

Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) Community Action Model

Topic: Flooding

Step 1: What are the issues in the community (or communities)?

Note: It may be helpful to narrow down to a top five issues to keep your organization / community from becoming overburdened.

- Gentrification: moves out renters who have been there for years.
- Community stability
 - Communities need to invest in themselves.
 - Peoplestown: for every house destroyed, a new one should be built.
- Health problems can come with flooding (mold, mosquitoes, etc).
- Proper representation of the neighborhood
 - It's important to be action oriented when it comes to influencing legislation / government.
 - Get a small subset of devoted members if you cannot get the community at large involved.
- Identify groups affected
- Elderly and children, the poor, and others can be impacted differently.
- Identification helps to focus a plan of action.
- Look at census data to understand how the broader area compares with the issues in your community.
- Photo voice: a method in which community members have an opportunity to photograph what they see as the issues that face their community.

Step Two: What solutions can address these issues?

- Involve developers early on and consider health in your assessment of the situation.
- Controlling flooding can lower mosquitoes, mold issues, allergies, asthma, etc.

Step 3: What are the health benefits of the above mentioned solutions?

- Lower number of complications with asthma or allergies.
- Less houses with mold and pests.
- Better work and school attendance.

Step 4: How will it be measured?

- Information from clinics about asthma prescriptions / visits

- Surveys of houses for issues with mold
- Pest reports from health departments
- Illness
- School absence

Miscellaneous

- A community member expressed desire to protect the integrity of the neighborhood.
- Need to think about which groups will support you.
- Can be difficult to direct or lead with “low wealth”, but can combat by partnering with another organization.
- Important to engage the community.
- It’s better for community to work together instead of having 4 different groups (i.e. advisor groups).
- Sometimes the resources that outside groups offer exceeds what the community can gather. When this happens, continue to evaluate whether the project is in the community’s best interest.
- Use churches, local health clinics, and senior services to recruit, hold meetings, and transport people.
- Examine the community to know what issues are there and what organization can help.
- There needs to be a shift towards getting people involved in their own community as opposed to later in the process. They need to be involved from step one!
- How are we going to fix problems? Grants come in once ideas come together and common vision is established. If there is a good idea community members can write the grant.