

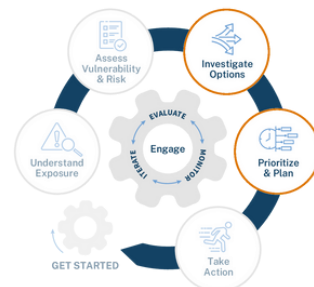
Advancing Cross-Jurisdictional Climate Adaptation



Cook County, Illinois

Project Team: ICF, Cook County Department of Environment and Sustainability, Geosyntec, and Metro Strategies

Funding Amount: \$115,516



Project Summary

This project strengthened cross-jurisdictional climate adaptation in Cook County, Illinois by expanding upon existing resilience planning efforts across five municipalities—Bellwood, Franklin Park, Justice, Lynwood, and Markham. These communities face climate hazards such as extreme heat and flooding that are compounded by socioeconomic stressors and a long history of public and private disinvestment. Led by the Cook County Department of Environment and Sustainability and a Climate Resilience Practitioner Team (ICF, Geosyntec Consultants, Metro Strategies Group), this project convened all five communities through a series of working groups to identify shared challenges, leading practices, and opportunities for partnership to advance regional resilience. In close collaboration with the communities, this project also produced monitoring and evaluation plans to track the efficacy of each implemented resilience project. Ultimately, the communities came away with invaluable resources and connections that equip them to make continued progress towards sustainable resilience.

“It’s good to know that we are not on our own.”

- Participating municipal staff

Project Goals



Coordinate regional collaboration across five municipalities in Cook County, Illinois to advance equitable, cross-jurisdictional adaptation.



Develop custom monitoring and evaluation plans to track the efficacy of recently implemented resilience measures.



Foster connections with regional entities and funding agencies to set communities up for success in seeking support for resilience efforts in the future.

Project Timeline

Months 1-2

Conclude community planning efforts

Months 3-4

Develop and refine monitoring and evaluation methodology

Months 5-10

Host working group series, presentations from regional entities, and 1-on-1 meetings with municipal staff

Months 11-12

Finalize community-specific plans for monitoring, evaluation, and future regional collaboration

Community Challenges



Aging Infrastructure

Aging sewage and stormwater infrastructure exacerbates the impacts of pluvial flooding



Urban Flooding

Extreme rainfall causes flash flooding, disrupting transportation and creating millions of dollars in property damage



Fragmented and Uneven Support

Disinvested communities are more dependent on support from the County and regional authorities, which makes coordinated regional planning crucial



Urban Extreme Heat

Extreme heat poses an acute public health risk, especially for vulnerable residents such as unhoused people

Project Approach

This project employed a collaborative, community-centered approach to fostering the partnerships and specific guidance necessary to support effective climate resilience and build long-term capacity for adaptation.

- ★ Established a cross-jurisdictional working group to align local resilience efforts and encourage regional coordination.
- ★ Developed monitoring and evaluation (M&E) plans with specific indicators, metrics, and data collection protocols to help municipalities track the efficacy of their resilience efforts.
- ★ Developed and hosted educational workshops to build local capacity for monitoring and evaluation beyond the scope of the project.
- ★ Fostered connection with regional entities to familiarize communities with available resources and prepare them to access support in the future.

“ We learned a lot about M&E...I really feel confident that we can successfully make our own M&E plans for future projects! ”

- Participating municipal staff

Impact

This project increased community resilience by fostering cross-municipality collaboration, building capacity to implement and track climate adaptation strategies, and ensuring long-term progress towards regional resilience goals. The CSCI investment enabled under-resourced communities to learn from one another and to track the efficacy of their resilience efforts, strengthening their ability to secure future funding and respond effectively to flooding, heat, and other climate stressors.

Next Steps

- Sustain cross-municipality coordination through the established working group and explore ongoing participation from regional partners.
- Finalize and implement monitoring and evaluation plans to track long-term effectiveness of resilience projects.
- Use co-developed indicators and data protocols to support future funding applications and alignment with broader resilience goals.
- Leverage lessons learned and community engagement strategies to expand resilience planning across other Cook County municipalities.