

# PROJECT SPOTLIGHTS

2024-25

**Climate  
resilience  
stories from  
communities  
across the U.S.**

In 2024, the Climate Smart Communities Initiative awarded over \$1 million to 11 communities to advance climate resilience projects across the country. These spotlights showcase each community's goals, challenges, and approaches.



**climate smart  
communities  
initiative**

[ClimateSmartCommunity.org](https://ClimateSmartCommunity.org)



# climate smart communities initiative

## HELPING COMMUNITIES MOVE FROM RISK TO RESILIENCE

The Climate Smart communities initiative (CSCI) **pairs funding with vetted adaptation practitioners to help communities plan, prepare, and implement** resilience solutions.

### GROWING RISKS

Climate impacts are increasing in frequency and severity, putting added strain on communities. **Frontline communities, often with fewer resources, face even greater challenges** in preparing for and responding to these risks.



### BARRIERS TO ACTION

Limited funding, staffing, and technical capacity make it difficult to move from planning to action. **Without support, communities are often left reacting to events instead of preparing for them.**



### HOW CSCI SUPPORTS COMMUNITIES

CSCI helps close this gap by providing opportunities for funding and technical support to communities most vulnerable to climate impacts. An annual grant program paired with additional support **helps communities to advance resilience planning and turn ideas into actionable projects.**

#### CSCI Funding Timeline

Funding  
Availability  
Announcement

*Fall*



Funding  
Applications Due

*Spring*



Funding Awards  
Announced

*Summer*



Projects Begin

*Late-summer*



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initiative**

## PROJECT PARTNERS



**CLIMATE  
RESILIENCE  
FUND**

**GEOS  
INSTITUTE**

**EcoAdapt™**

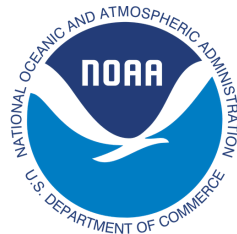


**fernleaf**



CSCI is managed by a group of partners, working closely together with the NOAA Climate Program Office and with support from The Coca-Cola Foundation and the Walton Family Foundation

**WALTON FAMILY  
FOUNDATION**



**THE  
Coca-Cola  
FOUNDATION**

# GRANTMAKING PRIORITIES

The CSCI grants program is focused on assisting communities that are facing significant climate challenges with limited resources. **These communities have often received designations from federal and state agencies that assess their relative risk level based on environmental, social, and economic factors.**



## Climate Change Vulnerability

Funding is prioritized for communities most vulnerable to climate change-related hazards to increase their climate resilience.



## Equity

Projects center those most impacted as decision-makers and co-creators of solutions in climate resilience planning and implementation.



## Nature

Projects consider climate impacts on ecosystems and nature-based solutions (NbS) in climate resilience plans.



## Capacity Building

Projects increase capacity of the community to pursue their climate resilience goals.

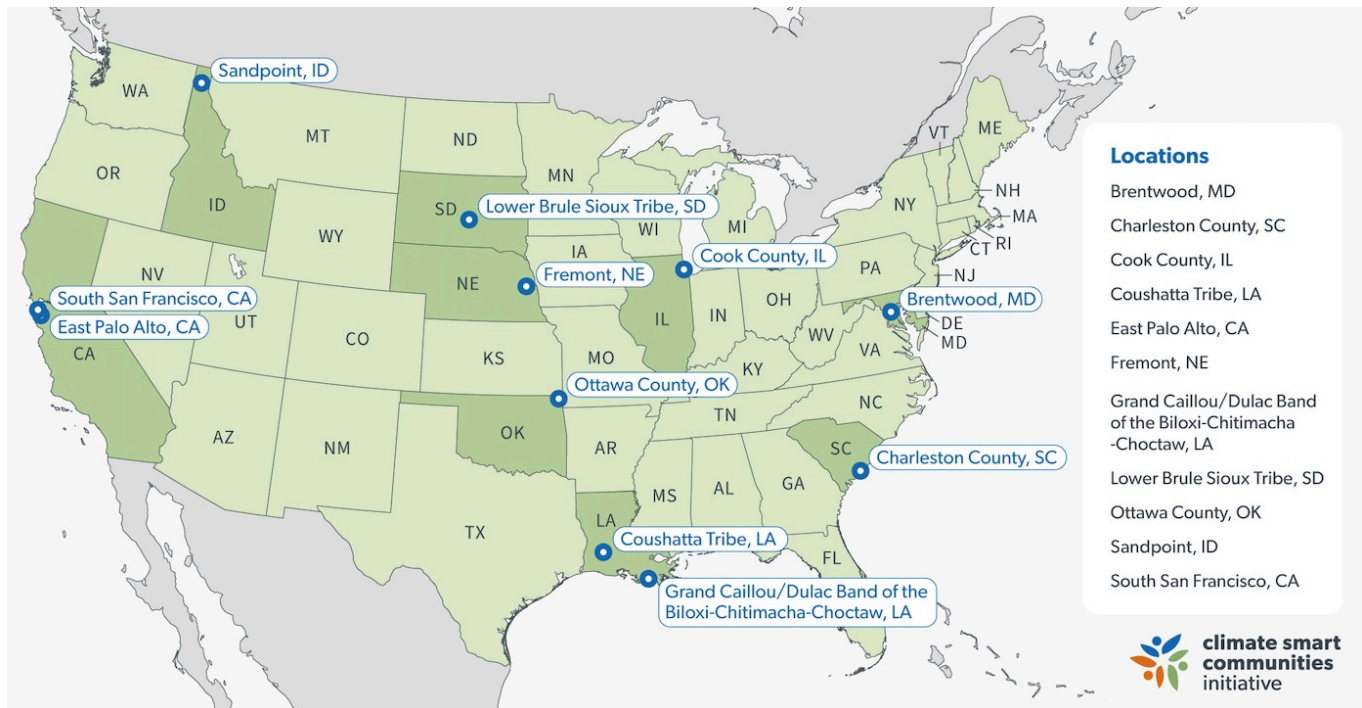


## Readiness to Increase Climate Resilience

The project goal(s) and team will enable the community to make measurable progress on climate resilience.

# AWARDED PROJECT LOCATIONS

CSCI announced its first round of awards in August 2024 to 11 communities on the front lines of the climate crisis. Priority was given to communities that had a higher relative level of climate risk, based on environmental as well as social and economic considerations; and were already connected with a vetted adaptation professional.

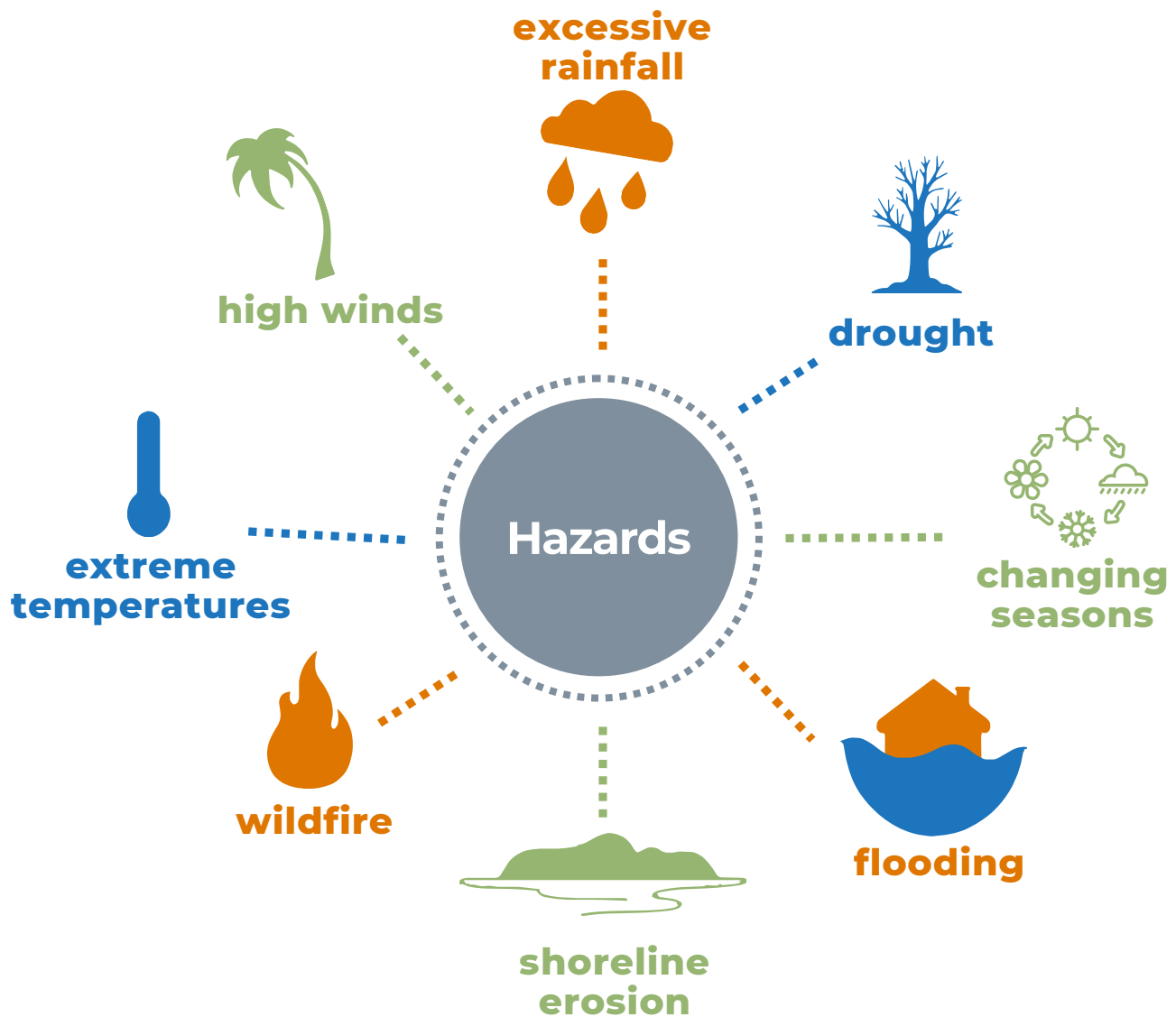


**23** NUMBER OF APPLICATIONS RECEIVED

**\$107,209** AVERAGE GRANT AWARD SIZE

**\$1,179,298** TOTAL AMOUNT GRANTED

# COMMUNITY PRIORITIES



Awarded communities received funding, technical support, and additional resources to enable each of the communities to accelerate a climate resilience plan or project through a collaborative process that involves local officials and community representatives working alongside a climate adaptation expert.



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# East Palo Alto Engagement Project



## East Palo Alto, California

*Project Team:* Coastal Quest, City of East Palo Alto, and Climate Resilient Communities




*Funding Amount:* \$115,000



## Project Summary

This project engaged with and uplifted a community facing challenges related to a changing climate, including sunny day flooding from rising seas and poor air quality from more intense wildfires. The project team conducted a series of community-led in-person focus groups and workshops hosted in English, Spanish, Samoan, and Tongan, and distributed a survey across the community. The concerns and priorities collaboratively identified through these workshops create the foundation for the City of East Palo Alto's new Environmental Justice Element and updated Safety Element of the city's General Plan—a guiding policy vision for the next 8+ years of climate resilience, environmental protection, and community engagement.

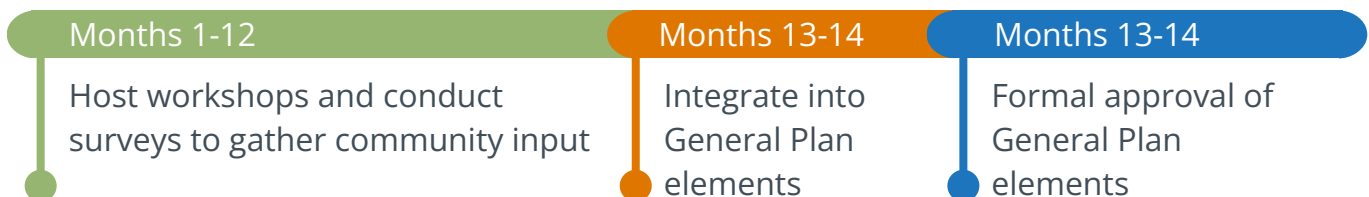
## Project Goals

-  Increase awareness within underserved communities of climate challenges, local environmental concerns, and potential solutions.
-  Co-create solutions with residents through accessible engagement on issues such as housing stability, pollution, health, and safe community spaces.
-  Empower residents to stay engaged and shape city actions through interactive activities and increased civic participation.

*The Pacific Islander community in East Palo Alto is often left out of these conversations but is directly impacted by these policies and programs. We are excited to learn about civic engagement through this process and see its importance in getting our voice heard!*

- Community member,  
Pacific Islander workshop

## Project Timeline



## Additional Collaborators

Nuestra Casa • 'Anamatangi Polynesian Voices • East Palo Alto Climate Change Community Team

## Community Challenges



### Drought and Water Scarcity

Water shortages are exacerbated by droughts



### Wildfire Impacts & Air Quality

More days with dangerous air quality



### Aging Housing Stock

More than 80% of homes are over 50 years old and many lack air conditioning



### Low Tree Canopy Cover

Parts of the city have less than 6% canopy cover

## Project Approach

To engage historically underrepresented groups and ensure their concerns were included in the City's General Plan, the project team utilized the following approaches:

- ★ Hosted accessible engagement opportunities with childcare, meals, translation, and stipends to ensure Spanish-speaking, English-speaking, and Pacific Islander residents could fully participate.
- ★ Conducted door-to-door surveys in disadvantaged neighborhoods to capture residents' concerns.
- ★ Partnered with the City's Climate Change Community Team to co-develop outreach strategies and promote peer-to-peer information sharing.
- ★ Integrated community leaders and partners across faith, cultural, and youth groups as trusted cornerstones of East Palo Alto's identity, leveraging their networks to reach residents often overlooked, including elders, recent immigrants, and multilingual families.



## Impact

The community engagement work increased awareness within underserved neighborhoods of climate challenges, local environmental justice concerns, and potential solutions. Residents were able to co-create solutions through accessible conversations on pressing issues such as housing stability, pollution, health, and safe community spaces. Using interactive activities like gallery walks, mapping exercises, and open discussions, the process empowered participants to voice local priorities, stay engaged, and shape future city actions through stronger civic participation.

## Next Steps

- ✓ Implement the priorities identified in the General Plan.
- ✓ Continue transparent communication with residents about what progress is being made on the goals that they helped create.
- ✓ Provide regular updates on the status and future plans to identify adjustments or improvements to the planning process

# Improving Tree Canopy for Climate Resilience



## South San Francisco, California

*Project Team:* Coastal Quest, Rise South City, City of South San Francisco

*Funding Amount:* \$95,000



## Project Summary

This project aims to increase urban canopy tree coverage to combat urban heat island effects and poor air quality impacting residents of South San Francisco. This community faces multiple increasing hazards related to climate change and proximity to urban and industrial activities. The project team sought to increase collaboration and community-based decision making for implementing a tree canopy pilot project that was focused on and responsive to the needs and priorities of vulnerable South San Francisco residents. Trees were planted by community work parties and provided to and planted by individual residents. As a result of this work, the partners have successfully pursued funding to continue and expand on this partnership to address climate vulnerabilities in South San Francisco through education, community engagement, and additional tree canopy improvements.

## Project Goals



Increase tree canopy coverage in South San Francisco, focusing on locations with communities vulnerable to climate risks



Engage with historically vulnerable communities on climate resilience solutions



Create a replicable framework for climate resilience implementation to continue and scale this work



*Trees not only improve our neighborhoods but improve the quality of our physical and mental health. Your program is extremely valuable at a time when we need it most.*

*- Lizette, South San Francisco Resident and Free Tree Recipient*

## Project Timeline

Months 1-6

Education and outreach, building collaborative relationships, centering community needs

Months 6-9

Tree planting parties and community outreach

Months 9-12

Distribute trees, continue building relationships

## Additional Collaborators

**UC Davis** – Partner on a proposal to monitor health impacts of increased green space through tree planting

**Rotary Club of South San Francisco** - Supports tree delivery to residents and assists with volunteer events

## Community Challenges



### Vulnerable Community

Residents face language barriers and limited resources to address climate-driven vulnerabilities including heat and poor air quality



### Poor Air Quality

From industrial/highway setting, exacerbated by hotter temperatures and more extreme heat days



### Low Tree Canopy Cover

Community has on average <9% canopy cover but their forest master plan indicates they can achieve >22%

## Project Approach

To engage historically underrepresented groups and ensure that the project is implemented in a way that centers community needs while improving tree canopy cover, the project team used the following approaches:

- ★ Providing culturally and linguistically relevant outreach for Spanish-speaking and English-Speaking residents and meeting them in their communities at events like farmer's markets and placing flyers at local businesses.
- ★ Hosting a centrally located, visible tree planting work party to generate community interest and demonstrate success through action.
- ★ Increasing capacity for collaboration between the the City of South San Francisco and community organizations by creating regular meetings between stakeholders and collaborating to implement the pilot tree program.



## Impact

- ✓ Strengthened collaboration between the the City of South San Francisco, residents, and community organizations to build long-term program capacity.
- ✓ Engaged residents directly through tree giveaways and work parties, centering their input in planting decisions.
- ✓ Secured new partnerships and funding to continue and expand the program beyond its initial year.

## Next Steps

- Continue to implement tree planting in ways that center equity and align with the community's Forest Master Plan.
- Expand and scale this work with funding for an arborist and continued implementation of the program.
- Build on the relationships developed between the the City of South San Francisco, community organizations, and residents to grow the capacity for and interest in this work.

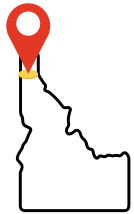
## More Information:

 <https://www.ssf.net/Departments/Parks-Recreation/Parks-and-Recreation-Facility-Projects/Free-Tree-Program>

 <https://www.risesouthcity.org/s-projects-side-by-side>

# Sandpoint Forward!

## Planning for Resilience



### Community of Sandpoint, Idaho

*Project Team:* Project 7B, Bonner County Climate Coalition, Liaison to Sandpoint City Council, and Model Forest Policy Program

*Funding Amount:* \$122,629



### Project Summary

The Model Forest Policy Program (MFPP) facilitated the Sandpoint Forward! Planning for Resilience project to build climate resilience for the small, rural community of Sandpoint, Idaho. Guided by MFPP in collaboration with local partners, this community-based team used the Steps to Resilience framework to facilitate a participatory climate adaptation planning process. The project resulted in a locally driven Resilience Plan that integrates nature-based and policy-oriented solutions while addressing the socioeconomic challenges faced by underrepresented residents. Through collaborative leadership, participatory engagement, and cross-sector knowledge-sharing, the project strengthens community capacity, increases awareness of climate risks and opportunities, and enhances local fundraising ability for future resilience initiatives.

### Project Goals



Increase climate resilience through an adaptation planning process aligned with the Steps to Resilience.

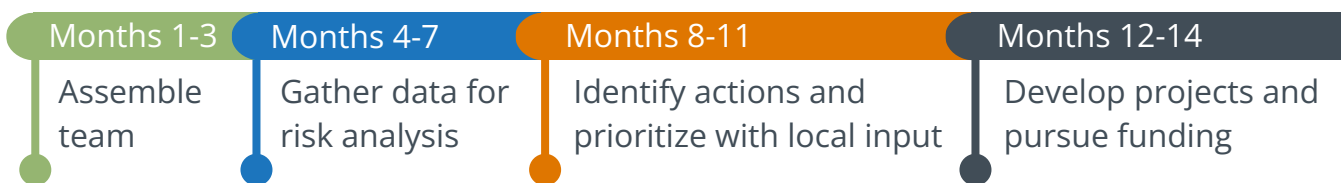


Demonstrate and evaluate the Steps to Resilience framework in an under-resourced, climate-impacted rural community.



Overlooking Sandpoint and Lake Pend Oreille  
Photo courtesy: Rod Barclay

### Project Timeline



### Additional Collaborators

Kalispel Tribe • Selkirk Fire Rescue & EMS and Northside Fire District • Resilience planning team and expert advisors • Liaison to Sandpoint Sustainability Committee • Fernleaf consultants

## Community Challenges

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### Wildfire Risk

Longer and more severe wildfire seasons with double the extreme fire danger days by mid-century.



### Wildfire Smoke & Heat

Increased risks of smoke-related illness and reduced fire-season tourism income.



### Extreme Heat & Drought

Increased frequency of drought and heat waves.



### Economic Challenges

Prevalence of low-wage tourism jobs and lack of affordable housing.



### Ecosystem Health

Increased early spring floods followed by intense summer drought; impaired lake health and threats to fisheries and recreational economy.

## Project Approach

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The project team engaged with Sandpoint community stakeholders to conduct a climate risk assessment, develop a resilience plan, and prepare for implementation by:

- ★ Forming a steering committee and organize a stakeholder group to represent local community needs.
- ★ Assessing local extreme weather exposures, vulnerabilities, and risks through research and community input.
- ★ Engaging community members, including underrepresented groups, to gather concerns and solution ideas.
- ★ Identifying and prioritizing adaptation strategies, with a focus on nature-based solutions.
- ★ Building implementation readiness by identifying funding opportunities and preparing outreach materials.
- ★ Drafting a resilience plan with clear goals, actions, and timelines.

## Impact

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This project increased the climate resilience capacity of Sandpoint, Idaho and worked to achieve the following outcomes:

- ✓ Improve public understanding of climate-related risks and preventative actions.
- ✓ Strengthen support for resilient land use that protects ecosystems and increases the adaptive capacity of people infrastructure.
- ✓ Identify and empower vulnerable populations to address climate risks.
- ✓ Reduce high risk development in hazard areas.

## Next Steps

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- Continue seeking funding opportunities to implement resilience projects developed during this project.
- Develop plan for ongoing coordination and funding for plan implementation.
- Integrate results with other community planning processes such as the Comprehensive Plan and Hazard Mitigation Plan.

## More Information

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Sandpoint Forward! Project 7B

<https://project7b.org/project-7b-and-sandpoint-forward-team-up-on-resilient-land-use/>

# 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.



- 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.

# Centering Coshatta Knowledge



## Coshatta Tribe of Louisiana

Project Team: Coshatta Tribe of Louisiana and South Central Climate Adaptation Science Center

Funding Amount: \$80,089



## Project Summary

This project built capacity for understanding climate vulnerabilities and identifying opportunities to build resilience with the Coshatta Tribe. The project team identified community assets, evaluated exposures, and analyzed risk and vulnerability in partnership with Coshatta tribal staff, leadership, and a Coshatta Advisory Committee. These efforts increased the strength of the community vulnerability assessment and provided a framework for identifying community climate resilience objectives and criteria for evaluating and prioritizing programs and projects, forming the basis for a draft climate resilience plan that is informed and supported by tribal objectives and priorities.

## Project Goals



Engage the Coshatta Tribe of Louisiana's staff and community members in learning about its climate hazards, vulnerabilities, risks, and needs for climate resilience.



Propose, evaluate, and prioritize programs and projects to support climate adaptation and resilience.



*Being able to say we have funding for stipends for committee members is a big deal... for young people it is an even bigger deal. Engagement was a challenge initially to get people involved - both food and stipends really helped, if we didn't have that, we may have had much less participation*

*- Bethany Crochet  
Environmental Division Manager,  
Coshatta Tribe of Louisiana*

## Project Timeline

Months 1-9

Update Vulnerability Assessment with new information on climate hazards and community vulnerability and risk

Months 7-12

Draft resilience objectives and prioritize implementation projects

## Region-Wide Partnerships and Collaboration

The project developed climate projections for a six-parish area: Allen, Jefferson Davis, Evangeline, Calcasieu, Acadia and St. Landry. Tribal lands are within two Louisiana Watershed Initiative districts.

## Community Challenges



### Rainfall-Induced Flooding

Extreme rainfall events and flooding impedes transportation, contaminates drinking water, and damages wastewater facilities, homes and businesses.



### Extreme Heat

Increases risk to outdoor workers, the elderly, and youth, and reduces opportunities for traditional practices such as foraging and powwow activities.



### Ecosystem Impacts

Extreme weather and heat impacts the integrity of ecosystems important to the Tribe. Risks include loss of native species, loss of culturally important species used in medicine and basket weaving, and reduced opportunities for religious practices in intact habitats.

## Project Approach

This project brought together a climate adaptation planner, Coushatta staff, and the Coushatta Advisory Committee to develop a relevant and local vulnerability assessment and to identify and prioritize climate resilience project opportunities.

- ★ Map and document community assets and evaluate community risks and vulnerabilities
- ★ Establish and work with a Coushatta Advisory Committee to develop and implement opportunities specific to participation of traditional knowledge holders and additional engagement with tribal members
- ★ Collaboratively develop programs and projects in a draft climate resilience plan



## Impact

By centering inclusive engagement and traditional knowledge, this project resulted in a culturally rooted and relevant vulnerability assessment and draft Climate Resilience Plan designed to address the needs of the Coushatta Tribe. Broad participation fostered trust and intergenerational learning that extends beyond this one effort. Communication and capacity-building created a foundation for sustainable, community-led decision-making now and into the future.



## Next Steps

- Implement priority initiatives identified in the draft climate resilience plan



# Sharing Capacity for Community Resilience Planning and Ecosystem Restoration in Grand Caillou/Dulac



## Grand Caillou/Dulac Band of the Biloxi-Chitimacha-Choctaw Indians of Louisiana

*Project Team:* Grand Caillou/Dulac Band of the Biloxi-Chitimacha-Choctaw Indians of Louisiana and Climigration Network

*Funding Amount:* \$122,000

### Project Summary

This project increased the collective capacity of Tribal leadership and of the Grand Caillou/Dulac Band of the Biloxi-Chitimacha-Choctaw Indians of Louisiana (GC/D), community members, and partners to develop an actionable, community-led Community Resilience Plan in Dulac and Chauvin, LA. GC/D strengthened and built new relationships among local, regional, and national partners, and guided the team on the development of core principles for the project that were included in signed contractual agreements among the project team. Red Plains Professional helped to synthesize existing data and reports and generate new up-to-date maps of risk and nature-based projects to inform adaptation strategies. GC/D led development and implementation of a community survey and conversations to understand residents' perspectives on climate risk and adaptation strategies, and priorities for the resilience hub at the GC/D Community Outreach Program Office. Importantly, as a result of CSCI funding, the project team was able to raise an additional \$563K to sustain resilience planning over the next three years. The project culminated in the design of an in-person Gathering in summer 2025 for Tribal and community members to discuss risk and priorities for resilience planning.

### Project Goals



Increase the capacity of Tribal leadership and the community to build climate resilience.



Mitigate the impact of disasters and safeguard lives and community livelihoods.



Ensure efficient and coordinated disaster response efforts to minimize loss and facilitate a speedy recovery.

## Community Challenges



### Catastrophic Land Loss and Degradation

Rapid coastal erosion, saltwater intrusion, and habitat destruction threaten infrastructure and cultural practices



### Livelihood Disruption

Damage to fish and wildlife habitat undermines traditional food sources and employment opportunities



### Barriers to Federal Recognition & Resources

GC/D's 28 year struggle to gain federal recognition limits access to essential resources



### Increasing Disasters

Worsening storms and flooding cause repeated damage



### Housing Insecurity:

Critical need for safe and sustainable housing



*GC/D's planning efforts are designed to address flooding, rapid coastal erosion, saltwater intrusion, and habitat destruction in their community that threaten infrastructure and cultural practices and undermine traditional food sources and employment opportunities. (Photo provided by GC/D)*

## Partnerships and Collaboration

The project was co-designed and led by GC/D Tribal leaders, members, and non-Tribal residents from Dulac and Chauvin, with support from the Parish and national and regional technical partners. Through this planning effort, new partnerships formed and existing regional partnerships were strengthened. Indigenous and community members have joined a planning team that will continue to work on a resilience plan over the next three years under NFWF funding.

## Project Timeline

### Months 1-4

Partner team and relationship building, development of core principles to guide the project, asset identification, data and report gathering, fundraising

### Months 5-8

Preliminary asset and hazard mapping, Community Talking Circle and 1:1 dialogues with Indigenous and other community members, collaborative survey design

### Months 8-12

Survey implementation, planning and hosting an in-person Community Gathering

## Project Approach

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Planning activities occurred over three phases:

### Phase 1: Relationship Building, Principle Development, and Data Gathering/Analysis

- ★ Formed planning team including Tribal leadership, Climigration Network, Red Plains Professional, Tribal members, elders and youth, and regional partners
- ★ Gathered existing asset and hazard information to generate preliminary maps to characterize risk
- ★ Tribal leadership and partners develop core principles, co-design initial planning approach
- ★ Collaboration on additional fundraising to support the planning process beyond year 1

### Phase 2: Outreach and Engagement Design and Preliminary Mapping

- ★ Hosted 1:1 dialogues and a Talking Circle to share information and gather community input on the planning approach
- ★ Completed preliminary asset and hazard maps to share with community members for feedback
- ★ Design community survey to gather residents' and experts perspectives on climate risk and adaptation strategies, including those that relate to the resilience hub at the GC/D Community Outreach Program Office

### Phase 3: Survey Implementation and Community Gathering

- ★ Implement community survey
- ★ In-person core team meeting and Community Gathering

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*The capacity that the Climigration Network shared with us, with support from CSCI funding, has been instrumental to our success. By funding a partnership designed to remove administrative barriers and add capacity for smaller community-based organizations, we are able to do what we do best, which is convening community members and experts to have creative and forward-facing conversations about what the solutions are, and ways to address them with a coalition of partners.*

”

**Chief Devon Parfait**

*Grand Caillou/Dulac Band of Biloxi-Chitimacha-Choctaw Indians of Louisiana*

## Impact

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This project significantly increased the leadership and capacity of GC/D to build climate resilience by strengthening partnerships, identifying climate hazards and mapping community assets, and securing the funding necessary to support the multi-year planning and collaboration needed for a resilience plan. The project increased Tribal and community awareness and engagement in regional climate resilience planning and built trust among core team members needed to achieve long-term planning goals.



*The Grand Caillou/Dulac Band of Biloxi-Chitimacha-Choctaw (GC/D) are leading a new planning project called “Building Capacity for Community Resilience and Ecosystem Restoration in Grand Caillou/Dulac.” Their new Community Outreach Program Office (COPO) is a resource for all residents in Grand Caillou, Petit Caillou, Dulac and Chauvin. (Photo provided by GC/D)*

## Next Steps

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- With NFWF funding, partner with Tribal and community members to develop a community-led resilience plan
- Host 4 Community Gatherings to assess risk, refine risk maps, develop adaptation strategies and finalize a resilience plan
- Conduct an in-depth household-level community survey to understand individual household vulnerability, stressors and interest in relocation
- Identify opportunities for nature-based approaches to reduce flood risk in the region

## More Information

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Grand Caillou/Dulac Band: <https://www.gcdbcc.org>

Community Outreach and Program Office: <https://www.gcdbcc.org/projects>

Climigration Network Next Step Cohort: <https://www.climigration.org/next-step-cohort>

# Climate Action Plan Implementation and Engagement



## Town of Brentwood, Maryland

*Project Team:* University of Maryland Environmental Finance Center and Town of Brentwood

*Funding Amount:* \$50,707



## Project Summary

This project empowered the Brentwood community with the knowledge, tools, and opportunities needed to understand and address local climate risks, while building long-term resilience through education, engagement, and action. The project team provided suggestions to the external parties developing the Town's Climate Action Plan (CAP) and designed outreach methods and materials to engage underrepresented residents—particularly Spanish-speaking/Latinx communities and those living in multi-unit housing—in climate adaptation activities. Through community events, nature-based education, and bilingual engagement, the project increased climate awareness and promoted environmental stewardship. Town Public Works Department staff received a customized training on green infrastructure design and maintenance, supporting institutional capacity for developing and maintaining climate-resilient practices. The Town administration and public safety departments, and Mayor and Council Members received a customized training on budgeting for climate adaptation and resilience to build institutional capacity. The project also advanced two adaptation projects likely to be prioritized in the CAP, including conceptual design of a green infrastructure project and development of supporting materials for funding applications to pursue adaptation and energy projects.

## Additional Collaborators

- Nature Forward
- Brentwood Green Team
- Prince George's Audubon Society
- Brentwood Native Plant Network
- Brentwood Tree Committee
- Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (MNCPPC)

## Project Goals



Engage diverse community members in implementing Climate Action Plan strategies.



Educate community members on local climate risks and actions they can take to increase personal and community resilience.



Build skills and capacity of local government to foster a culture of climate resilience.

## Project Timeline

### Months 1-5

Planned staff & leadership trainings; drafted plan for engagement

### Months 5-9

Met with CAP developers; trained Town staff

### Months 10-12

Developed outreach materials and conceptual designs; prioritized projects for funding applications

## Community Challenges

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### Extreme Heat

Rising temperatures and extreme heat events create serious health risks particularly in areas lacking tree canopy with vulnerable populations such as seniors.



### Flooding and Stormwater Impacts

A significant portion of Brentwood (approximately 66%) properties are within current FEMA-designated flood zones without accounting for future risks. Additionally, the stormwater system is strained and needs further study, adaptation, and maintenance to handle future heavy rain events.



### Barriers to Community Participation

Many residents face financial constraints and are under-reached in public planning and climate resilience efforts. Engaging underrepresented residents in climate action planning is crucial to implementation success.

## Project Approach

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This project prepared the Town to move from climate planning to implementation by supporting engagement, capacity building, and project development concurrently with the CAP timeline.

- ★ **Early coordination with Climate Action Plan process:** Participating in consultant-led meetings ensured alignment with emerging priorities and a smooth transition to implementation.
- ★ **Education and stewardship through events:** Preliminary outreach at local events featured bilingual, hands-on nature and climate education for all ages to build awareness and support.
- ★ **Targeted staff & leadership training:** Green infrastructure training prepared Town staff to maintain these solutions, and a climate leadership workshop built the capacity of staff and elected leaders to make climate-resilient budgeting and planning decisions.
- ★ **Culturally responsive engagement strategy:** The team developed a communications outreach plan tailored to Brentwood, piloted it during community events, and refined it based on feedback to guide future engagement.
- ★ **Advancing priority projects:** The team analyzed sites, developed conceptual designs, coordinated stakeholders, and prepared funding application materials for priority projects.

## Impact

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Community members gained an increased understanding of local climate risks, especially about the impacts of flooding and extreme heat. Culturally sensitive outreach and bilingual education strategies prepared the Town to strengthen its connections with under-represented residents. The outreach and engagement toolkit will support expanded community stewardship of their future resilience. Municipal staff gained capacity to support implementation and maintenance of green infrastructure solutions, as well as tools for incorporating climate resilience into the Town's budgeting and decision-making processes.

## Next Steps

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- Advance priority adaptation projects by pursuing funding sources.
- Continue to deeply engage community members with implementation of the Climate Action Plan.

# Flood Risk Assessment and Reduction



## Fremont, Nebraska

*Project Team:* Headwaters Economics, City of Fremont, Fremont Area United Way

*Funding Amount:* \$115,000



## Project Summary

The project aimed to develop a **community-informed flood risk assessment for vulnerable neighborhoods in southwestern Fremont, with actionable recommendations** for risk reduction. This area faces high flood risk from more intense precipitation combined with local stressors like insufficient stormwater infrastructure. The team provided disaster risk reduction information in English and Spanish to local schools and **ensured emergency alerts are translated into Spanish**, improving safety for neighborhoods such as the Regency Mobile Home Park, which is predominantly Spanish-speaking.

The team also facilitated **long-term recovery group meetings to identify solutions** such as evacuation shelters and projects to reduce flood risks. These meetings **built relationships and coordinated resources** among local government, housing groups, schools, public health, faith-based groups, and nonprofits. A major focus was **addressing the needs of lower-income and highly vulnerable residents**. As part of this effort, the team conducted needs assessments at Regency and Meadowbrook mobile home parks to support resource coordination, and continues to work on longer-term solutions.

With city and county partners, the team advanced work to **identify new emergency shelters that are more accessible and culturally appropriate**. Three potential sites were identified to better serve the Hispanic community, with efforts underway to gain Red Cross approval before year's end. Current Red Cross shelters are distant from these neighborhoods and difficult to access.

Some efforts were complicated by **political rhetoric around temporary and undocumented workers**. For instance, United Way postponed a planned workshop due to fears of deportation in the mobile home parks. The team adapted by gathering input through trusted community leaders and small groups, rather than large events.

Finally, the team delivered a **community-wide flood risk assessment tool now used by the City to meet federal standards and prioritize risk reduction**. The tool informs permitting decisions and helps communicate with developers about elevating new homes and affordable housing above flood depths.

## Project Goals



Create a flood risk assessment for vulnerable neighborhoods



Create actionable recommendations for reducing flood risks in these neighborhoods



Create a mapping tool to evaluate building permits and support developers with elevating homes and structures above flood depths



*As our community's Spanish-speaking population continues to grow, translating the Emergency Alert System into Spanish ensures equal access to critical safety information. This enhances public safety by building trust between the community and local agencies, reducing miscommunication during severe weather, public health emergencies, or evacuations, encouraging great participation in safety programs, and protecting more families through timely, understandable alerts.*



**Shayla Linn,**

*Executive Director, Fremont United Way*

## Community Challenges



### Increased Flood Risk

Exacerbated by climate-change driven changes in precipitation and extreme weather events



### Vulnerable Housing Stock

Mobile and manufactured homes are highly vulnerable to flood damage and capacity for repair/replacement is low



### Stormwater Infrastructure

Insufficient stormwater infrastructure contributes to increased flooding risk

## Project Timeline

Months 1-6

Assess vulnerability and risk

Months 6-9

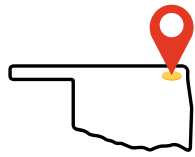
Investigate options

Months 9-12

Prioritize and plan



# Ottawa County, OK Resilience Project



## Ottawa County, Oklahoma

Project Team: Fernleaf, L.E.A.D. Agency

Funding Amount: \$119,000



## Project Summary

This project provided capacity to partners in the city of Miami and across Ottawa County, Oklahoma, including local governments, community organizations, and Tribes, that are working to build community resilience to weather-related hazards and other stressors impacting health and safety. It focused on all jurisdictions and Tribes within the county and addressed multiple climate-related threats, such as flooding and extreme heat, particularly in areas that are impacted by toxic pollution. Building upon existing partnerships and past work, the project established a county-wide, multi-jurisdictional stakeholder team and completed a parcel-level, multi-hazard vulnerability assessment. These efforts lay the groundwork for identifying resilience strategies through a collaborative, whole-of-government approach to support sustained resilience-building.

## Project Goals



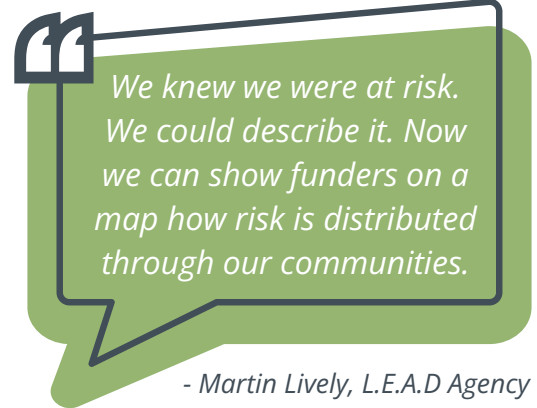
Increase capacity among local governments, Tribal Nations, and community organizations to address flooding and toxic pollution.



Conduct multi-hazard vulnerability and risk assessment to identify and prioritize risks to people, infrastructure, and critical services.



Co-create resilience strategies and identify funding opportunities.



## Project Timeline

### Months 1-4

Assemble stakeholder group and solicit community input

### Months 5-8

Conduct workshops and meetings to help identify vulnerabilities and risks

### Months 9-12

Identify strategies & funding opportunities

## Additional Collaborators

- Eastern Shawnee Tribe of Oklahoma
- Ottawa Tribe
- Wyandotte Nation
- City of Miami
- Ottawa County

## Community Challenges

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### Toxic Legacy Exposure

Each flood event is toxic due to hazardous waste leaching from Tar Creek Superfund site



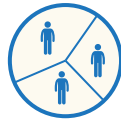
### Excessive Flooding

Increasing severity of flooding due to dam-caused flooding and more severe rain events



### High Social Vulnerability

More than 20% of households and residents live below the poverty line



### Siloed Communication & Decision-Making

Limited capacity and resources among stakeholders prevents coordinated and efficient planning efforts

## Project Approach

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To address community challenges and build long-term community resilience across communities and Tribes, the project team utilized the following whole-of-government approach:

- ★ Assembled a multi-jurisdictional stakeholder group that included the City of Miami, Ottawa County, and Tribal Communities.
- ★ Local partners completed community surveys of residents in the floodplain and completed a pilot demonstration project to demonstrate the viability of flood resilience solutions.
- ★ Conducted a multi-hazard county-wide vulnerability and risk assessment that includes property-level information for each jurisdiction in the County.
- ★ Developed an inventory of preliminary strategies and actions based on assessment findings and stakeholder input.

## Impact

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This project enhanced community resilience by providing a comprehensive understanding of multi-hazard risks, particularly flooding and extreme heat. By identifying vulnerable residents and assets, the project supported local jurisdictions and Tribal communities with vital, place-based hazard information to guide effective resilience actions. Additionally, the initiative fostered stronger collaboration across local governments, Tribes, and state agencies, enabling a coordinated, community-centered approach to resilience.

## Next Steps

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Project stakeholders will leverage the relationships strengthened among County-wide stakeholders during this project to:

- Coordinate among county-wide stakeholders to collaborate on resilience-building opportunities.
- Use assessment results to develop site-specific resilience strategies.
- Advance resilience strategies through project development and seeking funding.

More information on LEAD agency can be found on their website

 <https://www.leadagency.org>

# Climate Adaptation in Charleston County



## Charleston County, South Carolina

*Project Team:* Fernleaf, Adaapta, Lowcountry Alliance for Model Communities

*Funding Amount:* \$121,000



## Project Summary

The project implemented a two-part approach to enhance flood resilience and advance community-centered solutions throughout Charleston County. A framework for flood mitigation decision making was developed through a process of geospatial analysis to support expanded flood insurance coverage in high vulnerability areas, workshops with key County staff to shape strategy recommendations, and an exploration of sustained local funding options. In parallel, the brownfields redevelopment effort identified potential brownfield sites in pilot neighborhoods through a second spatial analysis using environmental and hazard data, followed by community engagement through interviews, tours, and a workshop to build local capacity. The final phase produced both a Brownfields Strategic Plan that identified areas of potential redevelopment that could build community-centered resilience and a Programmatic Framework for Flood Mitigation that guides context-focused project selection that aligns with countywide flood loss reduction priorities.

## Project Goals



Establish a structured framework to guide flood resilience actions and build support for a dedicated local resilience fund to sustain long-term action.

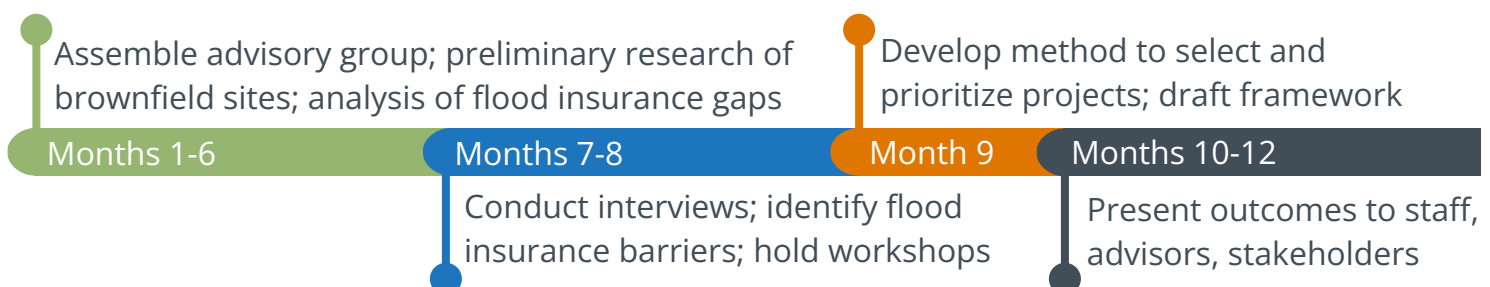


Advance opportunities for community-led brownfields redevelopment in Charleston County that invest in resilience and address the impacts of past actions.



Create a detailed spatial analyses of both concentrations of potential brownfield sites and areas with low rates of flood insurance policy coverage with high hazard vulnerabilities.

## Project Timeline



## Community Challenges



### Legacy of Disinvestment

Historically discriminatory zoning and industrial siting have left certain neighborhoods under-resourced and overburdened by environmental hazards.



### Brownfields

Contaminated or underutilized properties pose health risks and hinder economic revitalization in key neighborhoods.



### High Flood Vulnerability

Increased flood risk threats to homes and infrastructure, with limited access to insurance or mitigation resources.



### Funding Gaps

Lack of sustained, local investment limits the ability to implement large-scale, long term resilience strategies.

## Project Approach

This multi-phase initiative integrates stakeholder engagement, spatial analysis, and strategic planning to build a resilient future through flood mitigation and equitable redevelopment. This approach included:

- ★ Establishing internal project team and an external advisory group to guide priorities and input.
- ★ Analyzing flood insurance gaps and brownfield vulnerabilities using spatial data and community insights.
- ★ Engaging with stakeholders through workshops, interviews, and site visits to shape goals and strategies.
- ★ Developing and finalizing an actionable framework and inventories, while identifying funding options for implementation.

## Additional Collaborators

*City of North Charleston*

•  
*Town of Hollywood*

•  
*Red Top Community Association*

•  
*Union Heights Neighborhood Association*

## Impact

This project increased community resilience by identifying critical needs in both flood loss protection and impactful local redevelopment, engaging local voices to shape targeted solutions, and delivering actionable frameworks grounded in data and aligned with funding strategies. Through collaborative planning, data-driven tools, and a framework to guide future resilience efforts, actionable strategies were developed to protect vulnerable populations and support inclusive redevelopment.

## Next Steps

- Integrate redevelopment and mitigation frameworks into existing County programs with defined leadership
- Identify and pursue funding opportunities for implementation guided by the framework's strategies and prioritization criteria
- Develop more detailed analyses for specific areas within the county to further support decision-making
- Engage and collaborate with jurisdictional neighbors to drive consistent momentum for multi-benefit resilience programming