



AMERICAN CLIMATE
LEADERSHIP AWARDS

Migrant Clinicians Network

migrantclinician.org/climate-justice

This guide offers a successful stepwise model for you to replicate in your community. It is part of a series featuring the finalists of ecoAmerica's 2023 American Climate Leadership Awards.

OVERVIEW

Climate change amplifies preexisting vulnerabilities and bears down the hardest on those already struggling — especially during a disaster. Response and recovery plans need to account for geographic remoteness, language, culture, immigration status, poverty, medical issues, and social disconnection. We build adaptable and customizable trainings, technical assistance, resources, and strategies for hyperlocal, hyper-inclusive community response to climate catastrophe. These plans eliminate structural racism and environmental injustices to ensure inclusive, effective climate responses at the community level.

STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE

- 1. Inclusivity at the core.** The initial phase of the project is, in some ways, the most important. Use MCN resources to build collaborations between community leaders (from faith-based leadership to natural resources advocates to business owners to social interest groups), clinicians (including community health workers and outreach workers), and members of vulnerable subsectors of the community (like geographically isolated neighborhoods, schools, low-income areas, or households who don't speak the primary language of the community).
- 2. Intentional processes with funding.** Some community mobilization occurs organically after a disaster, but the process, when it is preventive and not reactive, can be more efficient and effective, if it has financial support. Funding comes from a variety of sources including private and federal grants. In many cases, there is already dedicated funding to emergency planning, like at community health centers, and this project ensures those plans are inclusive and culturally contextual.
- 3. Facilitation.** MCN facilitates the process, to ensure open dialogue and promotion of marginalized voices. Communities need facilitation to ensure every community member can provide their input. Through our resources, we can support new partners and communities with tools that include a variety of approaches to use with your community. It is not one-size-fits-all. We provide an ample list of strategies to allow communities and their leaders to choose what works best with their community.

- 4. Build goals together.** What type of disaster could hit our community, and how would it affect us? MCN provides technical assistance to carry out risk assessments to explore impact scenarios of different events and how various communities could be affected. Basics like water, electricity, access to medicine, communications, food, shelter, and access to a medical facility should be mapped for each neighborhood and vulnerable group.
- 5. Make connections and linkages that will outlast a disaster.** Be consistent and dependable. Community mobilization involves a long-lasting relationship with the community and its members. In addition, when using this model to address climate-related emergencies and disasters, it is necessary to periodically revisit the community plan to ensure relevance, the availability of resources, and the inclusion of new support structures (new healthcare facilities, businesses, neighbors).
- 6. Bring in the experts.** Technical assistance like training in supporting the mental health needs of clinicians during a disaster can further empower the community to take care of its own when cut off during an emergency. MCN provides TA and trainings, much of which has been made widely available on our website as archived webinars.
- 7. ...Then bring in the true experts.** The community understands its own needs best. In what languages are materials needed? What literacy level? What happens when a main road is blocked? How do we get water when the municipal system isn't available? What area always floods? The experts are the people who live and work in the community, because they know their needs and resources best.
- 8. Disseminate.** Once a community has completed its community mobilization plan, they must share with other communities so that others can learn the process and outcome.
- 9. Make it circular.** None of these steps occur in a linear fashion. Throughout the project, the community returns again and again to each of these steps, deepening and defining their plans.

Migrants Clinicians Network is an ACLA 2023 Finalist. For more information and replication guides, go to ecoAmerica.org ecoAmerica's American Climate Leadership Awards (ACLA) recognizes, rewards, and shares best practices on climate change advocacy and action nationwide. ACLA provides \$175,000 annually in recognition of real climate leadership. Individuals and organizations selected as finalists have achieved demonstrated success in engaging a broader diversity of Americans for climate action at local, regional, and national levels, in ways that are replicable, while prioritizing diversity, inclusion, and justice.