

Capacity Building Checklist



This checklist was designed to help you plan and prepare for the effects of climate change in your community. *Communication* and *connection* are two key elements in capacity building, because they garner support and build on existing efforts.

In most cases, local health jurisdictions do not have the capacity to take on separate climate and health projects. Finding opportunities to integrate climate actions into existing work and leveraging the work of existing partners is a great way to begin. You can also explore new funding opportunities available to your department for capacity building.

The following resources have been compiled to help you COMMUNICATE, CONNECT, and BUILD CAPACITY:

COMMUNICATE

Communications Framing


Before launching into the work, it's helpful to spend time thinking about how to frame the issues. Framing is an approach that shapes how an issue is understood. Traditional fact-centered approaches are not the most inclusive way to gain broad understanding and buy-in. Framing climate change in the context of health means discovering what health means and looks like to everyone, including those who are not part of the dominant culture, and convey messages that connect with people's priorities.

- Review [OHA's Climate and Health messages](#). This three-pager was developed as the executive summary to the 2020 Oregon Climate and Health report and serves as a guide for climate and health messaging in Oregon. These messages are based in the latest climate science.
- Do a little homework to [assess your community's readiness](#) for engaging in this work. Making these initial assessments can help to frame messages and develop actions that are appropriate and effective in your community.

- Consider these [Tips for Difficult Conversations](#) developed in response to challenges identified in early climate and health planning in Oregon.
- Consider drafting a statement that draws from the resources above and describes your intentions. This statement can be used to communicate with others and may change as you learn more. If you wish, you can use this Template to create a [“Statement of Intent”](#).


CONNECT

Reach out and connect with internal partners to get an understanding of what is currently being done in your jurisdiction. Explore how you might add value to existing planning or preparedness work that is already underway. Connecting with other efforts can help you grow existing capacity by aligning interests and leveraging resources.

- Review your own department's community health improvement plan (CHIP) and strategic plan, to identify potential climate actions. Keep a running list of opportunities for potential collaboration, even if you don't yet have partners or the capacity to engage.
- Review other plans in your jurisdiction. Many cities and municipalities have hazard mitigation plans and climate action plans. Reading these plans will help you identify any potential opportunities to collaborate across sectors, such as with partners working in transportation or housing. These partnerships can be included in your list of stakeholders (below).
- Create a list of potential stakeholders. You can use this [template](#)  [Stakeholder List](#) and adapt it to your needs. Identify existing partners that you could engage with, as well as potential sectors where you could develop new collaborations and partnerships.
- Consider joining the NW Climate and Health Network to connect with other public health practitioners and researchers in our region:
 - [NW Climate and Health Network](#)

BUILD CAPACITY

Building capacity is leveraging and expanding the existing capacity of your staff, as well as that of local partners, community groups, community-based organizations and networks to take on climate and health work.

- [Assess your organizational capacity](#). Develop and propose a project framework that can evolve over time depending on your capacity and stakeholder engagement. Consider using this  [Project Plan Template](#) as a starting place.

- Consider hiring an [AmeriCorps VISTA](#) through OHA's program. In our experience, there is high interest among recent college graduates and an increasing number of applicants interested in engaging in this work. If you are interested in hiring an AmeriCorps VISTA to implement actions in this toolkit, please get in touch with our [Climate and Health program staff](#).