MODULE 5

HEAT RISK:
How to Take Action in Your Community

SESSION DURATION:
20-25 MINUTES

SLIDE 1: Heat Risk: How to Take Action in Your Community

PURPOSE: To introduce Module 5, which is focused on identifying ways in which community design can influence heat risk as well as steps for taking action around heat risk (or for influencing community design). Presenters may have their own experience taking action around different topics in their communities and so are encouraged to present their own steps for taking action around heat risk if more appropriate.

KEY TALKING POINTS:

1. This module is designed to help you understand how community design can influence heat risk, as well as how community design can be changed to reduce heat risk.
2. During this module, we'll be working together to think about ways to take action around heat risk in our communities.

KEY TALKING POINTS

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SLIDE 2: Objectives

PURPOSE: To introduce the objectives for Module 5 and to provide audiences members with an overview of what they will learn. This is the Module 5 roadmap.

KEY TALKING POINTS:

1. This module has three objectives designed to help you learn how to take action around heat risk in your community.
2. The three objectives are:
   a. To understand how community design can reduce heat risk
   b. To understand how changes in community design can influence heat risk
   c. To think about ways to take action around heat risk in your community
3. During this module, we will talk about each of these topics in detail.

KEY TALKING POINTS

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SLIDE 3: Activity

PURPOSE: This activity is designed to create a break in the presentation and to help audiences start thinking critically about how community design can influence heat risk. Note that this slide provides the instructions for the activity, which involves use of the next two slides. Presenters may choose to ask audiences only to discuss the activity in small groups or also to share what they discussed with the broader audience. Note that this activity is optional. Presenters are also encouraged to create their own questions as part of this activity (or their own activities at other points in the presentation) that they know will resonate strongly with their audiences. Note that this is also an opportunity to talk with audiences about the "urban heat island effect," more information on which can be found below.

KEY TALKING POINTS:

1. Let's pause for a moment.
2. Find a partner or break into small groups.
3. We'll show you a slide of an outdoor scene in a community.
4. Discuss:
   a. How do you think the current design of that community influences heat risk?
   b. How do you think the current design of that community could be changed to reduce heat risk?

KEY TALKING POINTS

ADDITIONAL (OPTIONAL) INFORMATION:

What is the urban heat island effect? An "urban heat island" occurs when a city experiences much warmer temperatures than nearby rural areas because of how it is built. Specifically, a city with a lot of pavement, buildings, and other surfaces that absorb and retain heat will typically experience much warmer temperatures. Energy costs, air pollution levels, and incidents of heat illnesses and mortality can all be higher in urban heat islands.

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SLIDE 4: How Does the Design of this Community Influence Heat Risk?

PURPOSE: To provide audiences with an outdoor scene in a community that lacks heat-reducing (or "cool" design) features, to inform the small group discussion (see previous slide). Note that this particular community image may or may not reflect the communities of audience members, and that it was created specifically for instructional purposes.

KEY TALKING POINTS:

1. Here's the slide of an outdoor scene in a community.
2. Remember, we are asking you to discuss:
   a. How do you think the current design of that community influences heat risk?
   b. How do you think the current design of that community could be changed to reduce heat risk?
3. Would anyone like to share their ideas with the group?

KEY TALKING POINTS

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SLIDE 5: Changing Community Design to Reduce Heat Risk

PURPOSE: To provide audiences with an outdoor scene in a community that has heat-reducing (or "cool" design) features. Presenters are encouraged to allow audience members to explore which of their own ideas for reducing heat can be found in the slide and/or to discuss each of the features listed.

KEY TALKING POINTS:

1. Here's a slide of that same outdoor scene with heat-reducing (or "cool" design) features.
2. Those features include:
   a. Public transportation options (e.g., to travel to parks or cooling centers)
   b. Abundant tree canopy and green spaces (e.g., to provide shade and to cool air and surface temperatures by moving water from the ground into the atmosphere)
   c. Shaded bus stops (i.e., to provide shade while people wait for the bus)
   d. Access to public places with air-conditioning (e.g., cooling centers)
   e. Cool roofs (i.e., roofs that are designed to reflect sunlight)
   f. Limited pavement (i.e., because pavement radiates heat)
   g. Drinking fountains (i.e., so that people can hydrate and cool down)
   h. Multiple water features such as public pools (i.e., where people can recreate and cool down)
   i. Cool walls (i.e., walls that have an exterior coating that reflects sunlight)
   j. Abundant parks (i.e., that provide cool places to recreate and that cool air and surface temperatures by moving water from the ground into the atmosphere)
   k. Shaded playground (i.e., so that children can recreate in a cooler environment)
   l. Cool pavement (i.e., a type of pavement that reflects sunlight)
   m. Multiple water features such as splashpads (e.g., where children can recreate and cool down)

KEY TALKING POINTS

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SLIDE 6: Taking Action around Heat Risk: Why Community-level Solutions Matter

PURPOSE: To help audiences understand the benefits of engaging with other community members to take action around heat risk in their communities, for example when developing a community project. This slide is meant to build on the preceding discussion of how the design of a community can be changed to reduce heat risk and to serve as a backdrop for the ensuing discussion of ways to take action.

KEY TALKING POINTS:

1. There are different approaches for taking action around heat risk in a community, and we'll walk through a common set of steps in just a moment. First, however, we want to emphasize why community-level solutions matter.

2. One reason that community-level solutions matter is that they involve collective effort. Simply put, many people acting together to reduce heat risk in their community is more powerful than one person acting alone.

3. Another reason that community-level solutions matter is that they engage residents to find solutions. This, in turn, helps to:
   a. Empower community members (because finding one's own solutions is empowering)
   b. Create ownership of the solution and buy-in among community members
   c. Support community cohesion, which builds community resilience. Community resilience is often defined as the ability of a community to use available resources to respond to, withstand, and recover from adverse events (e.g., natural disasters, pandemics), as well as to adapt to changing circumstances.

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SLIDE 7: Taking Action around Heat Risk: Developing Community Projects

PURPOSE: To help audiences understand that it is possible to take action around heat risk in a community, for example through community development projects focused on achieving a "cool" design.

KEY TALKING POINTS:

1. There are different ways to take action around heat risk in a community, for example through community projects. Here we'll share a common set of steps for community action planning. It's important to note that this is not the only approach, nor is it necessarily the best approach for your community.
2. Action steps:
   a. Connect with interested residents and potential partners
   b. Identify needs and opportunities
   c. Prioritize the needs and opportunities identified
   d. Create an action plan
   e. Take action
3. We'll discuss each of these steps in more detail.

KEY TALKING POINTS

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SLIDE 8: STEP 1: Connect with Interested Residents & Potential Partners

PURPOSE: To introduce audiences to the first step in the sample approach: connecting with interested residents and potential partners.

KEY TALKING POINTS:

1. An important first step in developing a community project is to connect with interested residents and potential partners and to identify how they can support taking action, for example by discussing:
   a. What are their interests around heat risk and community design?
   b. What are their skills and expertise?
   c. What is their availability?

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SLIDE 9: STEP 2: Identify Needs & Opportunities

PURPOSE: To introduce audiences to the second step in the sample approach: identifying needs and opportunities.

KEY TALKING POINTS:

1. An important second step in developing a community project is to work collaboratively to identify needs and opportunities, for example:
   a. Assess (e.g., using a neighborhood audit sheet) the presence/absence of "cool" design features in your community.
      i. This will allow you to establish need.
   b. Identify community design initiatives that may be planned or underway and determine whether they include "cool" design features.
      i. This will allow you to know whether "cool" design features may be coming, and if not, what to discuss with decision-makers.
   c. Identify potential new projects that could include "cool" design features.
      i. This will allow you to know what new projects to discuss with decision-makers.
   d. Identify key decision-makers that drive design initiatives in your community (e.g., county/local government, neighborhood committees, planning boards, etc.).
      i. This will allow you to know who to connect with when it's time to take action.

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SLIDE 10: STEP 3: Prioritize the Needs & Opportunities Identified

PURPOSE: To introduce audiences to the third step in the sample approach: prioritizing the needs and opportunities identified.

KEY TALKING POINTS:

1. Once you have identified needs and opportunities, the next step is to work collaboratively to prioritize them, for example by discussing:
   a. What "cool features" would most benefit the community?
   b. Would most residents support the change?
   c. Who (if anyone) might be opposed to the change, and why?
   d. What costs would be associated with making the change?

KEY TALKING POINTS

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SLIDE 11: STEP 4: Create an Action Plan

PURPOSE: To introduce audiences to the fourth step in the sample approach: creating an action plan.

KEY TALKING POINTS:

1. Once you have prioritized the needs and opportunities identified, the next step is to create an action plan for addressing them.

   a. Specifically, use the needs and opportunities you identified, as well as what you know about heat risk, to develop your plan and/or key messages to share with decision makers, for example:

      i. Define what at-risk groups are in your community

      ii. Explain what "cool" design features are needed in your community and why

      iii. Propose how "cool" design features could be included in current and/or planned community design initiatives

      iv. Suggest what potential new projects could include "cool" design features

KEY TALKING POINTS

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SLIDE 12: STEP 5: Take Action!

PURPOSE: To introduce audiences to the fifth and final step in the sample approach: taking action.

KEY TALKING POINTS:

1. Once you have created a plan, the next step is to take action. For example, you can:
   a. Meet with county/local planners and other decision makers to present your action plan.
   b. Convey support for your action plan from fellow residents and interested partners.
   c. Remember, it may take a while to be heard and to get results, so be persistent and patient. Also, remember to report back (e.g., about any progress or delays) to fellow residents and interested partners to keep them engaged.

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SLIDE 13: Activity

PURPOSE: This activity is design to help audience members think critically about how to take action around heat risk specifically in *their* communities. Presenters may choose to ask audience members only to discuss the activity in small groups or also to share what they discussed with the broader audience. Note that this activity is optional. Presenters are also encouraged to create their own questions as part of this activity (or their own activities at other points in the presentation) that they know will resonate strongly with their audiences.

KEY TALKING POINTS:

1. Find a partner or break into small groups.
2. Think of a "cool" design feature that would benefit your communities.
3. Brainstorm the steps you would take to advocate for the inclusion of that "cool" design feature in your communities.
4. Would anyone like to share their ideas with the group?

KEY TALKING POINTS

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SLIDE 14: Summary

PURPOSE: To reinforce the objectives of this module by highlighting the key takeaways.

KEY TALKING POINTS:

1. There are many ways that community design can influence heat risk.
2. However, there are also many ways that community design can be changed to reduce heat risk.
3. It's possible to take action around heat risk in your community to achieve a "cool" design.

KEY TALKING POINTS

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SLIDES 15–17: Module 5 Templates

PURPOSE: These Module 5 templates are included so that presenters can add additional information in the presentation that they consider important for audiences to know. If a presenter needs more templates, they can simply copy those provided here.

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