

WHY IS NEW ORLEANS ACTING?

New Orleans is engaging in heat resilience in two broad ways. First, by prioritizing short-term measures aimed at immediate relief from extreme heat, hurricanes, tropical storms, power outages, and other disasters. Second, by investing in long-term climate resilience for housing, energy systems, tree canopy, green infrastructure, transportation, and disaster preparedness.

Although heat planning is integrated with disaster preparedness, community advocates continue to push for stronger protections. Given that efforts have been challenged, enforcement and implementation have varied.

POPULATIONS MOST AFFECTED



Older Adults



Unhoused People



Young Children



Outdoor Wokers



Energy insecure households



Households without reliable cooling

HOW IS NEW ORLEANS RESPONDING? 

SHORT-TERM HEAT RESPONSES



Cooling shelters



Community-led Hydration Stations



Free/Discounted Attractions



NOLAReady Heat Alerts



Community Outreach



Utility Shut-Off Prevention (electricity)



URBAN HEAT ISLANDS

Are commonly found in metropolitan areas and are a result of impervious surfaces and a lack of green space.

LONG-TERM HEAT RESPONSES



Better Bus Stops Project



Indoor cooling ordinance



Community LEAP



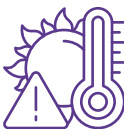
City Worker Protections



Community Lighthouse

FOUR THINGS COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS SHOULD KNOW

1



DEVELOPMENT OF THE NOLA HEAT ACTION PLAN

In response to increasing temperatures, the city is developing a climate action plan aimed at mapping the hottest neighborhoods, lifting community voices, and guiding projects and funding.

2



NOLA READY HAZARD MITIGATION PLAN

A citywide plan outlining occurrences of extreme heat, health hazards related to heat exposure, and actions aimed at protecting people and the environment.

3



HEAT IS MORE THAN TEMPERATURE

The effects of heat on health are shaped by housing quality, energy affordability, historic redlining, neighborhood shade, transportation, food security, and access to cooling resources.

4



RECOGNIZING HEAT ILLNESS

Heat can overwhelm the body. Look for signs of heat illness, such as dizziness, confusion, thirst, headaches, and muscle cramps.

WHAT SHOULD YOU LISTEN FOR DURING FOCUS GROUPS



COOLING AT HOME

- Can people afford energy costs?
- Does the A/C or cooling system work?
- Can the home stay cool?
- What do people do during power outages?
- What strategies do people use to stay cool?



COMMUNITY RESOURCES

- Do people know about cooling centers?
- Where do they get heat information from?
- Who do they go to for help? (i.e., family, friends, neighbors, community organizations)



NEIGHBORHOOD ENVIRONMENT

- Are there trees?
- Is there shade?
- Parks and their condition
- Bus stop conditions
- Access to cooling corridors
- Walkability (i.e., shade, safety, and sense of belonging)
- Access to community resources



HEALTH & IMPACTS

- How does heat affect daily life?
- Have they experienced heat-related illness?
- Who struggles most during heat waves?
- What is the perception of heat and health?
- Are health appointments missed because of the heat?
- Is their children’s mental health impacted during the summer months because of heat?

SUGGESTED QUESTIONS YOU COULD ASK



Where do you go when your home gets too hot?



Have you ever used a cooling center? If so, how did you choose one?



What prevents you from staying cool at home?



If you are experiencing a heat emergency, what would you do?



Have you noticed changes that made your neighborhood cooler or hotter?



What services, policies, or programs would help you or your neighborhood stay safe from the heat?

WHAT ELSE SHOULD THEY KNOW?

- Were people generally aware of the heat initiatives and policies?
- Did people feel represented in heat initiatives and policies?
- What other policies, programs, or initiatives were mentioned that relate to heat and health?
- How are private and public policies shaping tree canopy?
- How can governments, community organizations, and heat-vulnerable communities collaborate?
- What else should we know?

PRIMARY TAKEAWAY

In New Orleans, extreme heat is closely linked with hurricanes, flooding, and power outages. Thus, making heat resilience an important component of disaster preparedness. Investments in short-term and long-term climate resilience strategies include energy reliability, increasing tree canopy, and neighborhood resilience. However, the extent to which these policies and initiatives have been implemented is unknown.

Community organizations continue to advocate for stronger protections for heat-vulnerable populations and are essential partners in helping residents access existing resources and ensuring that future investments address the needs of the communities most vulnerable to extreme heat.

