



Healthy, Thriving Community

We envision Missoula as a caring community, focusing on health, preparedness, personal and community resilience to create a healthy community in which people thrive, even in the midst of climate change stress.

Our community will enhance our climate-related disaster and threats preparedness, educate Missoulians about the climate-health link, and build more resilient individuals and community.

Snapshot: Climate change poses risks to human health both directly (heat exposure, forest fires, flooding, and insect-borne disease) and indirectly (depression, anxiety, scarcity, and community chaos), and many people in Missoula are interested in reducing the risks of climate change for our health, our community, and the natural world. Building connections across the community, developing compassion for others, and developing resilience in ourselves and in our social structures will make it easier to reduce risks of climate change and create better health.

KEY STRATEGIES:

1. Enhance community disaster and threats preparedness

Goal: Build a community approach to disaster preparedness to support community members, businesses, and groups in the face of climate related events and threats.

Activities:

- A. Support networks such as neighborhood councils, churches, and affinity groups to prepare to work together as needed.
- B. Help assure that community wide preparation is occurring for anticipated threats: fire, flooding, avalanche, high temperatures, air pollution, and drought.
- C. Launch Wildfire Summer-Smart and Heat Initiative to, in part:
 - i. Assess and improve current communication strategies during times of high smoke and heat.
 - ii. Conduct assessment of options on air alert days (emphasize youth, vulnerable populations), and provide indoor spaces for recreation, exercise, and health needs during high smoke and high pollution days.
 - iii. Educate about health risks and avoidance strategies.
 - iv. Work with housing experts on long-range plan for energy efficient homes.
- D. Work with existing programs to encourage sharing of resources (such as water) when scarce.

Metrics and Timetable:

- a. Develop guidelines or discussion items for councils, churches and groups to consider in their planning. These items will focus on increasing awareness of climate risk, and examples from other communities of how communities and neighborhoods work together in the face of this risk. Draft completed spring 2016.
- b. Missoula City-County Disaster Preparedness Plan includes provisions for climate related disaster such as fires, flooding, avalanche, heat, and drought. Examine 2015 plan. Establish contact with planners for 2016 plan and incorporate new ideas and strategies.
- c. Track success initially by the number of participants in Wildfire Summer Smart programs; track number of educational events or actions about smoke health. Develop program in 2015. Expand



educational materials 2016 and beyond.

- d. Assessment performed of relevant groups by end of 2015. Sharing mechanisms developed and trialed by December 2016.

2. Link health and climate change

Goal: Link health impacts of climate change to most or all discussions about climate change and work to improve health. A health message is shown to be effective in motivating change.

Activities:

- A. Engage with the City-County Health Department and other health related agencies to include health impacts of climate change in the annual Health Impacts Assessment.
- B. Work with Health Department to share information about climate risks to health.
- C. Identify list of resources for dealing with health impacts.
- D. Encourage hospitals and clinics to be prepared for periods of high smoke exposure, high temperatures and other risks.
- E. Develop metrics for reporting on climate related risks and health events

Metrics and Timetable

- a. Climate change related health information readily available through health department and government agencies by December 2016.
- b. Contacts from Health Department identified as team members in 2015.
- c. List of climate change related health resources created and posted on Climate Smart website by December 2015.
- d. Risks identified through conversations with health providers, hospital administrators, Emergency Medical personnel by December 2015. White paper encouraging preparedness submitted to hospitals and providers by May 2016.
- e. Expected health impacts for western Montana will be identified by September 2015. Data on occurrence of each risk will be collected by December 2015, and tracked annually.

3. Build personal and community resilience

Goal: Build personal and community resilience for better coping and connectedness during times of climate stress.

Activities:

- A. Offer education on emotional well-being to help build resources to recover from difficulty.
- B. Teach methodologies to reduce stress and fight/flight response.
- C. Build and support social networks: neighborhoods, churches, affinity groups.
- D. Create opportunities for public dialogue and participation with a high degree of tolerance and trust (safe forums).
- E. Link with other communities in Montana and the northwest to share strengths and resources.
- F. Reward and recognize acts of kindness.
- G. Build compassionate altruism.



Metrics and Timetable

- a. Educational materials identified by December 2015 and shared with service agencies, schools, businesses, and the public by June 2016.
- b. Align with existing groups to offer stress reduction classes, and skill building to cope with emergencies as well as chronic stress. Identify groups by December 2015. Include environmental stress as aspect of skill building by June 2016.
- c. Identify the many ways Missoulians build networks currently. Share this information in positive stories on the Climate Smart Missoula website by June 2016.
- d. Work with existing groups to build a Resilient Missoula, including hosting public dialogues about climate change related stressors.
- e. Reach out to other cities in Montana and Idaho to compare notes about Climate planning. Share resources and develop networks. Make first contact by the end of 2015.
- f. Tell more positive stories about the kindnesses of Missoulians. Connect the dots that support each other, make us stronger and more resilient as a community, even in the face of climate change. Post at least one story/month on the Climate Smart website, beginning Sept. 2015.
- g. Measure compassionate altruism in surveys of the general population annually.

ADDITIONAL STRATEGIES:

- Research other communities with a “Happiness Initiative” and assess opportunities. Use well-being of our community as a key component in city-wide planning and policy efforts.
- Work with artists and art educators to link climate action with arts, culture, and local celebrations. Include music related to resilience and climate and “art eruptions” to catch interest, shift awareness, have fun.
- Impact Policy. Mobilize public comments and participation when health related energy topics arise in legislation or city-county decision making.
- Engage in future planning processes to help maintain a focus on creating a healthy, thriving community.

A CLIMATE SMART WAY FORWARD. We know this is an all-encompassing, rather daunting bucket. We believe that by talking about the challenges that are here today and that lie ahead, in hopeful and positive terms, we can build a more resilient Missoula. And by bringing new community members to this conversation, from mental health professionals, to medical practitioners, to artists, we will build strong connections. A challenge may be capacity—it can be difficult to bring these busy professionals together!

And Remember...

*--- Include all who are interested --- Emphasize co-benefits ---Build on existing processes
--- Include the arts --- Remember humor --- Give voice to the vulnerable*

Potential Partners: St Patrick Hospital, Community Medical Center, Missoula City-County Health Department, City of Missoula, Missoula County, American Lung Association of the Mountain Pacific, University of Montana, Missoula County Public Schools, Poverello Center, Learning Center at Red Willow, Turning the Wheel, National Coalition Building Institute, Living Art, Zootown Arts Community Center, The Hive, faith communities, Jeanette Ranken Peace Center, local and state elected officials, individuals, and more.



Developing Healthy, Thriving Community strategies during Summit #2