

# FLOOD RESILIENCE CHECKLIST FOR STATE PLANNERS

Better prepare your state for flooding and sea level rise



STATE  
RESILIENCE  
PARTNERSHIP

## 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 floodprone 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](https://stateresilience.org/planning)