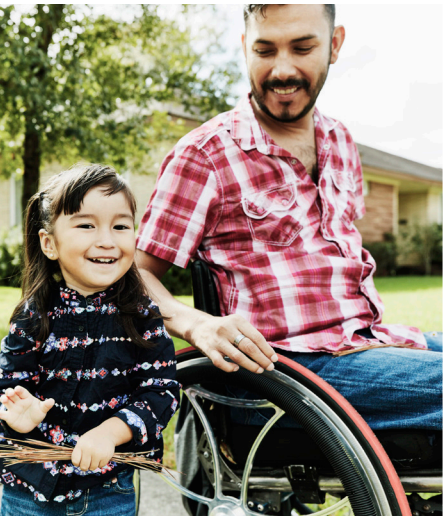

BUILDING ALLIANCES FOR EQUITABLE RESILIENCE

ADVANCING EQUITABLE RESILIENCE THROUGH PARTNERSHIPS AND DIVERSE PERSPECTIVES

April 2021

Resilient Nation Partnership Network

FEMA

FOREWORD

Throughout the month of October 2020, the Resilient Nation Partnership Network, FEMA, and NOAA hosted a four-part forum series entitled *Alliances for Equity*. Over four weeks, 33 speakers representing 28 organizations convened to share their perspectives and personal and professional journeys related to equity. Nearly 2,200 viewers representing over 500 organizations from diverse sectors and industries attended the virtual sessions.

With whole-community representation, we are moving beyond conversation to face the issues of equity and resilience, collectively and intentionally. One result of partnering with our *Alliances for Equity* speakers and Network partners is this resource, "Building Alliances for Equitable Resilience," which includes guidance, perspectives, stories, resources, and more. With this information, we intend to inspire readers with actions and considerations for equitable practices they can take today and use as part of their day-to-day activities.

We are promoting a cultural shift, and we can't achieve that without you. Share your thoughts and work to help us achieve greater outcomes collaboratively. We hope this leads to increased commitments and greater action to create equitable resilience. We recognize there is much to accomplish, and this is just the beginning.

Be brave.

Be an investor in relationship building and listening.

Be clear in your purpose to collaborate and partner.

Be respectful of diverse leadership and differing views.

Be open to learning from other people's lived experiences.

Be honest, listen, and be willing to make meaningful adjustments as you learn.

DEEOHN FERRIS
President, Institute for Sustainable Communities

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Resilient Nation Partnership Network, FEMA, and NOAA would like to thank our partners who have contributed their time and perspectives to develop this resource. More than ever, adopting equitable practices in all areas of resilience is a collective responsibility. We'd especially like to thank the individuals below (in order of appearance) for their generosity.

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Additionally, thank you to our 33 incredible partners who spoke at the "Alliances for Equity" Virtual Forum in October 2020. They played a crucial role in the development of this resource, providing their thoughts, insights, and personal stories. You can find their contact information at the end of this document. Please get in touch with them!

We are honored to be on this journey with you all.

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With additional partner stories on:

"Remembering Our Most Vulnerable During Times of Need"

"Nothing About Us, Without Us"

"Mobilizing Equitable Resilience at the Local Level"

"Remembering and Including the Voices of Native People"

This resource is intended to inspire the whole community to make equitable and resilient practices a part of their day-to-day work now.

INTRODUCTION

It is difficult to provide a concise definition of "resilience," which means many things to many people. To classify resilience as belonging to any single sector is more difficult than ever. What we have learned is that resilience truly has no sector. None of us can do it alone.

In 2015, the Resilient Nation Partnership Network was formed to cultivate diverse relationships and bring new voices to the table to advance the resilience conversation. This continues to be at the core of the Network's efforts. We seek to enable greater collaboration to increase collective impact nationwide.

Powered by partnership, this *Building Alliances for Equitable Resilience* resource was developed to deliver insights and perspectives as we work to achieve a more resilient nation.

> "Equality is giving everyone a shoe.
> Equity is giving everyone a shoe that fits."
> — NAHEED DOSANI

PARTNER PERSPECTIVES

Whether you're just starting the journey or moving full speed ahead, you need to keep all sorts of considerations in mind. For example, consider the terms we use, why equity is critical to whole community resilience, and how to be more inclusive moving forward. It can be a lot to think about. With diligence and an open mind, it can be achievable. Our partners help break it down.

What's the difference between "equity" and "equality?" These terms are not interchangeable.

Equality vs. equity…there is a difference!

I believe it is important to understand the difference between equality and equity, especially as it relates to emergency management. These two concepts are inherently different, and as such, produce very different outcomes.

Equality focuses on sameness or uniformity in its approach to find a solution. For example, as children we are taught the importance of equality or sameness. If one sibling wants a piece of candy, then to be fair, the parent typically gives the other siblings a piece of candy. Every child is in the same location to receive the candy, has access to the parent with the candy, and all can be satisfied by receiving the same or similar type of candy. That is equality, not equity.

Diversity and equity are interconnected. To appreciate equity, we must also understand diversity, or differences. Diversity can produce meaningful equity because different perspectives and experiences are considered, respected and incorporated. Uniformity, or homogeneity, cannot produce equity because uniformity lacks diversity in perspective and experience.

Equity acknowledges that people are diverse and have different needs, and therefore does not seek one solution as an answer to the needs of many. Achieving equity requires understanding that everyone is not starting in the same place, everyone doesn't have access to the same resources, and everyone doesn't have the same life experiences. Therefore, one solution cannot address everyone's needs.

Equity is a continuous process that requires understanding the needs of those you serve and then applying their perspective in solution-building. In times of disaster, diversity and equity become critical and must be operationalized. People who lack diversity in perspective will not develop equitable policies, perform equitable planning, or create equitable programs that will benefit, rather than harm, the most vulnerable groups and communities.

For example, say there is a major tornado that occurs in a city somewhere in America. During the disaster response, a homogeneous group of decision makers might assume those affected by the disaster will have access to personal transportation. They assume that because everybody they know has a car, then everyone has a car. As a result, they establish a disaster resource or recovery site that is well outside public transit access routes. Unfortunately, those who are most affected by the disaster do not have personal vehicles and thus cannot benefit from the available disaster resources. Their recovery from the disaster is now impeded until the inequitable response can be corrected. The result of that homogeneous meeting of the minds is an inequitable policy that provides disparate access to resources for the less vulnerable, and fails to serve the most vulnerable, who are already underserved and rely on public transportation.

Cultivating equity, in any realm, requires first understanding the existing inequities that are at play. Too often, organizations will determine the need for increased equity, but then fail to approach the solution armed with diversity of thought and representation. They may also lack a knowledge of societal imbalances that created the need for additional equity measures in the first place. It is like putting a fresh blanket over a pothole and convincing everyone that the new blanket will solve the core problem of failing infrastructure. Real life does not and has never worked that way. The pothole exists, so address the problem with well-researched, data-driven solutions.

When diversity is absent in decisionmaking, so is equity, and that is a huge problem for a field that prides itself on helping people in need—before, during and after a disaster. By understanding the differences between equality and equity, emergency managers will be positioned to create more equitable plans and programs.

CHAUNCIA WILLIS, MPA, MEP, CEM, CPC, CDP
CEO, Institute for Diversity and Inclusion in Emergency Management (I-DIEM)

Why is equity a critical piece of whole-community resilience? Here's how to break down barriers and embrace diverse perspectives.

When we talk about community resilience and equity, the discussion should be about leading with the notion that events have a disproportionate impact on certain parts of the community. Ideally, those parts of the community should have prominent "seats at the table" in making resilience decisions. At a minimum, community resilience planning should be done in collaboration with those parts of the community. So how do we make this a reality?

First, take the terminology "whole of community" literally. As mentioned above, embrace diverse perspectives and prioritize those most in need. Reach out to parts of the community with which you don't normally work: for example, homelessness groups, LGBTQ+ advocacy groups, Black Lives Matter chapters, and renters' rights activists. Organizations with chapters and regional offices and state, local and federal agencies should use local staff to their fullest. Make sure volunteers have a conduit to offer input. Enhance opportunities for those who are in continuous contact with the community and aim to inform policy and decision makers about the lived realities of people.

Second, contextualize the meaning of the word "equity" and apply it consistently. It is important to understand why some communities and parts of communities are "frontline," meaning they feel the impacts of disasters and climate change most immediately and severely. The reasons why may be legal issues, such as redlining or immigration status. Sometimes the cause is a mix of poverty and other factors such as race. To be equitable, you first have to understand the source of the inequity. Once you do, be consistent in the conversation about disaster management and climate change, noting that adaptation and mitigation techniques are too expensive for most. Thus, it is important to right-size programs, planning, subsidizing and granting to community capacity.

Third, normalize it. Make sure that as an organization, addressing equity is a goal throughout all parts of your work, not siloed into diversity and equity-specific programming. Think of approaching the "whole of community" with the "whole of the organization." Companies, organizations, and agencies that have formal exercises or follow emergency management doctrine should include the concept in those exercises and weave the language of equity into any policy or frameworks that are designed around a community-wide approach. Larger nonprofits serving large parts of a community or multiple communities should take a similar "silo-breaking" approach across programs and areas of outreach. They should also coordinate with smaller nonprofits and organizations to widen their circles of awareness and influence, keeping the goal of equity in mind. During community-wide decision-making, make sure people not only have an opportunity to offer input, but also have access to similar information as planners and organization leaders.

A special thanks to the Resilient Nation Partnership Network for the opportunity to contribute to this work and for all their contributions and support of other organizations involved in working for true resilience.

MONICA SANDERS, J.D., LL.M
Georgetown University Emergency and Disaster Management Program

How do you achieve equity when everyone in your community is different?

Integrity and honesty are critical to achieving equity in any community, especially diverse ones. Equity is often described as fairness or impartiality. Achieving equity in a community requires a consistent effort for each community member to arrive at the same destination, regardless of individual factors or where any one person begins. It means disaster assistance based on what you need, where you are.

First, communities must be honest about their composition, needs and resources. Each community has a distinct cultural, geographical and economic composition. An accurate understanding of current demographics and resource needs and an understanding of how and why communities came to have a greater need for assistance is critical to achieving equity. The whole community must be honest and acknowledge that the historical denial of equity and lack of opportunity to participate in economic, social, and civic life is intertwined with current concerns and the gaps in resources and access that impede underserved communities from preparing for and recovering from a disaster. These steps allow communities to limit their blind spots and create a clearer picture of what can and should be done to achieve equity.

Next comes the hard part; everyone must act upon this information with integrity. Different from honesty or truthfulness, integrity has a value or ethical basis and is defined as the performance of right actions regardless of the circumstances. Governments must act with integrity to address identified equity concerns by developing plans with partners in the community whose personal experiences clearly and painfully illustrate the existing gaps and impediments to recovery. Then, communities must implement those plans with integrity, demonstrating a commitment to equity at each decision point and choosing equity regardless of the circumstances or adversity encountered.

JO LINDA JOHNSON, Esq.
Director, FEMA Office of Equal Rights

All humans have unconscious biases that have shaped how we've made decisions for lifetimes, and we see those impacts profoundly in emergency management. Here are things you can do now to overcome it.

There is a pathway to combating unconscious bias, but it is not what most people think.

Some people claim there are things you can do to "undo bias," but that is not realistic. We cannot stop being biased; we would have to stop being human. But what we can—and must—do is learn the skills that it takes to manage ourselves better and challenge our own thinking.

In the context of racism, the five skills that are key to managing ourselves to advance racial justice are racial equity literacy, emotional intelligence, communication, critical thinking, and conflict management. I am not going to discuss all of them, but I will share some foundational principles that intertwine them.

When we do not have these skills but we understand bias, we can try to bail ourselves out by saying, "What are we supposed to do if it's just the way we are?" The answer is: That is not just the way we are. Human beings have a level of sophistication in our ability to learn and adapt that is unique to us. It is when we are on autopilot that we tend to do things that are status quo...we think and behave in certain ways because that is just the way we always have. Ultimately, enhancing our knowledge, skills, and tools allows us to show up as our better selves, especially in moments that matter

Cognitive bias and how our brains work, in and of themselves, are not bad. Bias is a series of mental shortcuts that make our lives easier. However, it works for simple, predictable situations. The issue comes when we allow our biases to drive us when we are faced with decisions that involve complexity. In these moments, we cannot be on autopilot; we actually have to be in the driver's seat. There is nothing simple or predictable when we are dealing with managing ourselves, our relationships, and our organizations, especially during a disaster. We have to work extra hard to not allow our own insecurities and flawed logic to distract us from reality.

The other part of managing ourselves and our organizations better is facilitating accountability—where there are clear expectations in which we will embed racial equity and social justice. We create organizational cultures that help people navigate healthy conflict. We are not going to brush it under the rug and pretend like it doesn't exist. Because when there is conflict, it means that there is a misalignment between: (1) our expectations about how the world works, ourselves, and others; and (2) the reality of the situation, ourselves, and others. It takes a lot of work to realign our expectations with reality and to act accordingly. This requires navigating through internal and external conflict, which is necessary for us to clarify the most productive way to move forward.

Managing ourselves better also involves our ability to have some humility. Arrogance is one of the biggest contributors to how people and organizations unwittingly act as passive conductors of oppression. It is dangerous because it leads us to believe we know more than we really do, which causes us to make uninformed decisions. If we do not have humility, we cannot learn. In these moments when we are working with each other and partnering with our communities, we need to be humble so that we can engage from a place of learning and not trying to be right.

Let's stop doing mental gymnastics to justify that what we did was right. Each and every person, level of government, nonprofit, and business has a shared struggle and opportunity to be better and do better to embed racial equity and social justice. And those of us who participate in the Resilient National Partnership Network can lead the way toward a more resilient nation where we amplify Black, Indigenous, and People of Color's voice, choice, and dignity in all of our policies, programs, and workplaces.

DR. ATYIA MARTIN, CEM
PRESIDENT AND CEO, ALL ACES, INC

REMEMBERING OUR MOST VULNERABLE DURING TIMES OF NEED

VALERIE NOVACK, *Center for American Progress*

I was still in high school when Hurricane Katrina hit. I never expected that years after that tragedy, I would learn that people with disabilities, older adults, and others were still routinely left out of the emergency planning conversation. A decade later I found myself tasked with finding best practices for accessible evacuation plans because, despite the lessons we should have learned after Katrina, this still was a problem. Instead of finding examples of successful efforts to reduce the vulnerability of disabled people by creating more inclusive processes, I found lawsuits against some of our biggest cities for discrimination in their emergency response practices. It was bad enough that Katrina had to happen before disability access became a requirement, but it was negligent to have not changed further since then.

This realization fueled my trajectory into not just the inclusion of, but direction by, people with disabilities in response and resilience. This was solidified further in 2017 with Hurricane Harvey. This time I was old enough to respond by volunteering on a hotline for affected people with disabilities where the results of inequity, apathy, and unawareness were overwhelming: inaccessible shelters, separated families, forgotten residents, and then hunger and homelessness. I've continued to watch this cycle event after event in various communities. I am fortunate to have spent the last handful of years working alongside dedicated disability advocates and disabled experts in preparing for and responding to disasters within their own communities and helping to share what I learn with others.

We cannot continue to only write and talk about building networks, practices, and communities that are prepared for and resilient to disaster events. We must actively engage in the changes necessary to make them so, and we hope that resources such as these are the start to that work.

> "Diversity is being invited to the dance. Inclusion is being asked to dance. Equity is allowing you to choose the music."
>
> — CYNTHIA OLMEDO

EQUITY CONSIDERATIONS TO FOSTER CHANGE

Advancing equitable resilience requires a lot of learning, listening, and self-reflection. Cultural shifts don't happen overnight. What are some of the actions that you can take starting today? Our partners shared some of their recommendations. Write these down. Keep them by your desk. And most importantly, don't get complacent.

Your personal journey matters. Ensuring that we take responsibility for our own equity education – reading, learning and listening to new voices – is critical to advancing whole community resilience. Once we begin to understand the challenges at this deeper, personal level, we can become advocates and change agents in all dimensions of our livess.

Continue to foster awareness and education of equitable practices. Keep emphasizing the importance of embedding equity in your day-to-day work with peers and colleagues, even when you start to feel like a broken record. Learning and adoption takes time and repetition.

Listen, be open, and be respectful of people's emotions. Individuals, partners, and community members around you have experienced (and continue to experience) discrimination or exclusion. They all have a story and perspective to share. Listen, reflect, and think about how you can incorporate their experiences in advancing equitable resilience.

Speak only from the perspective of your personal experiences. Do not assume that you understand the life experiences of others. Owning your personal perspective and acknowledging the perspective of others is essential.

Partnerships with local communities, community-based organizations and tribes are key to advancing inclusive planning. Community members, community-based organizations and tribal representatives are trusted leaders who can provide a variety of answers, insights and perspectives on solving equity challenges. Engagement needs to be representative of the whole community.

Collaborate with entities that prioritize and practice equity as part of their everyday business. Expect more from the people and organizations with whom you engage. Work outside your traditional networks.

Change how you talk to communities. Use language that is inclusive, easy to understand, and less academic. Communicate how you are adapting your approach (if it's not the first time you've engaged a specific community). And prioritize translations for communities whose first language is not English.

Remember, community members want to learn and understand, too. Sometimes, there's a misperception that the locals are uninterested or apathetic, but really, you're just not meeting them where they are. Listen to what they have to say, and work together toward overcoming barriers.

Equity and resilience have no sector! Neither should be viewed as an individual consideration; they should both be fully integrated into core missions. All organizations and individuals have a stake in creating a more equitable and resilient nation.

Achieving equity and inclusion is a continuous process. Understand that the sources of these challenges are historical and deep-rooted. Therefore, the work to correct them will be ongoing and deeply reflective. Commit to and have patience with the process. Encourage others to do the same.

Understand history and legacy to inform today's moment. Many, tribes, territories and communities have faced generations of underinvestment, disinvestment, and destructive policies. We need to understand those stories to inform how we adopt, embrace and build resilience.

MOBILIZING EQUITABLE RESILIENCE AT THE LOCAL LEVEL

ANNA MARANDI, *National League of Cities*

For many years, it was only the early adopters in local government and often just larger, "blue" cities that were integrating equity into sustainability, climate, and resilience plans. They codified practices within their respective departments, designed toolkits, and presented their innovative ideas at climate conferences. Yet it was still a niche topic, and the majority of staff and elected officials in cities wondered, what is this whole racial equity thing about? Would it involve me? Is it mandatory? Then, over the summer, the Black Lives Matter protests transpired, and in nothing short of a momentous shift, we began to hear of elected officials who had attended a racial equity workshop and wanted to share what they learned with colleagues at the city, or communities that were reexamining policing practices, and staff who were making changes to long-standing programs to incorporate racial equity. Many local leaders and officials began to realize how budgetary changes and more inclusive planning processes could quickly impact people's lives.

The change in attitude and eagerness to get at the root of cities' complex challenges triggered by the events of 2020 has been remarkable to witness. However, not all communities, elected officials, or staff are on board, and we have a long way to go in providing the training and funding needed for local governments to realize their full potential as leaders in resilience and equity. We also have a long way to go culturally and socially in encouraging individuals to engage in deep, inward reflection so we can all better understand our respective roles in a racist system—not as a personal flaw, but as something we were born into and have the power to change.

America's cities and suburbs were designed with race in mind, and the funding to do so came from state and federal governments. Now, in the age of climate change and with an urgent need for investments in resilience, we must redesign with race in mind. But cities cannot do this alone, and in fact it will be impossible for smaller cities to plan and protect for the future without collaborating with their neighbors. By their design, metro regions are fragmented by race and class, and it is ultimately at this scale that we can address challenges around infrastructure, ecosystems, social systems, and local economies. Working across jurisdictions at the metro regional scale is difficult, but essential. Funding and technical support from state and federal agencies to support regional collaboration could ensure that smaller communities—particularly those with a lower tax base—are not left behind. Cities, though they are already proving to be pivotal leaders in resilience and equity, need this critical support to address challenges that are beyond their scale and scope, such as climate-induced migration and buyouts. I hope we continue to generate and foster more of these inter-scalar partnerships and programs in the years to come.

INSIGHTS AND REFLECTIONS

Throughout the month of October 2020, the Resilient Nation Partnership Network and NOAA hosted a four-part series called “Alliances for Equity,” addressing the various phases of advancing equitable resilience. Thirty-three speakers convened over four weeks to share their perspectives and personal and professional journeys. Nearly 2,200 viewers representing more than 500 organizations across diverse sectors and industries attended the virtual sessions. These conversations were a critical launching point for advancing dialogue and resulted in valuable discussion. A summary of key insights is shared below.

- Federal Perspectives on Equitable Resilience
- Resilient and Affordable Housing
- Inclusive Planning
- Investing in Equitable Resilience
- State and Territorial Perspectives

FEDERAL PERSPECTIVES ON EQUITABLE RESILIENCE

The federal government is seldom the trusted change agent. Agencies must form partnerships and create cross-sector alliances to be impactful. We know creating systemic change will also require large federal institutions to make their own shifts. Agencies often don't have the comprehensive expertise to build resilience in all the ways necessary for vibrant communities, but together, we can fill the gaps and share the responsibility.

Here are key takeaways from a few federal partners as they work to advance equitable resilience.

- **Trust is earned.** Federal agencies must meet people where they are. Actively listen and learn from the people who live and work in the communities they are engaging.
- **Being proactive cultivates relationships, trust and credibility.** Before disasters, federal agencies must think about how they invest their capabilities, capacities and competencies equitably across states and regions.
- **Federal agencies must prioritize collaboration.** Breaking down walls and talking to one another creates opportunities to be more strategic in how federal funds are leveraged. Establishing alignment across all levels of government improves equitable outcomes.
- **Prioritize projects that are accessible to the whole community.** Federal agencies must work to reduce the level of entry to funding and mitigate factors that exacerbate inequities.

CONTRIBUTORS:

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RESILIENT AND AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Too often, disasters reveal the great inequities that already exist in our nation. The economic fallout disproportionately affects underserved and historically marginalized households. To solve these issues with limited resources, organizations must find practical strategies that incorporate resilience and mitigation into housing.

How do we help people stay safe in their homes and reduce the disproportionate impacts of natural hazards?

- **Affordable housing must be designed, constructed, and operated to face a variety of conditions, including current and trending risks. It must be resilient, sustainable, and preserved** to best protect the underserved and historically marginalized populations who need it most, and it should ensure that residents are not burdened with high utility costs, aggravated health conditions, and other impacts.
- **Federal agencies must provide better guidance, easier access, and clearer direction on ways to use housing, mitigation, and disaster funds for state, local, tribal and territorial jurisdictions.** Despite their eligibility for disaster recovery money, underserved and historically marginalized communities are continually and disproportionately harmed by natural hazards and often don't have the resources to access mitigation and recovery dollars for housing and community resilience building.
- **Support the nationwide adoption and use of up-to-date building codes.**
- **Make equity a central part of planning and building code efforts.** Policymakers need to leverage data to direct resources where they're needed most.
- **Set benchmarks and review them frequently to ensure progress is being made.**

CONTRIBUTORS:

Alliance for National & Community Resilience, Department of Housing and Urban Development, Enterprise Community Partners, International Code Council, Institute for Building Technology and Safety, National Low Income Housing Coalition

INCLUSIVE PLANNING

Mitigation and community planning can be an avenue to overcome inequities. To plan in a way that includes all, you have to provide a voice to the whole community. If you do not know their needs, you will not be able to meet them. Thoughtful and meaningful engagement with community members allows their perspectives to help create spaces that every resident can fully access, enjoy and feel safe while visiting.

Key themes to consider when thinking about inclusive planning include:

- **Equity is about providing everyone with what they need**—not providing everyone with the same thing.
- **Consider access to information.** Just because we send a tweet or an email doesn't mean people are getting the information. We need to understand how people are consuming information and then establish a tailored plan to reach the whole community.
- **Never go into a situation with a solution in mind.** Approach the problem with questions and then create potential solutions.
- **Resilience and mitigation planning should benefit the whole community.** It should not be framed so that some folks are winning and some folks are losing.
- **We don't know what we don't know.** When important perspectives are left out of the planning process, greater education and investment are required to fill those gaps down the road. Include those perspectives early and often. Everyone will benefit.

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NOTHING ABOUT US, WITHOUT US

JAKE WHITE, *National Association for Latino Community Asset Builders*

"Nothing about us without us" harkens to a dark history but also to our present, where policies are imposed on people without engaging those that the policies would impact. Credited to the disability movement, this theme has grown to incorporate multiple types of marginalized communities and subgroups. It is now a refrain that has grown louder as more and more vulnerable communities have battled with rampant increases in costs for dwindling amounts of property, while governing bodies produce sparkling multipoint plans to benefit the people and the land. Being rooted in this phrase is essential to ensuring equitable development. If you represent the "us," it is also essential to know what you need to sustain yourself and to thrive, once you are asked what you need.

As a trained planner, I've used many types of indicators that diagnose a neighborhood as struggling. Most of the signs of a struggling neighborhood can be attributed to local disinvestment, but just because a neighborhood does not receive local investment does not mean that the neighborhood has not created a community with inherent worth. The difficulty those communities face is translating that worth into something that can be understood by those in decision-making roles. At the National Association for Latino Community Asset Builders (NALCAB), that is where we focus our energies. We build the capacity of local nonprofit agencies to translate qualitative values into quantitative reasons for stakeholders to support the resilience of marginalized and vulnerable communities. We aim to redirect the flow of capital to serve those communities in a manner that benefits them. In my position, it is not uncommon to engage with an organization that is looking for a way to explain to leaders that although their community floods, its small businesses have value beyond the cost of the building in which they reside. Although a large, mixed-income development may boost my neighborhood's appeal, my community may lose residents for whom this is the only affordable area where they can get services in their primary language.

At NALCAB, we see this as a challenge to be addressed from multiple fronts. While our mission is to strengthen the economy by advancing economic mobility in Latino communities, we do this through building assets, as our name states. This has taken the form of building place-based cohorts, allowing them to connect to their communities and project their needs, and then helping them build plans of action that will serve their community. By doing this, our members can be prepared to use their own analysis and voices to strongly advocate for what is needed in the service of "us."

INVESTING IN EQUITABLE RESILIENCE

Because funding is distributed inequitably throughout our society, the ability to build a more resilient future is limited. Understanding how to change financial systems and investment strategies is the first step toward creating equitable solutions.

- **Access to capital is crucial to investing in equitable resilience.**
- **Risk is changing,** and if we aren't taking future conditions into consideration, we're probably not thinking about recovery and economic stimulus in the most effective or equitable ways.
- **There is a gap at the local level when it comes to boosting economic stimulus.** Some states, tribes, territories and localities are not equipped to adapt to changing risks. How do we bridge that gap?
- **Distribute complicated information to consumers in clear and concise language.** Learning about multiple financing programs and nuances can be very confusing.
- **The investment process is twofold.** 1) Identify an investment opportunity and 2) Manage risks. Private investors ebb and flow around those risks all the time. Public dollars need to focus on being equitable and resilient. Equity should be an inherent part of the financing process.

CONTRIBUTORS:

Climate Finance Advisors, Quantified Ventures, Small Business Administration, U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation

STATE AND TERRITORIAL PERSPECTIVES

Each level of government and all sectors of society have a role to play in creating a more equitable future. Each stakeholder working to create a more equitable and resilient world also needs to understand the perspectives of others.

Key themes to consider when thinking about state and territorial perspectives include:

- **State and territorial programs are most successful when they are fueled by local knowledge.** It is not possible for state and territorial agencies to understand the intricacies of every single community. Both grassroots and state-supported community science methods can help collect data locally and build networks and relationships that could be helpful later on.
- **Start a conversation with your Chief Resilience Officer and State Hazard Mitigation Officer** (or someone in a similar role). Don't wait for something to happen.
- **Budget for inclusive, trust building engagements.** It takes time and money to engage the whole community. We need to treat residents and business owners as the experts they are.
- **Find opportunities for equity in the big chunks of federal money.** This is another way to do resilience work within a limited state fiscal picture. There are so many emerging similarities in the issues and vulnerabilities faced when it comes to natural hazards.
- **Learn from others and share resources.** All 50 states, five territories, the District of Columbia and tribal nations have been affected by natural hazards.

CONTRIBUTORS:

State of Maine (Governor's Office of Policy Innovation and the Future), State of North Carolina (Office of Recovery and Resiliency), State of Wisconsin (Office of the Lieutenant Governor), The Pew Charitable Trusts

REMEMBERING AND INCLUDING THE VOICES OF NATIVE PEOPLE

NIKKI COOLEY, *Diné Nation, Indigenous Scientist and Educator and Institute for Tribal Environmental Professionals*

I am of the Towering House Clan, born for the Reed People Clan; my maternal grandfathers are of the Water that Flows Together Clan, and paternal grandfathers are of the Manygoats clan. I am from the Earth and Sky, and of the Diné Nation.

I am very fortunate to have grown up on Diné Bikeyah, Navajo Land, which is mostly within the boundaries set forth by the U.S. government. With the majority of the land base in Arizona, there is also land in New Mexico and Utah. I grew up in Shonto and Blue Gap, Arizona, which are small but vibrant communities. Shonto has a gas station, a K-12 school, and a post office. Families largely depended on livestock and crops, tended to carefully and lovingly in the hot, arid region. When I was not attending school, my main responsibility was to assist my grandparents in caring for their livestock and crops. I often walked after the sheep and goats as they grazed for miles, sometimes 20 miles round trip, from sunrise until sundown. I accompanied my grandfather through the cornstalks checking for rodents, insects or weeds. I listened to my relatives as they held ceremonies and prayers late into the night or in the early morning, praying for the well-being of all living things, including the plants and animals. At my parents' home, I would bring 3- to 5-gallon buckets of water into the house from water barrels to use for food, washing and drinking. My father and mother hauled water from windmills (most are now dried up), as the Navajo Nation never had and still does not have adequate water infrastructure. From a young age, I inherently knew the value of water, fresh air, organic foods, medicinal and subsistence animals and plants. I knew the value of harvesting crops and drying them for use in the colder, leaner months. No electricity or running water—no problem. I never considered myself poor or unfortunate, because I had everything I needed to survive: water, food and love. Now I know I was one of the fortunate ones.

As I entered my 41st year of life, I found myself thinking more about how I grew up. Several weekends spent in Shonto during the summer of 2020 allowed me to experience the most unforgiving heat. From growing up, I remembered the heat of summers and cold months of winter, but never the parched air and landscape and relentless heat. Now, the landscape is responding by not providing the usual lush greenery for our livestock to fatten up on, and watering holes are dried up. This forces us to drive a bit further to fill water tanks. My parents have had to reduce the number of their livestock and condense their cornfields. The corn does not grow as tall, melon and squash plants are reluctant to sprout, and animals such as ravens and rabbits are growing braver and finding ways to bust into the fenced field to feast. The rainy seasons do not fill the water holes, and winter months do not bring the many feet of snow I often trudged through to get to the bus stop. Life is not only changing but bringing extreme

hardship to a landscape and people that are already struggling to get by.

In my professional work with tribes and Indigenous communities across the country, including Alaska, I am hearing similar stories. Different landscapes and ecosystems, but the impacts on livelihoods, spiritual and physical well-being and traditions echo loudly. I hear stories of ceremonies and subsistence activities delayed or postponed due to plants not being ready to harvest or animals that have migrated elsewhere, following water and food. Elders tell of the unbalance humans have caused to Mother Earth and Father Sky. In the western way, we call it climate change. The disruption has certainly caused the delay or halt in the intergenerational sharing and teachings of knowledge and practices.

Our work as stewards of the Earth and Sky has become even more urgent and imperative to the survival of our tribal/indigenous culture and people. The climate crisis that has and will affect us for years to come has become the focus of many tribal/indigenous people, as we are often on the forefront of the impacts. Despite being sovereign nations, we are faced with poor or nonexistent infrastructures to serve our communities. Despite being sovereign nations, we are often excluded or forgotten when it comes to decision-making processes, funding opportunities, and discussions, whether on the national or international stage. Tribal/Indigenous people are the First People of this nation, survived forced relocations and removals from traditional homelands, and are now emerging as the leaders in climate change adaptation and mitigation. True, long-term partnership and engagement are required and needed. These are a few of the many reasons tribes and indigenous people should always be a part of the conversation and not just a check mark to satisfy diversity requirements.

RESOURCES

Our equity partners have curated a list of resources to help readers take intentional steps toward incorporating equity as part of their day-to-day work. These resources reflect a variety of backgrounds and missions. We hope they will inspire new ideas and ways of thinking that can change how we navigate our personal and professional journeys toward equitable resilience for all.

The views expressed herein are those of the individual contributors and may not represent the views of the U.S. Government. Nothing herein should be construed as an endorsement of any non-government entities, organizations, or service, or as a formal statement of guidance, or policy position of FEMA or other U.S. Government entities.

BUILDING CODES AND HOUSING

Building Codes Save

One of the most cost-effective ways to safeguard the whole community against natural disasters is to adopt and follow hazard-resistant building codes. This reduces not only casualties but the cost of building damage caused by a natural disaster. Building codes also help communities get back on their feet faster by minimizing indirect costs, such as business interruptions and lost income.

Community Development Block Grant Mitigation Program

The Community Development Block Grant Mitigation (CDBG-MIT) Program is a unique and significant opportunity for eligible grantees in areas affected by recent disasters to carry out strategic and high-impact activities to reduce disaster risks and future losses. Congress appropriated $12 billion in CDBG funds in February 2018, specifically for mitigation activities related to qualifying disasters in 2015, 2016, and 2017, and HUD was able to allocate an additional $3.9 billion, bringing the amount available for mitigation to nearly $16 billion.

Community Land = Community Resilience: How Community Land Trusts Can Support Urban Affordable Housing and Climate Initiatives

Housing insecurity and the impacts of climate change are two interrelated issues that increasingly affect cities across the United States. This report provides an overview of how community land trusts can help cities mitigate both of these challenges by promoting community ownership and decision-making and providing permanently affordable and resilient housing.

Department of Housing and Urban Development Community Resilience Toolkit

The Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Community Resilience Toolkit is a user-friendly guide to help recipients of HUD Community Planning and Development funds identify opportunities to use this funding to mitigate the impacts of natural hazards.

Equitable Path Forward

Equitable Path Forward is a five-year, $3.5 billion nationwide initiative to help dismantle the deeply-rooted legacy of racism in housing—including the types of homes that are built, where they're built, who builds them, and the wealth that is generated from them.

Guide to Equitable Neighborhood Development

Housing affordability and gentrification are not just problems for poor families in high-cost cities. In many markets, increasing real estate prices are resulting in an affordability gap for many moderate-income households, and particularly those headed by people of color. The guide identifies principles of equitable neighborhood development and provides tools for data-driven analysis and strategies for adapting data analysis into intentional policy and practice to ensure that low- and moderate-income people can share in the benefits of appreciating real estate markets and minimize involuntary displacement.

The Important Role of Energy Codes in Achieving Resilience

This briefing paper from the International Code Council discusses how building energy codes support individual and community resilience through reducing monthly energy burdens, heat islands, and the negative health effects of energy generation and poor indoor environmental quality, and increasing the availability of shelter following a disaster.

ReBUILD NC – Community Development Block Grant-Mitigation Action Plan

HUD's Office of Block Grant Assistance (OBGA) has been working with the Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity (FHEO) Office on CDBG-MIT Action Plans. The CDBG Program provides annual grants on a formula basis to states, cities, and counties to develop viable urban communities by providing decent housing and a suitable living environment, and by expanding economic opportunities, principally for low- and moderate-income persons.

Webinar Series: FHEO Requirements on CDBG-MIT Action Plans

The OBGA Disaster Recovery and Special Issues Division hosted a webinar series for CDBG-MIT grantees to provide information on best practices for transformative mitigation projects. Fair housing and equal opportunity requirements were discussed.

EMERGENCY RESPONSE

Amplify This! Podcast

Amplify This! is a podcast project featuring Chauncia Willis, Co-founder and CEO of I-DIEM and Monica Sanders, international disaster policy expert. During the eight-part series, they engaged with emergency managers; diversity, equity and inclusion experts; social justice advocates; and others from the world of disaster management and beyond. They discussed the realities of recent disasters, inequitable policies, and the impact of disaster management practices on marginalized and underserved communities.

Establishing and Maintaining Inclusive Emergency Management with Immigrant and Refugee Populations

The Establishing and Maintaining Inclusive Emergency Management with Immigrant and Refugee Populations Checklist is designed to help strengthen existing emergency preparedness plans by ensuring immigrants and refugees are part of any emergency response. Communities that prioritize an inclusive response to disasters are more resilient and less vulnerable due to equitable approaches to preparedness.

In the Eye of the Storm

This toolkit is designed to guide National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) units and their Environmental and Climate Justice Committees through the process of building equity into the four phases of emergency management: prevention and mitigation, preparedness and resilience building, response and relief, and recovery and redevelopment.

LEARNING HUBS AND THOUGHT LEADERSHIP

Adaptation Equity Portal

Two of the biggest challenges facing the United States—and the world—are the growing inequalities that unfairly disadvantage large segments of the population, and climate change, which exacerbates existing risks in our communities. The effects of climate change—including rising temperatures, more polluted air, and more frequent and intense storms—will disproportionally affect poor and disenfranchised people. Policymakers must find ways to focus not only on the physical impacts of climate change, but also on the ways that policies can have a differential impact on certain individuals and communities.

Georgetown Community Portal on Racial Justice and Inequity

Interdisciplinary portal covering Georgetown University's work on inequity and racial justice. This includes a study on the public health crisis in light of COVID-19, how Black wealth is generated, and research on disparate impacts across sectors.

IntentionallyAct.Com Learning Portal

Created by All Aces. Inc., this online collective care community for diversity, equity and inclusion focuses on bringing together professionals to discuss and advance racial equity and justice.

National Equity Project

The National Equity Project is a leadership and systems change organization committed to increasing our capacity to achieve thriving, self-determining, educated, and just communities. Our mission is to transform the experiences, outcomes, and life options for children and families who have been historically underserved by our institutions and systems.

Network of Age-Friendly States and Communities

Communities enrolled in this network (accounting for more than 500 localities and several states) seek to improve equity by bringing an "age-friendly lens" to housing, transportation and public spaces. By doing so, local leaders can deliver better outcomes for all. Strategies range from prioritizing places with specific needs to creating culturally relevant programming, building mutually beneficial partnerships and more.

Partnership for Inclusive Disaster Strategies

"The Partnership" is the only U.S. disability-led organization with a focused mission on equal access, disability rights and full inclusion of people with disabilities, older adults, and people with access and functional needs, before, during, and after disasters and emergencies.

The Partnership for Resilient Communities (PRC)

The Institute for Sustainable Communities PRC works to transform the national urban climate resilience field by increasing the number of leaders of color in the urban field of practice, advancing approaches that build the resilience of people and places through influence-building and policy approaches, community education and engagement, and installing clean energy and green infrastructure.

Race, Equity, and Leadership (REAL)

From action guides to training and case studies, the National League of Cities' REAL team offers a number of resources to strengthen local leaders' knowledge and capacity to eliminate racial disparities, heal racial divisions and build more equitable communities.

Weather Ready Nation

The Weather-Ready Nation (WRN) Ambassador™ initiative is the NOAA effort to formally recognize partners who are improving the nation's readiness, responsiveness, and overall resilience to extreme weather, water, and climate events. As a WRN Ambassador, partners commit to working with NOAA and other ambassadors to strengthen national resilience to extreme weather.

Wharton Risk Management and Decision Processes Center Equitable Resilience

Natural disaster losses globally are averaging upward of $250 billion annually. As the climate continues to warm, scientists predict changes in the frequency, duration, timing, and location of floods, storms, wildfires, droughts, and other extreme events, potentially exacerbating trends of rising disaster losses. Marginalized communities will bear the brunt of these impacts but do not have adequate resources for sufficient investments in adaptation and hazard mitigation. Many households and communities are not prepared for today's extreme events, let alone tomorrow's.

PLANNING TOOLS AND RESOURCES

Equity in Building Resilience in Adaptation Planning

What constitutes strengthening resilience through equitable adaptation planning? How do we assess the context comprehensively so that effective methods are designed? To be able to declare that community resilience has been achieved, we must develop systems that address the needs of and provide protection for those who are most vulnerable and marginalized.

Guides to Expanding Mitigation – Making the Connection to Equity

This Guide to Expanding Mitigation shows how community officials can partner with the Whole Community to strive for equity in hazard mitigation, including the planning and project development process. This guide is a starting place for community officials to initiate a conversation about mitigation investments that make communities both more equitable and more resilient, and avoid the situation in which risk reduction measures displace the very people they are intended to protect.

Local Early Action Planning (LEAP) and Vulnerability Assessment

Tropical coastal communities face the impacts of climate change with increasing frequency and severity, which exacerbates existing local threats to natural resources and the societies that depend on them. The LEAP Guide is organized into four major steps to support the integration of planned adaptation within the context of existing development objectives and plans and ongoing projects and programs. Intended users include national and local governments, marine and coastal managers, disaster managers, and community development practitioners who work with coastal communities on a wide range of development issues.

National Risk Index

The National Risk Index has authoritative data from multiple federal partners and received input from more than 55 partners across several industries including federal, state, regional, and local government agencies; academia; private organizations; and nonprofits. It incorporates physical and social vulnerability data to identify communities more at risk to the adverse impacts of natural hazards. The information in this online resource also allows communities to look at risk from multiple hazards.

Promising Practices for Advancing Equitable Development

The National Association for Latino Community Asset Builders (NALCAB) made grants to 12 organizations in cities and rural communities across the country to engage in intensive equitable development planning efforts in specific neighborhoods where they work. These organizations are part of a larger national cohort of over 20 organizations in 14 states with which NALCAB is engaged deeply to build capacity and advance local equitable development practice and policy. This document summarizes key insights from the grantees' strategies for advancing equitable neighborhood development.

Racial Equity: GIS for racial justice

Location intelligence can help build a more equitable and just world where a person's race or ethnicity does not affect outcomes. Mapping and GIS can provide insight into patterns of inequality and bring communities together around a common understanding of how to drive change.

Training: Whole Community Coastal Climate Resilience Planning

The goal of this training is to improve the practice of coastal resilience planning by incorporating the needs and perspectives of populations that are especially vulnerable to changing climate conditions, many of whom are historically underrepresented in civic decision-making. The target audience is any professional, elected, or appointed official or community leader engaged in coastal planning. Although New Jersey focused, the training can be broadly applicable to coastal planning for other states and territories.

Whole-Community Coastal Climate Resilience Planning (Training)

The goal of this training is to improve the practice of coastal resilience planning by incorporating the needs and perspectives of populations that are especially vulnerable to changing climate conditions, many of whom are historically underrepresented in civic decision-making. The target audience is any professional, elected, or appointed official or community leader engaged in coastal planning at the state or local level.

RESEARCH AND POLICY

Assessing the Potential Equity Outcomes of Maine's Climate Action Plan: Framework, Analysis and Recommendations

Addressing climate change in Maine will require collaboration and combining knowledge. Successfully reducing Maine's contributions to climate change will require creating resilient systems that can adapt to climate change impacts, and doing so in ways that do not disadvantage vulnerable groups. This equity assessment analyzed plans for buildings; infrastructure and housing; coastal and marine; resilience; emergency management; energy; natural and working lands; public health; and transportation resources.

Enabling Better Places: A Handbook for Improved Neighborhoods

This free 24-page publication (jointly produced by the AARP Livable Communities initiative and the Congress for the New Urbanism) discusses the types of small-scale, incremental policy changes that a community can make without overhauling entire zoning codes and land use policies. The publication explains why a community may want to change its zoning codes and rules, and how it can do so in ways that strengthen the local economy, promote equity, and create public spaces that work for all.

Enhanced Engagement and Risk Communication for Underserved Communities: Research Findings and Emerging Best Practices

Underserved and underrepresented communities are often the most vulnerable to coastal hazards. To better understand how NOAA can effectively serve these stakeholders and develop culturally relevant and targeted resources to reach these communities, this literature review of risk communication strategies was created. Population focus areas include low-income populations, recent immigrants, ethnic communities, and rural communities.

Impact of the Coronavirus Pandemic on the Economic Well-Being of Latino Communities in the United States

This briefing paper presents analysis of data on the disproportionate health and economic impacts of the pandemic among Latinos, including infection and death

rates, job losses, small business closures, unmet basic needs and housing insecurity. It concludes with a call for an intentional and well-targeted federal response that puts Latino workers and entrepreneurs in a position to drive U.S. economic recovery.

Making Equity Real in Climate Adaptation and Community Resilience Policies and Programs: A Guidebook

To prioritize the climate adaptation and community resilience needs of frontline communities and address the historical neglect they have experienced, California must move beyond embracing equity to making it real. This requires centering community needs and building social equity into the very fabric of policies and grant programs that focus on climate adaptation and resilience. To get there, this guidebook offers policymakers a blueprint on how to operationalize equity in policies and grant programs.

Latino Economic Agenda: A Latino Perspective on U.S. Domestic Economic Policy

The economic slowdown resulting from the public health crisis has already been sharp and dramatic. It is clear that this crisis is having an immediate and hard-hitting impact on the service, hospitality and transportation sectors, which disproportionately employ Latinos and low-wage workers, as well as small businesses of all kinds.

San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission Environmental Justice and Social Equity Policies

The San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission's environmental justice and social equity policies integrate principles of environmental justice and social equity into planning, design, and permitting for shoreline projects in and along the San Francisco Bay.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Over the four-week period of the 2020 "Alliances for Equity" Partnership Forum, speakers shared their perspectives, insights, and lessons on equity. They represent a wide range of expertise and industries, and we could not have had these conversations without them. Many of them were involved in the development of this document. Their perspectives are invaluable.

The four sessions of the 2020 Alliance for Equity Virtual Forum are available on FEMA's YouTube channel:

OCTOBER 7 – "LET'S TALK EQUITY"

OCTOBER 14 – "PRIORITIZING EQUITY"

OCTOBER 21 – "PLANNING FOR AN EQUITABLE FUTURE"

OCTOBER 28 – "BUILDING A FOUNDATION FOR ACTION"

Please see their contact information below and get in touch. Building relationships and learning from one another is the foundation of our collective success.

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Bridget Bean, *formerly FEMA*

Katherine Fox, *FEMA*

Michael Grimm, *FEMA*

Nicole LeBoeuf, *NOAA*

Brooks Nelson, *formerly U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation*

Dr. Jeffrey L. Payne, *NOAA*

Dr. Louis W. Uccellini, *NOAA*

CLOSING

The Resilient Nation Partnership Network is honored to champion this movement with our committed partners. We hope this document serves as a valuable resource, no matter where you are in your journey toward building equitable and whole-community resilience.

If you want to learn more, reach out to us. We want to hear your thoughts, ideas, and opportunities. Email us at FEMA-ResilientNation@fema.dhs.gov, and let's start a conversation.

"We all should know that diversity makes for a rich tapestry, and we must understand that all the threads of the tapestry are equal in value no matter what their color."

— Dr. Maya Angelou

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