

EPA Region 1 Climate Leaders
Big Idea D: Develop a Common Data Platform for New England
OR
What Data Do Communities Need to Build Resilience?
March 25, 2014

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Purpose and Goals of Big Idea

Goals:

Develop a resource that provides access and links to the best available data and information for the purpose of:

- informing New England municipalities/local organizations in their efforts to address resiliency as they face a changing climate, and
- providing support to other Big Idea efforts being implemented by Region 1 Climate Leaders

Climate data and information, and stories of local implementation of practices to adapt to a changing climate, have already been produced by many parties and more is now and will be developed. However, as a general matter, these efforts are fragmented and dissemination of their content can be difficult to access, frequently are inappropriately formatted for practical use, and often are not available in a form and format that can be readily and effectively used and understandable for municipal and regional decision makers. The members of this group recognize that data delivery for climate adaptation is a large undertaking that include both compiling the data and providing effective delivery mechanisms. Therefore, our work will be targeted to achieve successes associated with community resiliency and the work being performed by the other Big Idea themes by providing the best available data for their needs. This group will also track the national efforts on this topic at climate.data.gov and utilize their products as appropriate.

Desired outcome

The desired outcome is linked to the Summit Goal: To launch collaborative actions from regional leaders that will make New England municipalities resilient to climate change.) Municipalities need ready access to data so they can identify key vulnerabilities and develop effective strategies to address them. The other groups formed from the Summit also need data and information tools to assist them with their efforts. The goal of this group is to develop the tool(s) to meet those needs.

Building resilience in many cases requires a technically grounded recognition of key vulnerabilities, an understanding how those factors influence their vulnerabilities and

identification of critical pathways to address the vulnerabilities. Some communities have taken steps to assess their vulnerabilities and increase their resiliency to climate change. Gathering stories from a representative sample of what actions have been taken by communities to identify vulnerabilities, understand the processes and data used, what strategies they employed and to what degree their process was effective in leading to increased resiliency will provide information that can be made available to and used by others.

The other “Big Idea Themes” have also indicated a need for data and information to assist them in their efforts and or to be a product of their theme. The group will work with these other efforts to further refine and clarify their data needs. Theme D activities will be completed in concert with their needs so they have the critical data/information to be successful.

Scoping actions

The group envisions addressing five main tasks to attain the goals stated above:

1. ***Identifying user needs:*** Determine what information municipalities and communities need to become more resilient, recognizing differences in social and physical geography (i.e., large vs. medium vs. small municipality; socioeconomic issues, coastal vs inland; flat vs mountainous, etc) result in differing needs in differing situations and conditions. Our work will also need to address appropriate metrics and timelines, and ways to identify and make use of the most effective delivery mechanisms. During this phase, Group D will seek input from other Big Idea groups and other sources about what data and information they believe are needed.

Specific Task 1 activities include:

- Identify the end users of this effort and incorporate these groups/audiences into needs assessment
 - Survey other Big Idea groups for their data and information needs.
 - Analyze several examples of communities that have assessed their vulnerability to climate change and the level of success they have achieved. Identify other data needs that communities and others will need for achieving resiliency.
2. ***Identify and gather existing efforts:*** The group will inventory existing data and approaches for 1) communities that have done climate change vulnerability assessments, and 2) data/information that is available to assist with the other Summit groups. The group will identify, rank, and gather the best available existing climate data and information efforts so as to ensure that our work will not be duplicative and fit within the limitation of available resources for this effort.

Specific Task 2 activities include:

- Complete a quick and limited survey of ongoing efforts at climate resiliency and the data/information needs of the other Groups. Start with list generated by Group D leaders, expand to broader Climate Leaders, then to broader stakeholder network. This needs to include completed efforts, ongoing efforts, and proposed efforts.
 - Develop a data ranking process that identifies high, medium and low priority data/information to gather.
 - Gather those data/information that can be gathered with available resources and have the highest priority.
3. **Identify Gaps:** Explore the information gathered in effort 2. Identify key data and model elements that have been completed, identify information/data/model gaps, identify synergistic efforts to gather or produce new data, and identify areas where information is available but delivery is difficult to access or apply.

Specific Task 3 activities include:

- Organize small workshop to explore key gaps and needs
 - Incorporate data/information needs from other groups
 - Develop straw proposal to address gaps, potential linkage, metrics, and formatting
4. **Develop data strategies:** develop recommendations, strategies and activities needed to address gaps determined in task 3 with a focus on developing steps needed to obtain those limited and most valuable data sets.

Specific Task 4 activities include:

- Bring together groups to prioritize efforts
 - Determine information/data delivery issues and plans
 - Identify synergistic efforts
 - Estimate resource needs
 - Identify potential funding sources
 - Implement efforts
5. **Outreach:** Educate end users (this should be accomplished in close collaboration with the other “Big Idea” groups) on results of this effort and to get them to use the data and information for vulnerability assessments. Education effort needs to be integrated into broader Climate Leader efforts, but with a focus on municipal and regional stakeholders that are ready to complete a vulnerability assessment.

Interaction with other activities

This group will work with the other Big Idea groups to identify critical data needs and other relevant information these groups feel are important for completing their goals. As resources allow, this group will work with the groups to identify the availability of the needed data/information and collect, analyze and store data as needed. For instance, if Group A would like to determine vulnerability of communities to increased flooding, our group will evaluate available data and if suitable, collect the data and make it available to group A.

Immediate Actions - *low hanging fruit*

- Analyze several examples of communities that have already assessed their vulnerability to climate change. What data did they use (there are many examples here: see below).
- Survey other Big Idea groups for their data and information needs

Needs:

- **Funding/Resources**
- **State/Federal Agency Resources**
- **Data** – left blank for now

Partners

Other Big Idea themes/Groups, municipalities and others that have built resiliency in communities, regional planning commissions

Timeline

26 March 2014	2 nd Draft Concept Paper finalized
21 April 2014	Draft Action Plan completed and set to team
1 May 2014	Action Plan finalized
19 May 2014	Climate Leaders meet at Antioch Conference to discuss

Linkages to other Big Ideas – all the other Big Idea groups will have data/information needs. We will need to work with these groups to see what information we will be able to supply them so they can be effective in completing their tasks.