

Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness and Municipal Resilience Programs

A state-to-local model for accelerating climate resilience planning and implementation

Overview

Two states, in collaboration with The Nature Conservancy (TNC), have created a replicable state-to-local model to accelerate climate resilience for others to follow. Massachusetts' Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP) Program and Rhode Island's Municipal Resilience Program (MRP) show how states can help cities and towns move from climate risk awareness to funded, on-the-ground resilience projects. Both programs use a similar delivery model: state-supported planning, community engagement, technical assistance, formal municipal designation and dedicated implementation grants.

How the Model Works



Municipalities enter a state-supported resilience planning process (In the case of MVP and MRP, TNC's Community Resilience Building process).



Communities use climate data, local knowledge and stakeholder input to assess hazards and vulnerabilities alongside existing community strengths.



Municipal staff, residents, businesses and community partners identify priority projects.



Participating communities receive formal program designation.



Designated communities become eligible for implementation grants that support design, engineering, construction and project delivery.

Massachusetts Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP) Program

Launched in 2017, MVP helps Massachusetts municipalities assess climate risks, set priorities and qualify for Action Grants that fund resilience projects. The program addresses flooding, extreme heat, drought, sea level rise and severe storms, with an increased focus on equity and action-oriented implementation through MVP 2.0.

- **Lead entity:** Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs
- **Impact to date:** 349 of the 351 municipalities in Massachusetts have participated in the process and developed MVP plans. Nearly \$200 million has been awarded in action grants toward 500 projects, with additional funds supporting the planning phase.

Rhode Island Municipal Resilience Program (MRP)

Launched in 2019, MRP adapts the MVP model for Rhode Island. Municipalities complete a facilitated community-based process, receive Resilient Rhody designation and become eligible for Action Grants that support design, engineering and construction of priority projects.

- **Lead entity:** Rhode Island Infrastructure Bank, with state resilience partners.
- **Impact to date:** All 39 Rhode Island municipalities have completed the process, with \$21.4 million awarded for 22 completed projects.

According to the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, every \$1 invested in resilience and disaster preparedness returns approximately \$13 in avoided damages and recovery costs.

Why the Programs Matter

- **They align state and local action.** State agencies can steer resources toward shared climate, infrastructure, equity and hazard mitigation goals while keeping planning locally grounded.
- **They create a fundable project pipeline.** The programs turn broad risk assessments into prioritized projects that are ready for grants, financing and implementation.
- **They close capacity gaps.** Technical assistance and dedicated funding help municipalities act even when staff capacity and local budgets are limited.
- **They deliver tangible public benefits.** Projects reduce flooding, heat and other hazards in ways residents can see and experience.
- **They normalize nature-based solutions.** MVP and MRP make natural infrastructure a routine part of local resilience planning, design and delivery.

For elected officials and senior agency leaders, MVP and MRP offer a proven, repeatable approach for helping municipalities plan, prioritize, finance and deliver climate resilience projects at scale. The model is flexible enough to adapt to other states, while preserving three core ingredients: state leadership, local ownership and funding for implementation.

For more information and to discuss collaborating on establishing a similar program in your state, contact Humna Sharif, Climate Adaptation and Resilience Director (Humna.Sharif@tnc.org).



Community members attend a community resilience building workshop.
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Eroding seawall at India Point Park in Providence, RI, an MRP project.
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Bioswale at St. Louis Sponge Park in Lowell, MA, an MVP project.
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