

Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness Program Action Grant Case Study

Municipality: Medford

Project Title: Conceptualization and community building for equitable, community-driven Resilience Hubs in Medford

Award Year (FY): 21-22

Grant Award: \$ 202,485

Match: \$ 71,017

Match Source: In-Kind

One or Two Year Project: 2

Municipal Department Leading Project: Health

Project Website URL: <https://medfordma.org/departments/health-department-2/municipal-vulnerability-project/>

Community Overview:

- What is the population size of your community and where is it located?
 - Medford is 7 miles northwest of downtown Boston on the Mystic River in Middlesex County, Massachusetts. Medford's population was 59,659 according to the 2020 U.S. Census.
- Do you have any [Environmental Justice](#) or other Climate Vulnerable communities? (Think about both those who live and work in your town.)
 - Yes. Environmental justice communities in Medford are predominantly in South Medford and Wellington. The Medford Climate Change Vulnerability Assessment (2019) revealed climate hazards are likely to have a more significant negative impact on Medford residents experiencing low income, facing homelessness, living with disabilities or chronic illness, older adults, and who speak languages other than English - as well as other factors that limit household resources, affect health or well-being, or are otherwise impacted by systems of marginalization.
- Other unique traits of your municipality like who the top employers are, geography, history, etc.
 - Tufts University has its campus along the Medford and Somerville border.

Project Description and Goals:

- Where was the project located?
 - This project was city-wide with a focus on Medford's environmental justice communities.
- What climate change impacts did the project address?
 - Climate events / emergencies
 - Flooding
 - Extreme Heat
 - Winter Storms
- What were the specific goals and tasks of the project as stated in your application?

Goals	Tasks
Goal 1: Invest in community engagement by assembling a team of BIPOC Community Liaisons who are established within their Medford communities to build relationships with Medford residents and to spearhead a community group who will be involved in designing community-led resilient policies.	Task 1: Build trusting relationships
Goal 2: Further engage community-based organizations to develop a coalition of providers that work to enhance communication and to strategize a co-location system to co-host services in the manner of Resilience Hubs.	Task 2: Engage community-based organizations
Goal 3: Involve City of Medford offices and departments in coordinating city-run social services and promoting equitable community resilience.	Task 3: City implementation of anti-racist policies

- Did your project meet the goals set forth in your application in terms of:
 - Employing nature-based solutions
 - N/A – this project laid a foundation for several resilience hub sites, each of which will be employing nature-based solutions in a later phase, but not during this phase.
 - Improving equitable outcomes for and fostering strong partnerships with EJ and other Climate Vulnerable Populations
 - Yes – this project
 - Providing regional benefits
 - Yes – this project provided a model for regional community resilience work through a justice-based approach to a community resilience hub network and published a publicly available Operations Plan
 - Implementing the public involvement and community engagement plan set forth in your application
 - Yes – the Community Liaison team followed the plan they set forth to hold 30+ public meetings and events over the course of the project
 - Finishing the project on time
 - Yes

Results and Deliverables:

- Describe, and quantify (where possible) project results (e.g. square footage of habitat restored or created, increase in tree canopy coverage, etc.). Report out on the metrics outlined in your application.
 - As outlined in the application, project success will be measured by attainment of our project goals, tasks, and deliverables. All deliverables were completed as outlined except for an acquisition plan (see note in lessons learned regarding the shift in focus). Two additional metric that we used to measure success in this project were around building relationships and raising awareness.
 - **Building relationships:** 84% of participants who engaged in monthly meetings were returning participants (defined as attending 2 or more meetings or events).
 - **Raising awareness:** the average percentage of new participants was positive overall for the duration of the project (defined as change in the number of participants per month / total months).
- Provide a brief summary of project deliverables with web links, if available.
 - The City of Medford hired and trained five community liaisons with ties to the following communities in Medford: Black and African American, Brazilian, Haitian, Latino, and Arabic-speaking communities. The community liaison team engaged 200+ community members through meetings, activities, and events, and 50+ in ongoing monthly meetings over the duration of the project. Through this work, they informed the development of Medford’s Resilience Hub Network Operations Plan, including the purpose and core features for network partners; parameters for the leadership network; and a site evaluation framework. The Operations Plan is available publicly on the MVP website at <https://medfordma.org/departments/health-department-2/municipal-vulnerability-project/>.

Lessons Learned:

- What lessons were learned as a result of the project? Focus on both the technical matter of the project and process-oriented lessons learned.
 - We encountered a few obstacles during implementation that required a pivot in our thinking and approach. During the grant-writing process, we intended to develop an acquisition plan for the City to acquire a building to become a resilience hub. However, as our process continued, we found there was significant interest in partnership from community-based organizations. This led us to pivot to pursuing partnerships with organizations and other city agencies with existing buildings (e.g., Library, West Medford Community Center) to pivot to using existing buildings instead of acquiring a new building.
 - Our community outreach process was continually adapting based on successful and unsuccessful efforts. Different strategies worked well for different cultural communities. For example, our Haitian and Arabic-speaking communities found a consistent monthly meeting structure worked well to connect with folks and to engage new people every month. However, this structure was not successful in

our Brazilian and Spanish-speaking communities in Medford. For this group, our community liaisons found it was better to go to businesses and connect with people during their typical day-to-day activities. We expect that one reason for this is because of a high percentage of varying working hours in these communities (e.g., shift work that varies day to day).

- Relationship building and re-building takes years. If you are starting from the ground up, it takes a complete paradigm shift to lay the groundwork for a co-creative process of building social resilience that is not extractive. For example, if the City of Medford has mainly done outreach and engagement on the City's terms (public meetings held at City Hall; surveys distributed to get feedback about a specific topic without a follow-up distribution of information on the outcome of the process), so the first steps of community engagement that we needed to take were to rebuild trust that had been eroded, especially in BIPOC communities.
- What is the best way for other communities to learn from your project/process?
 - The best way to learn about the project is to read about the project and the community liaisons on the [MVP webpage](#) and to adopt the community liaison model for outreach and engagement. The Medford Department of Health and Department of Planning, Development, and Sustainability is always open to presenting and doing 1-1 interviews about the community liaison model and the resilience hub network!

Partners and Other Support:

- Include a list of all project partners and describe their role in supporting/assisting in the project.
 - ACBC Consulting – Health Equity Consulting
 - Diane Sullivan – Health Equity and Community Outreach Consulting
 - Maryann Broxton – Health Equity and Community Outreach Consulting
 - Linnean Solutions – Climate Resilience and Public Policy Consulting
 - The Collins Center at UMass – Municipal Communications/COVID after-action workshop facilitation
 - Drawing Impact – live graphic recording for workshop notes
 - Bijoux Consulting – racial equity and bias seminar

Project Photos:

- In your electronic submission of this report, please attach (as .jpg or .png) a few high-resolution (at least 300 pixels per inch) representative photos of the project. Photos should not show persons who can be easily identified, and avoid inclusion of any copyrighted, trademarked, or branded logos in the images. MVP may use these images on its website or other promotional purposes, so please also let us know if there is someone who should receive credit for taking the photo.

- Because this was primarily a community outreach and engagement project, no site photos are included.