**Recruitment Guide: Core Team**

## [Purpose](#_[Name_of_Chapter)

To identify and invite five to ten people to be on the core team. They might be community leaders or come from government agencies, universities, and non-profit organizations. The core team will lead ERB activities and make decisions.

*Note: In some instances, you may already be part of a team that has been assigned to a specific project. It could still be valuable to consider whether there are additional people to invite who would bring valuable expertise and representation of local constituencies to the team.*

## What you will need

1. Contact information for potential team members.
2. Invitation email template (below)

**What does the core team do?**

They work together to:

* Set goals for using ERB
* Decide which activities to do in the ERB tool
* Collaborate with local partners and liaison with public, private, and civic groups
* Carry out outreach and engagement
* Recruit community participants for workshops
* Prepare for workshops
* Lead workshop activities
* Assess hazards, equity, and resilient systems
* Foster the transition from resilience planning to implementation and monitoring

## Who should be on the core team?

The team should look like the community and have representation from government agencies, private and non-profit organizations, informal leaders, and residents. You couldconsider:

* Skills and expertise
  + Facilitation, geographic information systems (GIS), floodplain management, communications, urban planning, climate, community organizing, project implementation
* Demographic composition of the area
* How the city and county agencies are organized
* Who is working on related topics
  + Food security, watershed management, emergency response, affordable housing, land use planning, environmental justice
* Who has insights into and connections with various local constituencies
* Who works well on teams
* Who has time to be an active contributor

## How large should the core team be?

There are tradeoffs associated with having a smaller or larger group size. Having a larger core team allows you to have greater representation across groups. However, it may be more feasible to manage and coordinate the logistics of a smaller core team. You should consider these tradeoffs when determining the size of the core team.

## Where might I find prospective team members?

* City or county departments
  + Public works, parks, land use, emergency management, social services, public health, housing, environment, library
* Formal and informal local leaders
  + Faith leaders, volunteer organizations, school board, museum director, county council member, university researchers
* Non-profits and community-based organizations
  + Neighborhood association, parent-teacher organization, senior citizens recreation center, youth club, Rotary, 4-H

# **How long will it take to put a team together?**

It could range from a few days to weeks, depending on

* Your available time—and theirs
* Existing relationships with community partners
* If there is a specific mandate that requires particular organizations’ participation
* If there is already an adaptation, hazard mitigation, or other plan in place

# **How should I do outreach and recruitment?**

* What have you and others found works best for different constituencies?
  + Call, text, email
  + Attend an organization’s meeting to request they send a representative
  + Work with tribal government
* What is culturally appropriate?
* Are there protocols you need to follow?

## How can I work to achieve equity and inclusion on the core team?

* Make sure all core team members are adequately compensated for their time and expertise.

It could be a problem if some team members are being paid by their organization to do the work of the core team, but others are expected to volunteer for free. If this is the case, look for funding to compensate everyone fairly.

* Be aware of and try to avoid engagement fatigue.

It might be the case that despite your best efforts to recruit team members from underrepresented parts of the community, no one from these groups wants to join the core team. It could be that they have ‘engagement fatigue.’ This comes when individuals are subjected to multiple attempts to solicit their participation for research or for decision-making without seeing any benefits to their neighborhood or social group. Ways to avoid this include fair compensation, managing expectations for the process, and trying to ensure that ERB activities provide immediate as well as long-term benefits.

* Address team power dynamics

See suggestions on the core team kickoff page and section of the project plan template for how to address power dynamics within the team, to ensure everyone has a voice in team decisions and that teamwork is distributed evenly.

# **Tracking sheet for outreach to potential members**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Name of potential member** | **Constituency/ Organization** | **Email or Phone** | **Response** |
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |

# **Sample invitation letter**

Dear [name],

I/we are reaching out to you to invite you to participate in a new initiative to improve the resilience and equity of our community. Because of your [include reason for inviting this person, e.g., their experience with a particular issue, their leadership in an organization, etc.] I/we are inviting you to be part of a small core team of people that will lead a process to identify key issues of concern and actions that can be taken to address them [note: you may be more specific about specific issues of concern you are trying to address and products that will be developed]. I/We are committed to making sure the process is inclusive, equitable, and transparent, and we would greatly appreciate your participation!

Your involvement would mean participating in planning meetings [give time frame, e.g., every other week] beginning [month] and continuing through [month]. We will be planning a series of workshops to engage the broader community, using materials and activities in the EPA Equitable Resilience Builder tool (<http://epa.gov/emergency-response-research/erb>). The Equitable Resilience Builder (ERB) supports communities in strengthening resilience to disasters and climate change, with a focus on equity. It engages users in a guided process to inclusively assess local hazards, equity, and resilience of built, natural, and social environment systems; then uses the results to collaboratively prioritize actions to build community resilience in an equitable way. The workshop activities include identifying community connections, storytelling, participatory mapping, indicators, and strategy planning. Local knowledge and expertise is a critical part of key part of the process and that is why we are hoping you will help us to lead this effort.

I/We hope that this process will result in a stronger network of community organizations and agencies to share information and resources, a set of data and information that will be used to measure change, and a set of actions and next steps for building resilience in an equitable way.

If you have any questions, please don’t hesitate to contact me/us. I/we look forward to hearing from you and working with you on this effort!

# **What to do next**

After you have recruited team members, the core team can meet to

* Have a kickoff meeting to discuss how the group will work together
* Do a team storytelling exercise
* Set initial goals for using ERB
* Review ERB menu of activities and select activities to do
* Complete their project plan

Go back to the ERB Tool to the next page in this section, the Core Team Kickoff.