

## City of Milwaukee 2020-2025 HUD Consolidated Plan COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY



The Urban Economic Development Association of Wisconsin, Inc. (UEDA) led a project team of staff and four consultants who worked with CDGA staff and community-based organizations to implement the community engagement activities for the Plan.

### April-May 2024: Planning & Community Input Design

- Project team worked with NSP Community Organizers to develop the community survey, outreach and promotional strategies, and plan for community engagement.
- We identified outreach events, meetings, and groups to connect with to both promote the survey and talk about community needs.

### June-November 2024: Community Input & Data Collection

- Tabled at events such as Sixteenth Street Community Health Center Bike Day, Juneteenth Festival, Bronzeville Cultural & Arts Festival, Silver City International Festival, and other neighborhood resource fairs.
- Promoted the community survey via in-person events, NSP organizer door-knocks, social media, email newsletters, etc.
- Hosted focus groups on Youth Services, Employment & Economic Development, Housing Development, General Housing, Safety/Organizing.
- Attended meetings with the Milwaukee Reentry Council, BID/NID Council, Milwaukee Continuum of Care, Milwaukee Food Council, Milwaukee Water Council, Take Root Milwaukee, Safe & Sound Block Captains, Rooted & Rising Washington Park Residents, and Ethnic & Diverse Business Coalition.
- Closed Community Survey and compiled results from both the survey and focus groups. Began reviewing data sources needed for Plan sections and preparing the draft.

### November 2024-April 2025: Data Review, Analysis & Drafting

- Worked on compiling various data sources, and reviewing IDIS template to identify quantitative data provided by HUD and other sources needed.
- Identified data needed from others, such as the Continuum of Care, Department of City Development, Housing Authority of the City of Milwaukee and made requests.
- Hosted listening sessions with service providers that work with groups of people identified as having special needs in the Plan.
- Reviewed other reports and data sources that speak to the key areas of the plan, such as other City or regional plans related to housing and economic development.

### April-July 2025: Finish Plan, Public Comment & Submission

- Finish draft ConPlan for initial review by CDGA.
- Prepare Plan and slide deck / overview for public comment process. Attend and host public meetings as needed.
- Finalize Neighborhood Revitalization Strategy Area (NRSA) plans for North and South Side (to be submitted with the Plan to HUD).



## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

- Worked with 19 NSP Community Organizers to develop the community survey, promotion, and outreach strategies.
- Produced Promotion kit that included materials in English & Spanish.
  - About Con Plan slide deck
  - Palm card
  - Flier (2 sizes)
  - Social media images
  - QR codes
  - Display poster
  - Focus Group slide deck
  - Focus Group surveys
- Tabled at 12 community events, reaching 405+ people with survey information.
- Sent Consolidated Plan survey information to all Common Council members, provided materials to those that requested.
- Hosted or presented at 13 focus groups and outreach meetings, which included 278 participants.
- Community survey resulted in 1,080 responses from residents.
- Held 8 small group listening sessions with service providers for special needs groups, 34 participants.
- When the Plan is posted for Public Comment, in-person and virtual sessions will be held for the public. At these sessions we will share key needs, opportunities, and strategies in the 2025-2029 Consolidated Plan.

## 2024 HUD CONSOLIDATED PLAN COMMUNITY SURVEY OVERVIEW



Community engagement started in late spring 2024 in partnership with the City of Milwaukee's Neighborhood Strategic Planning (NSP) area community organizers. The group helped design the survey and outreach strategies, which were launched in June 2024. Responses were collected through mid-October, utilizing our stakeholder network and in-person events and meetings.

The survey was designed to address two core areas of the Housing Concerns and Public Services Needs. It was available electronically and on paper in English and Spanish. Electronically, the survey could be taken in other languages via Google Translate and was promoted at in-person events, electronically in various networks, on social media, and through the community organizer network.

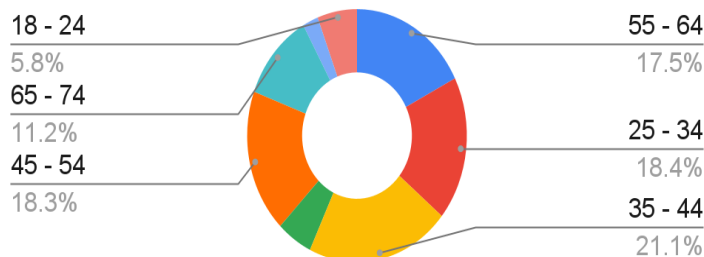
Respondents were asked to prioritize the issues that most affect their quality of life and housing concerns. They were also offered the option to add comments; questions related to housing discrimination, housing status, demographics, and qualitative questions about what people like about the city and what they thought needed to change.

**Total Responses: 1,080** | 26% digital, 74% paper

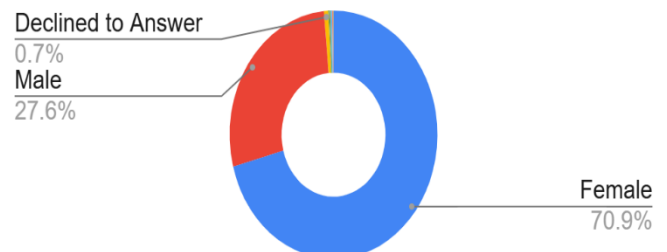
Outreach covered the CDBG Target Area well. The top 10 zip codes for responses are: 53206, 53216, 53208, 53209, 53210, 53218, 53212, 53215, 53205, 53204.

### DEMOGRAPHICS

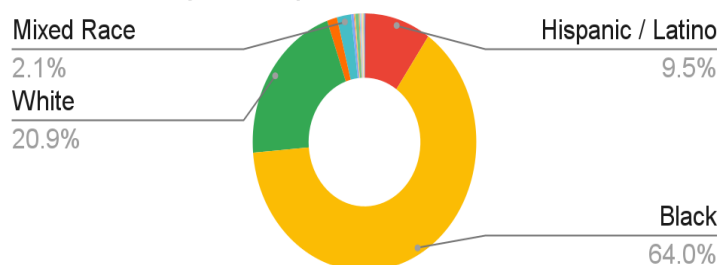
#### Age of Respondents



#### Gender of Respondents



#### Race/Ethnicity of Respondent



Survey demographics are more skewed towards the City's NSP areas than the city as a whole which are:

- Black 38.1%
- White 32.3%
- Hispanic or Latino 20.7%,
- Asian 4.8%
- American Indian and Alaska Native 0.4%
- Some other race: 0.3%
- Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander: 0.0%
- Female 52%, Male 48%

*American Community Survey 2019-2023 5-Year Estimate (provided by the City's Office of Equity & Inclusion)*

## COMMUNITY SURVEY RESULTS

What <b>housing concerns</b> are most important to you? (1,037 responses)	What <b>public service issues</b> most affect your quality of life? (1,044 responses)
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. 72% - Address homelessness</li> <li>2. 67% - Maintain &amp; increase affordable rental housing</li> <li>3. 66% - Increase homeownership</li> <li>4. 53% - Prevent evictions &amp; foreclosure</li> <li>5. 52% - Provide housing for special needs groups (Veterans, persons with HIV/AIDS, people with disabilities)</li> <li>6. 46% - Develop new housing</li> <li>7. 45% - Ensure quality housing (address conditions, reduce lead exposure)</li> <li>8. 2% - Maintain and increase affordable rental housing</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. 71% - Address crime &amp; safety</li> <li>2. 61% - Increase youth services</li> <li>3. 55% - Maintain &amp; improve streets &amp; sidewalks</li> <li>4. 48% - Provide training &amp; employment opportunities</li> <li>5. 47% - Increase access to healthy food</li> <li>6. 40% - Maintain &amp; improve recreational spaces</li> <li>7. 36% - Support local businesses</li> <li>8. 32% - Address environmental concerns</li> <li>9. 28% - Improve transportation options</li> <li>10. 18% - Encourage commercial development</li> </ol>

Along with the community survey, UEDA hosted or participated in focus groups and listening sessions to delve more deeply into the key issues in the Plan.

### 33 Events, Gatherings, and Presentations from June 2024-March 2025

- 15 community events, 405+ people
- 13 focus groups & outreach meetings, 278 people
- 8 listening sessions with special needs service providers, 34 people

The next few pages provide a summary of what we learned from residents and service providers in terms of the opportunities, assets, and challenges facing Milwaukee - as well as strategies to address them.

Participants had interesting and innovative ideas to leverage current, ongoing work to develop and maintain affordable housing opportunities for people and families but were also frank about the barriers they experience and challenges in the housing market.

One of the Housing Focus Groups ended their session with the following question:

### ***When it comes to housing in Milwaukee, what is most important for us to do next?***

- Continue to build coalitions that work to preserve and promote affordability.
- Advocate for good ideas and money/resources to implement them.
- Strive for transparency with government, other nonprofits, and residents.
- Support policy that cracks down on out-of-state investors.
- Determine who in charge will implement the changes needed.

# COMMUNITY FEEDBACK

The 2024 Community Survey included two questions to gauge how people view the assets and needs in the City of Milwaukee:

## What is great?

### 1. Cultural Diversity

Milwaukee's rich mix of cultures, ethnic festivals, and inclusive neighborhoods.

### 2. Strong Sense of Community

The city's community spirit, resilience, and how people come together to support one another.

### 3. Vibrant Public Events

The city's many festivals, concerts, parades, and community celebrations—especially in summer.

### 4. Access to Nature

Milwaukee's parks, lakefront, rivers, trails, and green spaces.

### 5. Small-City Feel with Big-City Benefits

Ease of getting around, close-knit neighborhoods, and access to amenities without the stress of larger metros.

### 6. Resources and Services

Numerous programs, nonprofits, and community based organizations provide valuable support in areas like housing, youth, food, and employment.

### 7. Opportunities for Growth

Education, job training, entrepreneurship, and support for small businesses foster opportunity.

### 8. Historic and Unique Character

Milwaukee's architecture, public art, neighborhood pride, and legacy of activism and creativity.

## What needs to change?

### 1. Address Crime and Safety

Urgent action on gun violence, youth crime, reckless driving, and public safety enforcement.

### 2. Improve Housing Affordability/Stability

More affordable rental and homeownership options, regulation of landlords and investors, and support for unhoused residents.

### 3. Invest in Youth and Education

Greater investment in youth programs, public schools (especially MPS), and life skills training to create positive alternatives to crime.

### 4. Repair Infrastructure and Cleanliness

Potholes, poor road conditions, neglected sidewalks, illegal dumping, and overall city maintenance.

### 5. Combat Segregation and Disparities

Racial and economic segregation, unequal access to resources, and neighborhood disinvestment.

### 6. Support Mental Health/Social Services

More accessible mental health care, addiction treatment, and wraparound support services.

### 7. Foster Government Accountability

Better leadership, transparent budgeting, and more equitable distribution of city services and resources.

### 8. Promote Economic Opportunity

Living-wage jobs, workforce development, small business support, and economic justice across all communities.

## Community-Based Focus Groups Feedback Summary

	Opportunities & Assets	Challenges & Areas for Improvement	Strategy Ideas
<b>Community Safety</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Strong sense of community and resilience</b> by residents and in Milwaukee neighborhoods.</li> <li>2. <b>Extensive network of programs, community partners, and organizers</b> that work with, and provide support to residents.</li> <li>3. Recent <b>initiatives that proactively work to address resident concerns</b>, such as Vision Zero and One MKE.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Top safety and crime issues are <b>reckless driving, gun violence, and youth crime</b>.</li> <li>2. <b>Public infrastructure needs</b> such as poor road conditions, neglected sidewalks, illegal dumping, public lighting, tree maintenance, etc.</li> <li>3. <b>Lack of care for vulnerable people with special needs</b> (i.e. housing, care/treatment, supportive services).</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Address crime and safety issues</b> to combat neighborhood disinvestment.</li> <li>2. <b>Invest in youth and education</b> to create positive alternatives to crime.</li> <li>3. <b>Repair infrastructure</b> and support efforts to <b>clean and improve neighborhoods</b> and public spaces.</li> <li>4. <b>Promote economic opportunities</b> (i.e. living-wage jobs, small business support).</li> </ol>
<b>Employment Services &amp; Economic Development</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Leverage local infrastructure and institutions</b> such as MATC, unions, training providers, etc. Focus on youth and trades.</li> <li>2. Expand <b>equitable economic development</b> by utilizing blighted buildings, vacant spaces, and neighborhood-based strategies (via BIDs, NIDs, TIFs) to create jobs, activate storefronts, etc.</li> <li>3. <b>Support workforce readiness and invest in existing partnerships</b> that address barriers and connect job seekers to meaningful, livable-wage jobs and careers.</li> <li>4. <b>Strengthen entrepreneurial ecosystems</b> to scale up support for small businesses.</li> <li>5. <b>Activate community spaces for engagement</b>, expanding use of public school buildings and nonprofit partners to create opportunities that engage youth and residents alike.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Employment barriers and legal system challenges</b> faced by job seekers such as criminal records, debt, driver's license suspensions, and limited expungement options.</li> <li>2. <b>Gaps in workforce alignment</b>, including a lack of mid-skill, livable-wage jobs and insufficient connections between employers and youth or justice-impacted individuals.</li> <li>3. <b>Systemic inequities and legacy issues</b> that impact access to employment (i.e. segregation, racism, gatekeeping) and exit of large employers, leaving employment gaps.</li> <li>4. <b>Lack of affordable child care and transportation barriers</b> that hinder job retention and employment stability.</li> <li>5. <b>Small business sustainability challenges</b> such as high rents, lack of access to capital, limited technical assistance, and ongoing support beyond startup funding.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Expand inclusive workforce and economic policies</b> that reduce barriers such as "Ban the Box" initiatives, multilingual employment tools, etc.</li> <li>2. <b>Enhance support for small businesses</b>, such as creating centralized "back offices" for legal and financial services, revisit rigid job creation requirements, and diverse entrepreneurial ventures.</li> <li>3. <b>Activate vacant properties strategically</b> to improve tracking and coordination, working collaboratively with property owners and community partners to repurpose these spaces.</li> <li>4. <b>Reform funding and permit processes</b> to be more flexible, reduce grant-related burdens, and advocate for equitable federal and local funding guidelines.</li> <li>5. <b>Promote growth and wealth-building</b> through BID-supported rent-to-own programs; address rising tax assessments on revitalized properties and foster equitable access to capital.</li> </ol>

	Opportunities & Assets	Challenges & Areas for Improvement	Strategy Ideas
<b>Supporting Commercial Corridors &amp; Businesses</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Enhance safety</b> by prioritizing traffic calming and improvements in commercial areas; align with projects such as the Reckless Driving campaign and Reimagining 175.</li> <li>2. <b>Leverage city-owned properties</b> to activate vacancies in commercial corridors through TIFs or creative financing that catalyze neighborhood investment.</li> <li>3. <b>Integrate trail and green space planning</b> to more strongly connect BID/NID areas to these spaces to boost accessibility and connectivity.</li> <li>4. <b>Strengthen City Area Plan implementation</b> to foster more public-private partnerships and advance complex goals such as workforce housing placement.</li> <li>5. <b>Increasing collaboration and communication</b> between BID/NID leaders and community organizers to align efforts and educate residents on City service tools like MKE Mobile.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Insufficient and inconsistent funding</b> that can sustain the support needed for BID/NID work and grassroots initiatives.</li> <li>2. <b>Public engagement and communication gaps</b> for residents and business owners, who are often unaware of how to engage with City services, leading to misdirected requests and underutilization of tools.</li> <li>3. <b>Service reductions and enforcement issues</b> such as reduced sanitation and policing, illegal dumping, inadequate support for unhoused residents, vacant property timelines and zoning compliance.</li> <li>4. <b>Access to business support</b> for small business owners, who face difficulties in navigating and accessing technical assistance.</li> <li>5. <b>Limited awareness of available resources</b> by grassroots and business groups that often lack information about funding opportunities and resources like Chambers, CDFIs, Wisconsin Diverse Enterprise Network (WiDEN) and WI-TART (Wisconsin Technical Assistance Referral Tool).</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Improve transparency on illegal dumping</b> to help coordinate efforts with city partners (BIDs/NIDs, block captains, organizers) about how this issue is tracked and addressed.</li> <li>2. <b>Enhance communication with property owners</b> and collaborate with BIDs to send proactive communications (such as welcome letters and vacancy updates).</li> <li>3. <b>Streamline business transition processes</b> and provide guidance to community partners on business ownership changes; clarify how inspections and code compliance are managed during transitions.</li> <li>4. <b>Implement consistent inspection practices</b> that are proactive and equitable, rather than triggered by complaints or property sales.</li> </ol>

	Opportunities & Assets	Challenges & Areas for Improvement	Strategy Ideas
<b>Youth Services</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Maximize public and community spaces</b> to expand youth programming in parks, splash pads, libraries, churches, and nonprofits to increase access and engagement.</li> <li>2. <b>Promote accessible and affordable opportunities</b> that reduce cost barriers and connect youth to citywide services and programs, such as the “activity card.”</li> <li>3. <b>Invest in skill-building and career readiness</b> programs that increase access to trade-focused education, vocational training, and hands-on life skills, especially for middle school-aged youth.</li> <li>4. <b>Celebrate culture and connection</b> by engaging youth through arts, festivals, and museums, while fostering intergenerational programs and mentorship models.</li> <li>5. <b>Create innovative, youth-centered activities</b> that use niche interests and skills—such as roller skating, auto or bicycle repair, sewing, cooking—as creative entry points for learning, leadership, and community building.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Limited access and affordability</b> of youth programs, especially for tutoring and after-school care, creates barriers for families (particularly for youth ages 9–14).</li> <li>2. <b>Underutilized and inaccessible resources</b>, such as parks that lack safety features for evening use and youth-serving organizations that have limited hours and inconsistent availability.</li> <li>3. <b>Gaps in communication and awareness</b> for families of available services, with information not reaching those in underserved neighborhoods.</li> <li>4. <b>Systemic and structural barriers</b>, particularly for small community-based organizations that face challenges accessing funding due to complex grant processes, limiting their ability to serve local youth.</li> <li>5. <b>Fragmented services and safety concerns</b>, with poor coordination across sectors, limited transportation options, and safety issues like reckless driving reduce youth participation in programs.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Strengthen collaboration and resource-sharing</b> by encouraging joint applications for funding and building cross-sector partnerships to address safety, housing, and service gaps.</li> <li>2. <b>Expand access to youth services</b> through a centralized information platform; improve transportation options, and support transitional housing for youth experiencing homelessness.</li> <li>3. <b>Empower youth through engagement and skill-building</b> through programs focused on civic engagement, job readiness, and practical life skills, including support for driver’s license access.</li> <li>4. <b>Increase academic and mental health support</b> by promoting volunteer-based tutoring and expanding access to preventive, community-based mental health services.</li> <li>5. <b>Promote innovation and equity</b> and explore successful youth models in other cities; allow greater flexibility in CDBG funding to support holistic, preventive approaches.</li> </ol>
<b>Housing - General</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Milwaukee is still affordable</b> compared to surrounding cities.</li> <li>2. The <b>city has amenities</b> like unique neighborhoods, access to fresh water and Lake Michigan.</li> <li>3. <b>Vacant lots are opportunities</b> to build more housing.</li> <li>4. <b>People working in the sector locally are experienced</b> and committed to this issue.</li> <li>5. <b>Collective efforts</b> such as the Reclaiming Our Neighborhoods (RON) coalition and Community Development Alliance, and Take Root Milwaukee <b>support a broad range of housing goals</b>.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Not enough economic opportunity</b> for people to maintain an affordable housing situation (renters and owners).</li> <li>2. <b>Aging housing stock and lack of resources</b> lead to poor conditions, accessibility needs.</li> <li>3. <b>Lack of financial assistance</b> for rent and major home repairs.</li> <li>4. <b>Current market conditions</b> (interest rates, supply costs, high rents, vacant properties and absentee owners, displacement due to increasing property taxes).</li> <li>5. <b>Accessing public support or financial assistance is difficult</b> for residents (must navigate many barriers).</li> <li>6. <b>Lack of protection for renters</b> and ability to hold property owners accountable.</li> <li>7. <b>Challenging to develop housing in the city</b>; many steps aren’t transparent.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Invest in resources</b> such as downpayment assistance, funds to redevelop homes into accessible housing, and the Housing Trust Fund.</li> <li>2. <b>More opportunities</b> such as rent-to-own, community land trust, stronger purchase rehab program <b>that address barriers to homebuying</b>.</li> <li>3. The Housing Authority of the City of Milwaukee (<b>HACM</b>) <b>needs to be reinvented</b> and held accountable.</li> <li>4. Consolidate and <b>strengthen rent abatement programs</b> so they’re easier for tenants to use.</li> <li>5. <b>Property tax moratorium for seniors</b> and early warning dashboard for displacement,</li> <li>6. <b>Community-based property management</b> for rental housing and <b>tenant education</b>.</li> <li>7. Continue collective conversations on <b>how to keep housing affordable</b>.</li> </ol>



	Opportunities & Assets	Challenges & Areas for Improvement	Strategy Ideas
<b>Housing - Developers</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Quality of existing homes</b> in Milwaukee (less low-cost, new construction).</li> <li>2. <b>NIP is a good program but not invested in enough.</b> So few programs offer grants.</li> <li>3. <b>Willingness of groups to partner on housing efforts right now</b> – people see a lot of private-public opportunity.</li> <li>4. Increased <b>openness to other housing types</b>, especially for vacant lots.</li> <li>5. <b>Support for emerging developers</b> in our community.</li> <li>6. Inventory of <b>vacant lots and board-ups for housing development.</b></li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Need <b>more grants for home repair needs for low-income homeowners</b> (not loans or reimbursable grants).</li> <li>2. Processing for <b>managing HUD housing programs isn't very efficient</b> and can cause bottlenecks for housing developers.</li> <li>3. <b>Connecting purchase-ready buyers to local housing developers</b> (inventory for new homebuyers is still difficult).</li> <li>4. Along with development, <b>concerns about gentrification or displacement of long-term residents</b> increase.</li> <li>5. <b>Loss of homes to foreclosure</b> – do not always come back to owner-occupancy.</li> <li>6. <b>Lack of staff capacity at the City</b>, delaying inspections, permits, etc.</li> <li>7. <b>Ability to access loans/capital</b> is difficult with the current terms.</li> <li>8. <b>Acquiring foreclosed homes from the City could be improved</b> for nonprofit CDCs.</li> <li>9. <b>Empty homes that have been acquired by investors skew the housing market.</b></li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>RFPs that are realistic</b> in terms of the cost to develop and rehab homes.</li> <li>2. <b>Loans for small investments homeowners could make</b> to add units (i.e. ADUs).</li> <li>3. <b>Categorizing board-ups</b> (red-yellow-green) so it's easier to assess which ones are development ready vs. needing more work (would assist with the scoping process).</li> <li>4. <b>Not categorizing nonprofit developers the same way as a for-profit</b> (work is approached differently).</li> <li>5. <b>Sell foreclosed homes to owner occupants for \$1</b> again to spur development.</li> <li>6. A <b>support group for nonprofit developers</b> would be helpful.</li> <li>7. <b>Review current processes to manage housing development funds</b> and identify improvements to encourage scaling up.</li> <li>8. Share <b>data on who is buying lots and/or foreclosed homes</b> (if available).</li> <li>9. <b>Turn over long-time vacant homes to a local acquisition fund or land trust</b> (especially if investor-owned).</li> <li>10. <b>Policies that ensure development benefits existing residents</b> like inclusionary zoning could help create equitable growth without displacement of current residents.</li> <li>11. Support <b>partnerships with tech schools</b> to give students on-the-job experience and add capacity to what needs to be done.</li> <li>12. <b>Invest in preparedness initiatives</b> (fire prevention, insurance, etc.)</li> <li>13. <b>Support for more sustainable development and energy efficiency programs</b>, which can help retrofit older buildings and reduce costs for residents.</li> </ol>