U.S. Department of Health & Human Services

2022 Climate Adaptation Plan Progress Report

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Executive Summary

The United States Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) assembled a Climate Adaptation and Resilience Plan (CARP) Workgroup which consisted of members from Program Support Center (PSC) of the Assistant Secretary for Administration, Office of Assistant Secretary for Health (OASH), Administration for Strategic Preparedness and Response (ASPR), Assistant Secretary for Financial Resources (ASFR), National Institutes of Health (NIH), U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA), Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and Indian Health Services (IHS). The Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) drafted interim instructions in Spring 2021 for Federal agencies to submit draft CARPs by July 1, 2021, that included elements outlined in Section 211 of Executive Order 14008: *Tackling the Climate Crisis at Home and Abroad*. The CARP workgroup completed several iterations of the CARP addressing comments from CEQ and Office and Management of Budget over the Summer of 2021. On September 28, 2021, Secretary Becerra approved the HHS 2021 Climate Adaption Plan, and it was released to the public through an HHS announcement on October 7, 2021.

HHS 2021 CARP represents a concerted effort to enhance resilience and adaptation to climate change throughout activities of HHS. The plan also ensures continuity of operations of HHS facilities in the face of extreme weather events and fosters healthy greenhouse gas reduction and resilience efforts in the public health sector and community.

HHS CARP Work group developed a system to track implementation of the 2021 HHS Climate Adaptation Plan using a web-based collaborative platform, database management system, and an interactive business analytic visualizer resource called the CARP Task Tracking System. The CARP system provides a mechanism for HHS to prepare annual progress reports on the implementation of actions documented in the HHS 2021 Climate Adaptation Plan.

HHS identified five priority climate areas; Expanding Health Programs Implementation for Climate Adaptation, Improve HHS' responses to the Climate Crisis, Develop Climate Resilient Grant Policies at HHS, Optimize the Workforce and Operational Footprint through Space Management, and Promote Sustainable Climate Resilient Operations at HHS. Highlights of these five priority areas are described in Section 1 of the 2022 Climate Adaptation Plan Progress report.

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SECTION 1: UPDATES ON PRIORITY ACTIONS

Priority Action Progress Summary Table

Priority Action	Current Status	Estimated Date of Completion	Brief Description of Progress
#1 Expanding Health Programs Implementation for Climate Adaptation	In progress	March 2023	The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)'s Climate and Health Program funded eleven (11) grantees in 2021, focusing on environmental justice. The National Institutes of Health (NIH) funded research on climate change and health at roughly $8 million per year over the past nine years.
#2 Improve HHS Responses to the Climate Crisis	In progress	September 2023	Made advancements in convening teams within each Operating Division (OpDiv) and Staff Division (StaffDiv) to develop subagency-specific Climate Adaptation and Resilience Plans (CARPs).
#3 Develop Climate-Resilient Grant Policies at HHS	In progress	September 2025	Assembled a team of subject matter experts with proper representation to develop grant language that meets the goal of increasing climate resilience and sustainability with appropriate performance measures.
#4 Climate Resilience by Optimizing Workforce and Operational Footprint through Space Management	In progress	September 2025	HHS issued a new 21st-century space management policy with lessons learned from remote working during the pandemic that will substantially reduce facilities' footprint over time and help reduce emissions by reducing traffic and building operations.
#5 Promoting Sustainable and Climate Resilient Operations at HHS Facilities	In progress	September 2022	Staff updated the Facilities Program Manual to include planning guidance for Environmental Justice, Climate Adaptation and Resilience, and HHS interim National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) guidelines.

Priority Action Progress

Priority Action #1: Expanding Health Programs Implementation for Climate Adaptation

Climate Adaptation Action Name: Expand existing climate change-related public health and biomedical research activities

HHS Leads: CDC and NIH

Scale: National/Global

Goal: HHS will enhance current actions to integrate climate change into CDC and NIH programs. We will incorporate meteorologic, climate, and health data and expand research to help guide decision-making and enhance public health through climate actions, including adaptation, mitigation, and resilience measures.

Performance Measures:

- Increase the number of HHS's climate and health grantees and ensure a focus on environmental justice. (In progress)
- Develop and implement HHS's series of transdisciplinary scientific initiatives that support research and training efforts in climate change and human health. (In progress)

Accomplishments to Date:

- CDC supports the eleven grantees funded to do climate and health work in the Fall of 2021. CDC is developing a strategic framework to integrate climate resilience and health into various programs.
- CDC funds seven non-profit partners to perform climate and health work across the country through a cooperative agreement. This initiative is a five-year funding opportunity for organizations to implement activities to strengthen governmental and nongovernmental components of the public health system with a focus on climate change. The purposes of this program are to strengthen the nation's public health infrastructure; ensure a competent, current, and connected public health system; and improve the delivery of essential public health services through capacity-building assistance.
- On August 10th, 2022, the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR), a component agency of the Department of Health and Human Services, released the Environmental Justice Index (EJI), a national, place-based tool designed to measure the cumulative impacts of environmental burden through the lens of human health and health equity. The EJI delivers a single environmental justice score for each community so that public health officials can identify and map areas most at risk for the health impacts of environmental burden.
- CDC is researching to expand scientific understanding of the health implications of the climate crisis and weather extremes. CDC's National Syndromic

Surveillance Program (NSSP) monitors climate-related hazards, refines surveillance systems, and partners with other agencies to make health-surveillance data more readily accessible.
- NIH funded 350 individual grant awards on climate change and health research at roughly $8 million per year over the past nine years; 11 NIH Institutes and Centers contributed to this research funding.
- NIH/National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences (NIEHS) developed and maintains informational and educational resources on climate change and health, including the NIEHS Climate and Health Literature Portal and "Lessons in Climate Change."
- NIH established the NIH Climate Change and Health Initiative which has developed a strategic framework and funding opportunities aimed at reducing health threats from climate change across the lifespan and building health resilience in individuals, communities, and nations around the world, especially among those at highest risk.

Priority Action #2: Improve HHS Responses to the Climate Crisis

Climate Adaptation Action Name: Improve HHS Responses to the Climate Crisis.

HHS Lead: Office of Climate Change and Health Equity

Scale: National/Global

Goal: Improve HHS preparedness and responses through a consultative planning process for each OpDiv or StaffDiv supported by the new Office of Climate Change and Health Equity (OCCHE) and the HHS Sustainability Team.

Performance Measures:

- Advancement in convening teams within each OpDiv and StaffDiv to develop specific CARPs. (Complete)
- Completion of HHS-approved OpDiv CARP by Fiscal Year (F.Y.) 2022. (In progress)
- Revision of HHS CARP reflecting broader implementation across HHS. (In progress)

Accomplishments to Date:

- OCCHE has ushered in a new era of HHS work on climate adaptation and resilience by convening all relevant OpDivs and StaffDivs in the Department. OpDivs and StaffDivs are identifying and detailing strategies to support the healthcare sector, public health agencies, communities, and individuals to prepare for climate change's most acute health impacts. These impacts include both catastrophic events and long-term chronic disease burdens for those

populations we already know to be especially vulnerable to climate-related harm.

- OCCHE developed a Climate Adaptation and Resilience Plan (CARP) template for HHS Divisions and harmonized it with the HHS Divisional Sustainability template to address the goals of Executive Order 14057.
- OCCHE will consolidate contributed plans from OpDivs and StaffDivs to create a comprehensive overview of Department-wide activity – tools, resources, funding opportunities, regulations, etc. – and begin to identify strategies to promote in current HHS offerings. In short, the Department's work – and this year's report – is beginning to actively look beyond work on sustainability within HHS facilities and think about how HHS can advance climate health for the whole nation. Examples of ongoing and planned HHS actions that address climate-related threats across the country to health include:
    - Listening activities to understand specific threats to vulnerable communities (e.g., regional listening sessions, RFIs from the National Institutes of Health, Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality, Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Health [OASH], and others);
    - Identification of evidence-based best practices from health care providers and public health departments around the country;
    - Development of tools and supports to increase resilience in communities and facilities;
    - Introduction of technical assistance to help healthcare organizations measure and reduce their greenhouse gas emissions;
    - Exploration of regulations and incentives to advance work on this topic.
- HHS OpDivs have active sustainability, emergency preparedness, and risk management programs that will contribute to the development of OpDiv CARPs. CDC, NIH, and ASPR have vast experience in climate resilience, literacy, vulnerabilities, and climate change impacts on health.
- CDC launched a climate and health task force in 2021 to create an agency-wide strategic plan.

Priority Action #3: Develop Climate-Resilient Grant Policies at HHS

Climate Adaptation Action Name: Develop language across the range of HHS grant-making programs and funding announcements to advance federal sustainability and climate resilience goals

HHS Leads: Assistant Secretary for Financial Resources and OCCHE
Scale: National/Global

Goal: The goal is to include climate resilience and sustainability efforts in all types of grants. To increase the likelihood that grants and financial assistance policies improve awardee climate resiliency and sustainability to meet the HHS Climate Change mission.

Performance Measures:

- Verify that the Subject Matter Expert (SME) team has proper representation across HHS' Divisions to ensure the developed language meets the goal of increasing climate resilience and sustainability with appropriate performance measures in F.Y. 2022. (In progress)
- Report performance measure in grant case studies using new grant language, resulting in cost savings and greenhouse gas (GHG) reductions by sharing space and equipment in F.Y. 2023. (Not started)
- Report future grants' performance measures indicating the possible cost avoidance due to harmonizing grant language and mission-related work with climate adaption and resilience goals in F.Y. 2023. (Not started)

Accomplishments to Date:

- HHS created a team of subject matter experts to develop grant language that meets the goal of increasing climate resilience and sustainability with appropriate performance measures. The Greening Grants Team also reviews existing grant language for obsolete or competitive requirements that could impact progress towards climate resilience and sustainability goals.
- The team is in the process of cultivating multiple options to encourage and incentivize awardees to employ clean energy, reduce waste, and implement resilience planning for climate-related events. HHS staff have engaged with non-governmental institutions to understand the opportunities for grant language to encourage sustainable and climate adaptive actions by grantees. The staff has also participated in listening sessions and conversations with the grantee community to understand the limitations and possibilities for grant improvement, including freezer management, sharing of equipment, and grant evaluation/funding structures. Grantees have expressed a willingness and desire for these requirements to be included in the grant evaluation process to help guide the conversation and the direction of climate-responsible grant-making.
- HHS partnered with non-profit and industry organizations to create programs that encourage voluntary sustainability improvements in the way laboratories are managed and operated. These partnerships and discussions have begun to build a foundation for the work of incorporating actionable language in grants as we advance.

Priority Action #4: Climate Resilience by Optimizing Workforce and Operational Footprint through Space Management

Climate Adaptation Action Name: Workplace optimization and effective space management for climate resilience

HHS Lead: Assistant Secretary for Administration

Scale: Local/Regional/Global

Goal: Assess workforce needs, owned and leased space amenities, and work activities, then recalibrate our space strategy to lower carbon emissions and improve workforce experience.

Performance Measures:

- Monitor the Employee Viewpoint Survey scores for workplace satisfaction, telework/remote work program, health and work-life balance support, and sustainability/climate initiatives management support. (In progress)
- Record the number of people housed per gross square foot and people served by remote I.T. access platforms. (In Progress)
- Update policies for Real Estate and Workforce Management. (Complete)

Accomplishments to Date:

- A telework-friendly workplace promotes the health and well-being of our workforce, decreases commuting traffic stress and pollution, enhances workforce collaboration, optimizes space utilization, and increases our flexibility to operate during extreme weather events. On 18 February 2022, HHS issued the 21st Century Workplace Space Planning Policy based on increased telework to ensure efficient use of space. HHS will provide shared workstations and offices for staff who primarily telework five or more business days every federal government pay period.
- On 6 April 2022, HHS implemented the Data Quality Improvement Program for our Federal Real Property Profile Maintenance System (FRPP MS). The improvements to the FRPP MS will allow HHS to estimate the positive environmental impact awarded by increased teleworking across the Department.
- CDC has completed pilot programs pre-pandemic and is currently conducting a more extensive project for one floor of one office building. Maximum telework has allowed CDC to test systems for remote connectivity, and they have not discovered any unresolvable issues.

Priority Action #5: Promoting Sustainable and Climate Resilient Operations at HHS Facilities

Climate Adaptation Action Name: Update HHS facilities policy manuals and guidance documents to address sustainability and climate resilience

HHS Lead: Program Support Center (PSC)

Scale: National

Goal: Existing policies and guidance are outdated and insufficient to guide Department staff to meet newly developed environmental sustainability and climate resilience requirements set by Congress and the Administration. The goal is to create a workgroup comprised of HHS OpDiv Climate and Sustainability SMEs to collaborate and update manuals to include enhanced strategies and requirements to meet the

demands of climate change mitigation, adaptation, and resiliency. These documents serve as a framework for OpDiv efforts and design and construction guidelines.

Performance Measures:

- Identify key individuals and develop and distribute manuals for internal review. (Complete)
- Develop annual energy and sustainability reports. (In progress)
    - Establish metrics and benchmarks and track them minimally yearly.
    - Develop timelines.
    - Hold Meetings.

Accomplishments to Date:

- HHS develops and distributes several manuals among key stakeholders to incorporate climate adaptation and resilience goals, such as the Facilities Program Manual (FPM), General Administrative Manual Part 30 (GAM-30), and Logistic Management Manual (LMM). Staff updated the Facilities Program Manual to include planning guidance for Environmental Justice, Climate Adaptation and Resilience, and HHS interim National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) guidelines that further Executive Order (E.O.) 13990 objectives.
- HHS removed obsolete language and harmonized instructions to support sustainability, climate adaptation, and resilience goals and will publish the updated FPM.
- The HHS Logistics Policy Office reviews the LMM and works with the Logistics Management Council (LMC) members to identify issues to address. All LMC members were notified, and this discussion was on the agenda during a meeting held on 1 June 2021.

SECTION 2: UPDATES ON OTHER INITIAL PLAN TOPICS

Climate-Risk Reduction

HHS Lead: CDC

The CDC provides the Building Resilience Against Climate Effects (BRACE) Framework to help communities prepare for the local health impacts of a changing climate. The BRACE framework comprises five sequential steps, which are:

Step 1: Anticipate Climate Impacts and Assessing Vulnerabilities

Step 2: Project the Disease Burden

Step 3: Assess Public Health Interventions

Step 4: Develop and Implement a Climate and Health Adaptation Plan

Step 5: Evaluate Impact and Improve Quality of Activities

PSC will build on this framework to help prepare for the local infrastructure impacts of a changing climate.

Climate-Risk Vulnerability Assessments

HHS Lead: PSC

HHS provides subagencies with instructions on using CDC's Data Explorer to identify facilities' wildfire, heat, drought, and flooding vulnerabilities. It is a screening tool intended to provide awareness and preliminary assessments of facilities vulnerable to climate hazards. HHS is currently canvassing the array of climate and resiliency tools observed at the 2022 Federal Environmental Symposium to identify which tool(s) are ideal for specific use cases.

Climate Literacy

HHS Lead: OCCHE

HHS has assembled a Climate Literacy Team of subject matter experts from the Office of Climate Change and Health Equity, Office of Human Resources, and the Sustainability Outreach workgroup. The Climate Literacy Team is developing a climate literacy program framework to provide employees with evidence-based information, increase climate literacy, and identify resources, procedures, and actions to achieve climate resilience and adaptation. In April 2022, HHS hosted an Earth Day Speaker Series covering climate crisis causes, indicators, impacts, and implications on the environment and human health equity. The series provided an excellent climate literacy framework for HHS employees and the public, supporting E.O. 14057 § 401 Engaging, Educating, and Training the Federal Workforce towards a sustainability and climate action culture. CDC hosted a number of climate and health webinars in 2021 and 2022 to improve climate literacy and build capacity.

Tribal Engagement

HHS Lead: Indian Health Service and Office of Intergovernmental External Affairs, Tribal Affairs Office, and CDC

HHS will provide a webinar to tribal governments and indigenous people about the HHS CARP. HHS Divisions will seek input from tribal governments and indigenous people when developing their CARP to ensure indigenous populations have the opportunity to contribute to planning and implementation.

CDC provides funding to three Tribes to prepare for and respond to the health impacts of climate change and funds the National Indian Health Board to maintain a Tribal climate learning cohort.

Environmental Justice

HHS Lead: OASH, Office of Climate Change and Health Equity, Office of Environmental Justice (OEJ)

HHS recently established an Office of Environmental Justice (OEJ). OEJ will serve as a departmental-wide hub that will take responsibility for leading initiatives and coordinating work focused on the protection of disadvantaged communities and vulnerable populations on the frontlines of pollution and other environmental hazards that affect health. OEJ will address issues such as childhood lead poisoning and lead contamination issues; water/wastewater and related sanitation issues; chemical exposures, etc. – all which may be potentially exacerbated by climate change. OEJ has convened a departmental-wide EJ workgroup; is developing a new EJ strategic plan; is coordinating Justice 40 work; and working with federal partners to develop tools to support identification of disadvantaged communities.

Partnerships

HHS Lead: CDC

HHS has expanded partnerships on climate adaptation since October 2021. Collaborations include new jurisdictions funded by CDC's Climate and Health Program, new federal interagency coordination activities as part of the federal Climate Change and Human Health Group (including a new food systems and nutrition security workstream), partnership outreach by HHS's Office of Climate Change and Health Equity, and a multi-agency effort to add additional climate and health data to CDC's Heat and Health Tracker. CDC's Climate and Health Program has provided climate and health funding to seven non-profit grant recipients and is working with funded recipients to enhance partnerships.

SECTION 3: NEW TOPICS FROM E.O. 14057

Policy Review

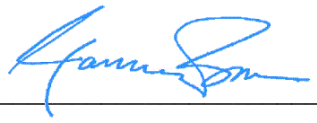
HHS Lead: PSC and OCCHE

HHS is reviewing policies, procedures, and programs through the initial implementation of the CARP Actions. HHS has identified several key regulations that the Federal Government is amending before implementing any changes to HHS' acquisition policies to ensure procurements meet climate-resilient investment criteria. For example, acquisition regulations and policies do not align fully with requirements in E.O. 14057 because they are requisite from revoked E.O.s. Through Climate Literacy, we will continue uncovering additional gaps.

Climate Scenario Analysis

HHS Lead: PSC

Climate projections are challenging to incorporate into decision-making because they contain considerable uncertainty for individual federal properties that do not have enough granular data. HHS is considering a simplified approach that evaluates current and projected hazard likelihoods against our risk tolerance for each facility. HHS canvasses various climate and resiliency tools and data sources to identify ideal projection tools for our specific use cases. The Indian Health Service is developing tools to assist decision-making, including climate projections and historical information. These tools may provide perspective on how climate change will affect existing facilities and planning for new facilities and may offer insight into differences in health outcomes related to climate change.



October 5, 2022

Xavier Becerra — Date

Secretary of Health and Human Services

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services