

CLIMATE, URBANIZATION

8 Ways NYC Can Help Vulnerable Communities Survive Summer Heat

BY JENNY BOCK AND SONAL JESSEL | SEPTEMBER 27, 2021

[Comments](#)

With contributions by Robbie M. Parks, Jacqueline Klapp and Patel Srivastava

As extreme heat becomes an increasingly frequent threat, it is critical the City of New York take bolder action to ensure frontline communities stay safe and cool during the summer heat season. With the more frequent occurrence of global crises like the COVID-19 pandemic and climate change-induced extreme weather events, the City must prioritize addressing the cascading health risks these crises pose for New York City's most vulnerable populations.

We are part of a team that recently found that in the summer of 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic and extreme heat combined to exacerbate health risks for low-income communities of color. Our results have just been published in the *Journal of Extreme Events*, and our team is made up of researchers from the Earth Institute at Columbia University and experts from the environmental justice group WE ACT. Below, we share some of our findings and suggestions for how the City can better protect vulnerable communities during the hot weather to come.

COVID, Inequality, and Extreme Heat: A Deadly Combination

Extreme heat is the **number one weather-related killer** in the United States and New York City. According to a 2016 study, an average of **130 New Yorkers die from heat-related causes** every year. The urban heat island effect, where urban environments experience higher surface and air temperatures than rural and suburban areas, exacerbates the impacts of extreme heat events and makes people in cities such as

is, please comment.



Update collection and Analysis of Heat Health data

New York

In line with what community groups have asked for, the city should update the heat-related mortality data it uses and expand the indicators it uses to measure heat-related mortality and heat vulnerability.

Recording heat relat

Moderate the urban h

Combating climate cr

Help vulnerable comm

9 INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE



11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES



13 CLIMATE ACTION

