

Maine Climate Council Community Resilience Working Group (CRWG) Meeting Summary from March 22, 2024

Welcome

- Goals are to view and discuss policy recommendations from the Psychological Resilience subgroup, discuss policy options for long-term adaptation funding and financing, including green banks, and discussing investment in tools and technical assistance (TA) for communities.

Draft Policy Recommendations: Psychological Resilience

- Dennis Kiley of the EcoPsychology Initiative presented draft policy recommendations from the Psychological Resilience subgroup, summarized below:
 - **Engagement and Communication:** Educate climate leaders, public officials, activists, and others involved in climate resilience on psychologically sound strategies and best practices to encourage hope, foster agency and support collective action.
 - **Equitable and Accessible Psychological Resilience Resources:** Provide equitable psychological resilience education, assessments, and training on multiple levels: individual, communal, institutional, and statewide.
 - **Mental Health Support in Response to Climate Impacts:** Prioritize awareness and action on mental health impacts of climate-related adverse experiences, especially in youth and other vulnerable populations.
- It is important to consider psychological resilience and mental health across the population, from older individuals who may be mourning the loss of a sense of place to youth who may have anxiety about the future of climate change impacts.

Policy Recommendation Reboot: Long-term adaptation funding and financing

- The CRWG recognizes that accomplishing the goals of the Maine Climate Council will require dedicated, long-term funding streams and that shorter-term grants, while very significant, may not be sufficient to cover the costs of adaptation and mitigation in the long term.
- Shaun O'Rourke of Quantified Ventures introduced the concept of green banks and other centralized funding and financing mechanisms which would allow for greater centralization of funds for projects to address climate change, greater flexibility for current and future project needs, and reduced burdens of grant administration on agency technical staff.
 - Other New England states, including Rhode Island and Connecticut, have demonstrated successes with this approach.

Policy Recommendation Reboot: Invest in tools and technical assistance for communities

- Judy East, CRWG co-chair, shared updates on the status of several current and proposed TA tools and funding mechanism for communities and addressed progress to date since Maine Won't Wait's 2020 publication.
- The Community Resilience Partnership has awarded over \$6 million, and the State Infrastructure Adaptation Fund has awarded around \$22 million so far. Both programs have pending proposals for significant increases in funding.
- Maine state agencies have been working to maximize funding from federal grants. Notably, there is a ~\$73 million application pending for the NOAA Climate Resilience Regional Challenge.

- Resilience TA progress includes:
 - A NOAA coastal fellow is developing a project to improve resilience TA coordination and navigation for Midcoast communities.
 - Most printed copies of the 2023 Community Resilience Workbook have been distributed. It has been downloaded over 1,500 times as well. A 2024 update is in progress.
 - DACF is seeking funding to create an online tool based on the resources in the Community Resilience Workbook.
- Becca Boulos, CRWG co-chair, presented information regarding public health theories, assessments, and behavior change.
 - Community Readiness Assessments, Community Health Needs Assessments, and Community Health Improvement Plans are all existing tools used by public health practitioners that could be adapted to help meet the goals of the CRWG.

Next Steps:

- Sub-working group members will continue to refine policy recommendations based on feedback from other CRWG members and will fill out deliverable templates to report their policy recommendations and necessary supporting information to the full CRWG.
- Deliverables will be reviewed by the entire CRWG at the next meeting on April 26. They will then be compiled into a single deliverable to be presented for the consideration of the full Maine Climate Council for inclusion in the 2024 Maine Won't Wait update.
- Upcoming meetings will be from 9 am to 12 pm on the following days:
 - Friday, April 26, 2024: in person with virtual option ([Register Here](#) for either in person or virtual).
 - Location: Marquart Building, Augusta, Room 118
 - Thursday, May 23, 2024: virtual, [Register Here](#).