

NEHA NEWS

NEHA's New Climate Change Activities and Resources

The National Environmental Health Association (NEHA), in partnership with ecoAmerica, Climate for Health (<https://ecoamerica.org/health/>), is developing resources for NEHA members to address climate change impacts. Some of those resources include a video that features NEHA member climate change success stories and a Climate Change and Emergency Preparedness and Response White Paper that addresses how emergency preparedness and response are directly related to climate change.

Climate Change Success Story Video

The climate change success story video showcases NEHA members addressing climate change impacts from Cambridge, Massachusetts; Franklin County, Ohio; and Salt Lake County, Utah. Environmental health professionals and members of NEHA's Climate Change Committee share their inspiring stories that address strategies for adaptation, mitigation at the community level, and strong coalitions and collaborations. To view the video, please visit www.neha.org/node/60356.

Cambridge, Massachusetts

The city of Cambridge, Massachusetts, released a comprehensive climate change vulnerability assessment (CCVA) in 2015 and it was determined that the climate of the past is no longer a reliable indicator of the future. The CCVA endeavored to model what would happen to city residents and the built environment when there was an increase in temperature, precipitation, sea-level rise, and coastal storm surge, as well as the implications these increases would have on economics, health, and well-being. The assessment identified Cambridge's key physical and social vulnerabilities based on the assumption that no actions are taken and modeled risks were varied by neighborhood and demographic factors.

The city ranked vulnerability factors and critical assets that led to prioritizing two main neighborhoods to develop climate change preparedness and resilience plans (CCPR). The goal of a CCPR plan is to provide a realistic set of actions and strategies in both the short- and long-term that could be implemented in partnership with the city, its residents, and partner organizations and businesses. The CCPR plan is divided into sections that address social and physical vulnerabilities, including health status, buildings and infrastructure, and the natural ecosystem. Cambridge focused on novel community engagement strategies aimed at building neighborhood social capital, enhancing social connections before an emergency exists, and increasing resident self-determination and empowerment.

Franklin County, Ohio

In early 2016, the Ohio Public Health Association (OPHA) recognized a lack of funding and inconsistent local public health efforts to address climate change in Ohio. With dedicated statewide funding unavailable, OPHA convened a group of public health practitioners, academicians, and other interested subject matter experts to discuss the public health response to this issue. The Ohio Public Health Climate Resilience Coalition's (OPHCRC) purpose is to leverage knowledge and resources across the state to create a white

paper and toolkit for local health departments to utilize and to encourage public health action.

Utilizing the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Building Resilience Against Climate Effects (BRACE) Framework, the group worked to assess climate impacts and identify vulnerabilities in Ohio. With this information, OPHCRC began development of a white paper to demonstrate a coordinated public health effort in Ohio that would also raise awareness of the need for local action. With priorities and budgets shifting, it is imperative for local governing bodies to take action when and how they can. The coalition is working to supply local health departments with tools and resources that they can use in their communities to build climate resilience.

Salt Lake County, Utah

Salt Lake City and County are addressing the challenge of climate change by helping clean the air. Fortunately, there has been a dramatic reduction in the cost and effectiveness of wind and solar energy in recent years, as well as an increase in the willingness of individuals, families, organizations, and many governments to step forward and act. Salt Lake County Health Department completed a comprehensive climate adaptation plan and hosted a seminar to introduce it to the community. The department also hosted its Fourth Annual Climate and Health Symposium—a time for local experts to discuss and report on climate activities.

Salt Lake City Mayor Jackie Biskupski is an ardent advocate for climate change response. She was selected as chair of the U.S. Conference of Mayors Alliance for a Sustainable Future and is one of the early adopters of the Sierra Club's Mayors for 100% Clean Energy goal. Salt Lake City recently opened the first net-zero energy fire station in the nation. Salt Lake County is a partner with the Utah Climate Action Network, an initiative led by Utah Clean Energy that provides a forum for all climate experts and leaders to share ideas and best practices on climate solutions. In October 2018 they hosted Utah Climate Week where a wide range of concerned community members, organizations, and businesses promoted awareness and action around climate change.

Climate Change and Emergency Preparedness and Response White Paper

NEHA is also developing a Climate Change and Emergency Preparedness and Response White Paper that addresses the relationship between climate change impacts and emergency preparedness and response. Increasing temperatures are changing weather patterns and the frequency and intensity of weather events. More severe weather events are producing more substantial and long-lasting damage, intensifying the need to incorporate environmental health professionals in the context of emergency preparedness when responding to disasters.

As of press, the white paper has not been posted but it is expected to be available by January. Please check www.neha.org/eh-topics/climate-change-0 for this resource, as well as for more NEHA and ecoAmerica resources that address climate change.

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NEHA Staff Profile

As part of tradition, NEHA features new staff members in the *Journal* around the time of their 1-year anniversary. These profiles give you an opportunity to get to know the NEHA staff better and to learn more about the great programs and activities going on in your association. This month we are pleased to introduce you to one NEHA staff member. Contact information for all NEHA staff can be found on page 49.

**Angelica Ledezma**

I began my journey with NEHA in December 2017 as a member services assistant. Through this position I had the opportunity to interact with our members and learn about the important work they do. I quickly became involved with NEHA's Annual Educational Conference (AEC) & Exhibition and have since moved into my new role as the AEC manager where I oversee the

administrative portion of the conference. I also serve as the liaison for the association's board of directors.

Prior to joining NEHA, I graduated from the University of Denver (DU) where I studied biology and psychology. I was also involved with the University Programming Board coordinating various campus events. My interest in sustainable practices and addressing climate change grew while at DU. This interest is what initially drew me to NEHA. I have since loved learning more about the wide span of work our members engage in such as food safety, water quality, and everything else within environmental health. I am eager to continue learning from our members and eager to play such a big role in something as exciting as the AEC.

I grew up in California and have lived in Colorado for the last 12 years. While I'm not a fan of the cold winter weather, it's well worth it for the abundance of outdoor activities the state offers year-round. When I'm not working, I can usually be found enjoying beautiful Colorado with my husband or reading a book while snuggled up with my two adorable miniature dachshunds.

I'm glad to be part of all the exciting things happening at NEHA and I'm honored to serve such a dedicated profession. I hope to harness the energy from last year's AEC in Anaheim, California, and to grow the conference with every coming year. I look forward to working with many of you along the way! 🐾

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