

Extreme Heat & Community Resilience



Report on Extreme Heat and Community Resilience Track 2024 CLIMATE RESILIENCE NEXUS

January 12, 2024

CLIMATE RESILIENCE NEXUS 2024

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH CLIMATE RESOLVE

The 2024 Climate Nexus Symposium in January was a critical opportunity to bring community-based organizations, local governments, tribes, climate experts and state agencies together to share promising practices and advance the community of practice for climate resilience across California. The Symposium featured four tracks to build capacity and share practices - funding and financing, research, tools and resources, and extreme heat and community resilience. The Office of Community Partnerships and Strategic Communications partnered with Climate Resolve and the Office Planning and Research on the extreme heat and community resilience track. This report documents the lessons learned and next steps from that track.



OVERVIEW

Existing inequities experienced by communities of color, low income communities, and frontline workers were further exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. In response, community-based organizations (CBOs) and local governments, in partnership with the State and philanthropy, worked together to meet the crisis. Working in partnership across the state, government and CBOs have engaged Californians – including those experiencing the greatest health and social inequities – with culturally competent and actionable information.



Building on the lessons learned from COVID-19, we brought together a group of thought partners to discuss how to effectively reach communities with the information they need to stay safer during extreme heat events. Rising temperatures and more frequent heat waves are impacting public health and safety, with profoundly disproportionate consequences for the most vulnerable Californians who are at an increased risk of heat-related illness and death.

PURPOSE, OUTCOMES, PROCESS

The purpose of the workshop was to gain insight on how resilience and social connectedness within communities can support programs and policies intended to mitigate the effects of extreme heat. Approaches can build upon past experiences building community resilience and advancing equitable health outcomes in response to COVID-19.

Outcomes

- A multi-sector discussion around extreme heat efforts
- Shared tactics on how to include community members who are most impacted by extreme heat into project planning and evaluation
- Identified policy and program actions to improve resilience

Process

As part of the breakout sessions for the Climate Resilience Nexus, we hosted an in-depth, interactive discussion on extreme heat and community resilience in California communities. More than 60 participants, who represented community-based organizations, state-wide nonprofit organizations, community foundations, philanthropy and government agencies, contributed to the workshop.

The table discussion was sparked by panelists on the topics of:

- Impacts of Extreme Heat
- Extreme Heat Messaging
- Resilience to Extreme Heat in Action

This report highlights key takeaways from this session.

IMPACTS OF EXTREME HEAT

- **Luz Gallegos**, Executive Director, TODEC Legal Center
- **Debra Williams**, CEO, Building Resilient Communities
- **Aubrie Fong**, Deputy Director of Partnerships, OCPSC, Moderator



“Everybody has to work together. One of the things that we also learned during COVID and we now are applying with extreme heat, is that you can’t do anything without the community being involved in creating the program that you’re talking about.”

— Debra Williams

Incorporating equity and community resilience helps create a more just and effective approach that benefits all members of a community, particularly those who are most vulnerable.



TODEC's community of farmworkers were among the most disproportionately affected during the COVID-19 pandemic. COVID-19 amplified the existing, overlapping risks faced by migrant farmworkers and their families, such as economic insecurity, lack of occupational protections, and persistent fear of immigration enforcement. These risks are also present with extreme heat.





“How tribal communities experience extreme heat is difficult to say, because every tribe is different. Some are state or federally recognized or unrecognized. We’re not going to be practicing one way or another. We speak different languages. We have different moral traditions.”

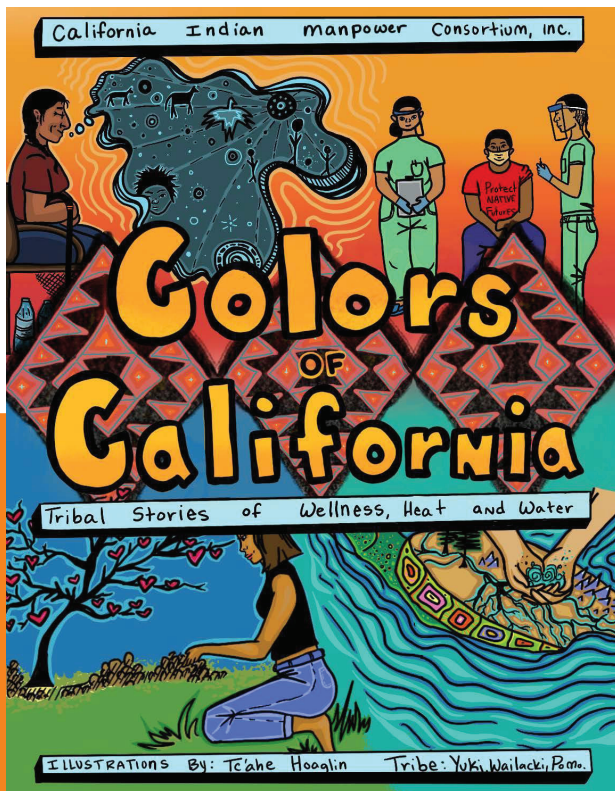
—Caelum Peyron

EXTREME HEAT MESSAGING

- **Mario Ortega**, CEO, Abrazar, Inc.
- **Caelum Peyron**, Rapid Response Coordinator, California Indian Manpower Consortium, Inc.
- **Naindeep (Deep) Singh**, Executive Director, Jakara Movement
- **Yumi Sera**, Executive Director, OCPSC, Moderator

Trusted messengers play a critical role in providing culturally and linguistically relevant messaging to communities.

Trusted messengers communicate in ways rooted in the specific beliefs and values held by community members. Messaging broadly directed towards a general demographic is often ineffective as each Native tribe has its own unique culture and concerns. *Good Medicine*, a children’s book written and illustrated by Native artists, vividly depicts the COVID-19 pandemic experience through the eyes of a Native boy, incorporating themes of resilience and connections.



A group of Native children’s expressed hopes and dreams for their communities inspired the illustrations for a coloring book used to conduct youth outreach.

COMMUNITY RESILIENCE TO EXTREME HEAT IN ACTION

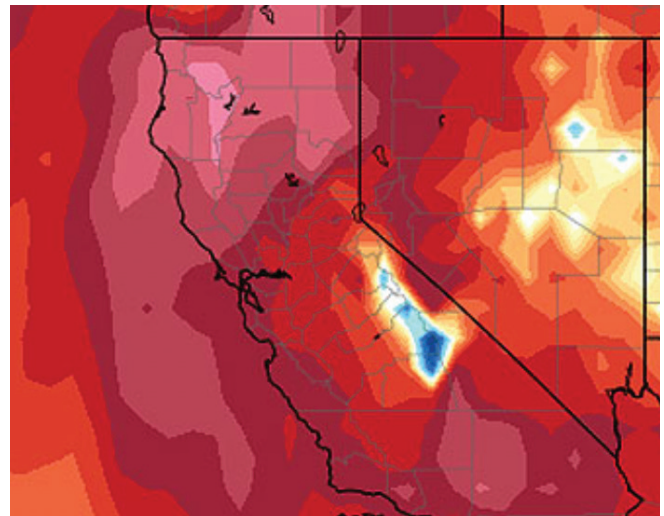
- **Natalie Hernandez**, Director, Resilience & Organizational Strategy, Climate Resolve
- **Miguel Miguel**, Policy Director, Pacoima Beautiful
- **Alex Morrison**, Resilience GIS Analyst, City and County of San Francisco
- **Olivia Seideman**, Policy Coordinator, Leadership Counsel for Justice and Accountability
- **Braden Kay**, Extreme Heat and Community Resilience Program Manager, OPR, Moderator

Policy and program-action organizations can improve community resilience by creating connections and empowering community members to have influence over policy and infrastructure.

People in communities who are most vulnerable should inform solutions. Feedback loops with community members should be maintained to ensure programs and policies are effective and equitable.



The COVID-19 pandemic along with hotter temperatures demonstrated the need for a centralized response. The Heat and Air Quality Resilience Project (HAQR) is a cross-sectoral initiative at the City of San Francisco to involve the public, private, community, and academic stakeholders in planning and implementation of medium- to long-term extreme heat and wildfire smoke resilience strategies. HAQR identified that weatherization and electrification initiatives are perceived by renters as inaccessible.

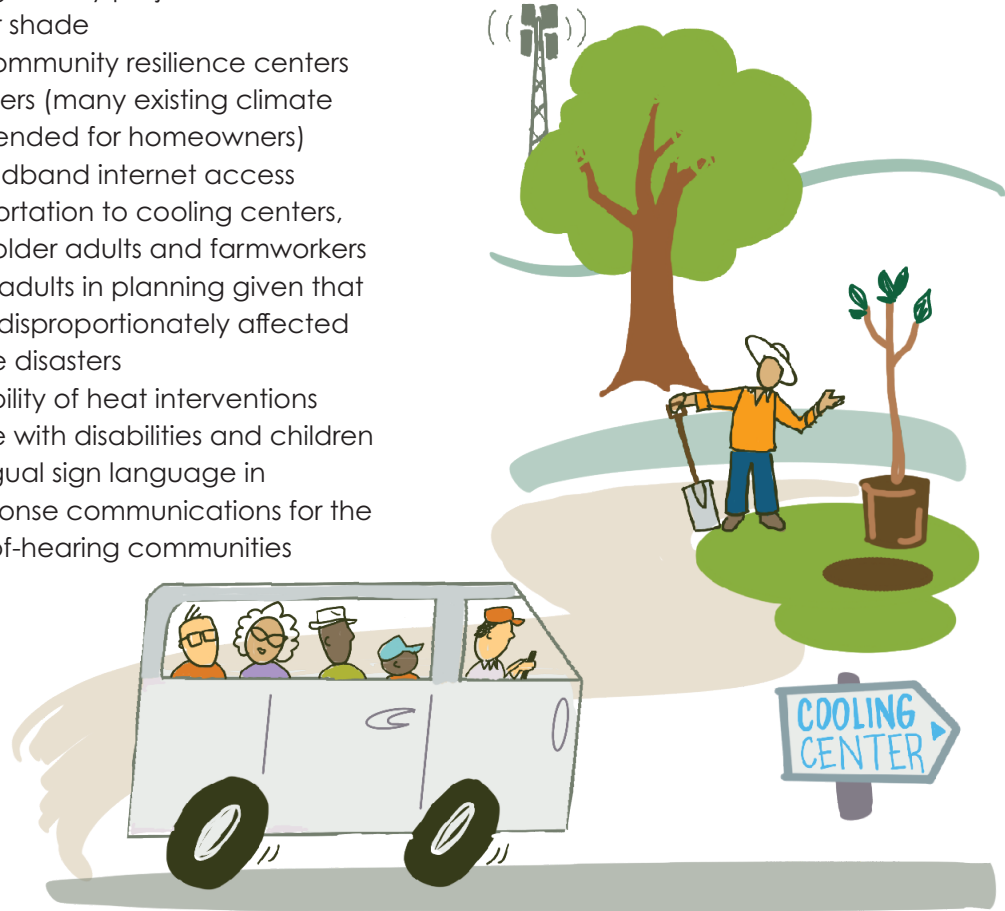


***Planning a Coordinated Response,
City of San Francisco***



A wide range of initiatives were identified that would build community resilience:

- Installing urban greenery projects
- Planting trees for shade
- Using parks as community resilience centers
- Focusing on renters (many existing climate initiatives are intended for homeowners)
- Expanding broadband internet access
- Providing transportation to cooling centers, with a focus on older adults and farmworkers
- Centering older adults in planning given that older adults are disproportionately affected by climate disasters
- Expand accessibility of heat interventions including people with disabilities and children
- Ensuring multilingual sign language in emergency response communications for the deaf and hard-of-hearing communities



There is a clear opportunity to expand California's extreme heat planning, programming and infrastructure. OPR's new Extreme Heat and Community Resilience Grant Program provides a unique opportunity to build on the existing efforts of Climate Resolve, OCPSC, cities, and CBOs to expand the community of practice and increase the impact of actions being taken to address extreme heat.



Implementing Cool Pavement, Pacoima Beautiful

On a 10-block residential area of Pacoima that includes schools, parks, and community centers, streets and other asphalt areas were covered in a coating that reflects solar radiation that otherwise would be absorbed by the asphalt and results in cooler air during hotter months. A local street vendor reported that the cool pavements near the park presented an opportunity for him to work safely, with his children nearby.



Spoken word written
and performed by
Jacob Virges, Youth Fellow,
Urban Strategies Council

The Temperatures are Rising

The temperatures are rising
Yes Things+
are heating up
Our Societies and Ecosystems
Both need a Tender Touch
Our resources are dying
Our Seas are Overflowing
A Lack of Unified Vision
Is what's Keeping us from Growing
A Lack of Proper education
Is what's Keeping us from Knowing
That We must find change soon
Before this Earth goes up in Smoke

Greenhouse Gasses, Daily
Getting more potent
Systems are Strategically Corrupted
So our Spirits will be crushed and Broken
Soot Covered Hands slave in Factories for Tokens
Sending Toxins in the air we Breathe
And Ripping Our Ozone Open

Things are Heating Up
The Cold Truth has been Unfrozen
Melting, just like Glaciers
Fading slowly in the Ocean

As FILTHY, VILE AND DISGUSTING Lies
rise to the Surface
Like lifeless fish
That the Ocean Spits up

You can hear the Whispers of
Children
Through Velvet Skies
Wishing on Shooting Stars for a Brighter tomorrow

A Tomorrow without unnecessary Pain and Sorrow
A Tomorrow where Love is our Leader and everyone follows
A Tomorrow with enough Hope for your neighbors neighbor to borrow
A Tomorrow that isn't drowning in the decisions of Yesterday...

Things are Heating Up
The Climate never stops changing
Time continues to fly by
But we're so stuck in our ways
Still dividing and degrading others due to their race
Still perverting and corrupting what's supposed to be "safe spaces"
Still Pimping Mama Earth so the rich keep getting paid

As the Temperatures keep Rising
It's getting hotter by the day
Through our Faith We, Build Resilience
And with that we Pave the way
We all Must Join Together
In how we Work and and How Pray
To Cool this Climate Down before this whole World Goes Ablaze

The Temperature is Rising