

SEED PROJECT IDEA

Sustaining a Focus on Resilient Relationships

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:

Undertaking the MVP 2.0 process has brought an incredible amount of learning and capacity to your municipality. Being a more resilient community involves transitioning this information from the individual process participants and formalizing it into how your municipality functions. Climate change touches every area of our lives, both directly and indirectly. Determining the ways each municipality can incorporate social resiliency into how it conducts everyday business, which includes having robust community engagement become the norm, will not only build a more adaptable community, but will broaden the pool of who is participating in municipal government.

While the MVP 2.0 process has focused on climate resilience, potentially new community members have taken an interest in how the municipality works and may now be interested in serving on a board or committee. Developing transparency and accountability is the foundation of trust building. Many community members may not fully trust how decisions are made in government or feel welcome to be a part of the process. Sustaining an inclusive resiliency mindset requires dismantling systems in your municipal government that concentrate power and exclude those most vulnerable. These seed ideas are a jumping off point to start addressing this.

High-level List of Potential Project Tasks:

For all tasks below, stipends, compensation, and or other equitable engagement modifiers (e.g., childcare) should be provided for project team members who are not participating as part of their job to remove barriers to participation for people who bring important and diverse perspectives. A professional facilitator, with expertise in equitable community processes, social and or racial justice, may be engaged to facilitate completion of one or more of the tasks below.

1. **Develop an equity-centered checklist:** Develop an equity-centering checklist to be used by different town boards and committees in their decision-making processes.
 - a. Form a project team that includes a cross section of the community and includes representatives of EJ communities or other priority populations to assess how different town boards and committees make decisions and the types of topics they are deciding about.

- b. Develop a checklist, or a set of questions, for each of these boards that will help them center equity in their decision-making processes. Some examples of similar resources developed to promote equity in municipal processes include Seattle, WA's [Racial Equity Toolkit](#) and Springfield, MA's [Public Employment Equity Plan](#).
 - c. Make the checklist available for the public to comment on, evaluate, add to, and prioritize the kinds of questions that should be on different checklists.
 - d. Design ways to integrate the checklists into the decision-making structures for the municipality's different boards or committees.
2. **Institutionalize the Core Team:** Institutionalize the Core Team as a new town committee.
- a. Identify what initiatives coming out of the MVP 2.0 process would be helpful to have a team move forward.
 - b. Identify what supports would need to be in place to sustain the Core Team.
 - c. Specify how this committee would continue to center community engagement and equity.
 - d. Explore how this team would work across municipal departments.
3. **Institutionalize engagement best practices:** Institutionalize new municipal-wide community engagement best practices.
- a. Form a community engagement and outreach team to continue to advise and test a variety of different ways to engage and communicate with the community.
 - b. Identify the lessons learned from the MVP 2.0 process to serve as a baseline.
 - c. Explore different forms of communication of municipal business beyond public meeting notices at the town hall and meeting minutes. In 2021, the City of Springfield, MA completed a Resilient Springfield Communication Strategy to improve communication with climate vulnerable residents; see their [strategy, key findings and recommendations, and tips to replicate this work](#).
 - d. Identify what supports and structures would need to be in place to support the engagement and outreach team and to make sure the work does not fall on one person's shoulders.
 - e. Design systems of accountability and transparency that could be applied across the municipality.