

To	Marchell Adams-David, City Manager
Thru	Michael Moore, Assistant City Manager
From	Megan Anderson, Sustainability Officer
Department	Office of Sustainability
Date	September 16, 2025
Subject	Grant Award – Duke Energy Foundation – Helping Emergency Response Organizations (HERO) Grant

Summary

This memo provides City Council with an update on the Office of Sustainability’s urban heat initiatives, a grant awarded by Duke Energy Foundation that will support continued resilience and urban heat work, and further information about associated work with City of Raleigh departments and community partners.

Below are further details about the Heat Hazard Mitigation Pilot and the Office of Sustainability’s urban heat initiatives.

Heat Hazard Mitigation Pilot funded by Duke Energy Foundation

The Duke Energy Foundation: Helping Emergency Response Organizations (HERO) grant program is designed to help boost community readiness and resilience. This grant builds on and supports the Office of Sustainability’s support of resiliency projects that prepare communities for and to mitigate against the impacts of climate change and supports the implementation of Raleigh’s Community Climate Action Plan (CCAP).

The grant will support ongoing efforts by Sustainability and our partners to:

- pilot a heat action plan informed by the needs of communities most vulnerable to extreme heat effects
- build sustainable programming through public-private partnerships to address extreme heat events
- help residents make informed decisions to reduce their vulnerability to environmental hazards

The result of the exercise will see heightened collaboration across agencies, sectors, and communities in local disaster preparedness and response to extreme heat by collecting experience, knowledge, and data to ensure response strategies meet the needs of

communities and residents at highest risk. Urban heat island effects pose a risk to future resilience of infrastructure, development, and residents' public safety. An effective emergency response strategy will require collaboration across agencies, sectors, and communities.

Sustainability, with cross-departmental collaboration and funding from the Duke Energy Foundation's HERO 2025 grant cycle, intends to launch a planning effort by convening an interdisciplinary group of community stakeholders, municipal agencies, community-based organization partners, and nonprofits focused on recovery and resiliency to develop a coordinated response to extreme heat events, lay the groundwork for an official heat action plan for Raleigh and the Triangle, and develop education and outreach materials to prepare residents for dealing with heat and safety risk.

Through a heat tabletop exercise convening regional partners, community-based organizations, utility providers, and environmental resilience champions, participants will assess the health and environmental crisis caused by extreme heat. They will develop a shared understanding of community needs during extreme heat events and collaborate to identify coordinated response, recovery, and resilience strategies to implement for the betterment of all who live, work, or visit Raleigh.

The City of Raleigh is a recurring recipient of the Foundation's Helping Emergency Response Organizations (HERO) grant program. Raleigh Fire Department's Division of Emergency Management was awarded funds in 2024 to purchase National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) weather radios to provide residents with radios that give real-time alerts for severe weather. The City continues to build on our collaborative efforts to reduce residents' vulnerability to environmental hazards and build positive social impacts.

The grant will support ongoing efforts by Sustainability and our partners to pilot a heat action plan informed by the needs of communities most vulnerable to extreme heat effects; build sustainable programming through public-private partnerships to address extreme heat events; and help residents make informed decisions to reduce their vulnerability to environmental hazards.

Supporting the Health and Well-being of Raleigh Residents

In 2024, Raleigh, N.C. recorded 10 days over 100 degrees. July of 2025 set a new record becoming the hottest month recorded to date. With Raleigh's continued population and infrastructure growth, addressing the effects of extreme urban heat will be an increasingly critical strategy for the Office of Sustainability and our partnerships with City departments and community organizations. The City continues to build out our urban heat mitigation initiatives to both build community resilience to future impacts while also protecting the community from more immediate daily impacts.

Sustainability works closely with our partners to implement solutions that reduce the harmful effects of extreme heat, educate our residents to heat hazards so they feel

empowered to be prepared to adapt to more high heat days, and promote investment in resilient city infrastructure and services designed to build long-term resilience to extreme heat and other risks posed by climate change.

As identified in Raleigh's Community Climate Action Plan (CCAP), urban heat and flooding are Raleigh's top climate impacts, and these issues are further exacerbated by several other social, health, economic and other outcomes for Raleigh residents. Raleigh's CCAP was one of the first climate plans in the country to lead with not only greenhouse gas reductions, but to promote social and economic advancement and build community resilience to the impacts of climate change. The Office of Sustainability is working across the City and community to create foundational opportunities, to reduce barriers, and to improve the quality of life for our residents.

In addition, the City of Raleigh FY21-25 Strategic Plan had a specific initiative focused on urban heat. The City Council recently adopted FY26-29 Strategic Plan which also includes a focus on building environmental resilience by taking a holistic approach and empowering the local community to take action and direct targeted resources to communities most at risk of extreme heat, flooding, and environmental hazards.