

## Climate Change, Health & Equity Initiative

### A SNAPSHOT OF CLIMATE JUSTICE AND COMMUNITY ORGANIZING APPROACHES

[Climate Change, Health & Equity](#) (CCHE) is a 5-year \$30 million initiative from the Kresge Foundation that aims to build the capacity of health care and public health to promote equitable climate resilience practices, mobilize health care and public health practitioner engagement in climate advocacy, and strengthen community-based leadership to accelerate implementation of equitable policies that advance climate resilience and health equity.

#### BAY AREA REGIONAL HEALTH INEQUITIES INITIATIVE



##### [Bay Area Regional Health](#)

[Inequities Initiative](#) (BARHII), a coalition of community and the Bay Area's government public health departments is spreading

awareness about the importance of public health departments' engagement in climate change and health equity efforts and promoting the equity officer model. BARHII works with California Department of Public Health to support equity officers across the state of California and is working with the National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO) to provide support to up to 47 other jurisdictions across the United States. BARHII has presented for the state of California's Climate Action Team–Public Health Workgroup, the California County Health Executives Association annual conference, and the Northern California Grantmakers, and participated in peer learning sessions to advance

this model. They have also developed an evaluation report that includes successes from the Equity Officer model for addressing climate-driven disasters and other community emergencies. BARHII, along with its partners, also released a guide detailing an assessment of climate readiness for California local public health departments to highlight the need for engaging in climate equity via equity officers.

**Equity Officers are making critical contributions to tip the scales toward health equity.** Sonoma County's Equity Officer Alegria de la Cruz transformed her county's planning process to allocate nearly \$100 million in American Rescue Plan Act funds to center equity. The results include instituting new procedures to require county government agencies to collaborate with community-based organizations in entirely new ways when developing funding proposals.

#### OTHER EXAMPLES OF CCHE GRANT-FUNDED PARTNERS



In 2022, the [American Public Health Association's](#) (APHA) Center for Climate, Health and Equity released the [Climate and Health Playbook: Adaptation Planning for Justice, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion](#), a resource to be used by public health professionals for embedding justice, equity, diversity and inclusion into their climate and resilience initiatives, programs and operations. The Playbook is designed to be used in tandem with

the CDC's Building Resilience Against Climate Effects (BRACE) model.



Southwest Boston Community Development Corporation, part of [Fairmount Indigo CDC Collaborative](#) (FICC), saw an exciting federal win after a decade of resident advocacy: the EPA designated a 3.7-mile stretch of the lower Neponset River as a Superfund site due to industrial contamination and hazardous legacy pollutants. The designation will ensure action to improve the ecological health of the river and benefit the communities that share the Neponset.



In Austin, Texas, as a result of [Go Austin Vamos Austin](#) (GAVA)'s advocacy efforts, the City's Federal Legislative Agenda for the 118th Congress included the language, "The City of Austin further supports funding programs to assist residents with reducing and eliminating the risk of flood damage and making flood insurance more affordable to low income-residents." GAVA is also collaborating with two University of Texas at Austin professors to understand the kinds of localized flooding residents experience and what interest they have in deploying green infrastructure to address the flooding. As part of this effort, three sensors have been placed in South Austin in Brassiewood, Creek bend, and Nuckols Crossing to monitor flooding.



[WE ACT for Environmental Justice](#) (WE ACT) has taken a multi-pronged approach to reducing health impacts of extreme heat for New York City's most vulnerable residents in their Heat, Health, and Equity Initiative (HHEI). HHEI has two key components operating at the state and local levels: improving New York State's Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) and NYC's Cooling Center Program. WE ACT was a significant partner in developing the city's Get Cool Program, which distributed 74,000 free air conditioners to vulnerable households across the city. WE ACT partnered with the Department of Health, the Public Housing Authority, the Mayor's Office of

Climate and Environmental Justice, and Columbia University to study the impact of the program. Results from this study informed the city's efforts to identify existing facilities that can be used as key cooling centers in high-risk communities along with other heat safety prevention activities.