

Beat The Heat Toolkit

Many neighborhoods beyond Hunting Park also experience higher than average surface temperatures. Below find a guide for how your community organization can start the conversation about high heat and begin to work together to become more resilient.



1 Background Research

A) CONSIDER PROJECT CAPACITY

Planning for extreme heat at the neighborhood level can take on many forms, each of which may require different resources. Equity can be embodied in community heat planning through inclusive practices that value, uplift, and center the voices and experiences of marginalized individuals and communities who face systemic barriers to opportunities and resources because of their identities. Before you begin, consider the following questions to help you design your neighborhood Beat the Heat program:

- Can this project be supported administratively and financially by a local organization or community group? Why or why not?
- Will someone be hired to lead this project, or will the work be done on a volunteer basis or in collaboration with a local organization?
- What is the duration of the project? 6 months? 1 year?
- How often will you meet to move the project forward? Weekly? Bi-weekly? Monthly?
- What resources will you need to complete the project?
- Why do environmental inequalities like exposure to heat exist in your neighborhood?
 - What is the specific history of land-use in your neighborhood that has led to unequal exposure to heat and environmental risk?
- What is the history of environmental advocacy in your neighborhood and how are residents already organizing themselves and leading?
- Who are they key stakeholders and what are the important community assets and landmarks in your neighborhood?

TOOLS

- ✓ Practicing Equity (p. 8-9 of Beat the Heat Hunting Park Plan)

B) UNDERSTAND CLIMATE CHANGE

Over the past decade, Philadelphia has experienced a variety of extreme weather, including the snowiest winter, several of the warmest summers, as well as hurricanes and other storms. Scientists expect these trends to continue in the future at an accelerating path and with increasing severity. Understanding more about the changing climate can help you communicate with residents about what to expect and how to be prepared.

TOOLS

- ✓ Growing Stronger: Toward a Climate-Ready Philadelphia
- ✓ Climate Change in Philadelphia: A Guided Conversation

C) CONDUCT BACKGROUND RESEARCH

Look at your neighborhood's heat vulnerability and heat exposure and research causes of heat disparity, such as land use and tree canopy.

TOOLS

- ✓ Heat Vulnerability Index
- ✓ Tree Canopy Data
- ✓ Philadelphia Neighborhood Stress Index
- ✓ Philadelphia City Planning Commission Community Plans
- ✓ Community Health Explorer
- ✓ EPA EJ Screen Tool
- ✓ Neighborhood Demographics
- ✓ Hot By Design: Neighborhood Mapping Exercise

2 Establish a Heat Team

Are there others working on similar issues in your community? Research which community development corporations, registered community organizations, block captains, colleges, university or schools, hospitals or health institutions, faith-based organizations, or other entities exist in your area. Make sure to include City agencies that can help create and implement your plan.

(provide small worksheet or link to sample one)

TOOLS

- ✓ Heat Team Work Plan
- ✓ List of Registered Community Organizations
- ✓ List of Community Development Corporations
- ✓ List of City Agencies & Other Potential Heat Relief Partners (p.26 of Beat the Heat Hunting Park Plan)
- ✓ Sample Community Asset Map

3 Hold Stakeholder Interviews

Interview key stakeholders and residents about their experiences with heat and the solutions they would like to see in their neighborhood.

TOOLS

- ✓ Potential Stakeholder Interview Questions

4 Conduct a Neighborhood Survey

Develop a neighborhood heat survey to learn about how people currently cope with heat, what tools they need to thrive, and what changes they would like to see in their community to make it cooler. Set a goal for how many surveys you want to collect. Administer the survey through block clean-ups and cold water distribution, community events, block captain mailings, and public workshops. Pay a few community



leaders to administer the survey and to organize events where people can fill them out. Don't forget to invest in plenty of clipboards and pens!

TOOLS

- ✓ Hunting Park Neighborhood Heat Survey (English)
- ✓ Hunting Park Neighborhood Heat Survey (Spanish)
- ✓ Sample Outreach Letter to Block Captains

5 Organize Community Events

Hold a few events that include music, dancing, art activities, cooling resources, and water ice throughout the summer to get folks to take the survey and talk about available cooling resources.

TIPS

- ✓ Ask around to find a good local DJ and neighborhood caterers—both can go a long way in supporting the community and creating a fun event!
- ✓ Partner with other organizations to increase interest and
- ✓ Compile outreach materials, such as utility assistance programs, public health resources, and other useful information
- ✓ Engage residents to design a community heat logo
- ✓ Set up a station to show people how to build hand fans

TOOLS

- ✓ Sample Flyer
- ✓ How to Build a Hand Fan (see diagram on how to build one on page 46 of the Beat the Heat Hunting Park Plan)

6 Appoint Beat the Heat Ambassadors

Recruit a resident Beat the Heat Team Leader to train and organize a team of resident Beat the Heat ambassadors. Provide stipends or gift cards to support their efforts.

TOOLS

- ✓ Sample Beat the Heat Ambassadors Training Presentation

7 Beat the Heat Mobile Station

Develop a mobile Beat the Heat station that includes hand-fan making, giveaways like misting fans or thermometers, heat-related resources and information, and the heat survey. Identify neighborhood events or locations to bring the mobile station to and engage residents.

TOOLS

- ✓ How to Make an Activity Station

8 Hold a Beat the Heat Design Workshop

Facilitate a workshop with your heat team and residents to identify and map where residents would like to see specific cooling interventions—such as tree plantings, cool roofs, cooling spaces, and bus shelters—in their neighborhood.

TOOLS

- ✓ Facilitators Guide for a Heat Design Workshop

9 Promote Trees and Neighborhood Greening

Coordinate a yard tree give away in partnership with TreePhilly. Work with the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society to hold a Tree Tenders training program for your community and to organize street tree plantings. Develop localized messaging about the importance of trees and specific areas they could be most impactful.

TOOLS

- ✓ Tree Philly Website
- ✓ Yard Tree Planting and Care
- ✓ Street Tree Care
- ✓ Tree Tenders Video Library of Tree Planting and Care Tips
- ✓ Pennsylvania Horticultural Society Tree Tenders Website
- ✓ Philadelphia Water Department Community Input for Green Stormwater Infrastructure

10 Build a Heat Relief Network

Map existing neighborhood cooling assets and resources and identify additional spaces, such as faith institutions, shopping centers, movie theatres, stores, or other businesses that could be incorporated into a neighborhood heat relief network. Identify what resources each partner is able to contribute. For example, one church may have an air-conditioned basement, while another partner may have a screen and projector or board games to provide entertainment, while a restaurant may offer up free snacks.

TOOLS

- ✓ Asset Based Community Development presentation (by Interfaith Power & Light)

All tools available at www.phila.gov/green.