

# 04

## PLANNING NEIGHBOURHOOD RESILIENCE ACTION



Now that you have conducted your Neighbourhood Resilience Assessment, and had rich community discussions through your Neighbourhood Mapping activities, you should have a good idea of the biggest challenges and opportunities within your community.

The next step is to create a Neighbourhood Resilience Action Plan to address challenges and build on opportunities.

A Neighbourhood Resilience Action Plan is a proposed course of action to address shocks and stresses, and foster conditions of resilience within your community—such as social connection and caring, health and basic needs and local leadership. Your Neighbourhood Resilience Action Plan should elevate and align work already happening within your neighbourhood while also seeking to address gaps. Action Plans do not need to be long or complex—and in most cases a short, simple plan that is updated frequently is preferable to a long one.

This is your road map to resilience.

Building resilience is both time and relationship intensive. In addition to your working team, you will need to involve community members, and should try to leverage partnerships with other organizations and neighbourhoods to strengthen the fabric of your neighbourhood as you implement this plan.

While there is no one template or model for a Neighbourhood Resilience Action Plan, many neighbourhood action plans share these components:

- Neighbourhood Maps
- Neighbourhood Resilience Report Card
- Vision and Goals (Why we are doing this?)
- Actions and Deliverables (What will we do?)
- Process (How will we do this?)

### TOOLS AND TEMPLATES FOR MODULE 4

1. Neighbourhood Resilience Report Card (completed in Module 2)
2. Neighbourhood Map (completed in Module 3)
3. Neighbourhood Resilience Action Plan

- Timeline (When will we do this?)
- Evaluation (How we will know we are making a difference?)
- Partners (Who will we work with?)

The process to create your Action Plan has several steps:

1. Scope the Action Plan
2. Review your Neighbourhood Resilience Report Card
3. Inventory your Current Programs and Actions
4. Create your Resilient Neighbourhood Vision
5. Develop High-Level Goals
6. Identify your Actions
7. Refine your Plan
8. Implement your Plan

### STEP 1: SCOPE YOUR PLAN

Just like your Neighbourhood Resilience Assessment, your first step is to determine the scope of your Action Plan.

- **Internal focus:** Will your plan target only staff and service users of your organization?
- **Internal and immediate community focus:** Will your plan target all or just part of the neighbourhood or community?
- **Whole neighbourhood focus:** Will your plan target residents and workers in the neighbourhood as defined by municipal boundaries? Or will you select a smaller area more directly around your organization (e.g. a five block radius)?

While the overarching goal of the Resilient Neighbourhoods Program is to build resilience at the neighbourhood scale, many organizations may first choose to build internal, organizational resilience. Choose the scale that works best for your organization and working team. This is entirely up to you. Building resilience in *any* capacity is extremely valuable on a day-to-day basis—and when shocks and stresses occur.

You will also need to determine who will create the Action Plan, and who will be charged with implementing actions. Some organizations choose to have community members participate directly in Action Planning; others choose to use their initial resilience planning team (developed in Module 1 of this toolkit) to start and validate the actions with community once they are drafted.

When you have determined the scope of the plan, organize a Neighbourhood Resilience Action Planning Workshop. Decide on a group size that is manageable for you and your organization—this may mean you choose to only work with your initial team.

## STEP 2: REVIEW THE NEIGHBOURHOOD RESILIENCE REPORT CARD

At the end of conducting your Neighbourhood Resilience Assessment, you created a Report Card for your neighbourhood. This summarizes the primary shocks and stresses that your community is concerned about, and the overall strengths and weaknesses of your neighbourhood.

Review these as a group and post the summary where everyone can see it and refer to it. Write the top 3 shocks and top 3 stresses on the Neighbourhood Resilience Action Planning Template in the appendix.

## STEP 3: CREATE A VISION

A vision statement is the long-term, ideal state of resilience that you want your neighbourhood to achieve. Your Neighbourhood Resilience Vision is a shared idea of success if you achieve all of your resilience goals and objectives. It is a “blue sky” statement, future-facing, clear, concise and inspiring.

### EXAMPLES OF VISION STATEMENTS:

- A neighbourhood where all people feel secure, able to transform to support the community during a disaster.
- A caring, sharing and accessible neighbourhood where everyone can feel valued.
- A neighbourhood that exemplifies a culture of resilience, which is supported by diverse, inclusive and collaborative partnerships.

There is no exact science to creating a vision, but these guiding questions can help:

- What are the assets of your neighbourhood/community?
- What about your neighbourhood/community makes you feel proud?
- Describe a time that you felt happy, healthy, supported and included in your neighbourhood—what were the conditions that enabled that to happen?
- In the event of a disaster, what would you most want to preserve or reconstruct in your neighbourhood/community?
- The word emergency comes from the Latin, “emergere” which means to “arise out or up”. If a disaster struck your neighbourhood/community tomorrow, what would you like to emerge from it?

**\*TIP:** Have participants write out their answers to these questions from three separate perspectives: 1) for themselves as an individual, 2) for the organization, and 3) for the neighbourhood/community as a whole. Encourage participants to capture these on three separate post-it notes and compare.

**\*TIP:** Imagining the distant future is challenging, but being able to anticipate and plan for what may happen is an important part of resilience. We suggest playing the free, open-source game, **The Thing from the Future** to think about what the future may hold. Play a few rounds of this game using positive cards such as “Grow” or “Transform”.

Gather everyone’s ideas and pick out key words and themes. Next, work together to turn these words and themes into a statement—a collective vision for your resilient neighbourhood. Do not spend too much time wordsmithing. Your vision statement does not need to be perfect, and can be revisited. The most important part is capturing what is unique about your neighbourhood—and what you want to achieve through this process. Write your vision statement on the Neighbourhood Resilience Action Planning Template in the appendix.

### STEP 5: DEVELOPING HIGH-LEVEL GOALS

Once you have created a shared vision, decide on a number of broad but realistic outcomes you are trying to achieve through your overall plan. These are your goals, and should draw directly from your Neighbourhood Resilience Assessment Report Card and reflect the need to continue building on strengths, address weaknesses and consider top shocks and stresses.

You may use the following Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats Table to help determine your goals.

<b>STRENGTHS</b>	Unique skills, knowledge, assets, resources and capacities that you can draw on from within your organization to implement your Action Plan.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What are the greatest strengths identified in your Report Card?</li> <li>2. What do you do well?</li> <li>3. What experience, knowledge and skills do you have?</li> <li>4. What unique resources can you draw on?</li> <li>5. What do others see as our strengths?</li> </ol>
<b>WEAKNESSES</b>	Areas for improvement that you may choose to address or change within our organization.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What was the greatest weakness identified in your Report Card?</li> <li>2. What can you improve?</li> <li>3. Where do you have few resources?</li> <li>4. What do others see as your weaknesses?</li> </ol>
<b>OPPORTUNITIES</b>	Partnerships, capacities, assets, skills and resources that you can leverage to implement your actions.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What resilience goals could align with our organization’s overall vision, mission and goals?</li> <li>2. What positive factors are currently driving your community’s resilience?</li> <li>3. What good opportunities are open to us?</li> <li>4. What trends could you take advantage of?</li> </ol>
<b>THREATS</b>	Negative events, forces or gaps in resources that may inhibit your ability to implement your actions.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What negative factors are currently impacting our community’s resilience?</li> <li>2. What trends could stand in the way of your success?</li> <li>3. What lessons can be drawn from other neighbourhoods?</li> <li>4. How do your weaknesses expose you to threats?</li> </ol>

Some examples of broad goals are:

- Educate and motivate community members on how to lower their carbon footprints.
- Improve organizational emergency preparedness.
- Expand after school programs for youth.
- Increase local food security.

#### **STEP 4: ORGANIZATION INVENTORY**

Brainstorm all of the initiatives, programs and projects your organization is already working on, or supports on an ongoing basis. It is highly likely that all or many of these projects, programs and initiatives are already building resilience. List these initiatives in the Neighbourhood Resilience Action Planning Template.

#### **STEP 5: IDENTIFYING RESILIENCE ACTIONS**

While goals are “what” you want to achieve, actions are “how” you will achieve them. Consider both actions that are already underway through current initiatives, and actions that could fill gaps. Make sure to include 1-2 actions that can be achieved quickly to receive buy-in from the community and keep engagement high.

Brainstorm different actions on post-it notes, then categorize into the following groups:

- Actions you are already taking to reach your goals;
- Actions you are already taking but need to tweak in order to reach your goals;
- Actions you need to add entirely, or need to make significant changes to in order to reach your goals.

While you are doing this, the following questions may help with the categorization:

- Referring back to the organizational inventory you created earlier, which programs, projects or work is your organization already doing to reach your goals?
- Which of these programs or projects are the most successful, and how could you elevate these?
- Which of these programs or projects are moderately successful and how could you build and support them to do more?
- Where are the gaps in your programs and projects that could be addressed over the short, medium and long-term to meet your goals?
- Which of these actions will have the most significant impact?
- Which of these actions have benefits across more than one shock/stress?
- Do we have the community leaders (staff, volunteers, residents or other) needed to complete actions?

- Are there any timing considerations for these actions?
- Do we have actions that address both our top shocks and top stresses?
- Do we have actions that amplify our greatest strengths and support our weaknesses?

Some examples of actions are:

- Hosting a personal and family emergency preparedness workshop for staff.
- Conducting a Disaster Support Hub exercise.
- Developing a business continuity plan for your organization.
- Creating a food garden in front of your facility.
- Planting trees in unused spaces on your property.
- Installing solar panels or a rain barrel at your facility.
- Hosting a skill-share event for community members.

**Then, determine the overall timeframe for implementing your Action Plan.** Write your final actions and accompanying logistical information under the appropriate categories in the Neighbourhood Resilience Action Planning Template in the appendix. You may add additional rows as needed.

If you find you have too many actions and need to refine them, consider using these guiding questions:

- Which of these actions are already resourced?
- Which of these actions can we start now?
- What can we realistically accomplish?
- Do we have priority and secondary actions, and if so, what are they?
- What criteria should guide our decision making?
- Who benefits from this work?
- Who is impacted by this work?
- How will we ensure equity and inclusion are built through our actions?
- What actions clearly align with what we are already doing or planning?
- How could you leverage existing resources or initiatives already under way?
- What are the essential first steps?
- How should these be communicated to stakeholders and the community?
- Who do you need to consult with to get permission, resources, etc.?

## **STEP 6: VALIDATE THE PLAN**

Now that you have created your Neighbourhood Resilience Action Plan with a small group of people, it is important to validate that plan with community members to ensure that you are on the right track.

This helps to build buy-in with the community and to develop relationships with community champions. You may choose to engage your organization or

community in specific ways to validate the plan. Some suggestions include:

1. **Interviews:** Have conversations or conduct semi-structured interviews with specific people (front-line workers and leaders at your organization or community leaders who represent a particular group's perspective).
2. **Community conversations:** Solicit feedback during community events. Draft a set of questions that can be answered in an informal setting that extract the goals and perspectives of community members' aspirations for improved resilience.
3. **Workshop discussions:** If resources permit, bringing staff or the community together for a workshop allows for more structured visioning, goal-setting, and action-planning activities.

Once you have received this feedback, refine your Action Plan as necessary.

### STEP 7: IMPLEMENT ACTION PLAN

Implementing actions is the critical part of this process: it is the time at which analysis, visioning and planning takes shape in the real world. Implementation can also be the point in the process which differentiates the communities that are successful from those that are not. Resilient communities work together to solve problems. Ensure that appropriate resources have been allotted to carry out priority actions. Schedule regular (monthly or quarterly) progress reports on actions.

### STEP 8: MONITOR AND RE-ASSESS

Monitor your progress as actions are being implemented or completed. Collect notes on what is working and what is not—resilient communities are ones that learn from their mistakes and adapt. You may also choose to:

- Revise or remove any actions that are found to be unachievable;
- Postpone actions that may improve when conditions are more favourable;
- Identify new actions that better address objectives.

At a pre-determined point in time (e.g., 1 year) when resilience-building actions have been implemented, return to your Neighbourhood Resilience Assessment and conduct it again. The assessment will show you what progress has been made and where, and kick-start the creation of your next Action Plan.

This continued assessment, updating and analysis is essential for effective resilience.

## TOOLS AND TEMPLATES FOR MODULE 4

