

Education and Outreach: Informing the Public of Flood Risk

WHY EDUCATE?

Education about flood preparedness and local flood risk is a crucial step in increasing community resilience. Education and outreach efforts can focus internally, with staff and volunteers, and externally with the public. Goals of education efforts might include:

Encouraging a culture of preparedness. Floods are extremely stressful, costly, and can happen anywhere. Raising awareness of actions community members can take before and during a flood such as having a disaster plan, knowing evacuation routes, and in some cases, purchasing flood insurance, can reduce losses and ease tension after a flood.

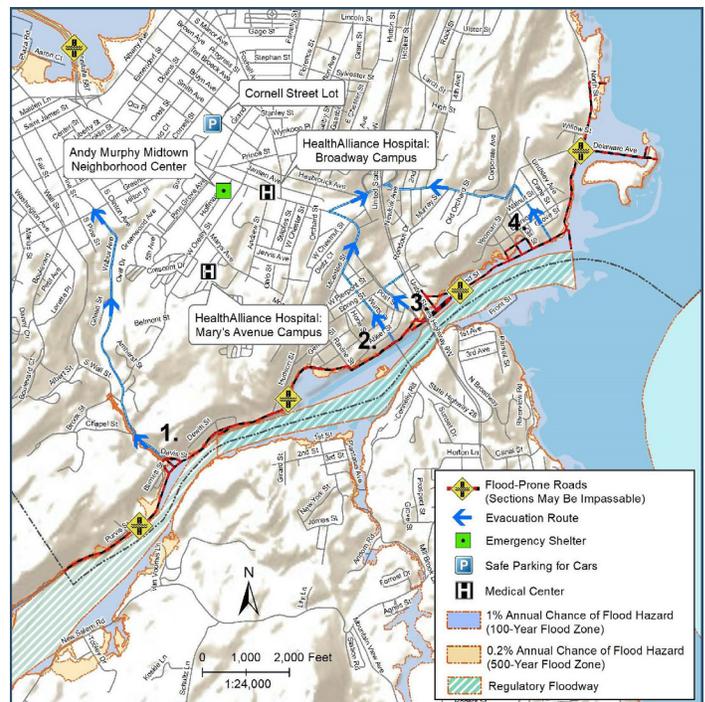
Protecting people, property, and the environment. If low-lying land floods now, it will likely flood more frequently in the future. When this is communicated to residents and developers, more informed decisions can be made that can help reduce flood losses. Raise awareness of the Special Flood Hazard Area and other locations of known flooding using maps, photos, and community voices. Raise awareness of mitigation actions individuals can take on their property.

Avoiding wasted time and money. When permissible options are communicated and discussed early in the construction process for new development, less time and money can be spent on preparing, reviewing, and approving applications. Ensure relevant staff and volunteers are informed on current and projected flood risk, floodplain management, and flood damage prevention laws.

Cultivating community buy-in. Community buy-in is essential for the often costly and time consuming effort to increase community resilience and plan for a changing climate. Identify community champions to participate in planning efforts and keep the public informed and engaged throughout.

Earn Points in Climate Smart Communities (CSC) and the Community Rating System (CRS)

Educating community members and establishing public communication campaigns around flooding can earn points in the New York State's Climate Smart Communities Program (Pledge Element 9, Inform and Inspire the Public) and the Community Rating System (300 Series, Public Information). More points in CSC can lead to Bronze or Silver Certification and can translate to higher scores in Climate Smart Communities grant applications, and more points in CRS can qualify communities for reductions in their NFIP insurance rates.



Several Hudson Valley communities have created Flood Preparedness Guides that include mapped flood zones, evacuation routes, local resources, and tips for what to do before, during, and after a flood. An excerpt from The City of Kingston's guide is pictured https://kingston-ny.gov/filestorage/8463/13525/City_of_Kingston_FloodGuide_FINAL.pdf

