Climate Adaptation Planning: Six-Step Planning Process

This resource highlights the six-step planning process from FEMA's Climate Adaptation Planning: Guidance for Emergency Managers. For the full document, please visit: https://www.fema.gov/plan.

Traditional emergency planning and climate adaptation planning share many similarities; however, there are a few differences:

- Climate adaptation planning has a higher degree of uncertainty and should consider multiple future climate scenarios.
- Climate adaptation planning is an iterative process.
- Climate adaptation planning should be a key part of all community planning.

Figure 1: U.S. Climate Resilience Toolkit's Steps to Resilience

The full guide aligns the key climate adaptation planning actions included in the U.S. Climate Resilience Toolkit's[1] Steps to Reslience (Figure 1) to the six-step planning process outlined in FEMA's Comprehensive Preparedness Guide (CPG) 101,[2] providing emergency managers with the tools to integrate adaptation planning into hazard mitigation and emergency management (Figure 2). The following checklist outlines the key roles that emergency managers should take during each step of the six-step planning process. For examples of real-world implementation of this planning process, see the case studies provided in the full guide.

Figure 2: The Six-Step Planning Process

[1] NOAA. *U.S. Climate Resilience Toolkit.* (2014). http://toolkit.climate.gov.

[2] The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). *Comprehensive Preparedness Guide 101: Developing and Maintaining Emergency Operations Plans, Version 3.0*. (2021). https://www.fema.gov/sites/default/files/documents/fema_cpg-101-v3-developing-maintaining-eops.pdf.

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Step 1: Form a Collaborative Team

- ☐ Lead or participate in scoping efforts to outline preliminary goals and considerations.
- ☐ Identify potential key participants from existing hazard mitigation and community preparedness planning.
- ☐ Describe funding opportunities for mitigation, community preparedness, and adaptation.
- ☐ Advocate for broad representation on the planning team, including historically underserved populations.

Step 2: Understand the Situation

- ☐ Identify data and information sources on past extreme weather-related events.
- ☐ Lead or participate in the process of:
  - ☐ Understanding past extreme weather events and their impacts to the community.
  - ☐ Evaluating climate scenarios and the types of impacts these conditions may have on the community.
  - ☐ Identifying underserved population groups, as well as critical community facilities, assets, and services.
- ☐ Perform outreach so the community can understand the potential risks posed by climate-related hazards.

Step 3: Determine Goals and Objectives

- ☐ Collaborate with community partners to outline the desired outcomes and objectives of the plan.
- ☐ Ensure that objectives are targeted, actionable, and incorporate broad perspectives and priorities.
- ☐ Develop performance metrics that can be used to measure progress towards the goals and objectives.

Step 4: Develop the Plan

- ☐ Engage in the identification and prioritization of strategies and actions to enhance community resilience.
- ☐ Draw upon experience and local knowledge of past hazard events in the formation of adaptation strategies.
- ☐ Encourage innovation in developing new strategies and actions.
- ☐ Help prepare the adaptation plan by providing linkages to the local hazard mitigation plan.
- ☐ Identify the physical, financial, or institutional resources and information needed to implement strategies.

Step 5: Prepare and Review the Plan

- ☐ Lead or participate in multi-agency efforts to write and review the climate adaptation plan.
- ☐ Help identify the roles and responsibilities of stakeholders to carry out the plan.
- ☐ Provide information on possible funding sources for implementing planned strategies and actions.

Step 6: Implement and Maintain the Plan

- ☐ Participate in multi-agency efforts to raise community awareness to implement plan recommendations.
- ☐ Collect data on climate-related hazards to inform future plan updates and monitor plan performance.
- ☐ Evaluate whether implemented and recommended strategies are still appropriate given changing environmental conditions.
- ☐ Coordinate changes in the local hazard mitigation plan with the strategies of the adaptation plan.