving Loan Fund Program (STORM) and Hazard Mitigation Grant Program- 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.

355   Service (NRCS), Small Business Administration (SBA), Economic Development Administration
356   (EDA), U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE); Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA);
357 ▪ **State Government Recovery Counterparts:** Planning Department, Public Health Department,
358   Public Works/Engineering Department; and
359 ▪ **Non-Governmental Organizations:** Voluntary Organizations Active in Disasters (VOADs),
360   Community-Based Organizations (CBOs).

361 ## 1.3.1 Coordinating Resources, Partners, and Stakeholders for Community-
362 ## Wide Recovery

Figure 3. Components of the Recovery Coordination
Process

363   To coordinate and identify needs and resources a community requires for community-wide recovery
364   activities, it is important to create an organized committee or structured group of stakeholders that
365   represent a true cross-section of all those affected by the disaster. **Figure 3** displays components of
366   the recovery coordination process. The activities that require community input include recovery
367   projects, changes in community services, and new community initiatives. Full representation of
368   historically disadvantaged and underserved stakeholders in these efforts provides these populations
369   with an opportunity to have a voice in structured community decision-making and aids in local
370   outreach to federal, state, and other funding organizations.

371   In some cases, these efforts are organized solely by the local government. In others, the local
372   government works with existing community groups and groups that organically emerge from the
373   community. Typical models for organizing structured community-wide coordination include recovery

374   committees, recovery task forces, recovery commissions, or advisory groups. **Figure 4** outlines key
375   supporting partners in creating a local recovery committee.
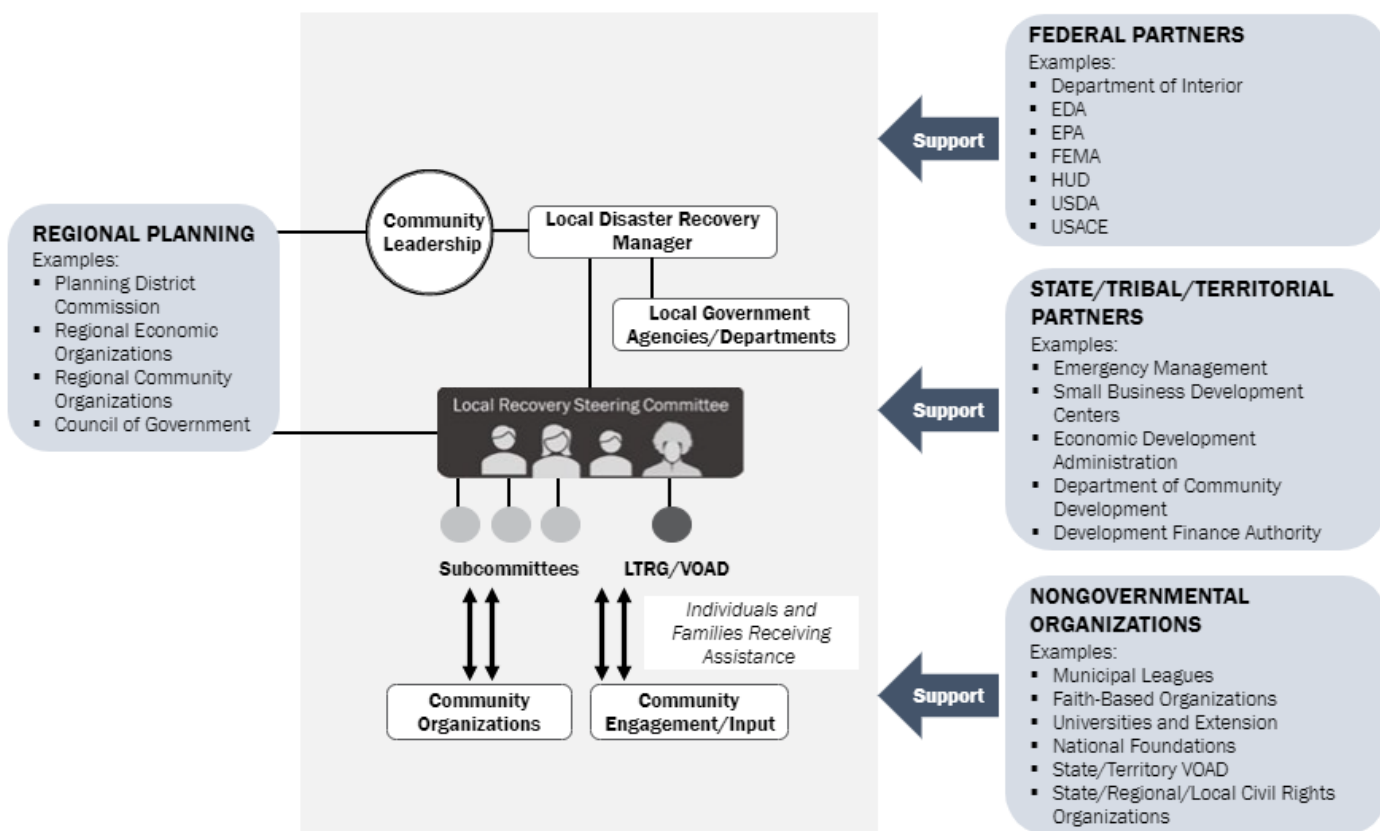
Figure 4. Local Recovery Committee Structure with Supporting Partners

376   One mechanism to build equity into the recovery structure is to specifically approach community
377   groups, professional association memberships, and equity task forces that are already working on
378   equity initiatives and ask them to join the recovery coordination structure. For example, the National
379   Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) has published work in this area that
380   may be a useful reference for recovery leaders. Other organizations such as faith-based groups,
381   neighborhood associations, senior populations and additional examples of possible representatives
382   are outlined in **Figure 5**.

383   Sometimes reaching those who are historically disadvantaged or underserved calls for an alternative
384   approach, requiring outreach to both formal and informal networks that already support those
385   communities. For example, faith-based leaders can reach populations that are isolated due to
386   language barriers. Local officials must actively cultivate relationships and coordinate with
387   organizations who are already familiar with these communities.

- 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

- Local Advocates and Non-Profit Organizations
- Technical Assistance Representatives Active Post-Disaster
- Farmers and Landowners
- Private Sector
- Civil Rights Organizations
- Representatives from underserved communities or heavily impacted areas
- LGBTQ+ representatives
- Senior populations
- Colleges and universities
- Youth leadership groups

388 **Figure 5. Examples of Representatives in an Equitable Coordination Structure (Not All Inclusive)**

389 Many small and low-resourced communities have leaders who fill multiple roles. For example, a
390 mayor may also be the fire chief; a Tribal Governing Leader may also be the finance or budget
391 director. These situations create challenges for personnel who have numerous responsibilities as the
392 community shifts from short-term recovery into intermediate to long-term recovery. Their limited
393 capacity can prevent these personnel from leveraging all the resources available to them, which may
394 not allow for the ability to always foster lasting change in community equity. **Figure 6** displays the
395 various roles in governing and recovery operations that leaders may fill in low-resourced
396 communities.

Governing Roles

| Mayor | Town/City Council | County Commissioner | Tribal Leadership | Police Juries/Home Rule Leadership |

Recovery Operations Roles

| Town/City Manager | County Judge | Tribal Leadership | Finance/Budget Director | Emergency Manager/ Fire Chief |
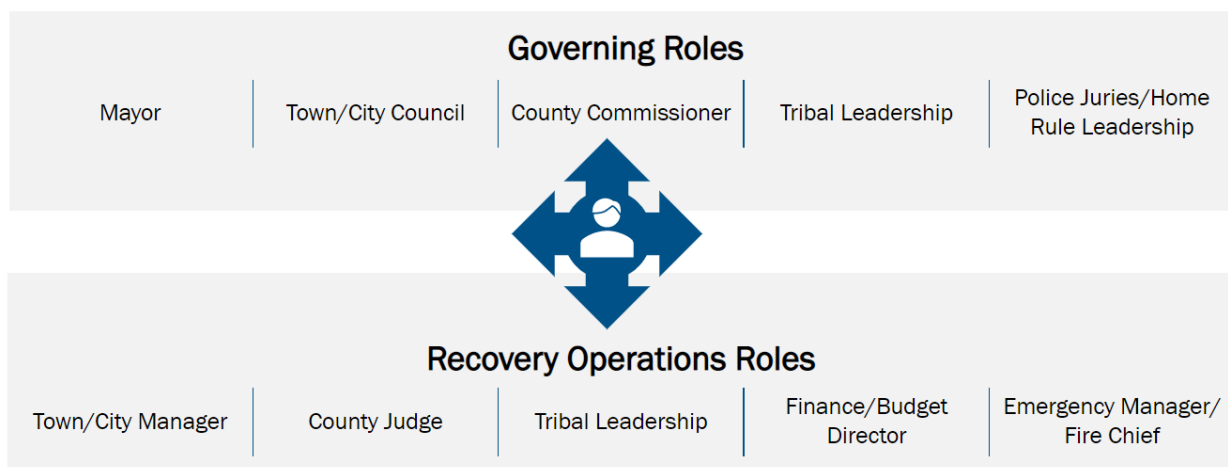
397
398 **Figure 6. Commonly Shared Roles and Responsibilities of Small and Low-Resourced Community**
399 **Leaders**

1.3.2 Coordinating Resources for Individuals and Families

401 Local non-profits often organize a Long-Term Recovery Group or Unmet Needs Committee to provide
402 coordinated case management for resources to impacted individuals and families. These groups can
403 partner with VOADs. Communities that do not have a VOAD Group may reach out to their state or
404 National VOAD organization, using information on the National VOAD Site. Local or tribal
405 governments can coordinate with VOADs to support their engagement the community.

406 | 📄 Oglala Sioux Tribe, Oglala Lakota Nation Great Plains Region, Pine Ridge, SD

407 **Disaster Type:** Pandemic (COVID-19)

408 **Focus:** Best Practices in Distributing Recovery Aid from the COVID-19 Pandemic

409 In 2020 with the arrival of the COVID-19 pandemic at the Pine Ridge Reservation of the Oglala
410 Lakota Tribe, the tribal government came together to form a COVID-19 task force to determine
411 how to protect and provide for tribal members. The Oglala Lakota Tribe is one of the seven
412 Lakota bands located in southwest South Dakota with over 60,000 tribal members. The nation
413 is extremely tight-knit and places a high priority on community and taking care of each other.
414 The Lakota people also think in generations and consider how the impact of a decision made
415 today will impact their children and great grandchildren. Thus, when the Oglala Lakota shut
416 down businesses and tribal borders due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the nation sought a new
417 solution to provide money and essential goods to their members. They began with simplifying
418 the application process for tribal members to receive aid; in fact, the application consisted of
419 only two data points: 1) the number of people in the household and 2) what they needed
420 during lockdown (e.g., food, rent money, gas, or medicine). This removed obstacles for
421 accessing disaster assistance and built trust in the community. While this process was useful
422 for aid from the Tribe itself, when Federal aid became available, the Oglala Lakota had to work
423 directly with the Department of Interior to advocate for the benefits of their approach instead
424 of a more cumbersome traditional federal aid application. This was possible in part due to their
425 treaty rights as a sovereign nation, the Federal trust responsibility, and their ability to use their
426 knowledge of the community and those receiving aid to negotiate and overcome federal
427 concerns about who would receive assistance.

428 Additionally, as need for aid grew, the Tribe began a day labor program, employing those who
429 had lost their job to COVID or were unemployed for hourly labor to fix roads, deliver food,
430 conduct home repairs, and more.

431 While the COVID-19 pandemic was unprecedented, the Oglala Lakota took it as an opportunity
432 to identify best practices to use incoming disaster aid to best serve their community. They
433 worked to lower the burden to apply for and manage aid by acting as a middleperson for their
434 communities. They found that when people were asked what they needed rather than given
435 formula determined funds, people asked for less. The straightforward and easy to understand
436 process built trust in the community and ensured that those who needed the most aid were
437 able to receive it, achieving equitable outcomes for all.

438 # 1.4 Policy

439 Local officials can adopt an "Equity in All Policies" approach to address inequities when working with
440 partners across sectors and when setting up recovery processes, planning distribution of resources,
441 and developing recovery plans. An equity policy clarifies what is expected from everyone and
442 improves accountability. This allows for the inclusion of disadvantaged groups and places, advancing

443   a route to more successfully apply for resources such as grants (see [Making Equity Real, The
444   Greenlining Institute, 2019](#)). Community groups can also inform policies that advance equity and
445   mitigate long-term vulnerabilities. For example, the Hawaii Broadband and Digital Equity Office was
446   established in July 2021 by [a state law](#) to build broadband development strategies and investments
447   resulting in all communities have information technology capacity within the state, among other
448   goals. **Table 1** outlines questions to consider when conducting an equity impact assessment for local
449   policies.

450   **Table 1: Conduct an Equity Impact Assessment for Local Policies (Adapted from [Annie E. Casey**
451   **Foundation, 2015](#))**

Conduct an Equity Impact Assessment for Local Policies	
- 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 the proposed policy, practice, or decision be perceived by each group?	- 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?

452   **Recovery Management Policy Resources**

453   ■ [Planning for Equity Policy Guide](#), American Planning Association

Goal 2: Identify Unequal Patterns of Disaster Exposure and Impact

454
455

456 "For low-income families and persistently poor communities, there are fewer resources to
457 prepare for, adapt to, and cope with the consequences of climate change and flooding. Both
458 chronic flooding and one-time flood events can have devastating consequences for financial
459 well-being, with residual consequences on mental and physical health." (Rhubart, 2020)

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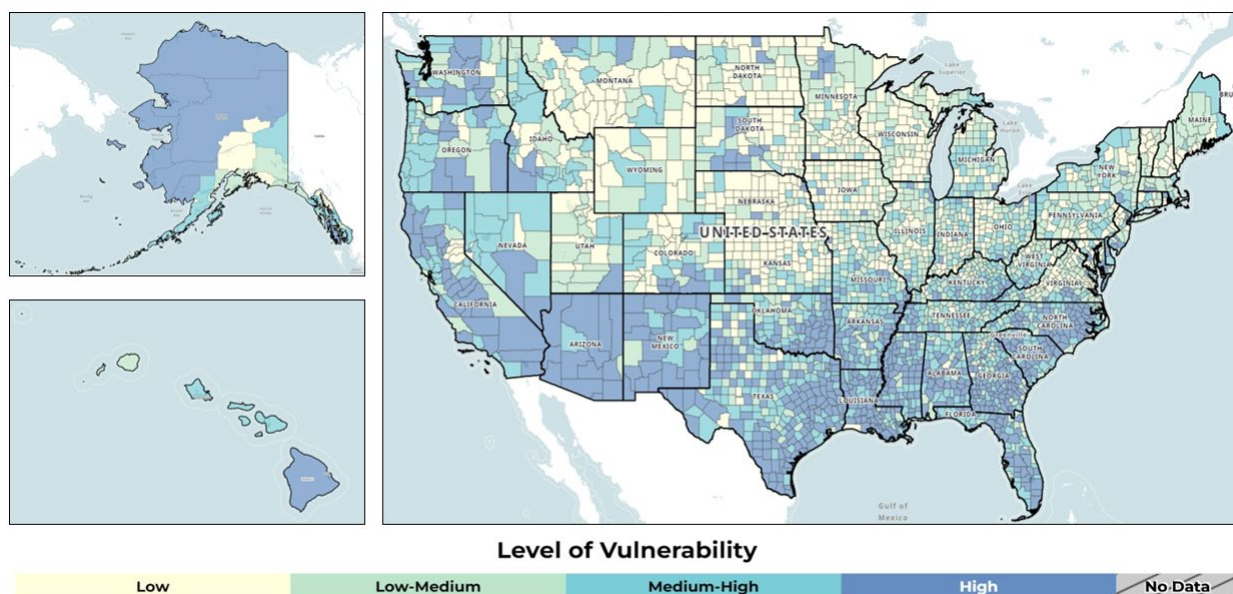
461 **Figure 7. Adapted from [Social Vulnerability Index by County](#) (2020, CDC/ATSDR)**

2.1 Generate a Data-Informed Picture of Recovery Needs

463 Inequities that existed prior to a disaster are often exacerbated by the disaster (e.g., disparities
464 caused by racism or poverty) and may result in further concentrations of vulnerable populations in
465 hazardous areas with lower incomes and access to fewer services. Those who are most vulnerable
466 prior to a disaster (e.g., children, seniors, single mothers, individuals with disabilities, victims of
467 abuse/human trafficking, individuals experiencing social isolation) become even more vulnerable
468 after a disaster due to displacement, economic disruption, and additional disaster impacts.

469 Using readily available national databases can quickly and easily indicate communities that may be
470 under resourced and overburdened and may require additional support and resources to help
471 facilitate equity during the disaster recovery process. **Figure 7** is a Geographic Information System
472 (GIS) [map](#) taken from the CDC/ATSDR's Social Vulnerability Index database of all counties in the 50
473 U.S. states indicating their level of vulnerability. This graphic also serves as an example of how
474 community mapping can provide information about unmet needs and pre-existing inequitable

475   conditions. It is important to remember that while national databases provide readily available data,
476   the information required to inform an assessment of the community need is unlikely to be captured
477   by a single dataset, Therefore, use of national data does not supplant the usefulness of field-derived
478   information generated from a variety of sources that may be updated on an irritative basis
479   throughout the recovery period.

480   To address the needs of the disadvantaged and underserved populations, it is critical to analyze the
481   pre-existing conditions of these populations and evaluate how the event impacted communities. This
482   assessment needs to be communicated among local and tribal government and interested
483   stakeholders to inform outreach, planning, and decisions.

484   "Communities and individuals may have multiple, overlapping vulnerabilities—a concept Dr.
485   Kimberlé Crenshaw calls 'intersectionality,' which is 'a lens, a prism, for seeing the way in which
486   various forms of inequality often operate together and exacerbate each other. We tend to talk
487   about racial inequality as separate from inequality based on gender, class, sexuality, or
488   immigrant status. What's often missing is how some people are subject to all of these, and the
489   experience is not just the sum of its parts.'" [5]

490   **Figure 8** simplifies the concept of intersectionality in disadvantaged and underserved populations by
491   showing several examples of characteristics that can compound stressors in a disaster context.

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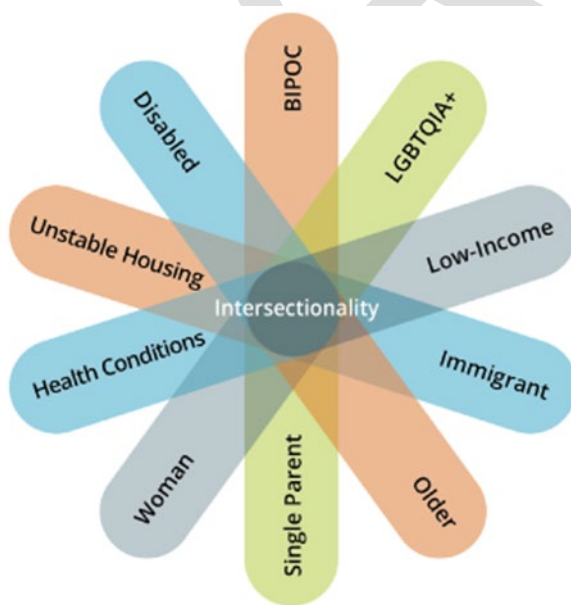
Figure 8. Intersectionality Diagram

493   Qualitative data, including information generated from interviews with disadvantaged and
494   underserved populations, coupled with broader quantitative and qualitative datasets available from
495   other agencies and organizations, can inform recovery leaders of community needs before, during,
496   and after a disaster. Recovery leaders can work with community-based organizations and

[5] United States Department of Housing and Urban Development, "Citizen Participation & Equitable Engagement (CPEE) Toolkit"

497 representative groups to involve disadvantaged and underserved populations in data collection
498 opportunities. The Asset Based Community Development approach builds on the resources and
499 expertise that are already in the community and recognizes the strength and value of all individuals.

500 Disaster-related data informing equitable recovery can include:

501 ▪ Event hazard and damage characteristics, including the identification of disaster severity,
502 impact, and damage across key community facilities, assets, systems, and services, and who has
503 been affected by those impacts.
504 ▪ Duration and projection of services lost or services that require relocation.
505 ▪ Impacts to the informal economy, cultural institutions, and to local healthcare or community
506 services that focus on disadvantaged populations.
507 ▪ Displacement of disadvantaged populations.
508 ▪ Short- and long-term health impacts and projections, including mental health considerations.
509 ▪ Cascading effects of multiple events (e.g., a natural disaster becoming a technological disaster)
510 or recurrent losses.
511 ▪ The extent to which climate factors compounded the disaster, including disease vectors.
512 ▪ The extent to which impacts in this event compound one another, particularly on impacts to
513 disadvantaged residents (e.g., an impact to a school further places stress on disadvantaged
514 neighborhoods served by the school).
515 ▪ Effects of the disaster on support systems and disaster workers.
516 ▪ Impacts to natural systems that supported community ecosystems such as urban canopies and
517 natural stormwater management.

518 ### 📁 Sources of Guidance and Data

519 ▪ Resilience Analysis and Planning Tool (RAPT), FEMA
520 ▪ National Risk Index, FEMA
521 ▪ Social Vulnerability Index (SVI), CDC/ATSDR
522 ▪ Community Resilience Estimates, U.S. Census Bureau
523 ▪ Equity and Inclusion in HUD Sustainable Communities Grantees, HUD
524 ▪ Executive Order 14008: Tackling the Climate Crisis at Home and Abroad, The White House
525 ▪ Justice40 Initiative, The White House

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

531 "Health is a product of multiple determinants. Disparities in health are shaped more by social,
532 economic, environmental, and structural factors—and their unequal distribution—than by health
533 care." (National Academies of Science, Engineering, and Medicine)

534 For example:

535 ▪ **Health partners** use data to address health inequities, which commonly occur along lines of
536 socioeconomic status, race/ethnicity, and citizenship status. One way health partners address
537 health inequity is by collecting data on conditions within a community that measures health risk
538 factors and outcomes. This is referred to as Social Determinants of Health. Collecting and
539 analyzing this data serves as an opportunity to identify and improve root causes of health
540 challenges and to address the roots of health inequities such as housing affordability. Health
541 departments and their partners use [Community Assessment for Public Health Emergency
542 Response](#) (CASPER) and [Adverse Childhood Experiences](#)(ACEs) to collectively identify data
543 related to abuse, neglect, and other potentially traumatic experiences affecting people under the
544 age of 18. Following a disaster, CASPER and ACE can inform efforts to address health inequities
545 and to provide information to traumatized communities who often lack resources to effectively
546 navigate mental health, wellness, and potential escalation of violence.
547 ▪ **Planning departments** have data that can be used to advocate for disaster funding. One example
548 is the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission's Equity and Access Project, which seeks
549 to improve economic and social opportunity in the greater Philadelphia region by expanding
550 access to essential services for vulnerable populations, specifically those who are critically
551 impacted by barriers and gaps in infrastructure, service coordination, and policies.
552 ▪ **Schools** may also have valuable data and insight related to equity. Some schools conduct "Social
553 Work Family Needs Assessments" that ask about areas of need (e.g., food, housing, clothes,
554 hygiene, household products, school supplies mental health, other community services), and
555 whether students identify as displaced, doubled up, or unaccompanied. School officials may also
556 have access to data indicating the percentage of the student population at or below the poverty
557 level from this assessment.
558 ▪ **Regional Organizations** such as Council of Governments (COGs) or Metropolitan Planning
559 Organizations (MPOs) are often tasked with performing specific functions that require periodic
560 county or regional-level reviews of current and future needs. For example, California state law
561 requires that MPOs and local jurisdictions conduct the Regional Housing Needs Allocation
562 (RHNA) process and plan for their respective "fair share" of housing units at all affordability types,
563 which can incorporate local factors such as transit connectivity, job availability, and
564 sustainability.

2.2 Develop a Whole-of-Community Picture of Needs and
565
566 Inequities

567 Local officials, community leaders, community-based organizations, and stakeholders know their
568 community best. In times of disaster, these groups must work together to develop a clear,
569 coordinated picture of their community's population and demographics. State and federal agencies
570 often use public databases (e.g., income, employment, disabilities, age, vehicle ownership), to
571 assess needs, determine funding allocations, and identify barriers to equity (as discussed further in
572 **Section 8.1**). However, local officials and community leaders should aim to augment public data with
573 detailed, community-level data to provide a more complete analysis of the population and
574 demographics, economic condition, and historical context. When local officials combine these

575 datasets, they can develop a more accurate picture of needs and resource gaps of the post-disaster
576 recovery planning process.

577 Local community-based organizations, regional planning commissions and economic development
578 districts, local universities, state community development agencies, and national nonprofits can
579 provide additional resources and technical assistance at the local level. Identifying pre-disaster
580 conditions helps local leaders identify challenges that could lead to disaster scenarios if local
581 leaders and government officials fail to act. Multiple pre-disaster conditions can foreshadow
582 imminent emergency situations that may arise for these communities during a disaster. **Table 2**
583 highlights examples of pre-disaster conditions that impact the vulnerability of disadvantaged
584 communities that disasters exacerbate.

585 **Table 2: Examples of Community-Disaster Conditions Creating Vulnerabilities (Adapted from**
586 **[Community Resilience Indicator Analysis (CRIA)](#))**

Population Characteristics
▪ Above average population without a high school education
▪ Above average population 65 and older
▪ Above average population with a disability
Household Characteristics
▪ 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 Characteristics
▪ Above average quantity of mobile homes as percentage of housing
▪ Below average quantity of Owner-Occupied housing
Healthcare Characteristics
▪ Below average quantity of hospitals in vicinity
▪ Below average medical professional capacity for the area
▪ Above average population without health insurance
Economic Characteristics
▪ 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
Connection to Community

Population Characteristics
▪ 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

587 Disasters disproportionally impact marginalized communities. Local leaders and government officials
588 should work together to identify and support such groups throughout emergencies. **Table 3** identifies
589 examples of populations likely to be disproportionately impacted by disasters.

590 **Table 3: Examples of Populations Likely to Be Disproportionately Impacted by Disaster**

Examples of Populations Likely to be Disproportionately Impacted	
▪ Those displaced due to the disaster	▪ Service workers, seasonal workers, and migrant laborers
▪ People of Color	▪ Institutionalized populations, such as those in hospitals, nursing homes, and prisons
▪ Tribal and First Nation communities	
▪ Women	
▪ The LGBTQ+ community	▪ Veterans
▪ Rural communities	▪ Victims of trafficking
▪ Children, youth, and seniors	▪ People experiencing homelessness
▪ People with disabilities	▪ Renters
▪ Those with Limited English Proficiency	

591

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

592 2.3 Assess Equity Status and Develop a Baseline

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

595 ▪ What are the pre-existing inequities? Where are the populations and places of concern?
596 ▪ What is the current cultural context of the community? Are there coalitions recently organized
597   around specific issues (e.g., fighting hate crimes, decreasing homelessness, supporting refugee
598   relocation)?
599 ▪ Has the community experienced a prior disaster? Was there an equitable response then?
600 ▪ How can the community expand baseline recovery needs to prepare for a future disaster?

601 ▪ Has any partner already used a Public Health Risk Assessment Tool that identified populations of
602   concern to address health disparities?

603 To work towards equity within a community, stakeholders should identify who already has
604 momentum by reviewing existing plans, inventories, projects, and pre-existing cross-cutting priorities.
605 In addition to identifying priorities, examining plans will help officials to understand (1) the planning
606 process (e.g., outreach, engagement) for the community, (2) methods to prioritize projects, and (3)
607 the partners already involved in planning and implementation. Did reviewers use an accessible
608 process? Did disadvantaged and underserved communities have representation? These questions
609 set the stage for multi-sector stakeholder collaboration.

610 **Equity Assessment Resources**

611 ▪ Natural Hazards Center Disaster Justice for All: The Need for a More Equitable and Just
612   Recovery Lens, University of Colorado Boulder
613 ▪ Plan Integration: Linking Local Planning Efforts, FEMA
614 ▪ 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, 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. 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.

By using an inclusive planning process, the equitable recovery plans that are developed identify needs of disadvantaged groups more accurately and may result in more appropriate solutions and enhanced buy-in from all stakeholders, ensuring civil rights compliance and demonstrating 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

3.1 List Multi-Sector Collaboration Activities and Partners

There are several actions which can help local officials collaborate with their equity-first partners:
- Begin to develop an equity group (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.

650 **Table 4** aggregates the types of partners and examples of how local leaders can collaborate with
651 them.

652 **Table 4: Partner Types and Examples**

Partner Type	Examples
Social	- Community advocates, organizations, and their networks - Neighborhood associations - Social service organizations - Faith-based organizations - Civil Rights organizations
Environmental	- Environmental justice advocates and researchers - Climate change and sustainability advocates - National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and National Weather Service (NWS) local representatives and volunteers - Agricultural community (e.g., farmers, ranchers, forest landowners)
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, Non-Governmental Organizations, crowdsourced funding)
Health	- Healthcare coalitions - Food banks - Mental health providers
Youth	- Schools, colleges, and universities - Child Protective Services - Neighborhood organizations - Youth mentorship and leadership organizations (e.g., Big Brothers Big Sisters of America)
Local Government Services	- Police - Health departments - Human service departments - Housing departments - Chief Operating Officers/Finance departments

653

654

	💡 Addressing Resource Challenges

655
656

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:

657
658
659
660
661
662
663

- State Departments of Emergency Management, Health and Human Services, and Planning;
- State or Tribal FEMA representative that can provide support from federal resources such as the Recovery Support Functions;
- National organizations like the NAACP and VOAD; and
- Nearby academic institutions, state extension programs, state environmental protection departments, state natural resource departments, federal agencies (such as the United States Department of Agriculture and Rural Local Initiatives Support Corporation).

664

665 ## 3.2 Build a Community View of Equity

666 Equity needs are unique to each community. Therefore, recovery planners will need to develop a
667 community definition of equity and identify community needs through an inclusive recovery planning
668 process.

669 **How Do You Build and/or Restore Community Trust?**

670 ▪ Have the necessary difficult conversations.

671 ▪ Stay attuned to the damage and hurt of communities.

672 ▪ Bring resources, not words.

673 ▪ Work with partners who the community already trusts.

674 ▪ Walk the beat and engage stakeholders firsthand.

675 ▪ Do not make promises you cannot keep.

676 ▪ Celebrate small wins.

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

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

687 ### 📁 Guidance for Community Resources

688 ▪ [Building Alliances for Equitable Resilience: Advancing Equitable Resilience through
689 Partnerships and Diverse Perspectives](#), FEMA
690 ▪ [Roadmap to Federal Resources for Disaster Recovery](#), FEMA
691 ▪ [Community Leadership](#), Local Initiatives Support Corporation

692 ### 📋 Community Mapping Technique in Puerto Rico

693 **Disaster Type:** Hurricane

694 **Focus:** Lessons Learned from 2017 Hurricane Season

695 In 2017, Hurricanes Irma and María devastated many communities across Puerto Rico and left
696 them in critical need of support to plan for recovery. FEMA's Community Assistance Recovery

697 Support Function (CA RSF, formerly Community Planning and Capacity Building [CPCB]) was
698 deployed in the summer of 2018 to provide technical assistance to highly impacted
699 communities without significant experience in recovery planning. The CA team used their
700 community conditions assessment to process data, prioritize communities with unmet needs,
701 and provide mapping support, tabletop exercises, and recovery resources. FEMA Voluntary
702 Assistance Liaisons identified community-based organizations that provided aid and capacity
703 support to the highest priority communities. CA met with these organizations to learn about the
704 unmet needs of these communities.

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

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

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

723 [Puerto Rico Community Mapping Collaboration: Empowering Risk-Informed Resilience in
724 Underserved Communities](), FEMA

725   3.3 Advocate to Ensure Everyone Has a Voice

726 Equitable recovery uses diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility principles to identify pathways
727 to communicate needs and improve representation throughout the recovery planning process.
728 Recovery planners can reach previously unheard from members of the community by organizing
729 listening tours, using established techniques such as story circles, and canvassing to reach homes
730 and businesses. Local officials can also distribute recovery information resources to advise the
731 community on (1) what stage the planning process is in, and (2) how they can be involved in recovery
732 activities.

733 To do so, recovery planners may:

734 ▪ Engage affected populations and stakeholders to continue to identify recovery needs and foster
735   inclusivity.
736 ▪ Actively work to engage those historically kept from resources, those who have had negative
737   experiences and distrust of local planning policies, the already underserved populations, those
738   underrepresented at the government level, and the socially excluded and isolated.
739 ▪ Use partnerships to reach those who could be too overwhelmed to ask for help.
740 ▪ Consider establishing an Independent Oversight Advisory Board or similar group to serve as an
741   objective entity to monitor recovery progress, interventions, and help address conflict.
742 ▪ Use data to inform outreach and ensure all populations in the community are represented in the
743   recovery process.

744   💡 **Lessons Learned to Ensure Equitable Engagement**

745 ▪ Have meetings at locations where everyone will feel welcome.
746 ▪ Select locations that are on public transportation routes and/or close to the community.
747 ▪ Ask for feedback throughout the recovery planning process, especially on draft recovery
748   strategies and plans.
749 ▪ Provide multiple opportunities and ways to provide input both privately and publicly.
750 ▪ Provide a way to vote on recovery projects.
751 ▪ Compensate for time and provide transportation if possible.
752 ▪ Use translation services and be culturally appropriate.
753 ▪ Provide childcare services.
754 ▪ Involve youth and seniors in care facilities.
755 ▪ Confirm that the process is inclusive and incorporates diverse populations.
756 ▪ Ensure meetings and communications comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act
757   (ADA).
758 ▪ Be flexible in scheduling.
759 ▪ Provide different engagement platforms.
760 ▪ Consider providing leadership positions to role models who have firsthand experience
761   navigating the identity and intersectional challenges of disadvantaged and underserved
762   populations.

763 ▪ Promote a variety of engagement strategies to increase access to important learning
764 opportunities.

765

766 **Resources for Equitable Engagement**

767 ▪ [Engaging Faith-based and Community Organizations: Planning Considerations for
768 Emergency Managers](#), U.S. Department of Homeland Security
769 ▪ [Assessing Social Equity in Disasters](#), Eos
770 ▪ [Community Recovery Management Toolkit](#), FEMA

771
772

773 **Community Example: Advancing Equity in Ouachita Parish, LA**

774 **Disaster Type:** Flooding

775 **Focus:** Leveraging an Inclusive Recovery Planning Process

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

782 Local officials partnered with FEMA, the State Office of Community Development (OCD) and the
783 Governor's Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness (GOHSEP). Based on
784 this partnership, Parish leaders adopted the NDRF to manage recovery efforts and identified
785 disaster resilience as a community goal in fall 2017.

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

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

797 Strong partnerships grew out of the Great Flood. The community leveraged the partnerships,
798 resources, and capacity built through the equitable disaster recovery process to collaboratively
799 address other community risks and to mobilize to protect the youth. Ouachita implements this
800 resilience strategy and has been awarded multiple flood mitigation grants from Housing and

801   Urban Development (HUD)'s mitigation Community Development Block Grant (CDBG-MIT)
802   FEMA's Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) and from the U.S. Economic Development
803   Administration (EDA).

804 3.4 Develop Recovery Equity Objectives

805 Depending on how a community structures its recovery, the needs, resources, and voices at the
806 table will influence the breadth and depth of recovery objectives, benefits, and co-benefits. To the
807 degree possible, communities should choose objectives with multiple benefits for greater recovery
808 outcomes. **Table 5** provides some ideas for recovery objectives. The full table can be found in the
809 equity section of the Community Recovery Management Toolkit.

810 <div align="center">**Table 5: Sample Equity Objectives**</div>

Theme	Sample Equity Objectives
Social	- Invest in social capital and social support systems - Encourage community members to champion and promote equity-related projects - Increase trust and form bonds between community members
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 - Confirm new or renovated housing is sustainable and resilient
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

Theme	Sample Equity Objectives
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
Community Planning	- Develop a recovery plan and a resilience strategy - Take advantage of re-design opportunities - Re-develop communities with ADA accessible requirements
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
Culture	- Encourage cultural heritage preservation - Understand ancestral systems of social organization - Support financially burdened sites

811

812 **Equity and Managed Retreat to Manage Natural Hazard Risk**

813 ▪ [Managing the Retreat from Rising Seas: Lessons and Tools from 17 Case Studies](#),
814 Georgetown Climate Center

3.5 Options for Documenting Planning Activities

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

821 **Table 6** aggregates examples of equitable projects in post-disaster plans which all are from real-
822 world post-disaster recovery plans.

823

824 **Table 6*: *Examples of Equitable Projects in Post-Disaster Plans**

Theme	Equity in Post-Disaster 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 (St. Croix, 2018)
Housing	▪ Incorporate affordable and accessible housing, offering housing options for all ages, abilities, and income levels (Denham Strong, 2017)
Environmental	▪ Protect coral reefs, beaches, and heritage trees through triage, restoration, reduction of debris, and land use management (St. Croix, 2018) ▪ Establish a Sustainable Development Resource Office with sustainable building programs and identify and utilize energy alternatives (Greensburg, Kansas, 2007) ▪ Work with mitigation officers to maximize funding for projects that will protect communities from future climate impacts (St. Croix, 2018)
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 (Denham Strong, 2017) ▪ Promote mixed-use construction of businesses and residential units
Health	▪ Create mobile or community-based health centers to improve accessibility ▪ Tailor health services outreach to vulnerable populations (e.g., senior-buddy programs to monitor health conditions) ▪ Improve access to client-centered healthcare
Planning	▪ Update and enforce new comprehensive land use plans
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 (St. Croix, 2018) ▪ Improve stormwater infrastructure such as septic tanks, culverts, and waste disposal in rural areas
Cultural	▪ Repair, fortify, and preserve historical and cultural archives (St. Croix, 2018)

Theme	Equity in Post-Disaster Plans
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)
Seniors	▪ Improve health and social support programs for disadvantaged senior populations

825 **Resources to Inform Planning**

826 ▪ [Local Solutions Guide for COVID-19 and Beyond: Adaptive Design](#), FEMA

827 ▪ [Building Community Resilience with Nature-Based Solutions. A Guide for Local
828 Communities](#), FEMA

829 ▪ [A Guide to Equitable, Community-Driven Climate Preparedness Planning](#), Urban
830 Sustainability Directors Network (Under "Innovation Lab - Refinement: Tools and guides to
831 inform developing programs on landing page)

832 **Partners Planning Guidance: Learn How Your Partners Plan**

833 ▪ [Healthcare Coalition Recovery Plan Template](#), HHS

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837

Goal 4: Promote and Protect Equity Throughout Recovery

838 "Free and informed choices, all options understood, timely, and accessible." (Jerolleman, 2019)

839 ## 4.1 Use Evidence Informed Decision Making

840 In addition to involving civil rights, faith-based, and community-based organizations already
841 addressing inequitable conditions, it is important to include researchers and universities in the
842 recovery process. These groups are often in the forefront of many disaster-related system changes
843 and can inform the recovery process through the inclusion of evidence derived from peer reviewed
844 research. For example, the development of the Social Vulnerability Analysis Tool, led by Dr. Susan
845 Cutter, Director of the Hazards Vulnerability & Resilience Institute at the University of South Carolina,
846 provided the first widely used method for local communities to map and understand the effects of
847 disaster on disadvantaged populations.

848 Researchers have proven the value of resiliency, social support, and social capital. Researchers from
849 many disciplines have studied equity since the 1970s and have developed ideas and methods for
850 achieving equity, including procedural justice and distributive justice. For example, according to
851 FEMA's Equity Action Plan Summary, FEMA executes a "methodical, multilayered, and systematic
852 approach" to analyze accessibility impacts and invest in resources to advance civil rights in
853 underserved communities.

Procedural Justice	Distributive Justice
Fair opportunity and respectful treatment	Whether everyone received the same outcome and got what they needed

854

855 💡 **Procedural Justice**

856 Informational and interpersonal equity are elements of procedural justice.

857 ▪ Are the components of the systems making fair distributions of post-disaster recovery
858 resources?
859 ▪ Who was selected to make recovery decisions?
860 ▪ Are there clearly defined goals and evaluation criteria?
861 ▪ Do the decision makers have reliable information about the recipients?
862 ▪ Does the structure and process include everyone?
863 ▪ Is there a way to appeal decisions?
864 ▪ Are there safeguards and monitoring of decision makers?
865 ▪ Are there change mechanisms in place to change the process if it is unfair?

866   Source: (Leventhal, 1980)

867   💡 **Distributive Justice**

868   Diminishing unequal social and economic conditions to achieve parity in standards of living are
869   elements of distributive justice.

870   ▪ Are structural and social conditions present that prevent equality in recovery outcomes
871   across all impacted communities?
872   ▪ Is there a baseline to determine the resource gap that exists between the community
873   members with the fewest resources and the common standard of living across all impacted
874   communities?
875   ▪ Are recovery leaders distributing resources based on community need where underserved
876   communities may receive a greater amount of resources to achieve parity across all
877   impacted areas?
878   ▪ Are recovery leaders building capacity to address the pre-existing structural and social
879   conditions in order to sustain improvements in parity of standards of living as a result of
880   achieving equal recovery outcomes?

881   Source: (Patrick, 2006)

4.2 Develop Accessible Communications and Outreach

883 Local officials should ensure everyone is receiving complete and truthful explanations about the
884 recovery process to build informational equity. Informational equity rises when people have sufficient
885 information about the process (e.g., about how it operates and their role at each stage of the
886 process) and about the resources available to them. Interpersonal equity, which refers to how people
887 are treated during recovery and recovery planning, is also important. Community members must be
888 treated with respect, sensitivity, true concern, and empathy (Greenberg, 1993.)

889 Recovery requires partnership among the affected community, broader community, governments,
890 faith-based institutions, aid organizations, and the private sector. Effective recovery relies upon
891 successful communication between these key stakeholders. After a disaster, recovery leaders must
892 identify the most reliable methods of community outreach, especially considering that not every
893 community member has dependable internet or cellular service. Radio, newspaper, social media
894 posts, flyers, and town halls are some of many ways to inform the community about recovery efforts.

895 Any information provided to the community (including live meetings and public hearings) must be
896 accessible in accordance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 to allow meaningful access by
897 persons with Limited English Proficiency. Similarly, effective communication access must be
898 provided to persons with disabilities in accordance with the ADA.

899 It is important for local officials to communicate many pieces of recovery information to the
900 community. This includes, but is not limited to:

901 ▪ Notice of local meetings and how to access them;
902 ▪ Recovery resources available to the community;
903 ▪ How to access recovery resources;
904 ▪ Information on any required public hearings (such as CDBG-DR);
905 ▪ Availability of interpreter services during meetings;
906 ▪ Availability of childcare during meetings; and
907 ▪ Information on transportation resources to meetings.

908 ### 💡 Tribal Nation Considerations

909 ▪ Build and establish trust up front.
910 ▪ Physical presence makes a difference.
911 ▪ Leadership should reflect the diversity of the community.
912 ▪ Meet people where they are.
913 ▪ Cultural sensitivity is key.
914 ▪ Understand context.
915 Source: Equity Coalition Meeting 12.03.2021 FEMA Region 6 COVID 19 Recovery Tribal Nation
916 Engagement

917 ### 📁 Resources for Equitable Engagement

918 ▪ [Citizen Participation & Equitable Engagement Toolkit](#), HUD
919 ▪ [A Guide to Supporting Engagement and Resiliency in Rural Communities](#), FEMA

920 # 4.3 Emphasize Respect and Trust

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

927 Ensuring equity means building trust, learning, identifying, and overcoming intentional and
928 unintentional barriers arising from bias or systemic structures. For example, social protection
929 systems help individuals and families, especially the marginalized, cope with crises and shocks, find
930 jobs, improve productivity, and protect the aging population. Social protection programs, a vital
931 concept for successful post-disaster recoveries, boost respect and trust by empowering people to be
932 healthy, pursue education, and seek to lift themselves out of poverty.

4.4. 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 potentially better address inequitable problems that arise immediately after a disaster.

A few key considerations to be mindful of 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 does that the costs get shifted to other parties? If so, to whom?
- Does the legislation or regulation impact communities' ability to voice 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? (Adapted from Schrock, 2013)

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 Executive Orders 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.

967 # 4.5 Opportunities to Incorporate Equity in the Recovery
968 # Process

969 **Figure 9** displays the relationship between the equity principles discussed thus far. Local officials
970 should familiarize themselves with applicable recovery guidance such as the most current version of
971 the NDRF and the jurisdiction's FEMA-approved Hazard Mitigation Plan. The NDRF includes general
972 areas of opportunity to enhance equity in recovery, while the FEMA-approved Hazard Mitigation Plan
973 may help inform development of pre-disaster mitigation plans by providing information on community
974 hazards and vulnerabilities.

Roadmap to Equitable Recovery for Local Officials

Pre-Disaster

Review Guidance Informing Recovery

Review Relevant Guidance to Understand Equity Considerations; For Example:

- National Disaster Recovery Framework (NDRF)
- Jurisdiction's Hazard Mitigation Plan

Establish Organizational Structure

Establish Pre-Disaster Recovery Planning Committee that Includes Stakeholders Involved In Supporting Community Equity (See **Section 1.3.1** "Examples of Representatives in an Equitable Coordination Structure")

Assess Pre-Disaster Conditions

- Conduct Equity Scan of Community to Identify Vulnerable Populations (**Section 2.3**)
- Map Locations of Vulnerable Populations and Incorporate into Pre-Disaster Recovery Planning (**Section 2.3**)

Post-Disaster

Form Post-Disaster Planning Committee

Include Representatives of Partner Types to Support Equity Objectives (**Section 3.1**)

Develop Recovery Plan

Include Equity Objectives in Recovery Planning (**Section 3.4**)

Develop Communications Plan

Develop and Implement Communications Plan to Inform Community of Recovery Progress and Related Resources (**Section 4.2**)

Monitor Recovery

Ensure Equity is Included in Recovery Process (**Appendix A: Checklist for Monitoring Equitable Recovery Progress**)
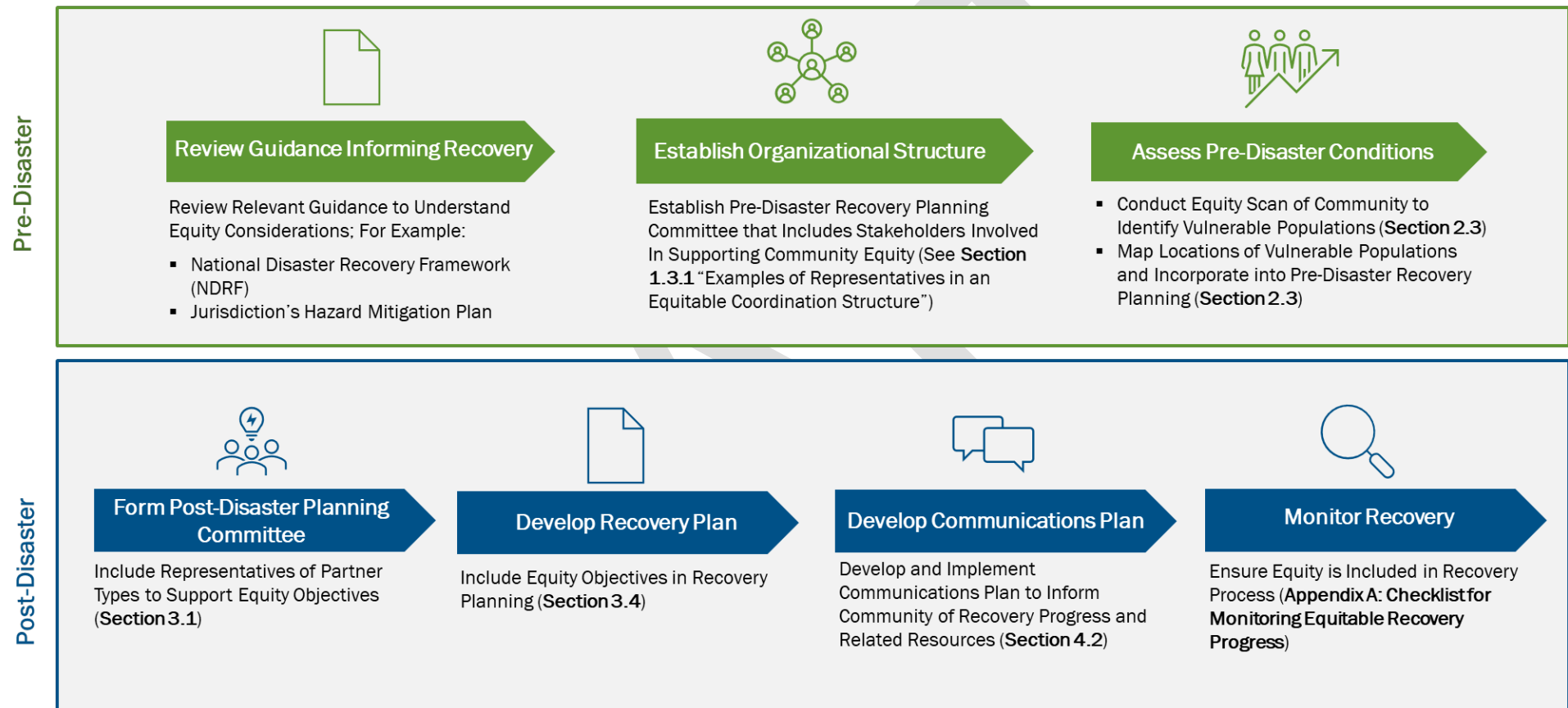
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Figure 9. Roadmap to Equitable Recovery for Local Officials

977 Local officials can then develop a Pre-Disaster Recovery Planning Committee, as outlined in **Section**
978 **1.1**, that is charged with planning ahead for disasters that may occur in the community. Officials can
979 use the guidance found in **Section 1.3.1** with examples of representatives that may provide subject
980 matter expertise and guidance to ensure local officials include equity in development of Pre-Disaster
981 Recovery Plans. The committee can also consider the recommendation this Guide provides in
982 **Section 2.3** in conducting an equity scan of the community. This scan will identify the disadvantaged
983 and underserved populations that are experiencing pre-existing inequities that create additional
984 vulnerabilities to disasters and additional challenges for recovery. The committee may engage in
985 mapping these communities to ensure they receive resources that address their needs and rapidly
986 reach those communities.

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

989 ### 💡 Whole Community Concept

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

998 **Section 3.1** of this Guide provides a list of potential partners who may help the local government
999 deepen its understanding of the Whole Community. There are many opportunities for the committee
1000 to include equity objectives within its equitable recovery plan. This Guide contains example
1001 objectives in **Section 3.4**.

1002 The committee may engage in communications and outreach strategies outlined in **Section 4.2** to
1003 solicit input from disadvantaged and underserved communities to help assess the progress of
1004 recovery in these communities and opportunities to improve coordination.

1005 Lastly, committee members may refer to **Appendix A**, which contains a checklist for monitoring
1006 equitable recovery programs. This tool is not one-size-fits-all and should be tailored to the needs of
1007 the specific jurisdiction. It is a starting point for establishing a monitoring program to help inform the
1008 committee on progress to achieving equitable recovery outcomes.

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	Region 10 Interagency Recovery Coordination (IRC) Equity Officer, Oregon

Disaster Type: Wildfire

Focus: Best Practice: 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 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 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.

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Goal 5: Adapt to the Dynamic Nature of Recovery

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> "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." (Fussell, 2015)

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5.1. Compounding Effects of Disasters

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Disasters cause compounding effects on underserved populations, some of which are highlighted in
Table 7. 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.

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Table 7: Compounding Effects of Disasters

Pre-Disaster	During-Disaster	Post-Disaster
▪ Do not have preparedness resources or networks for information	▪ Do not have the resources to evacuate ▪ Experience greater exposure to disaster impacts	▪ Lack resources to rebuild and often lose their community through displacement ▪ Can be victimized as safety nets are often down ▪ Lack insurance or a rainy-day fund ▪ Public transportation systems disrupted, preventing access to private transport options

1048   5.2 Pace of Recovery

1049 The recovery process can be broken into short-term, intermediate, and long-term. Actions taken in
1050 the short-term can influence the intermediate and long-term (e.g., not involving displaced
1051 populations in the recovery making processes of their community).

1052 Intermediate and long-term recovery frequently moves at a slower pace than the recovery activities
1053 occurring immediately following the disaster. Addressing systemic inequities over an extended time
1054 frame requires planning efforts to be deliberate, intentional, and long-term. Following a disaster,
1055 recovery funding can come into a community from many sources. However, everyone in the
1056 community simultaneously seeks access to scarce resources, and those with better access are often
1057 able to capture these finite resources before others (Olshansky et al., 2012). As funding
1058 mechanisms become available at varying points along the recovery timeline, some recovery efforts
1059 are limited until those resources are accessible.

1060 Additionally, low resourced communities may have to engage in recovery work in phases occurring
1061 over several years due to difficulty meeting recovery grant cost match requirements and/or lack of
1062 trained staff to support the efforts. It is important for communities to maintain awareness and
1063 visibility of recovery progress within vulnerable communities so that former inequities do not arise as
1064 time passes and when there are transitions of recovery leadership.

1065 **Considerations for the Pace of Recovery:**

1066 ▪ Recovery proceeds at different rates for different people.

1067 ▪ Identifying and incorporating new resources.

1068 ▪ Re-prioritization of projects as new needs are identified.

1069   5.3 Environmental Influences

1070 "Environmental justice is the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless
1071 of race, color, national origin, or income, with respect to the development, implementation, and
1072 enforcement of environmental laws and policies." Source: Environmental Protection Agency

1073 Disaster impacts can cause damage to ecosystems and the broader environment such as silting up
1074 dams or decreasing in fish populations due to debris or flooding. Officials can often become
1075 overwhelmed by grant applications and face personal impacts from the disaster as well, forcing them
1076 to prioritize their own safety over protecting ecosystems and marginalized communities. After
1077 Hurricane Katrina in 2005, many Vietnamese people and the African American community did not
1078 return to the Gulf Coast because of impacts to fishing populations that they relied on. In some areas,
1079 jobs did not return. Rebuilding costs, insurance costs, and taxes became unaffordable for many
1080 along with increasing rent prices. Local officials struggled with leadership during rebuilding. In this
1081 changing environment, it is essential to build a recovery system that can adapt, track, and transfer
1082 information. Creating a monitoring system to track progress toward equity will assist communities in
1083 achieving equity and identifying their equity needs.

1084 | **Changing Circumstances and their Influences Include:**

1085 | ▪ Unintended consequences of recovery efforts;

1086 | ▪ Errors in the recovery planning and implementation process;

1087 | ▪ Changing culture of the affected communities;

1088 | ▪ New legislation that affects recovery work;

1089 | ▪ New partners that engage in recovery efforts;

1090 | ▪ New funding streams to support projects;

1091 | ▪ Changes in staffing and leadership within the recovery coordination structure; and

1092 | ▪ Changes in contacts of partner organizations (e.g., those deployed to work disasters).

1093 Combining green building practices with economic and social equity action can provide long-term
1094 resilience for communities and reduce the impacts and vulnerabilities they face due to climate
1095 change. It is crucial to communicate the economic and health benefits of embracing green
1096 construction early-on in recovery when mitigation funds are available and can be easily included in
1097 recovery planning. Advocating for an inclusive decarbonized economy by shifting to renewables,
1098 investing in carbon capture, or optimizing tax credits may accelerate support for groups most
1099 vulnerable to the impacts of environmental degradation and promote environmental justice.

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1101 # Goal 6: Monitor Progress

1102 "Examine those who profit from the current system. Many current efforts to address inequity rely
1103 entirely on community consultation. This practice is necessary, but not sufficient. It can,
1104 perversely, place the burden of overcoming problems on the shoulders of marginalized people
1105 themselves. And it ignores the role of those with power and resources — the people who can
1106 investigate and reform policies and practices." (Hino and Nance, 2021)

1107 ## 6.1. Assess Conditions Before Implementing a Project

1108 Below are three examples of resources available to assess how recovery planners address equity
1109 and measure project impacts. See also **Section 2.3** of this document.

1110 1. **Key Questions to Ask When Conducting a System Analysis of Root Causes of Inequities**
1111 **(Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2015):**

1112 - What are the racial inequities, barriers, or negative outcomes involved in the problem? Who
1113 bears the heaviest burden? Who benefits most?
1114 - What institutions are involved? What unfair policies and/or practices promote inequities?
1115 - What social conditions or determinants contribute to the problem (such as poverty, housing
1116 segregation, education)?
1117 - What other compounding dynamics are involved (such as income or gender inequities)?
1118 - What cultural norms, myths, or popular ideas justify or maintain the problem?
1119 - What are the cumulative impacts of allowing inequities to build up over time?
1120 - What are the key causes or contributing factors of inequalities?
1121 - What solutions or interventions could eliminate the inequities?
1122 - What can LDRMs learn from prior efforts to fix inequities or change the system?
1123 - What strategies could result in systemic change and advance equitable solutions?
1124 - What social protection programs are in place in your community? What programs are missing?

1125 2. **Public officials may require developers to complete a Social Impact Assessment (SIA) to**
1126 **improve understanding of a project's consequences on the surrounding community.**
1127 - Any local strategy to address social equity must be informed by local planning history, the equity
1128 landscape, and the input of diverse stakeholders (American Planning Association).

1129 3. **Public officials should utilize the Health Impact Assessment (HIA), a process that helps**
1130 **evaluate the potential health effects of a plan, project, or policy before it is built or**
1131 **implemented.**

1132 4. **Organizations should perform Privacy Impact Assessments (PIAs) to identify and mitigate**
1133 **potential risks to personally identifiable information.**

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🖥 Training Resources

1136 ▪ [Empowering Local Governments, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Resources for Local
1137 Governments,](#) Municipal Research and Services Center
1138 ▪ [DEI Resources for Municipal Governments](#), Metropolitan Mayors Caucus
1139 ▪ [County Resources on Diversity, Equity & Inclusion](#), National Association of Counties
1140 ▪ [Appendix A: Checklist for Monitoring Equity Progress](#)

1141 6.2 Track and Evaluate Equity Outcomes

1142 Tracking the inclusion of equity in recovery programs is critical to understand if efforts to ensure
1143 recovery programs are implementing equitable outcomes successfully. Four key evaluation questions
1144 that provide the best measurable information on the effectiveness of the efforts include:

1145 1. Is the recovery organizational structure diverse, equitable, inclusive, and accessible?

1146 2. Is the process to decide who gets the recovery resource fair (e.g., procedural justice)?

1147 3. Are all people and places achieving desired recovery outcome (e.g., distributive justice)?

1148 4. Are people and places receiving the recovery resources they need (e.g., distributive justice)?

1149 To assess the effectiveness of efforts to achieve equitable outcomes, local officials should build an
1150 evaluation system that establishes a process to collect, analyze, and employ data to inform the
1151 evaluation. Developing this system should ideally begin by forming an evaluation design team prior
1152 to a disaster using the guidance found in **Goal 3**. The evaluation design team can include parties
1153 such as those described in **Table 4** who are actively involved in the equity planning process
1154 described in **Goal 3**. Additionally, including ideas and feedback from members of vulnerable
1155 communities such as those listed in **Table 3** may help inform the development of the system and
1156 ensure the recovery process addresses the whole community. Working together, this design team
1157 should define what constitutes successful implementation for the indicators above.

1158 A logic model is a helpful tool that can guide local officials in the development of the evaluation
1159 system. A logic model supports the recovery process by developing and visualizing linkages between
1160 the indicators identified at the beginning of this section. Mapping out this process helps local
1161 officials identify appropriate outcomes that will demonstrate achievement of equity during recovery.

1162 The following is a summary of [CDC guidance on developing a logic model](#); the bolded terms are
1163 defined in the full guidance document. A logic model begins with the identification of resources, also
1164 known as **inputs**, that are used by local officials to perform **activities** that produce tangible results,
1165 **outputs**, to achieve desired equitable recovery **outcomes**. The equitable outcomes fall into three
1166 categories:

1167 ▪ **Short-term outcomes** which are the immediate effects of the program activities;
1168 ▪ **Intermediate outcomes** which are the intended effects occurring the midterm of the recovery
1169 period; and

1170   ▪   **Long-term outcomes** that ultimately lead to lasting impacts in the survivor's community.

1171 "Account for inequities and geographies: Indicators that do not account for inequalities may
1172 actually serve to make inequality worse. For example, 'number of houses with air
1173 conditioners,' if not segmented by income, does not help decision-makers identify who is most
1174 at-risk during heat waves. Similarly, some populations have lower tolerance for or
1175 higher sensitivity to some climate impacts than others. For example, 'elderly residents may be at
1176 higher risk of heat-related health problems.'" (Greenlining Institute, 2019)

1177 Since the recovery process takes many years, local officials should analyze recovery projects to
1178 evaluate progress on a regular basis to determine who benefited, what projects are being
1179 implemented, and confirm that outcomes are on track. In addition, it is essential to ask members of
1180 vulnerable populations if they believe equity is being achieved throughout the recovery process; the
1181 perception of these communities is as important as measurable outcomes.

1182 Evaluation systems allow programs to measure the effectiveness and efficiency of efforts to ensure
1183 equitable outcomes. The NDRF includes resources that can assist in developing the evaluation
1184 system as it outlines a strategy to evaluate, measure, and prioritize recovery outcomes, such as
1185 leveraging pre-disaster conditions data or continuously evaluating the effective of recovery activities.
1186 To obtain additional data or metrics to evaluate equitable recovery outcomes, local officials can ask
1187 academic, non-governmental, or private sector partners to help develop a data-informed evaluation
1188 methodology. It is best to develop this capability as part of the pre-disaster planning process to have
1189 a validated evaluation system available immediately post-disaster.

1190 ### 💡 Key Questions to Consider When Monitoring Recovery Efforts

1191   ▪   How much post-disaster equity work did we accomplish?
1192   ▪   How well did we accomplish our equity objectives?
1193   ▪   Are historically disadvantaged, underserved, and marginalized communities better off?
1194   ▪   How does the community feel about the outcomes of the recovery effort?

1195 Source: Local and Regional Resource Guide, Government Alliance on Race and Equity

1196 ### 📄 Data Supporting Equity, Nebraska

1197 **Disaster Type:** Winter Storm

1198 **Focus:** Developing an Inclusive Long-term Recovery Plan

1199 In March 2019, Winter Storm Ulmer made history as one of the worst winter storms in Great
1200 Plains history. The blizzard caused multiple road closures, resulting in massive travel delays. It
1201 produced destructive straight-line winds and record-breaking flooding. It also set new low-
1202 pressure records due to the development of a bomb cyclone. The impacts of Winter Storm
1203 Ulmer, combined with the conditions from the rainy fall season, resulted in significant losses

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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.

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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.

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

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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. Other actions Nebraska took to ensure an equitable response included:

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- Addressing several equity objectives and strategies in the recovery plan, such as ensuring that it addresses considerations for people with access and functional needs throughout disaster response, recovery, and preparedness.

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- Promoting available services such as deconflicting information about insurance, legal rights and responsibilities, grant programs, and other funding and services available to vulnerable populations.

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- Conducting the assessments and implementing the LIG helped to inform the objectives in the plan and the inclusion of equitable principles and practices.

1229

- Sharing information and connecting groups defined a clearer path and set of objectives.

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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.

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." (Pastor et al. 2006)

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: (1) the assets that people can draw upon in times of need; (2) the flexibility to change strategies; (3) the ability to organize and act collectively; (4) learning to recognize and respond to change; and (5) the agency to determine whether to change or not (Cinner, 2018).

7.1 Organize and Empower Underserved Groups

To build adaptive capacity for disaster recovery in their community, local officials can organize under-served groups to help by:

- Identifying untapped resources and assets not previously offered or accessible to groups due to historical and current discriminatory practices and regulations.
- Providing recommendations for how to level the playing field relative to circumstances.
- 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 (Bandura 1982). 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.
- Establishing intergenerational equity and make sure the actions taken now do not impair or impede the options of future generations (Phillips, 2005).

7.2 Provide Ongoing Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility Training and Education

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 diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility 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

1268 populations). Challenging bias in culture, being proactive, overcoming barriers, and learning to listen
1269 are all part of building an equitable recovery from disaster.
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EQUALITY:
Everyone gets the same—regardless if it's needed or right for them.
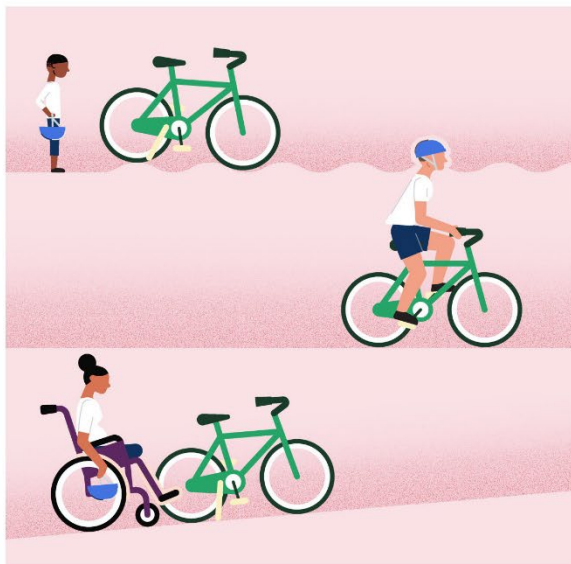
EQUITY:
Everyone gets what they need—understanding the barriers, circumstances, and conditions.
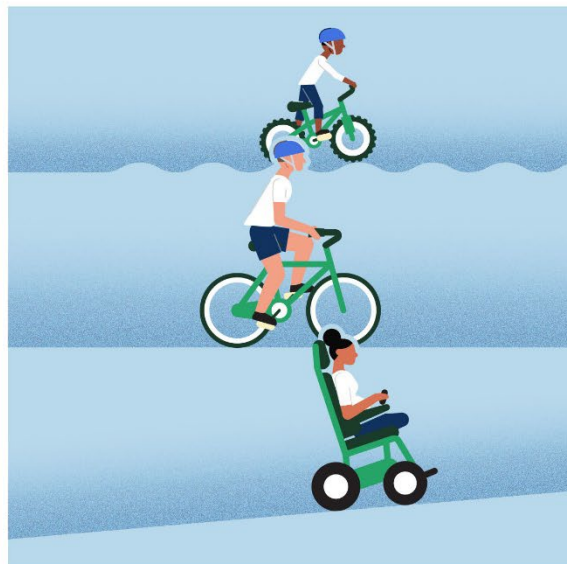
Copyright 2022 Robert Wood Johnson Foundation

1271

1272 **Figure 10. Difference between Equality and Equity (Copyright 20xx Robert Wood Johnson**
1273 **Foundation)**
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1275 As illustrated in **Figure 10**, equality means that each individual or group receives the same
1276 resources and opportunities. Equity recognizes that each person has different circumstances and
1277 allocates resources and opportunities accordingly to reach the optimal outcome.

1278 📁 **Training Resources**

1279 ▪ Building Alliances for Equitable Resilience: Advancing Equitable Resilience through
1280 Partnerships and Diverse Perspectives, FEMA

1281 💡 **Advice to Other LDRMs**

1282 Advocate with your municipalities to create a fund to provide resources when disasters are not
1283 federally declared. Other resources for un-declared disasters include FEMA's Resource
1284 Roadmaps which provide information about federal and non-federal resources.

1285 Recovery Resources, FEMA

Goal 8: Overcome Barriers and Ensure Fair Recovery Outcomes

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1288 "Ensuring social justice by addressing basic human rights, discrimination, exclusion, and
1289 powerlessness can remove enormous individual, familial, and communal stressors." (Fairbank et
1290 al., 2003)

8.1. Honestly and Openly Examine the Barriers to Equity

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1292 Understanding the environment in which recovery planning occurs helps communities remove equity
1293 barriers. There are barriers to equitable recovery at the individual, community, and system levels.
1294 Even with evidence of inequitable disaster impacts and risks, people often dismiss inequities
1295 because "that's the way it has always been," or ignore community hazards because of the benefits to
1296 the economy the hazard provides. **Figure 11** lists examples individual, community, and system
1297 barriers to equity.

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

Community Barriers
- Socially Organized Denial
- Corrosive Communities
- Current Hate Crime Climate
- Political Polarization
- Continuing Effects of the Past (e.g., segregation, slavery, genocide)
- Resistance to Remediation
- High Prevalence of Substance Abuse
- Deaths of Despair

System Barriers
- Overburdened
- Power Disparities
- Racism, Sexism, Ageism
- Learned Helplessness
- Decrease in Social Safety Nets
- Trust
- Victim Blaming
- Low Efficacy
- Low Capital
- Bias

Figure 11. Barriers to Equitable Recovery

1298 It may be difficult for local officials to encourage communities who have been disadvantaged in the
1299 past to participate in disaster preparedness and recovery activities due to learned helplessness.
1300 Learned helplessness can occur when an individual or community continuously faces a negative,
1301 uncontrollable situation and then stops trying to change their circumstances, even if they now can do
1302 so (adapted from Seligman, 1975). Recovery can foster learned helplessness, which is why
1303 employing equitable processes and outcomes is essential to building the resilience of the
1304 community. Overcoming barriers to equity during disaster planning can strengthen a community and
1305 develop an openness, solidarity, and greater resilience to future disasters.

1306 The recent rise in hate crimes is just one indicator of the challenges local recovery officials face.
1307 Individuals in disadvantaged communities are often the target of hate crimes, and survivors are
1308 some of the populations facing disproportionate level of pre-disaster vulnerabilities. Lack of
1309 organized disaster management threatens vulnerable and marginalized populations, as better-
1310 established recovery programs may have a stronger basis to preserve equity in the face of
1311 community challenges. For example, during the COVID-19 pandemic there was a dramatic increase
1312 in hate crimes (**Table 8**) and violence against Asian-Americans and Pacific Islanders. Local leaders
1313 can use the FBI's Crime Data Explorer to investigate hate crimes in their region to identify
1314 communities that may have pre-existing equity challenges which may require additional recovery
1315 resources.

1316
Table 8: Rise of Hate Crimes (FBI)

Year	Number of Hate Crimes
2016	6,063
2017	7,175
2018	7,120
2018	7,103
2020	8,052

1317 # 8.2 Incorporate an Intervention Component

1318 Incorporating an intervention component in equitable recovery work focuses on identifying levels of
1319 support at one or more levels: societal, community, neighborhood, family, and/or individual. As local
1320 officials move from response to recovery, they may need to intervene if they determine community
1321 leaders are failing to support equitable recovery outcomes. Recovery leaders should work with their
1322 health, economic, environmental, legal, and cultural counterparts to identify additional resources

1323 and funding throughout the recovery process. The various levels and types of interventions are
1324 further outlined in **Figure 12**.
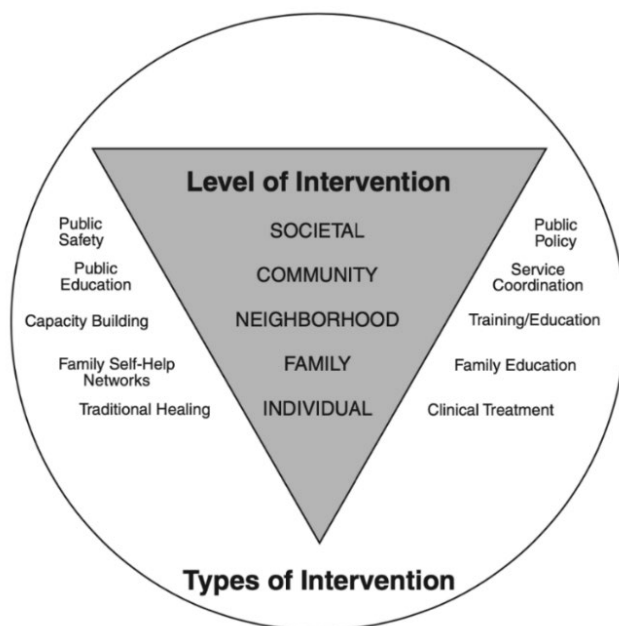
1325 **Figure 12. Types and Levels of Intervention (Fairbank et al., 2003)**

1326 As the recovery process progresses, LDRMs use the system their community created to adjust and
1327 intervene when necessary. By working together and following an intervention plan, local officials will
1328 be able to help break barriers and achieve a successful and equitable recovery.

1329 💡 **A Health Perspective on Interventions**

1330 Health inequities are, in large part, a result of poverty, structural racism, and discrimination.
1331 Interventions with the greatest promise target factors arising from root causes in two clusters:

1332 ▪ Intrapersonal, interpersonal, institutional, and systemic mechanisms that organize the
1333 distribution of power and resources differentially across lines of race, gender, class, sexual
1334 orientation, gender expression, and other dimensions of individual and group identity.
1335 ▪ The unequal allocation of power and resources—including goods, services, and societal
1336 attention—which manifests itself in unequal social, economic, and environmental
1337 conditions, also called the determinants of health.

1338 Source: Robert Wood Johnson Foundation

1339

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Conclusion

1341

1342 Equity in post-disaster recovery relies on coordination and partnership between community leaders,
1343 organizations, governments, and the impacted populations themselves to ensure an inclusive and
1344 fair recovery process. The COVID-19 pandemic has taught LDRMs that public-private partnerships
1345 impact their ability to address crisis effectively and efficiently. The Achieving Equitable Recovery
1346 Guide helps community leaders overcome barriers historically found throughout the disaster
1347 recovery process by providing advice, checklists, toolkits, case studies, and examples on how to
1348 incorporate equity through the recovery process and how to achieve equitable outcomes.

1349 Some communities have experienced substantial and pervasive historical inequities, which can pose
1350 challenges to building trust and establishing relationships. Consequently, it is critical for the whole
1351 community to be engaged in recovery initiatives. Our climate is changing at an unprecedented rate,
1352 spawning diverse and dangerous disasters. Although no community is immune to the impacts of
1353 climate change, local officials must proactively engage with and protect vulnerable communities who
1354 often experience the brunt of its effects. As U.N. Secretary-General António Guterres has noted, with
1355 climate change, "as is always the case, the poor and vulnerable are the first to suffer and the worst
1356 hit."

1357 The National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) states equity means recognizing that
1358 we do not all start from the same place and must acknowledge and make adjustments to
1359 account for imbalances. The process is ongoing, requiring us to identify and overcome
1360 intentional and unintentional barriers arising from bias or systemic structures.

1361 When disasters strike, communities can lose everything. From homes to critical infrastructure
1362 systems to cultural identity, disasters can dismantle both physical and social structures. However, if
1363 restored thoughtfully, resiliently, and equitably, they provide an opportunity for communities to re-
1364 build long lasting inclusivity into all areas of society.

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1482 Appendix A: Checklist for Monitoring
1483 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 LDRM with 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 a federally declared one?				
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?				
Are diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility 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?				

	Yes	No	Unsure	N/A
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?				
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 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?				

	Yes	No	Unsure	N/A
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 System 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**

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Appendix B: Additional Resources

1486

1487 The resources provided are meant solely for informational purposes and are not intended to be an
1488 endorsement of any non-federal entity by FEMA, U.S. Department of Homeland Security, or the U.S.
1489 Government.
1490

Name of Resource	Issued By	Description of Resource
Category 1: Social Services		
Planning for Equity Policy Guide	American Planning Association	APA's first-ever Planning for Equity Policy Guide identifies policy recommendations for planners to advocate for policies that support equity in all aspects of planning at local, state, and federal levels. The Planning for Equity Policy Guide provides specific, actionable policy guidance through an equity lens on cross-cutting topics and areas of planning.
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.
Assessing Social Equity through Social Vulnerability Modeling	Eos: Science News by the American Geophysical Union	Social vulnerability modeling applies knowledge garnered from disaster case studies describing how chronic marginalization translates to disproportionate adverse outcomes to identify the most vulnerable population groups. Such populations often include those living in poverty, the very old and young, minoritized ethnic and racial groups, renters, and recent immigrants. This resource selects demographic variables representing these groups and combines them to construct spatial indicators and indexes that enable comparisons of social vulnerability across places.
Turning the Tide: Advancing Racial Justice in Federal Flood Infrastructure Projects	NAACP	A joint effort between the NAACP's Environmental and Climate Justice Program and the Columbia University Master of Public Administration Environmental Science and Policy Program, this report analyzes the Army Corps of Engineers planning process to determine if the process is equitable. This report also covers the pursuit of racial justice in disaster preparedness and recovery, specifically focusing on equitable flood protection for Black communities.
Core Principles of Equity and Emergency Management	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.
Disaster Justice for All: The Need for a More Equitable and Just Recovery Lens	Natural Hazards Center, University of Colorado Boulder	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. To implement these principles, disaster recovery management and resources will require significant structural changes.
Support Strategies for Socially Marginalized Neighborhoods Likely	Coastal Resilience Center, The University of	This report provides methods to address equity in emergency management mitigation efforts. This report also provides policy recommendations based on a literature review to

Impacted by Natural Hazards	North Carolina at Chapel Hill	provide equitable mitigation resources for marginalized communities.
Racial Equity: Getting to Results	Local and Regional Government Alliance on Race and Equity (GARE)	GARE created a resource guide to model 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.
Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Resources for Local Governments	Municipal Research and Services Center of Washington (MRSC)	The DEI resources page for local governments aggregates resources, tools, and templates for local governments in Washington State. This page provides definitions of key DEI principles, DEI training materials, official states of inclusion, DEI-related data, and public engagement resources and tools.
County Resources on Diversity, Equity & Inclusion	National Association of Counties (NACo)	NACo created a list of resources for counties to reference when implementing DEI into county operations to ensure all county residents have the resources to reach their fullest potential. This resource contains examples of county declarations and resolutions that focus on calling out injustices and advocate for policy changes to ensure racial equity. NACo continuously updates this resource with emerging county resolutions, declarations, and initiatives that promote DEI at the county level.
DEI Resources for Municipal Governments	State of Illinois	Local and regional governments can proactively take steps to advance equity and inclusion in their communities. The DEI Resources for Municipal Governments website provides links to resources to support Chicago-area municipalities in striving for better diversity, equity, and inclusion in their communities.
Hawaii Broadband Strategic Plan	State of Hawaii	The Hawai'i Broadband Strategic Plan 2020 provides guidance to identify and remove barriers to accessing broadband internet for underserved populations. By addressing affordability, increasing public awareness of the value of broadband access, and securing resources to sustain progress, Hawaii can build a more resilient future.
Category 2: Economic Initiatives		
Community Leadership Programs	Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC)	LISC's work hinges on the insight, experience and expertise of hundreds of community development groups rebuilding neighborhoods across the country. 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.
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. Finally, it provides information on specific COVID-19 considerations.
The American Rescue Plan Act: Promoting Equity Through ARPA Implementation	The Kresge Foundation	The American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) and its State and Local Fiscal Recovery Fund (SLFRF) represent an unprecedented response to the COVID-19 pandemic and its negative economic impacts. This landmark legislation has been integral to the country's COVID-19 response and has served as an opportunity for cities to foster long-term economic growth while promoting equity.
Category 3: Disaster Response		

Adopt a Pre-Event Recovery Ordinance	American Planning Association	In the immediate days and weeks following a disaster, it may be difficult to assemble a quorum of the governing body to enact emergency authorizations organizing and directing initial recovery efforts. The Adopt a Pre-Event Recovery Ordinance details an action a community can take in advance of a disaster. Adoption of a pre-event recovery ordinance can help overcome these difficulties and move the community toward better management of post-disaster crises.
Engaging Faith-based and Community Organizations	United States Department of Homeland Security	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. Faith-based and community organizations offer a wide variety of human and material resources that can prove invaluable during and after an incident. Collaborating with these vital community members will allow emergency managers to access a multitude of local resources and ensure members of the whole community can contribute to the disaster resilience effort.
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. By analyzing the common and effective leadership and management skills and techniques that professional managers deploy when a crisis strikes, we can 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.
National Disaster Recovery Framework, 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.
CDC/ATSDR Social Vulnerability Index	Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR)	Social vulnerability refers to the potential negative effects on communities caused by external stresses on human health. Such stresses include natural or human-caused disasters, or disease outbreaks. Reducing social vulnerability can decrease both human suffering and economic loss. The Vulnerability Index uses 16 U.S. census variables to help local officials identify communities that may need support before, during, or after disasters.
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.
Community Resilience Estimates	U.S. Census Bureau	The Community Resilience Estimates (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.

Category 4: Public Health/Healthcare		
[The Public Health Risk Assessment Tool](#)	The Drexel University School of Public Health	The Public Health Risk Assessment Tool (PHRAT) was developed to help public health planners prioritize their planning efforts for emergencies that impact the health of the public. To inform these decisions, the PHRAT guides planners through an analysis of the health-related impacts of various hazards that can occur in their jurisdictions. It 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.
[Healthcare Coalition Recovery Plan Template](#)	Office of the Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response (ASPR)	Recovery after a disaster can be the most prolonged and complex phase of emergency management. Recovery includes the restoration and strengthening of key systems and resource assets that are critical to a community's continued viability. ASPR Technical Resources, Assistance Center, and Information Exchange (TRACIE) developed this template to help healthcare coalitions (HCCs) develop/organize their recovery plan.
[Learn About Heat Islands](#)	United States Environmental Protection Agency (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.
[National Integrated Heat Health Information System (NIHHIS)](#)	National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)	HEAT.gov provides planning, education, and health information regarding extreme heat and its impacts to 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.
[Federal Long-Term Recovery and Resilience Plan Development: Mid-Course Update](#)	Thriving Together	Currently, more than 25 federal agencies actively participate in the Interagency Workgroup developing the Long-Term Recovery and Resilience plan. The purpose of the plan 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 ten years and beyond.
[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.
[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.
Category 5: Climate Change		
[Building Community Resilience with Nature-Based Solutions](#)	FEMA	Nature-based solutions are sustainable planning, design, environmental management, and engineering practices that weave natural features or processes into the built environment to promote adaptation and resilience. Such solutions enlist natural features and processes in efforts to combat climate change, reduce flood risks, improve water quality, protect coastal property, restore and protect wetlands, stabilize shorelines, reduce urban heat, add recreational space, and more.

Guide to Finding Federal Assistance and Resources for Environmental Justice Efforts	The Federal Interagency Working Group on Environmental Justice	The Federal Interagency Working Group on Environmental Justice (EJ IWG) includes several federal agencies and White House offices that increase local community capacity to promote and implement innovative and comprehensive solutions to environmental justice issues. A goal of the EJ IWG is to provide greater public access to federal information and resources, and this resource is part of that effort. This resource shares tips on using Sam.gov and Grants.gov to search for federal assistance and help find the most relevant information.
U.S. Climate Resilience Toolkit – Social Equity	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.
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.
Resilience Analysis and Planning Tool (RAPT)	FEMA	FEMA's Resilience Analysis and Planning Tool provides users with data and Geographic Information System (GIS) mapping layers focused on community resilience indicators, census tract demographic data, layers on climate predictions and equity, and analysis tools.
National Risk Index	FEMA	The National Risk Index is a dataset and online tool created by FEMA that highlights communities most at risk to climate risks. The National Risk Index is an interactive mapping platform and data-based interface with datasets focusing on communities' risks to climate hazards.
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 interviews, the Greenlining Institute identified challenges and provided recommendations for addressing the impacts of climate change at the community level.
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. The Greenlining Institute drafted four steps to make equity real in policies and grant programs to center community needs in adaptation and resilience planning.
A Guide to Equitable, Community-Driven Climate Preparedness Planning	USDN	This adaptation guide, released in 2017, targets achieving equitable outcomes for local governments through inclusive community engagement and addressing the root causes of climate inequity. The goal of this guide is to provide local governments with the tools and guidance to conduct a more inclusive and equitable climate preparedness planning process. The Racial Equity Evaluation Tool accompanies this guide and allows local governments to assess racialized power in climate preparedness planning.
Category 6: Land Use Planning		
Local Government Solutions Guide for	FEMA	This Adaptive Design Local Government Solutions Guide covers three sub-topics that describe short and long-term approaches to community revitalization and development:

COVID-19 and Beyond: Adaptive Design		public space, building, and zoning. All three sections consider the impacts of COVID-19 on how people use community spaces and how local governments can support healthier spaces for community recovery.
Plan Integration: Linking Local Planning Efforts	FEMA	Plan integration is the process by which communities look critically at their existing planning framework and align efforts with the goal of building a safer, smarter community. Plan integration involves a two-way exchange of information and incorporation of ideas and concepts between hazard mitigation plans (state and local) and other community plans. Specifically, plan integration involves the incorporation of hazard mitigation principles and actions into community plans and community planning mechanisms into hazard mitigation plans.
A Guide to Supporting Engagement and Resiliency in Rural Communities	FEMA	Rural communities face a unique set of challenges given their lower population density and larger amounts of undeveloped land. While there is no one-size-fits-all approach to rural communities, this guide is a step towards designing outreach and engagement activities that are authentic and right sized for a particular community to make every community more resilient.
Category 7: Equitable Housing Practices		
Citizen Participation & Equitable Engagement (CPEE) Toolkit	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 our nation's most vulnerable people. It discusses the importance of advancing equity throughout the CDBG-DR lifecycle by going beyond the program's citizen participation requirements, as necessary, to truly involve communities in their own recovery.
Fair Housing and Equity Assessment / National Equity Atlas	HUD	HUD designed the Fair Housing and Equity Assessment tool to assist grantee communities in evaluating access to opportunity in their regions, particularly as it pertains to infrastructure and housing. Successful grantees completed a thorough data analysis, facilitated deliberation of the data by community stakeholders, led a collaborative decision-making process, and set priorities for investment to address adverse neighborhood and environmental conditions, often resulting from historic patterns of discrimination. The National Equity Atlas is an online tool that equips policymakers with data to track and measure demographic changes and indicators of racial and economic inclusion at the regional, state, and national level.
VA Homeless Programs	U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA)	The VA and other programs that serve Veterans experiencing homelessness are available to assist during natural disasters and other emergency events. VA staff are familiar with community agencies, local neighborhoods, resources available from VA and other sources, and key people responsible for coordinating city, county, and state disaster response. The resources and services listed within this resource are available for Veterans in need of assistance during a natural disaster or other emergency.
Where We Live NYC Plan	City of New York	Where We Live NYC Plan is New York City's comprehensive plan to advance fair housing through 2025. This plan defines fair housing and provides resources on fair housing rights in New York City.
Redlining and Neighborhood Health	National Community Reinvestment	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,

	Coalition (NCRC)	and social policies to address and eliminate risks resulting from greater historic redlining.

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1494 Appendix C: Case Studies and
1495 Community Examples

1496 The examples provided in this Appendix are meant solely for informational purposes and are not
1497 intended to be an endorsement of any non-federal entity by FEMA, U.S. Department of Homeland
1498 Security, or the U.S. Government.

1499 Introduction

1500 Appendix C includes Case Studies and Community Examples of incorporating equity in the recovery
1501 process. Case studies outlined in Appendix C include a Background; Challenges; Actions; Lessons
1502 Learned/Best Practices Outcomes; and Additional Resources.

1503 These case studies are examples of equity in action throughout the recovery process. The intention
1504 of these examples is to illustrate the information discussed within this Guide, by presenting various
1505 actions and experiences used successfully in real world events. The selected examples represent a
1506 variety of disaster types, and include impacted tribal governments, states, and localities, thus
1507 providing potential starting points and ideas for incorporating equity into other communities'
1508 recovery operations.

1509 These examples are not intended to mandate replication in other communities, but are simply case
1510 studies which highlight innovative practices in areas such as:

1511 ▪ Historic and cultural awareness to inform planning;
1512 ▪ Intentional building of community trust;
1513 ▪ Understanding of differing impacts on vulnerable communities;
1514 ▪ Planning for equity using federal advisors;
1515 ▪ Using technology to leverage data for inclusive long-term recovery planning; and
1516 ▪ Incorporating equity principles from recovery initiation and throughout long-term community
1517 planning.

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Equity in Action: Oglala Lakota COVID-19 Disaster Assistance Delivery

On February 16, 2022, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Equity Coalition of the Willing, Office of Response and Recovery (ORR) Core Values Team, and Women's Employee Resource Group (FERG) interviewed a panel of leaders from the Oglala Lakota Tribal Nation to learn from their outstanding efforts that ensured the safety and care of all community members during the COVID-19 pandemic. This case study commemorates the lessons learned and shared by the following panel members: Davidica LittleSpottedHorse, Oglala District COVID-19 Task Force Member; Karin Eagle, former Public Information Officer; Shawnee Red Bear, former Incident Command Logistics Chief; and Steve Wilson, Director of Emergency Management.

Tribal Nation History and Values

The Oglala, meaning "to scatter one's own" in Lakota, are one of the seven bands of the Titowan (Lakota) people who, along with the Dakota, comprise the Očhéthi Šakówiŋ (Seven Council Fires), also referred to as the Great Sioux Nation. Pine Ridge Reservation, located in southwestern South Dakota, is the home of the Oglala Lakota Nation. They are a nation known for having great warriors with a rich culture and history. They defeated the United States in combat in the famous Red Cloud's war, which led to the signing of the Fort Laramie Treaty of 1868.

This nation also has an independent constitution, legal system, and supreme court. Their government manages relations with the United States directly. The nation is a tight-knit community with 48,000 members on the reservation system and nearly 60,000 tribal members in total. The Lakota people place high priority on community and taking care of one another, which creates a strong degree of social trust. Lakota people think in generations, considering how their decisions will affect their children and great grandchildren. A core Lakota value is "true generosity", the belief in giving without expecting anything in return. These values guide the governance decisions made by the Tribal Council and every community member.

Approach to Response: Safety of Community Members First

Travel Restrictions, Border Control, School, and Business Closures

The Oglala Lakota Tribal Nation took drastic measures to protect its community at the onset of the pandemic. At the death of the first COVID-19 victim, the tribe held a traditional funeral where the new disease spread "like wildfire." Nearly 30 additional patients tested positive for COVID-19 after

1599   this incident, and the tribal government knew they would have to act quickly to prevent further loss
1600   of life among vulnerable community members.

1601   The nation immediately formed a COVID-19 task force to ensure that tribal members were protected,
1602   and their basic needs met. The task force and Tribal Council canceled and shut down all non-
1603   essential work and travel, impacting badly needed sources of income for impoverished households
1604   and creating emotional stress as families were unable to see each other. Only grocery stores and gas
1605   stations were allowed to remain open during the first two months. The tribe's judicial and border
1606   control teams also enforced the closure of a U.S. highway within the tribe's borders to further restrict
1607   the spread of COVID-19 within the tribe's population.

1608   "Making sure that people had the basic necessities – food, water, heating – was so important.
1609   We had to be brave enough to take on roles that we were not accustomed to, but we knew how
1610   to be Lakota and take care of each other." – Karin Eagle

1611   "If we were going to ask our people to stay home and shelter in place, then we needed to do
1612   whatever we could to make that easier on them." – Davidica LittleSpottedHorse

1613   All tribal employees, educational, and health workers continued to receive paychecks during the
1614   shutdown. Hazard pay was provided for any essential workers, such as police officers, emergency
1615   managers, and grocers.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Challenges Faced Mobilizing Pandemic Response

1618   ▪ **Uncertain Risks:** Initially it was uncertain how deadly the new virus was; however, early data from
1619   the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) indicated that Native Americans were
1620   experiencing some of the highest rates of transmission and severe outcomes. Getting community
1621   members to take the virus seriously was difficult amid conflicting information.
1622   ▪ **Economic Hardship:** Before the pandemic hit, the Oglala Lakota already had the second highest
1623   poverty rate of any county in the country, with 46.2% of residents under the federal poverty line.
1624   ▪ **Capacity Gaps:** When the pandemic started, the tribe had no Emergency Operations Plans (EOPs)
1625   in place to address the threats of a pandemic. The task force initially had only ten members.
1626   ▪ **Funding Constraints:** The emergency management department had no funding to provide
1627   resources households needed to quarantine safely and effectively. Finding funding and capacity
1628   for delivering food, rental, and utility bill assistance remained a large challenge throughout the
1629   pandemic.
1630   ▪ **Supply Chain Delays:** There were shipping delays in obtaining critical resources for the tribe's
1631   pandemic response, including personal protective equipment (PPE), cleaning supplies, and food.
1632   ▪ **Lack of Broadband:** The Oglala Lakota Tribal Nation is in a rural area of southwestern South
1633   Dakota. Only 45.2% of households owned a computer with broadband internet access before the
1634   pandemic, making remote schooling, tele-health services, or tele-work non-viable options without
1635   large investments.
1636   ▪ **Geographic:** The reservation is made up of nine separate districts on multiple reservations, each
1637   with their own leadership. The reservations span over 1.7 million acres and take three hours to

1638   drive across. Households can live quite remotely, making it challenging to physically check in on
1639   households and deliver goods.
1640 ▪ **Information Management:** One of the biggest challenges faced by the task force was
1641   understanding what would be effective in communicating the importance of and enforcing travel
1642   and socialization restrictions. The tribe would need to keep the public informed using the Lakota
1643   radio station, social media, YouTube, and phone calls.

1644 Approach to Assistance: Trust, Generosity, and Dignity

1645 An Application Process Designed to Build Trust

1646 Tribal members were emotionally stressed from the disruption of the pandemic and felt isolated;
1647 family connection is an enormous part of wellbeing within their culture. Taking this emotional trauma
1648 into account, the COVID-19 task force developed a straightforward application for receiving
1649 assistance. The tribe asked for just two pieces of information: the number of people in the household
1650 and what they needed during lockdown (food, rent money, gas, medicine, etc.). Later, to provide
1651 economic assistance as well, the task force collected names of individuals at each address to get
1652 them the required resources.

1653 *"How can you ask a survivor to trust our agency, if our agency does not trust the survivor? Asking
1654 for help is hard, so we wanted to ensure everyone knew the task force was here for them.
1655 Making assistance accessible without shame was critical. ... People were at the heart of our
1656 efforts."* – Davidica LittleSpottedHorse

1657 The tribe's application process never required income verification to ensure that pandemic
1658 assistance would be easily and quickly accessible to anyone who needed it. Because tribal members
1659 believe in true generosity and karma, the panelists said they were not concerned with how survivors
1660 spent the financial assistance provided. "What we do is on us, and what they do is on them,"
1661 explained Davidica LittleSpottedHorse.

1662 After federal legislation made financial assistance available to tribes later in 2020, the tribe held
1663 firm to their use of a simple aid distribution system. Federal funding – routed through traditional and
1664 supplemental allocations under treaty rights via the U.S. Department of Interior – was provided as a
1665 lump sum after negotiations overcame federal concerns about who would receive assistance. The
1666 eligibility criteria remained open to all within the Oglala-Lakota Tribal Nation, embracing Fairness,
1667 Compassion, and Trust.

1668 Breadth of Assistance Provided to Impacted Households

1669 The task force aided everyone in the community, helping them overcome challenges to ensure basic
1670 needs and even bills were taken care of. The task force started by ensuring that all households had
1671 food supplies during the lockdown. Though they had no resources for providing food to households,
1672 they reached out to regional non-profit organizations to find out what was possible. They utilized
1673 volunteers and partnerships formed with a few 501-C-3 charities to organize resources and deliver
1674 packages to every single household on lockdown – over 10,000 in total – with food, cleaning

1675 supplies and information on how to take care of their health. This system kept everyone connected,
1676 informed, and safe.

1677 In addition to food, toiletries, and medicines, the task force ultimately also provided direct financial
1678 assistance, paid households' rent, electric, and utilities bills, and provided other essentials like
1679 propane or firewood for heat on cold nights. The Tribal Council funded the rental, utility, and fuel
1680 assistance program from June to December 2020. Through federal funding received in 2021, the
1681 tribal nation was able to provide additional financial and childcare assistance to tribal members.

1682 The task force aimed to set households up for success when they had to quarantine for two weeks
1683 due to a positive COVID-19 test result, so they wouldn't have to go out for anything. This was very
1684 important to reduce the spread of the virus in a context where multiple families (sometimes up to
1685 10) often live in one house.

1686 If an individual tested positive, a point of contact would be assigned to their household. The
1687 individual could call the point of contact anytime 24/7 if they needed anything. They would gather
1688 information about the people in the affected household, dietary restrictions, prescriptions, etc. and
1689 drop off two weeks' worth of provisions at their door. If the individual had to miss work and needed
1690 help with rent or utility bills, the task force would pay those. If other members of the household had
1691 not been exposed, they could choose to quarantine alone in a tribe-provided modular home,
1692 equipped with internet and other comforts they would need during the next two weeks – all at no
1693 cost. This made the quarantine process more manageable for COVID-19 survivors and greatly
1694 reduced transmission.

Day Labor Program Provides Work People Are Proud Of

1695

1696 The backbone of the tribe's assistance delivery and recovery measures was the day labor program.
1697 The task force quickly realized they would need more hands-on-deck to support their aid distribution
1698 and sanitation efforts.

1699 The tribe already had an 80% unemployment rate before the pandemic; closing all business activity
1700 in the nation caused even greater hardship. People who wanted to provide for their families were
1701 frustrated by the shelter-in-place protocols. The creation of the day labor program allowed the
1702 government to hire hourly employees to load tons of perishable food onto trucks, conduct deliveries
1703 to impacted households, collect trash, fix roads and walkways to ensure safe delivery routes, and
1704 conduct home repairs for the elderly, among other public works.

1705 "The first day we had 100 people show up! This showed the need for job opportunities and the
1706 commitment of our workforce. The community saw these people working – creating sidewalks,
1707 mending fences, creating safe walking spaces, clearing their yards – and were very grateful.
1708 These people showed up to work repeatedly every day. This program helps families; not just
1709 monetarily but gives the whole family a sense of pride." – Karin Eagle

1710 This program gave people a purpose and opportunity to help at a time when people were feeling low,
1711 greatly boosting morale. A key was that it was easy for people to sign up to work. Every person who

1712 showed up was put to work right away. They didn't have to demonstrate prior skills or experience and
1713 gained valuable skills on the job.

1714 The Oglala Lakota developed plans to re-open schools and businesses safely and were able to lift
1715 restrictions gradually in early 2021.

1716 Lasting Lessons Learned in Emergency Management

1717 ▪ The Oglala Lakota's measures prevented widespread deaths from COVID-19 seen in other tribal
1718   nations.
1719 ▪ Considering the culture, psychological health and wellbeing of survivors should come first when
1720   providing disaster assistance.
1721 ▪ Assuming that everyone in an impacted area needs assistance, instead of putting the burden of
1722   proof on impacted households, enabled the nation to reduce suffering and meet the urgent
1723   needs of families. Truly putting people first in their process.
1724 ▪ Incident recovery is an opportunity to boost local employment and professional development
1725   prospects. Putting people to work on community projects can help heal emotional stress caused
1726   by disruption.

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

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1731

1732
1733 **Figure 13. Rockaway Peninsula, Queens, New York (Joe Mabel/Creative Commons)**

Background

1735 In 2012, the low-lying urban neighborhood of Edgemere, on the Rockway Peninsula within the
1736 borough of Queens in New York City (NYC), experienced severe wave action and storm surge from
1737 Hurricane Sandy. After Hurricane Sandy, NYC engaged in a community-driven planning process and
1738 implemented multiple voluntary relocation projects in Edgemere (**Figure 13**) to reduce flood risks
1739 and move people out of harm's way. Widespread damage and regular tidal floods, coupled with
1740 longstanding public ownership of vacant land in the neighborhood, presented an opportunity to plan
1741 for a stronger, more resilient future.

Challenges

1743 ▪ Edgemere was an underserved and ignored neighborhood (the paved roads became dirt roads
1744   due to no infrastructure investment).
1745 ▪ Distrust of the NYC Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD) and city
1746   government.

1747 ▪ Different perspectives and tension between homeowners and NYCHA (NYC Housing Authority)
1748 residents. The NYCHA development was not one of the better developments, housing a very poor
1749 resident base in substandard conditions.
1750 ▪ Possibly not the first time the government has presented a plan and discussed new ideas for
1751 redevelopment but failed to follow up on actions.

1752 # Actions

1753 The HPD launched the Resilient Edgemere Community Planning Initiative in October 2015 as a
1754 collaboration between city agencies, community members, elected officials, and local organizations.
1755 The Resilient Edgemere Community Plan lays out a long-term vision for achieving a more resilient
1756 neighborhood with improved housing, transportation access, and neighborhood amenities. The plan
1757 was created in parallel with **Build It Back**, a citywide housing recovery program funded by the U.S.
1758 Department of Housing and Urban Development. One of the 65 distinct projects included in the plan
1759 was a "land swap" pilot project to provide buyout and relocation assistance to residents within a
1760 "Hazard Mitigation Zone" (HMZ), an area of Edgemere at risk of destructive wave action during
1761 storms. Through the land swap pilot project, Edgemere residents within a HMZ were eligible to
1762 receive a newly built, elevated home on safer ground. In exchange, residents would transfer title of
1763 their damaged, original homes to the city. The damaged homes would be demolished, and the lots
1764 maintained as open space that enhances Edgemere's future flood resilience and may become part
1765 of passive recreational amenities in the future.

1766 The plan is notable for being developed through an 18-month public engagement process that
1767 placed residents, who best understand their community, at the center of an open and transparent
1768 neighborhood planning process. **Resilient Edgemere** can provide an example of how local
1769 governments can transition affected residents away from vulnerable areas by helping people
1770 relocate nearby and simultaneously build community resilience and help to maintain community
1771 cohesion and local tax bases.

1772 Demographics (race/ethnicity and income) - The Edgemere study area has a total population of
1773 18,100 people, largely comprised of non-Hispanic Black (60%) and Latinx (32%) residents. The
1774 neighborhood median household income is the lowest on the peninsula at $30,400, compared to
1775 $44,000 for the peninsula at large and $55,000 in New York City.

1776 # Lessons Learned/Best Practices Outcomes

1777 ▪ During initial presentations to the community, there was intentional framing of the history of
1778 racism in planning and urban renewal (this helps build trust when the city and/or a government
1779 entity recognizes past discriminatory and institutionalized racist practices).
1780 ▪ Very low-lying marsh land is unfit for housing. NYCHA development on substandard land was a
1781 past error.
1782 ▪ HPD and the City dedicated resources to areas that had been neglected in the past.
1783 ▪ NYCHA residents were provided opportunities to participate as leaders, despite the tensions and
1784 the influence of homeowners.

1785
1786

- ▪ There were concerns about investing in a low-lying area after Hurricane Sandy, but instead of abandoning the neighborhood, the focus shifting to protecting unsafe areas.

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Winter Storm Elmer, Nebraska, 2019: Data Supporting Equity

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1790

1791 The state of Nebraska used equity-focused data from different studies to identify communities that
1792 were impacted by severe winter weather with special attention to those considered high in
1793 vulnerability prior to the event. This information was used to map out relief efforts and inform
1794 stakeholder engagement activities.

1795 **Figure 14. Highway 39 Bridge South of Genoa, Nebraska (State of Nebraska)**

Background

1796

1797 In March 2019, Winter Storm Ulmer made history as one of the worst winter storms in Great Plains
1798 history. The blizzard resulted in massive delays in travel due to multiple road closures. It produced
1799 destructive straight-line winds and record-breaking flooding. It also set new low-pressure records due
1800 to bomb cyclone development.

1801 For Nebraska specifically, losses were widespread and devastating across the entire state. Damage
1802 to infrastructure was significant in southeastern regions where much of the population is
1803 concentrated. Damage to agriculture and related infrastructure was centralized in western regions of
1804 the state. The storm effects were also exacerbated due to the state having experienced the fifth
1805 wettest rainfall on record prior to this event. It contributed to record flooding because of a high water
1806 table, saturated snowpack, and heavy frost. Seven different rivers experienced floods that were the

1807   worst the region had experienced in 50 years. All interstates in the Nebraska panhandle were shut
1808   down including parts of I-80, I-70, and I-76.

1809   The entire state continued to see the impacts of the storm for nine months after the blizzard;
1810   furthermore, it was the coldest winter on record reported in the last 100 years. As with every
1811   disaster, some areas were affected more than others. This was a catalyst in the state conducting a
1812   Baseline Conditions and Impact Assessment (BCIA) as well as a Social Vulnerability Assessment
1813   (SVA) to map out the damage across the state.

1814   Challenges

1815   The impacts of Winter Storm Ulmer, combined with the conditions from the rainy fall season, resulted
1816   in significant losses across the state. Given the widespread scale of the disaster, Nebraska not only
1817   needed to assess damage quickly, but the state also needed to determine how best to deploy
1818   resources efficiently, fast, and equitably. The following factors posed a challenge to this:

1819   ▪ **Scale of Event:** Winter Storm Ulmer severely impacted all of Nebraska. State and local
1820   governments needed to identify where damages occurred quickly. Due to the widespread nature
1821   of this storm, information was needed on where the most severe impacts were located along
1822   with insights into how these impacts affected vulnerable populations. Such information was
1823   critical to prioritize recovery efforts and resources. As this storm impacted critical travel and
1824   communication infrastructure, this information was challenging to obtain.
1825   ▪ **Multiple and Varied Stakeholders:** The widespread damage throughout the state affected many
1826   different groups and populations in different ways. It was recognized that communities faced
1827   different impacts depending on a variety of factors, such as urban versus rural areas, income
1828   level, and other factors such as age. There were numerous stakeholders that support the unique
1829   challenges (e.g., housing support, food banks) of vulnerable and underserved populations, such
1830   as community groups, non-governmental organizations, and volunteer organizations. Being able
1831   to understand and specifically address these challenges proved to be a complex task.
1832   ▪ **Confusion Around Grant Guidelines:** Due to the severity of the storm damage, there were many
1833   different grants that were available for communities to apply for. However, the number, type, and
1834   guidelines for application were often confusing. Additionally, many local counties were
1835   overwhelmed by the storm and had limited capacity to navigate the application processes and
1836   associated requirements.

1837   Actions

1838   The State of Nebraska contracted a consulting firm to help create a Long-Term Recovery Plan to
1839   guide the process of rebuilding. Further, to ensure an equitable response, certain objectives were
1840   set, and certain actions were taken throughout the recovery process. Specific actions included:

1841   ▪ The state conducted a BCIA, which sought to catalogue and measure disaster impacts to
1842   communities and families in Nebraska. This report focused on vulnerable populations and
1843   included an SVA to identify communities that would face disproportionate impacts.

1844 ▪ In addition to standing up the federal RSF, Nebraska also established a LIG. This group helped
1845 connect advocacy groups and other community organizations throughout the state with state and
1846 local agencies and the RSFs. This helped ensure that a variety of voices were heard and that all
1847 communities had an opportunity to influence the recovery planning process. The group included
1848 representatives from organizations with a strong understanding of local realities such as the
1849 Nebraska Association of County Officials, the League of Nebraska Municipalities, and the state's
1850 active long-term recovery groups.
1851 ▪ Several of the recovery objectives and strategies included in the recovery plan directly addressed
1852 equity, such as:
1853 – Ensuring that considerations for people with access and functional needs are addressed
1854 throughout disaster response, recovery, and preparedness.
1855 – Promoting available services and deconflicting information about insurance, legal rights and
1856 responsibilities, grant programs, and other funding and services available to individuals,
1857 including vulnerable populations.
1858 ▪ The BCIA and SVA provided data to help define the recovery strategies.
1859 ▪ The LIG ensured that communities immediate and long-term concerns were understood.

Outcomes
1860

1861 The work of the BICA and the SVA provided a clearer picture of the communities' characteristics
1862 throughout the state by combining impacts and cross-referencing data regarding socioeconomic
1863 vulnerability. As a result of this data, the state and its partners could more efficiently identify the
1864 communities that were considered highly vulnerable before the disaster or the communities that may
1865 have been impacted disproportionally from the disaster. This also allowed the state to begin
1866 strategizing where and how to allocate resources according to socioeconomic impact and not just
1867 according to damage assessments. This was particularly helpful due to the statewide impact of the
1868 blizzard. For example, learning where there were renters versus homeowners allowed for the state to
1869 consider interventions that would be more beneficial to that population, as many federal programs
1870 for rebuilding are geared to homeowners.

1871 The **BCIA and SVA** provided data to help define the recovery strategies.

1872 The **LIG** ensured that communities' immediate and long-tern concerns were understood.

1873 This work also helped inform the formation and purview of the LIG. Winter Storm Ulmer was the first
1874 time that Nebraska implemented the RSFs. The LIG worked with the RSFs and served as the link
1875 between communities, organizations, and officials across the state. It ensured that local
1876 communities gained insight and influence throughout the recovery planning and implementation
1877 process. Furthermore, the LIG helped connect RSFs with non-profit entities who could assist with
1878 recovery efforts, as they were able to communicate the impact realities facing communities on the
1879 ground. As a result, non-profit disaster organizations were able to identify and plan for the most
1880 strategic use and deployment of their resources, which were often from outside the state.

1881 Conducting the assessments and implementing the LIG helped inform the objectives in the plan and
1882 the inclusion of equitable principles and practices. The sharing of information and connection of

1883   groups defined a clearer path and set of objectives. From this input objectives were created to
1884   ensure that considerations for vulnerable, disadvantaged, and underserved populations were
1885   addressed, through codifying the promotion of accessible and available services and programs.

1886   # Lessons Learned

1887   ▪ The data gathered in reports such as a BCIA and SVA can be further analyzed to provide a more
1888   robust picture of disaster impacts and should be completed as early as possible in the disaster
1889   recovery planning process.
1890   ▪ Integrating the understanding of the disaster impacts with social vulnerability helps decision
1891   makers gain further insights into how to effectively deploy resources based on the potential
1892   impact to communities. Leveraging social vulnerability concepts helps to provide a different lens
1893   for how to view providing community recovery support.
1894   ▪ Having a LIG, in addition to the RSFs, was key to communities feeling included in the recovery
1895   planning process. Communities should be encouraged to develop similar groups/organizations
1896   for future disasters.

1897   # Additional Resources

1898   ▪ Long-Term Recovery, Nebraska Emergency Management Agency
1899   ▪ Baseline Conditions and Impact Assessment Report, Nebraska Emergency Management Agency

Equity in Action: The IRC Equity Advisor

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1901

1902 This document provides content and learning exercises that can be tailored to the needs of various
1903 Interagency Recovery Coordination (IRC) cadre courses. It highlights a wildfire recovery effort and
1904 one approach taken by field leadership to advance equity in disaster recovery operations.

Background

1905

1906 In 2020, wildfires burned over 1.2 million acres across the State of Oregon, decimating forests,
1907 communities, and thousands of homes and businesses. The state received a Major Disaster
1908 Declaration on September 15, 2020, with eight counties eligible for FEMA Individual Assistance, 20
1909 counties eligible for FEMA Public Assistance, and all counties statewide eligible for Hazard Mitigation
1910 assistance. Both state and Joint Field Office (JFO) leadership expressed a desire to apply an equity
1911 lens to DR-4562-OR recovery efforts, building off recent efforts to provide equitable COVID- 19
1912 assistance. This led to the Federal Coordinating Officer (FCO) requesting and deploying FEMA's first
1913 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 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 Executive Order requires agencies to "recognize and work to redress inequities in their policies and programs that serve as barriers to equal opportunity."
>
> The executive order 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."

Challenges

1914

1915 This was the State of Oregon's first activation of its state recovery framework. State leaders wanted
1916 to ensure that impacted populations had equitable access to federal and state assistance and that
1917 state programs were closing gaps in survivors' needs that were not eligible for federal assistance.
1918 They were committed to equity and sought assistance on turning that commitment into concrete
1919 operational decisions and actions. The agencies leading the State Recovery Functions (SRFs) had

1920   limited prior experience with disaster recovery management and lacked practical experience of
1921   incorporating equity considerations into the state's approach to disaster recovery.

1922   FEMA and the State of Oregon faced a challenging disaster environment amid the COVID-19
1923   pandemic. Traditional in-person engagement with survivors, agencies, and local partners remained
1924   limited, creating barriers to disseminating information about available recovery resources and
1925   engaging community members in the recovery process.

1926   Data and information sharing between state agencies and federal partners was another key
1927   challenge. Concerns on privacy and data sharing with state, local, and non-governmental
1928   organizations impact FEMA's ability to use the best data to inform decision making, provide
1929   adequate support for unmet needs, and reduce duplication of effort between recovery partners.
1930   Officials noted that more streamlined data and information sharing processes, consistent datasets,
1931   and accessible tools were needed to better understand and target community-level issues to deliver,
1932   monitor, and measure equitable recovery.

1933   Actions

1934   The IRC Equity Officer pursued a multi-pronged approach to advance understanding of equity and
1935   embed equity at the heart of operational decisions. The advisor (1) held brown-bag sessions on
1936   equity to assist FEMA personnel with understanding their role in advancing equitable recovery
1937   outcomes, (2) engaged the SRFs and unified their efforts to identify vulnerable communities with
1938   unmet needs, (3) provided technical assistance to state agencies on how to incorporate equity into
1939   recovery objectives, and (4) engaged with external partners to connect resources and build
1940   partnerships to improve outcomes for future disasters.

1941   The IRC Equity Advisor used an appreciative inquiry approach based on listening and partnership
1942   building with internal and external partners. Appreciative inquiry is a strengths-based, positive
1943   approach that helped partners recognize and pursue a shared vision for Oregon's recovery.

1944   The IRC Equity Advisor was part of a Disaster Operations Coalition for Equity in coordination with the
1945   FCO, Civil Rights Advisor, Disability Integration Advisor, Alternative Dispute Resolution, Operations
1946   Section Chief, and program leads. The IRC Equity Advisor engaged with leaders from key program
1947   areas across the JFO and held IRC teach-backs with discussion topics such as language access,
1948   tribal affairs, or disability integration. Internal engagement focused on supporting a greater
1949   understanding of equity, collaboration and resource sharing across program areas, and improved
1950   outcomes through the application of the equity lens. The FCO and IRC Equity Advisor cultivated an
1951   equity "lunch and learn" series that provided an open forum for cross-program engagement that
1952   helped the workforce ask questions and understand how they could apply equity into their day-to-day
1953   program areas to achieve tangible results. The lunch and learns were highly successful, with no less
1954   than 50 employees engaging at each session and staff from other JFOs, Regions, and headquarters
1955   participating as word spread across disaster operations.

1956   The IRC Equity Advisor directly collaborated with state leadership from all State Recovery Function
1957   agencies to assess the unique needs of each impacted community and determine the scope
1958   required to achieve equitable outcomes. The SRFs worked with the IRC Equity Advisor in applying an

1959   equity lens to existing state/county-level demographic and impact data and qualitative information
1960   gained through coordination with local partners. This approach helped them identify especially hard
1961   hit and vulnerable populations, and potential recovery barriers those populations were facing. The
1962   advisor provided final recommendations for state leadership to incorporate equity into the Integrated
1963   Strategic Recovery Plan that set the foundation for operational decisions throughout the disaster
1964   recovery phase.

1965 # Results

1966   The IRC Equity Advisor and the partnerships they formed advanced implementation of equity
1967   objectives and were crucial in addressing disparities in the delivery of disaster assistance for
1968   survivors.

1969   ▪ **The State has enhanced adoption and coordination of equity efforts in disaster management.**
1970   – The FEMA IRC team and Senior Policy Advisor coordinated the adoption of the state and
1971   federal Integrated Strategic Recovery Plan (ISRP), within the first few months of the event,
1972   which aligned SRFs to identified goals related to equity and reinforced the integrated
1973   operations approach to support outcome driven recovery solutions across all program areas.
1974   Examples of some of the SRF goals and activities were:
1975   ▪ SRF 1: Help local governments plan for strategic rebuilding to create a more healthy,
1976   equitable, resilient, and prosperous future
1977   ▪ SRF 1: Help local governments engage a diverse population with a focus on historically
1978   marginalized communities throughout the recovery planning
1979   ▪ SRF 4: Stabilize and seek resources to maintain sheltering and feeding activities for
1980   population that do not qualify for federal relief and housing benefits
1981   – As a result of the IRC Equity Advisor's work, state agencies also report having greater
1982   awareness of how they can leverage each other's ongoing efforts to maximize effectiveness
1983   on recovery efforts moving forward.
1984   – The Oregon Office of Emergency Management (OEM) is incorporating recommendations from
1985   the IRC Equity Advisor and its own lessons learned on equity and inclusivity into its revision of
1986   the state's Integrated Strategic Recovery Plan and intends to present the findings to the
1987   Governor. OEM and SRF leads developed a shared understanding of equity for adoption in
1988   the state recovery plan.
1989   – In addition, the state's Climate Adaptation Framework now centers on equity and will be
1990   incorporated into the State Hazard Mitigation Plan.
1991   ▪ **Oregon built significant recovery capacity because of its partnership with FEMA on DR-4562-OR.**
1992   In partnership with FEMA Region 10, Oregon OEM is standing up a steady-state recovery team, a
1993   permanent philanthropic advisor, and an equity advisor position to continue the recovery work
1994   initiated during this operation.
1995   ▪ **Local governments are pursuing equity frameworks for their recovery planning efforts.** For
1996   example, Lane County was one of the most impacted communities by the 2020 wildfires. The
1997   wildfires destroyed 615 homes within 9 unincorporated rural river communities in the burn scar.
1998   According to a HUD impact report, 57% of Lane County renters were experiencing rent burden
1999   before the wildfires, which is well above average in Oregon. Rent burden is defined as paying
2000   more than 30% of a household's income for housing. The county also has the highest population

2001   of people in Oregon experiencing homelessness before the wildfires, with 2,165 individuals
2002   affected in 2019. Accessing affordable housing was a pre-existing challenge exacerbated by the
2003   wildfires and remains a top priority for the county government. As a result of the IRC Equity
2004   Officer's engagement and embedding FEMA Community Assistance (formerly Community
2005   Planning and Capacity Building) staff early in communities, the Community Assistance RSF
2006   partnered with Lane County in January 2022 to help the government establish an equity
2007   framework for its recovery efforts, to include, improving housing access for those most affected
2008   by the wildfires.

2009 # Lessons Learned

2010 - **Equity efforts are most successful when there is a coalition among field leaders and a focus on**
2011   **partnerships.** The IRC Equity Advisor notes that the support of the Disaster Operations Coalition
2012   for Equity—comprised on this operation of the FCO, Civil Rights Advisor, Disability Integration
2013   Advisor, Alternative Dispute Resolution, Operations Section Chief, Equity Advisor, and program
2014   leads—was key to success. The partnerships the IRC Equity Advisor built with dozens of non-
2015   governmental, non-profit, and community-based organizations were crucial to help address
2016   unmet needs at the local level. The Equity Advisor cannot be successful alone.

2017 - **FEMA should deploy equity advisors to assist state recovery functions in defining their goals,**
2018   **objectives and needs and in implementing planned actions.** The IRC Equity Officer role was
2019   deployed 10 months into the operation, when most SRFs were preparing to stand down. The
2020   SRFs noted that had an equity advisor been available earlier—such as when they were first
2021   assessing needs and forming recovery objectives—there would have been greater success in
2022   achieving the state's goal of making equity an explicit priority in recovery objectives, strategies,
2023   and program distribution/scopes of work.

2024 - **JFO staff need to have a common definition and understanding of what equity is** and how it can
2025   be applied to day-to-day operations before an equity lens can be integrated into disaster recovery
2026   efforts. An Equity Advisor can play a key role in starting the conversation among teams to build
2027   understanding of what equity means to them. Thus, the IRC Equity Advisor needs to be someone
2028   who can communicate with and educate internal and external partners on what equity is and
2029   how it applies to their role as they support disaster recovery.

2030 - **The IRC Equity Advisor role greatly assisted in the roll-out of the integrated operations approach.**
2031   The use of an Equity Advisor increased collaboration among deployed FEMA teams and improved
2032   their understanding of both equity and the resources available from the JFO, federal agencies,
2033   and non-governmental partners to achieve equitable outcomes.

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

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2036
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2038

Background

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2040 Hurricanes Irma and María both impacted Puerto Rico in September 2017, causing catastrophic
2041 destruction across the island. The Community Assistance RSF, led by FEMA, was deployed in January
2042 2018 to provide recovery planning and technical support aimed at building communities' capacity
2043 and resilience through the long-term recovery process. The CA team immediately conducted a
2044 Community Conditions Assessment (CCA), which pulls together holistic data on capacity, vulnerability
2045 and impact conditions of all communities impacted by the disaster. The CCA identified 22 priority
2046 high-risk, low-resource municipalities in need of additional technical or recovery planning support.
2047 **Figure 15** displays how the CCA ranked all 78 municipalities in Puerto Rico to identify more
2048 vulnerable communities with larger capacity gaps and equity concerns, noted in dark blue, to
2049 prioritize delivery of technical assistance.

2050

Figure 15. Identifying Vulnerable Municipalities in Puerto Rico

2051
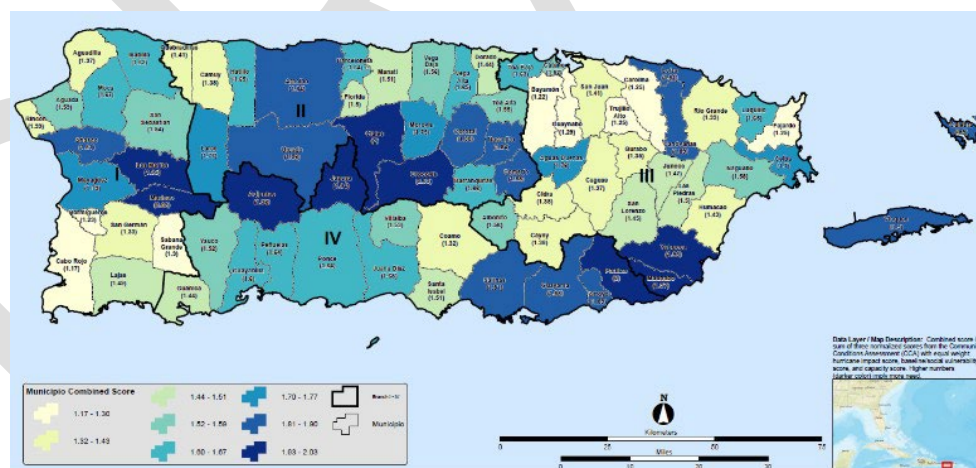
2052 <u>CA RSF Mission</u>: CA's mission is to support communities in their long-term recovery process after
2053 disasters, such as by providing planning, mapping, land use analysis, risk reduction and capacity
2054 building services.

2055 [Voluntary Agency Liaison (VAL) Mission](): The VALs' mission is to establish, foster and maintain
2056 relationships among government, voluntary, faith-based and community partners to support the
2057 delivery of inclusive and equitable services and strengthen capabilities of communities to
2058 address disaster-caused unmet needs.

Challenges

2059

2060 Many Puerto Rican communities, especially those in the mountainous interior of the island, had very
2061 limited resources or technical capacity to navigate complicated federal or philanthropic grants
2062 eligibility and management requirements to get community-scale recovery projects off the ground.
2063 Added challenges for isolated communities often included aging populations and limited connectivity
2064 or transportation options to urban hubs, creating a disconnect between neighborhoods and the
2065 nearest municipal government, which may be physically separated from each other by considerable
2066 distances.

2067 The FEMA VALs identified community-based nonprofit organizations in underserved and isolated
2068 neighborhoods with unmet recovery needs. The VALs had developed trusted working relationships
2069 with these community-based organizations over several years of engagement and were interested in
2070 finding a way to better empower these small community-level organizations to build resilience in their
2071 communities.

Actions

2072

2073 The CA RSF initiated the Community Recovery Mapping Project in April 2018 to help municipalities in
2074 Puerto Rico begin visualizing their vulnerabilities through mapped information, identifying recovery
2075 needs and prioritizing long- term recovery projects. The CA team prioritized initial outreach to the 22
2076 high-risk, low-resource municipalities identified by the CCA. Mapping workshops helped local
2077 governments see where potential risks and opportunities were located in their municipality and start
2078 to think about what long-term projects might be useful to reduce those risks or pursue community
2079 development opportunities. The CA team was able to learn about the communities' unique needs
2080 and priorities. The team used this understanding to build municipalities' awareness of types of
2081 available assistance from across federal and philanthropic sources to realize long-term objectives.

2082 The CA team conducted the mapping exercise with a total of 65 local municipalities out of the 78 in
2083 Puerto Rico between July 2018 and November 2019. The demand for the mapping technical
2084 assistance workshops went well beyond the initial 22 municipal governments originally identified
2085 because communities noticed the usefulness of the exercise, which helped them visualize their risks
2086 and recovery opportunities more clearly.

2087 CA also provided Recovery Visualization Tools Trainings to over a dozen municipalities interested in
2088 learning how to build and maintain their own GIS-based maps to support municipal activities, using
2089 ArcGIS and/or Google Earth.

2090 Through internal coordination, the FEMA VAL learned about the Community Recovery Mapping
2091 Project and invited the CA team to provide this type of tailored technical assistance to 10 community-
2092 based nonprofit organizations in high-risk, low-resource areas with enough internal capacity to
2093 receive the assistance. The community organization, COSSAO, proudly displays their maps in **Figure**
2094 **16**. Shown from left to right – (left) the only map the community originally had access to, (middle) the
2095 map the community built after initial technical assistance, and (right) the final map the community
2096 received at the conclusion of the CA workshops.

2097

2098
2099 **Figure 16. Community Organization COSSAO Displaying Maps**

Outcomes Achieved by Municipalities

A few examples of the community development projects completed through the CA RSF and
FEMA's Interagency Recovery Coordination (IRC) 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 trainings 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.

2100 Beginning in 2019, the mapping initiative was adapted into the Community Mapping Collaboration
2101 Project, designed to fit the needs of these community-based organizations identified by the VALs. The
2102 CA team maintained a flexible approach to meeting needs of community organizations with varying
2103 skills, access to technology and resources to build the specific capacities the organization needed to
2104 achieve their long-term goals. The CA team typically worked with the organization over several
2105 months to develop a trusted relationship, understand their needs and find the right resources they
2106 could use in the future, which in some cases were paper-based maps.

2107 Results

2108 Communities have been able to use the maps, products and skills generated through the mapping
2109 initiative to inform their recovery efforts and successfully access additional financial resources for
2110 unmet recovery needs from philanthropic and federal sources. Mapped vulnerabilities and identified
2111 resilience projects have informed the FEMA mitigation grant program application process. The CA
2112 team also identified FEMA Public Assistance (PA) projects in the mapped local areas to help officials
2113 identify collaboration opportunities among departments.

> **Outcomes Achieved by Community-Based Organizations**
>
> The CA and VAL collaboration project has built capacity in 10 community-based organizations, 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.

2114 Due to the success of the mapping collaboration project, there was a backlog of requests for
2115 mapping assistance during one period in the process. The high demand is an indicator that this
2116 model of coordinating mapping assistance through the VALs and CA RSF should be considered for
2117 replication on future disaster recovery operations.

2118 Lessons Learned

2119 - The CA RSF can provide a wide range of capacity building assistance post-disaster to fit the
2120 needs of community-based organizations and municipalities, helping to increase low-income and
2121 underserved communities' access to critical resources that enable equitable recovery.
2122 - Collaboration between Voluntary Agency Liaisons and the CA team was vital to connecting
2123 communities with unmet needs with the resources they required to recover.
2124 - FEMA successfully built trusted relationships with communities in underserved areas over several
2125 years by engaging them and listening to their needs. This helped FEMA better understand
2126 communities' recovery objectives and overcome barriers to holistically support them.

2127 Additional Resources

2128 - Hurricane María DR-4339-PR, FEMA
2129 - Hurricane Irma DR-4336-PR, FEMA

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

2130
2131
2132
2133

Background

2134

2135 Within days after what is now known as the "Great Flood of 2016," Ouachita Parish leaders knew
2136 they needed to take a different approach to recovery than what had been used in the past. **Figure**
2137 **17** displays a map of the flooding, which was a record flood in terms of damages. It was hard on the
2138 people. Inter-government communications were hard. In 2018, the Ouachita Council of Governments
2139 (OCOG) established the Ouachita Parish Executive Long-Term Recovery Committee, which then
2140 established the Ouachita Parish Long-Term Recovery Steering Committee. The Steering Committee
2141 established six subcommittees aligned with the RSF as prescribed under the NDRF. Each was
2142 populated with subject matter experts. The Parish needed a framework that was strong enough to
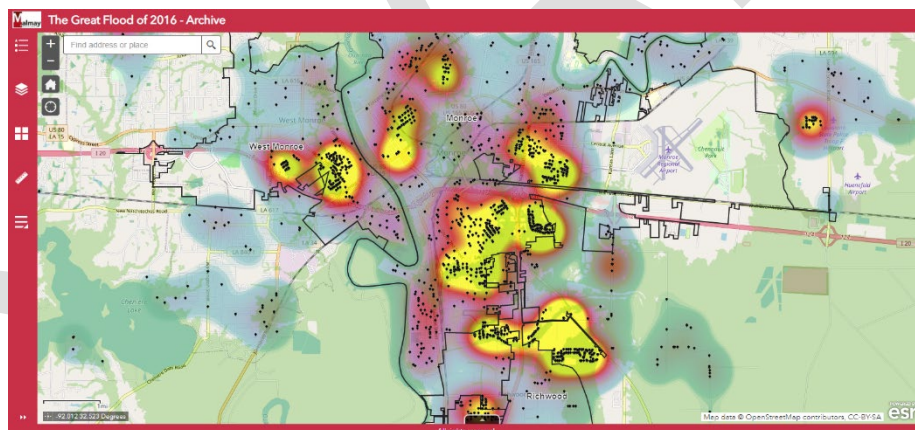2143 manage discourse but not so strong as to suppress new ideas.

Figure 17. The Great Flood of 2016

Challenges

2144

2145 The Low to Moderate income areas of the community were hit hard by the flood. Many households
2146 had no flood insurance in these areas. Many did not understand why they were being denied federal
2147 assistance. Cultural and generational differences in the way people communicate was a challenge.
2148 This circumstance created distrust.

2149 # Actions

2150 The Monroe Concerned Clergy and NAACP became part of the recovery team. Their involvement
2151 made efforts to be inclusive and diverse real. They provided important insights, feedback and
2152 ensured we were communicating with all the community and listening. Their participation in the
2153 Economic Recovery RSF (**Table 9: Recovery Support Functions**) was an important role, including
2154 dialogue on hard topics and establishing relationships that will serve the community well into the
2155 future.

2156 **Table 9: Recovery Support Functions**

Recovery Support Functions (RSF)	
RSF 1	Community Assistance
RSF 2	Economic Recovery
RSF 3	Health & Social Services
RSF 4	Housing
RSF 5	Infrastructure Systems
RSF 6	Natural & Cultural Resources

2157 # Results

2158 The partnership with Concerned Clergy of Monroe (**Figure 18**) and the NAACP made communications
2159 more effective and built trust. It brought value to the community's resiliency planning efforts. In
2160 2022, these relationships are still yielding value, from neighborhood engagements on job training
2161 and other community services to community planning to reduce violence.

2162

2163 **Figure 18. Concerned Clergy of Monroe**

2164 # Lessons Learned

2165 - Build partnerships with organizations like the NAACP, black clergy and others before the storm.
2166 - Make sure the emergency management planning team is inclusive and reflects the
2167   demographics of the community.
2168 - Increase the team's knowledge of low to moderate income areas including how to incorporate
2169   the CDC/ATSDR SVI into all phases of emergency management.
2170 - Conduct planning to address cultural, generational and language barriers.
2171 - Conduct outreach into all parts of the community, including the low to moderate income areas.
2172 - Invite workforce development and other organizations to partner and participate in recovery
2173   planning. Teach them to prepare, but also increase their resiliency by improving their job skills.