

SEED PROJECT IDEA

Create Cool Housing or Community Space

The following is a project idea for inspiration—ultimately, the Seed Project you choose should be based on your community's climate resilience priorities. Remember that you will have up to \$50,000 to spend on the Seed Project and about 9 to 10 months to accomplish it, so you may need to carve out a piece of the following action to fit those guidelines, and then work together on a plan for financing the next phase.

Project Description:

This project aims to enable natural cooling for housing or a community space that serves Environmental Justice (EJ) or other priority populations. This project aims to have a similar “quick build or tactical urbanism” approach as was commonly used for several public space modifications during the COVID-19 pandemic. “Quick build or tactical urbanism” projects use temporary, inexpensive materials to implement short-term projects that can then help inform longer-term improvements. These projects can often be completed much faster than typical capital projects (e.g., months instead of years) ([City of Somerville, 2021](#); [Tactical Urbanism Guide](#)). Examples of such projects include the following:

- Tree planting,
- [A green or white roof](#),
- [Green walls](#),
- [Cool pavement](#),
- A pop-up park (e.g. [Park\(ing\) Day](#)),
- A pollinator garden,
- A shade structure, or
- A splash pad (or other water feature).

High-level List of Potential Project Tasks:

1. **Form a project team:** The project team may include municipal representatives, community liaisons (with connection to those that live or work in heat islands), technical vendors (e.g., urban planners, landscape architects, builders), and volunteer organizations that can help implement like scouts or rotary clubs.
2. **Identify a location to create a cool space:** Identify and develop a short-list of potential locations/facilities for implementation of a cooling project. This identification process should involve community members and location/facility representatives and include:
 - a. Vulnerability mapping – Use the GEAR heat guides to identify areas where heat islands (or hot spots) overlap with EJ and other priority populations, as well as critical facilities and spaces that serve these people.

- b. Community input – Share vulnerability mapping with community members. Have community members identify locations that would benefit the most from a cooling project and what co-benefits they would like to see as part of the cooling project (e.g., recreation, lower utility bills, etc.). Using information from the GEAR heat guides, conduct outreach activities in EJ neighborhoods and ones at higher risk of experiencing extreme heat. In this step, community liaisons can use their lived experiences and/or strong connections to those who work in heat islands to support outreach efforts in these communities and gather input from these communities. These activities should be completed within the first 2-3 months of the project to allow maximum time for design and implementation.
 - c. Develop options – Options should include both a site (e.g., an affordable housing location, a senior center, [a bus stop](#)) and the solution (tree planting, [a green or white roof](#), [green walls](#), [cool pavement](#), pop-up park, pollinator garden, shade structure, splash pad or other water feature). Continue to involve community members in the progress of the project and solicit input on the final options. Consider site accessibility so the selected option can be accessible to all community members (for example, sidewalks, ramps, parking, etc.).
 - d. Prioritize options – Work with the project team and community members to rank locations based on community priority, co-benefits, and feasibility (i.e., cost, timeline, regulatory considerations, site suitability, willingness of facility owner, maintenance requirements/ability, etc.). Technical vendors can provide input on which solutions are feasible within the Seed Project timeline. Solutions that extend beyond the timeline should be recorded for future projects and funding.
3. **Design and implement the solution:** Depending on the solution selected, work with the facility/site owner and appropriate contractor to design and install the solution. Incorporate the community in the development of the project by setting requirements that contractors hire locally, find opportunities to involve residents and students in project implementation, and host events and install interpretive signage that educate the community on the benefits of the project.