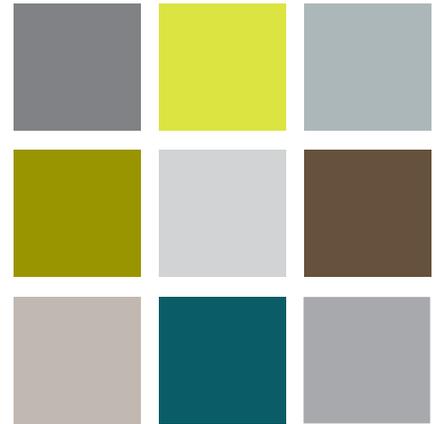


Climate Change Adaptation and Public Health Impact Statement



SUMMARY

Understanding how residents of Columbus perceive climate change, and their level of support for different types of policy action is critical to developing an effective climate adaptation plan for the City.

SITUATION

The City of Columbus is particularly vulnerable to climate related impacts associated with severe weather and vector-borne disease. The Mayor of Columbus, in partnership with Columbus Public Health, is interested in developing a citywide climate adaptation plan to ensure that communities are resilient in the face of these emerging threats. However, the City wants to ensure that such an effort will be publicly supported and responsive to citizen needs and concerns.

RESPONSE

OSU researchers conducted a survey of Columbus residents' knowledge, beliefs, behaviors, and support for climate related policy to help establish a baseline assessment of public opinion to inform city-level policy making. Behavioral and policy support models are being developed to identify both who is willing to take and support action on climate change, as well as what factors might motivate someone to take action. OSU researchers also



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conducted a series of community presentations throughout the City that were strategically designed to target the four critical beliefs underlying support for climate action (i.e., that climate change is real, caused by people, bad for people and solvable). Pre-post test surveys were used to assess changes in beliefs and policy support as a result of exposure to the targeted communication effort. Longitudinal surveys are also being conducted to assess the resiliency of these changes and commitments over time.

IMPACT

The City of Columbus Mayor's Office, Columbus Public Health, and several non-governmental organizations (i.e., Natural Resources Defense Council), and local consultants (i.e., Initiative Consulting) are using the results of this research to both provide the political support for developing a climate adaptation plan, as well as develop targeted communications and outreach meant to build additional Citywide support and engage audiences that are somewhat apathetic. The relatively high level of support revealed by our research is creating the political will needed to motivate action at the municipal level. The partners listed above are currently working to develop a new position to oversee the development of the adaptation plan within the current City governance structure.

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