

# **Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP) Action Grant Public Involvement and Community Engagement Guidelines & Requirements**

## *Guidance from the FY21 Request for Responses*

In order to be competitive for MVP Action Grant funding, applicants will need to demonstrate that public involvement and community engagement have been considered as a core component of the proposal. The work of building a climate resilient community will require a concerted effort to ensure that all residents, particularly members of Environmental Justice Populations (as defined in the [2017 EEA EJ Policy](#)) and Climate Vulnerable Populations (i.e., those who have less physical and/or socioeconomic resiliency due to factors such as access to transportation, income level, disability, race, health status, or age), are given an opportunity to shape your community's climate adaptation strategies. These guidelines have been designed to ensure that the climate adaptation work of your community provides "seats at the table" for these populations. Applicants are strongly encouraged to consider the "Community Liaison Model"<sup>1</sup> when setting up their project consultant team.

Please use the contents of this guidance document to craft a public involvement and community engagement plan that will add value to an MVP Action Grant project. **You will incorporate this plan into Question 9.4 of the Action Grant Application (Attachment A). All tasks outlined in the plan should also be included in Attachment B, the required Scope/Budget document.**

### **How to Use this Document**

Equitable engagement is a core principle of the MVP program. When developing your application:

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<sup>1</sup> The Community Liaison Model refers to a strategy of engagement whereby community-based organizations or individual representatives from EJ Populations and Climate Vulnerable Populations are brought on board as paid participating members of a project team. A Liaison's primary task is to manage public involvement and community engagement in a culturally competent and meaningful way. The objective of these partnerships is to promote equitable outcomes for climate resiliency projects.

1. Explore the tables below related to public involvement and community engagement methods that can be utilized in the implementation of an Action Grant. These methods are recommended as a starting point for designing outreach that creates opportunities for meaningful involvement, as defined by the [2017 EEA EJ Policy](#), which states that “all neighborhoods have the *right* to participate in energy, climate change, and environmental decision-making.” Other innovative suggestions beyond those presented in the tables are also welcome provided they meet the intent of the category.
2. Develop a public involvement and community engagement plan that incorporates these methods and that can be implemented within the scope of your project proposal. A successful plan will have a mix of print, digital, in-person, and equitable engagement methods. It will also identify ways stakeholder input will be incorporated into the project and a method by which the results of community engagement (i.e., input received) and final deliverables of the project are communicated back to stakeholders.
3. Incorporate this plan into Question 9.4 of your application (Attachment A). Review the sample plan from a hypothetical town in Section V of this attachment for ideas on how to structure your plan.
4. Include the content of the outreach plan in Attachment B (i.e., your scope and budget).

## **I. Outreach and Engagement Methods**

Applicants are referred to the general principles that are outlined on p.9 of [EEA’s 2017 EJ Policy](#) under the section, “Enhancing Public Participation.” Public involvement and community engagement efforts should consist of print, digital, and in-person methods. Applicants should also identify how community feedback will be incorporated into the project and a mechanism by which community engagement results and project deliverables will be shared. Methods are further identified in tables I.A, I.B, I.C, & I.D below. The difference between Principal and Assisting Methods is the level of time and effort required (i.e., Principal Methods require more time and effort to complete). An Equitable Engagement Modifier is a strategy that is specifically undertaken to overcome barriers to participation that EJ or Climate Vulnerable Populations regularly encounter.

The engagement methods presented in the following tables are example components of a successful Public Involvement and Community Engagement Plan under an MVP Action Grant.

**I.A Printed Engagement: Example Methods**

| <b>Principal Methods</b>   | <b>Assisting Methods</b>   | <b>Equitable Engagement Modifier</b>   |
|--|--|--|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Door-to-door fact sheet/ flyers/ survey distributed to residences and businesses within 500 feet of the location project(s)</li> <li>2. Posters hung in Local Businesses, Community Centers, or other publicly accessible venues, with a minimum of 20 throughout the City or Town</li> <li>3. Direct mailings to all residences and businesses within the City or Town with project information and physical address to which written comments may be submitted/and link to project website/or other mechanism for giving feedback</li> <li>4. Other innovative strategy</li> </ol> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Ad or notice in Local Print Newsletters that informs residents of project(s) and resiliency its resiliency benefits</li> <li>2. "Backpack Mailer" to students and families</li> <li>3. Sign(s) posted on site that inform residents of project(s) and resiliency benefits</li> <li>4. Other innovative strategy</li> </ol> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Translation of content into three (3) most-prevalent languages spoken within the community and distributed via principal and assisting methods<sup>2</sup></li> <li>2. Translated content published in alternative language newspaper that services residents of EJ/Climate Vulnerable Population</li> <li>3. Implementing and coordinating actions through the Community Liaison Model<sup>3</sup></li> <li>4. Specific project messaging crafted for and shared with EJ/Climate Vulnerable Populations to spur engagement</li> <li>5. Other innovative strategy</li> </ol> |

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<sup>2</sup> There is a statewide contract for foreign language interpretation and translation services that you may utilize: <https://www.mass.gov/doc/prf63/download>

<sup>3</sup> The Community Liaison Model refers to a strategy of engagement whereby community-based organizations or individual representatives from EJ Populations and Climate Vulnerable Populations are brought on board as paid participating members of a project team. A Liaison’s primary task is to manage public involvement and community engagement in a culturally competent and meaningful way. The objective of these partnerships is to promote equitable outcomes for climate resiliency projects.

**I.B Electronic/Digital Engagement: Example Methods**

| <b>Principal Methods</b>  | <b>Assisting Methods</b>   | <b>Equitable Engagement Modifier</b>   |
|---|--|--|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Online survey requesting resident feedback on projects</li><li>2. Podcast(s) that address your project and articulate community resiliency goals</li><li>3. Interactive project website + commenting function</li><li>4. Digital video streaming of presentation that addresses project content</li><li>5. Other innovative strategy</li></ol> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Project webpage</li><li>2. Social media communication on multiple platforms</li><li>3. Project Hotline (Information &amp; Voicemail) to provide people with information about project(s) and link to resiliency</li><li>4. Email to distribution list that includes community stakeholder groups</li><li>5. Post on local blog or in digital newsletter that includes information on how to submit comments directly to project team or link to an online survey</li><li>6. Other innovative strategy</li></ol> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Translation of content into three (3) most-prevalent languages spoken within your community and published on project website</li><li>2. Specific verbal messages crafted for three (3) most-prevalent languages spoken within your community, and broadcast in alternative language media that services residents of EJ/Climate Vulnerable Populations</li><li>3. Identifying and sharing content with alternative language online media outlets that services residents of the EJ/Climate Vulnerable Population</li><li>4. Project Hotline available in three (3) most prevalent languages in the community (Information &amp; Voicemail) to</li></ol> |

- provide people with information about project(s)
- 5. Implementing and coordinating actions through the Community Liaison Model<sup>4</sup>
- 6. Specific digital project messaging crafted for and shared with EJ/Climate Vulnerable Populations to spur engagement
- 7. Other innovative strategy

**I.C In-Person Engagement: Example Methods**

**Principal Methods**

- 1. Hosting or co-hosting a community meeting or open house
- 2. Series of workshops and speakers that are selected from the community who can address project and resiliency outcomes
- 3. Community Liaison Model<sup>5</sup>
- 4. Other innovative strategy

**Assisting Methods**

- 1. Drop-in hours at businesses, community center, or other venue near site(s)
- 2. Staffed “Pop-Up” event within project area
- 3. Staffed table at community event or festival
- 4. Demonstrations and trainings (i.e., raingarden construction or tree planting) within project area
- 5. Presenting scope of

**Equitable Engagement Modifier**

- 1. Selecting meeting hours that correspond with hours that are feasible for working parents
- 2. Translating meeting materials into three (3) most-prevalent languages spoken within your community and distributing by hand at community events
- 3. Providing professional grade interpretive services during public

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<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

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|--|---|
| <p>project(s) at an established community group's meeting</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>6. Public walking tour of the project site</li> <li>7. Other innovative strategy</li> </ol> | <p>meeting events</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4. Providing childcare during meeting</li> <li>5. Empowering EJ/Climate Vulnerable Population residents to select meeting location</li> <li>6. Providing food/refreshment at meetings</li> <li>7. Providing stipends for meeting attendance for those representing EJ/Climate Vulnerable Populations</li> <li>8. Providing transportation to meetings for those who may not otherwise have means to attend</li> <li>9. Implementing and coordinating actions through the Community Liaison Model<sup>6</sup></li> <li>10. Other innovative strategy</li> </ol> |
|--|---|

Other methods of written, digital, or in-person outreach may be proposed where these other methods would achieve the goal of improving equitable public involvement and community engagement.

**I.D Mechanism to Inform Stakeholders of Results of Engagement Process and Final Project Deliverables: Example Methods**

- Establish and advertise one or more information repositories (to hold all project documents) in town that are convenient and accessible to the impacted community.

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

- Hold a public meeting to share results of the public involvement and community engagement process and how that feedback was incorporated into the final deliverables.
- Create a document summarizing the response to public comments received and post that document along with project deliverables to the project website and notify stakeholders.
- Other innovative mechanism may be proposed to accomplish this goal.

## **II. Requirements for each type of public involvement and community engagement**

Public involvement and community engagement activities should meet the following standards:

### II.A All printed and electronic/digital engagement materials should:

1. Include a brief summary of the MVP Program.
2. Include a brief summary of the proposed project(s).
3. Identify a municipal contact person for the project.
4. Identify the process a resident would follow to self-identify as a stakeholder in a given project (e.g., signing up for an email list or requesting a formal invitation to serve as a stakeholder in a workshop).
5. Provide an email address, website, hotline phone number, and any alternate way of providing feedback directly to the project team.
6. Indicate where a resident can go to learn more about the MVP program and local climate change data: [www.mass.gov/mvp](http://www.mass.gov/mvp) and [www.resilientma.org](http://www.resilientma.org).
7. If the town encompasses an EJ community with a Limited English Proficiency (LEP) population as defined in the EJ Policy, translation of appropriate documents/webpages in the relevant language should be provided (if funds are required, please address this in the project Scope/Budget).
8. Be publicly available for a minimum of 21 days.

### II.B All in-person engagement events should/should be:

1. Open to the general public and publicized at least 14 days in advance using at least one electronic/digital method and one printed method.
2. Held in a location that is compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act.
3. Held in a location that is generally accepted by the community as a safe, welcoming facility for all persons regardless of race, ability, ethnicity, economic status or sexual orientation.
4. Selected according to their proximity to public transportation routes and options; it is also highly recommended that transportation and/or stipends

for meeting attendance be provided for individuals who do not have a means or method of attending an event.

5. Provide a child-friendly environment with modest refreshment to the extent that it is practicable (this is not a requirement, but it is strongly encouraged; if funds are required please address this in the project Scope/Budget).
6. If the town encompasses an EJ community with an LEP population as defined in the EJ Policy, professional grade interpretive services in the relevant language should be provided (if funds are required, please address this in project Scope/Budget).

### **III. Feedback on Public Participation and Community Engagement Plans**

In the event of a successful Action Grant application, EEA reserves the right to request revisions to content of the plan prior to final contracting.

### **IV. Additional Requirements for Public Participation and Community Engagement Plans for Municipalities with Environmental Justice Populations**

Municipalities with EJ Populations should demonstrate a commitment to working with members and representatives of these communities to craft a Public Participation and Community Engagement Plan that is customized to the needs of these populations. Outreach practices that are culturally sensitive and designed to overcome barriers to participation will improve public participation outcomes.

IV.A. Additional requirements per MVP Action Grant Project Type are as follows:

1. Grant proposals requesting funding for "**Planning, Assessments, or Regulatory Updates**" should include representatives of EJ Populations in the project team or as advisors to the project team, as these proposals are likely to result in town/city-wide changes in policy that will apply equally to all populations in the municipality (e.g., a new land use regulation, a new policy, an updated master plan).
2. Grant proposals requesting funding for "**Nature-based Solutions for Ecological and Public Health**" should consider projects with co-benefits for members of EJ populations. When work is proposed within EJ areas or areas that service EJ Populations, grant proposals should include representatives of EJ Populations in the project team or as advisors to the project team.
3. Grant proposals requesting funding for "**Resilient Redesigns and Retrofits for Critical Facilities and Infrastructure**" should include representatives of EJ Populations in the project team or as advisors to the project team when changes are being made to a critical facility that exists to serve the general



public (e.g., adding a cooling shelter to an existing school or library; redesigning an existing municipal building to accommodate a microgrid in order to expand capacity) or EJ Population.

**V. Sample Public Involvement and Community Engagement Plan**

Below please see an example of a completed Question 9.4 of the MVP Action Grant Application (Attachment A) based on a hypothetical project.

Public Involvement and Community Engagement Plan: Feasibility Study for Daylighting Haddock Spring

The Town of Old Riverbend is committed to building climate resilience through proactively implementing priorities identified during our MVP planning process. During Old Riverbend’s Community Resilience Building workshop, heat island impacts within the Haddock Spring neighborhood were identified as one of our greatest climate risks. The natural channel of Haddock Spring was filled and subsequently paved over in the mid-20th century to construct 5-acres of employee parking for a once-thriving mill complex. The high concentration of impervious surfaces in this area causes air temperatures to sometimes soar 15 degrees Fahrenheit above surrounding areas. By 2050, Old Riverbend is expected to see between 4 to 9 additional days with heat above 95 degrees Fahrenheit which will be extremely dangerous to residents. To that end, the Town is requesting funding to conduct a feasibility study– inclusive of engineering and permitting— for daylighting Haddock Spring. Restoring this riparian corridor in the heart of downtown Old Riverbend could provide our citizens with a place to relax and cool off in future heatwaves.

The Haddock Spring neighborhood is home to an Environmental Justice Population where at least 25% of households have limited English proficiency (located in the eastern portion of the neighborhood), and we are committed to conducting a thorough, inclusive public involvement and community engagement process as we begin to plan for the future of the Haddock Spring neighborhood.

**Public Involvement and Community Engagement Plan for Town of Old Riverbend  
Haddock Spring Daylighting Project**

|                  | <b>Print</b>   | <b>Digital</b>  | <b>In-person</b>   |
|------------------|--|---|--|
| <b>Principal</b> | Posters hung in Local Businesses, Community Centers, or other publicly accessible venues, with a minimum of 20 throughout the town | Podcasts that address the project and articulate community resiliency goals | -Hosting a community meeting<br><br>-Community Liaison Model |

|                                      |  |  |  |
|--------------------------------------|--|--|--|
| <b>Assisting</b>                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-"Backpack Mailer" to students and families.</li> <li>-Signs posted on site that inform residents of project and resiliency strategy that it addresses</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Project webpage</li> <li>-Email to distribution list that includes community stakeholder groups</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Tabling event during local cultural festival</li> <li>- Presenting scope of project at an established community group's meeting</li> </ul>       |
| <b>Equitable Engagement Modifier</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Translation of content into three (3) most-prevalent languages spoken within the municipality and distributed via principal and assisting methods</li> </ul>      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identifying and sharing content with alternative language online media outlets that services residents of the EJ/Climate Vulnerable Population</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Providing professional grade interpretive services during public meeting event</li> <li>-Providing childcare</li> <li>-Providing food</li> </ul> |

**How community feedback will be incorporated into project and mechanism by which results will be shared:**

Reserve time on all biweekly project team calls to review public comments to date and discuss how they can be addressed and incorporated into the project.

Publish a comprehensive response to all comments received from the public and how they were addressed on project website that is translated into the (3) most prevalent languages, along with an itemization of all deliverables.

Establish and advertise one or more information repositories (to hold all project documents) in town that are convenient and accessible to the impacted community.

To that end, we are committing to conducting **Print, Digital, and In-Person engagement** as depicted in the above table. **For Print engagement**, we will engage the services of a local graphic design company at the beginning of the project to design posters and flyers, which will be translated into Spanish, Portuguese, and Haitian Creole (the three primary languages of this Environmental Justice Population) to describe the purpose of the planning effort to daylight Haddock Spring. Translation will be completed by a contractor identified under the statewide contract. Posters will be hung up around town to notify residents of the need for the project and backpack flyers will be sent home with students from the local elementary school to request feedback from parents. These flyers will also be translated. We will also install signage along the former course of the Haddock Spring to get people familiar with the project and to welcome their input on what Haddock Spring can become. These signs will contain suggestion boxes and post-it notes for soliciting ideas.

**For Digital engagement**, we will work with students from the local high school to produce a series of podcasts that tell the history of Haddock Spring and discuss the costs and benefits of completing the daylighting project. These will be available on iTunes, Stitcher, or Spotify and will be featured on a new project website, which will be fully ADA compliant. Content on the website will be email blasted out to the City's regular email lists as well as through social media platforms. Project updates will be highlighted on this website through the use of a blogging function. The Town will also distribute a press release related to the award of the grant, purpose of the project, and ways to get involved via three local, alternative language, online media outlets (Noticias del Día, O Mundo, and Bon Maten Ayiti) that serve members of the Environmental Justice Population.

**For In-Person engagement**, we will host a public meeting at the beginning of the project at East Old Riverbend Community Center located within the EJ neighborhood to hear ideas for how to preserve their neighborhood during and after the daylighting project. We have heard concerns, already, about future gentrification and want to take steps to preserve this diverse, vibrant neighborhood and improve its quality of life. This meeting will require interpreters that will be acquired by a contractor identified under the statewide contract. In order to increase participation, we will need funding to cover costs to ensure that the meeting is child-friendly and that refreshments are available. In addition to the public meeting, we will also present about the project at an existing Haddock Spring Neighborhood Association meeting and host an all-day "tabling" event during our annual town festival, World Culture Day, to solicit more community feedback.

**For how community feedback will be incorporated into project and mechanism by which results will be shared**, we will reserve time on all biweekly project team calls to review public comments to date and discuss how they can be addressed and incorporated into the project. To share results of this process we will publish a comprehensive response to all comments received from the public and how they were addressed on our project website that is translated into the relevant languages along with all the deliverables. These documents will also be available in the East Old Riverbend Community Center where we are holding the public meeting.

In line with our local procurement practices, we have identified at least three potential community groups with close ties to the Haddock Spring EJ Population that will be invited to bid on a scope of services to implement this Public Involvement and Community Engagement Plan. The community group selected through the procurement process will work as a full, participating member of our project team and will work in tandem with the engineering firm we select for the daylighting project. They will also ensure we have members of the EJ Population advising us on every aspect of the project.

You will see all of the tasks laid out in this plan summarized in our Scope/Budget Attachment B with deliverables, due dates, requested grant funds, and designated match identified for each one.