FLOOD RESILIENCE CHECKLIST FOR STATE PLANNERS
Better prepare your state for flooding and sea level rise

1 REVIEW EXISTING PLANNING DOCUMENTS AND EFFORTS ACROSS THE STATE

Consider:
» On average, states have 2–3 plans that address flood resilience and adaptation.
» Determine what plans address flooding in your state and who is responsible for development and implementation.

☐ Review the State Hazard Mitigation Plan and any applicable flood, coastal, climate, water, resilience, and emergency management plans.
☐ Develop an understanding of the departments, agencies, offices, and non-governmental stakeholders involved in flood planning.

2 MOBILIZE THE FULL FORCE OF STATE GOVERNMENT

Consider:
» State flood planning is often spread across multiple plans and offices.
» Siloed planning can lead to different, and sometimes competing, planning principles, time horizons, objectives, and risk projections that fail to account for a state’s full flood risk.

☐ Establish a central source for strategic flood planning with values, goals, and outcome indicators to use across all state efforts.
☐ Establish timelines to regularly update flood plans.
☐ Identify dedicated funding for flood planning and other hazard mitigation planning, including for continual data collection and analysis.

3 BUILD PLANS ON A FOUNDATION OF FORWARD-LOOKING DATA

Consider:
» Flood risk models based on historic trends fail to provide a true view of a state’s current and future risk.
» Because of discriminatory land use and housing policies, socially vulnerable communities are often located in flood-prone areas.
» Without data on social vulnerabilities, states will see disproportionate and inequitable outcomes when flooding occurs.

☐ Incorporate probabilistic models with forward-looking climate projections into risk assessments.
☐ Incorporate geographic data of projected population growth and locations of socially vulnerable communities into risk assessments.
☐ Set metrics around whether socially vulnerable communities are meaningfully engaged, included in risk analyses, and have their needs met.
☐ Increase data resources at the state level, including technical assistance staff and engineers, and provide local access to these resources.

4 SUPPORT LOW-RESOURCED COMMUNITIES AND INCORPORATE COMMUNITY INPUT

Consider:
» States lean on local governments to carry out state flood plans; however, few plans include strategies to assist low-capacity communities.
» Assistance is particularly important for communities that have been historically and systemically excluded from government aid; these communities often lack capacity to research and respond to funding opportunities and technical expertise to assess flood risks.

☐ Target efforts to ensure low-capacity communities can access state funding and technical assistance.
☐ Engage with local communities to tap into lived knowledge of flooding impacts.
☐ Highlight co-benefits of projects to encourage buy-in and coordination among stakeholders.
☐ Budget time and funding for meaningful public engagement beyond cursory public comment periods in flood planning.
☐ Reward local jurisdictions developing resilience plans that prioritize ongoing engagement with diverse stakeholders and residents.

5 ADVANCE AN ACTIONABLE IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

Consider:
» Without a strong strategy to carry out plan projects and initiatives, states risk standing idle and missing their goals.
» Few plans identify committed funding strategies, project prioritization, and departments or individuals responsible for project implementation.

☐ Include specific initiatives and actions with concrete details, such as project scoping information, goals, timelines, committed funds, and responsible parties, as well as public communication and accountability strategies.
☐ Incorporate flood-related resilience objectives into daily operations and agency priorities.
☐ Create a prioritized list of specific projects and actions linked to accountable entities and funding sources.
☐ Use metrics tied to desired strategic outcomes, rather than outputs, to track and report progress toward implementation.

For more information and associated research, visit stateresilience.org/planning