

**Maine Climate Council Equity Subcommittee  
Draft Recommendations - for Deliberative Purposes  
Resilient Infrastructure and Engaging Maine Communities and People  
Version 8-26-2021**

*Please note:*

This document contains draft recommendations for deliberation by the equity subcommittee members. Edits and revisions will be discussed during upcoming working sessions of the subcommittee, the schedules of which will be posted on the [subcommittee website](#) in early September.

Public comment on these draft recommendations will be accepted during upcoming subcommittee meetings on September 23 and October 21, or anytime through this [online form](#).

All upcoming meetings and meeting materials can be found [here](#).

**DRAFT DOCUMENT - DELIBERATIVE VERSION**

Version 8-26-2021

MCC Equity Subcommittee

DRAFT Resilient Infrastructure and Engaging Maine Communities and People Recommendations

<b>Original Source of Proposed Recommendation (Direct Comments/Notes from Equity Subcommittee Minutes)<sup>1</sup></b>	<b><i>Proposed recommendation</i></b>
Coastal and low income communities have historically had the most challenges accessing state programs  Project funding is limited in small communities; also, expertise doesn't exist for how to begin – does the state have a long-term strategic plan for prioritization of infrastructure improvements w/re to climate vulnerability?	The state should identify priority communities for piloting the infrastructure adaptation fund, as well as prioritization criteria to apply to competing projects. Criteria might include income level and other sociodemographic factors of the community, in-house planning and engineering capacity, level of climate risk/vulnerability, and cultural/historic significance of infrastructure, amongst other factors.
There is a lot of saltwater intrusion already occurring on islands; these communities need both further information and clarity on responsibility to address the problems	The state should assess the climate vulnerability of groundwater systems and wells, particularly where there exists potential exposure to increased rates of salinization.
For low income/rural communities, access and participation is a real challenge – if you are trying to keep up with maintenance infrastructure and normal capital improvement cycles, that's really hard for small communities to do; communities need access to data and capacity for planning – long term capacity, to get from data to study to planning to engineering to building	In addition to providing project funding, the state's infrastructure adaptation fund should either fund, or package existing sources of funding for, risk assessment, planning, and engineering design, particularly in communities with limited resources.
The state has identified various infrastructure vulnerabilities, ie the Maine Ferry Service, in previous planning processes – but has no way to fund them comprehensively. At the same time, communities are heavily dependent on some of this same infrastructure.	The state should compile a list of vulnerable infrastructure identified through prior planning processes, and develop a plan for assessing this infrastructure for climate vulnerability as well as funding infrastructure resilience upgrades. When determining which infrastructure to upgrade first, the state should take into account infrastructure which is both critical and identified as important to the host community.

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<sup>1</sup> Text in this column is from Equity Subcommittee meeting minutes.

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Vulnerable communities require payment and wrap around services to be able to meaningfully participate in planning and decision making processes	All state programs which seek input from vulnerable communities must provide both payment and other wrap-around services to enable participation.
Municipalities need to understand the financial runway – marathon not a sprint	The state should help municipalities raise long term funding for long-term infrastructure projects (see NYS EFC as a model).
Localized data is critical for people to understand impact in their <i>specific</i> community – for most people, places/infra with cultural/historical significance being impacted by climate change is most significant.	The state should collate and make easily accessible localized climate impact data for communities to use in vulnerability assessments.
Climate vulnerability assessments have to include public process to build understand of the “what and why” behind infrastructure investments. Otherwise, if community revenue is needed to pay for a project, community buy in might not exist.	All local infrastructure vulnerability analyses must include robust opportunities for public engagement and education.
There are economic efficiencies if the state drives aggregation of a specific vendor to serve multiple communities on specific types of projects <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Putting the menu of options and pathway to \$\$ to communities</li></ul>	The state should explore the development of a menu of resilient infrastructure project recommendations, as well as a centralized list of vendors to provide vulnerability assessment, planning, design, and construction services.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Climate Resilience Planning Pilots (8 communities) – is there a format or process that is then standardized for other communities to use, and how do communities with fewest resources commit to that process?<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Helpful to have guidance from the state to streamline</li></ul></li></ul> <p>Formulate a community readiness assessment that supports learning and action in ways that makes steps clear and achievable – the remedies, not just pointing out the deficiencies – rely on existing public health tools to build on what they’ve created (and not just in English)</p>	The state should develop standard resilience planning guidance for communities, and should provide assistance to communities to run these planning processes. Guides and process assistance should be made available in languages other than English.

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<p>Concern, given that communities don't have values around climate/environmental action and their own hierarchy of needs, there is a learning curve that will be different for different people</p> <p>We have a social and cultural division in some ways by geography; when it comes to providing assistance, are we going to bring people who exclude themselves in the door?</p> <p>We may have communities who may not believe that the values that we're talking about are values that they care about.</p> <p>It will be harder for the state to allocate money to communities who do not apply.</p>	<p>State climate vulnerability funding programs should establish equity metrics to ensure that equitable amounts of funding and other assistance reach communities across Maine, including those communities who do not identify climate impacts as a top issue for concern.</p>
<p>Communities can have significant numbers of low income people in order to get CDBG funding, but that doesn't mean it's a healthy community (and many of these projects might happen in the wealthy parts of town?)</p>	<p>DECD should develop a robust engagement process for CDBG funding administered by the state, including representational participation from low income members of applying communities. Projects should benefit vulnerable neighborhoods within communities.</p>
<p>People without literacy, youth and the elderly, will have a hard time accessing climate engagement opportunities.</p>	<p>Climate engagement opportunities must be accessible across all forms of media, and must be delivered through trusted partners to reach vulnerable populations.</p> <p>Local climate engagement opportunities should be designed to engage vulnerable populations (ie, neighborhoods with low literacy, high linguistic isolation, high elderly or youth populations, etc) identified in close partnership with on-the-ground organizations.</p>
<p>Raising awareness in emergency alert system for air quality and heat, the importance of not just scaring people but people might not be able to respond in the way they "should"</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ We should provide remedies that meet everyone's needs</li><li>○ Not just the alert, but what do you do?</li></ul>	<p>The state's natural hazard emergency alert system should take into account variability in people's ability to respond, and should offer a menu of options for risk reduction.</p>

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Community readiness assessments are done at a town level, the idea is to figure out where a community or town is in terms of a specific public health intervention – are there opportunities to use to assess climate vulnerability?	The Maine CDC should study the opportunity to use community health readiness assessments to assess ability to adapt or respond to climate vulnerability.
Psychological resilience is critical to responding to climate vulnerability	The state should provide access to free psychological resilience resources geared towards addressing climate-driven trauma.
Climate vulnerability, and vulnerability in general, may exist in super local neighborhoods	The state’s definition of environmental justice and other vulnerable communities should, to the extent that data is available and reliable, identify disparate levels of vulnerability across communities (ie between neighborhoods).
Role of NGO resources. It’s uneven, a patchwork of opportunity. How do you help a community understand and access the resources that are available? Meet the needs of the smallest communities, those that aren’t first in line.	The state should create a consolidated list of organizations that provide resources for community resilience and climate action.
The Corps program often work best for those who have financial means – we need to account for adequate funding, etc. – for livable wages/work conditions/etc. - accessibility is key – combine it with wraparound services (cell phones/childcare/transportation, etc.)	Volunteer Maine should incorporate equity into plans for the Maine Climate Corps program. Equitable measures might include multilingual or otherwise targeted outreach, as well as provision of wrap-around services to ensure equitable participation.

***Summary of data needs and future research***

In addition to the above recommendations, the Equity subcommittee recommends that the state study the following areas for future consideration by the Equity subcommittee and the Maine Climate Council:

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