



2025 Emergency Preparedness in Communities

Outline

Since 2017 Tamarack's [Communities Building Belonging Network for Change](#) has been hosting a national Emergency Preparedness Community of Practice to support close to 200 learners, community leaders and Emergency Preparedness practitioners across the country to develop a better understanding of the role that community can play ahead of and during an emergency.

The Opportunity

Through the **Emergency Preparedness in Communities** project, made possible through the **Gore Mutual Foundation Collaborative Partnership Fund in 2025**, Tamarack is looking to work closely with a small group of communities based in Vancouver, Waterloo or Greater Toronto Area that are specifically developing emergency preparedness and community resilience plans with a focus on integrating equity-led and asset-based approaches to ensure that residents and those most vulnerable to climate change impacts are meaningfully engaged and resources in community are included and activated in broader community adaptation and resilience planning ahead of the next climate or public health emergency.

This would include:

- Participating in five (5) working group sessions in 2025. Sessions include:
 - mapping of community strengths, assets and vulnerabilities, as well as any existing local government strategies on emergency preparedness, climate adaptation and community leadership (local initiatives).
 - a focus group conversation on experiences of local climate inequities and recommendations on how to meaningfully engage residents in climate adaptation and emergency preparedness.

Our national [Emergency Preparedness Community of Practice \(CoP\)](#) which will be running bi-monthly, starting in February 2025, will be further supporting this work and more specifically this group of communities we are collaborating with more closely. Through this dedicated platform with resources on emergency preparedness, climate adaptation, and belonging, this space will help deepen the relationships between participants and connect them to peers across Canada and the US, strengthening their action and advocacy efforts.

We live in a time of intersecting crises, of climate breakdown, of polarization and othering, of loneliness and isolation. We know that the climate and loneliness crises disproportionately impact equity-deserving communities across our country, which is why developing emergency preparedness responses ahead of the next climate and/or public health disaster must be grounded in solutions that centre the voices of those with lived/living experience of poverty, exclusion and climate inequities.

And as we work with communities, we center belonging and connection. Because when people feel connected to their community, they become more engaged, caring, and willing to support one another through the most challenging times. Because when we build belonging we strengthen our social infrastructure. Belonging is an antidote to loneliness, social exclusion, and disconnection. [Lessons learned](#) from the COVID-19 pandemic and the 2021 BC heat dome have highlighted the importance of social connection and knowing your neighbours. [The 2022 publication by the Othering & Belonging Institute and UC Berkley on Principles for the Climate Crisis](#) speaks to how belonging describes the values and practices where no person is left out of our circle of concern and how climate crisis is fueling [othering](#) and how othering is the fuel for the climate crisis in return. We also know that climate change and increasing severity and frequency of climate related emergencies are creating feelings of anxiety, grief and helplessness and [can contribute to loneliness](#). Our recent [project with youth in BC](#) highlighted the importance of belonging to find safety and connection and create active hope in young people.

On this project we'll be collaborating with our partners [Good Neighbour Kitsilano](#) (GNK) from Vancouver and [MaRS Discovery District](#) in Toronto. GNK will be participating in the working group of communities developing local emergency preparedness plans and this will support their efforts to catalyze resident-led approaches currently piloted in Vancouver Kitsilano neighbourhood. MaRS Discovery District will engage corporate sector partners in their efforts to advance community resilience and we will leverage their subject matter expertise on how communities and corporate partners entrepreneurs can develop bold partnerships for community resilience and avoid maladaptation practices. Both partners will also play an advisory role in supporting the cocreation of the learning journey for the CoP.

Additional knowledge-sharing will be done through a dedicated publication on inclusive municipal climate adaptation approaches and participating communities will be presenting their plans in the national Community of Practice in early 2026.

How to participate in the Working Group

To be included in the Emergency Preparedness Working Group, please reach out to Astrid Arumae, Manager of Communities, Building Belonging and Climate Transitions by email astrid@tamarackcommunity.ca

*For communities outside Vancouver, Waterloo or Greater Toronto Area who are interested in participating, please reach out to Astrid at astrid@tamarackcommunity.ca

Community of Practice Sessions

Tuesday Feb 18, 2025, 12-1:30pm ET	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction to 2025 learning journey & EP Working Group Opportunity • Emergency preparedness responses for people experiencing homelessness & people with disabilities (with Kathryn Colby, Tamarack Institute, Laura Nelson-Hamilton, Strategic Design)
Tuesday, April 15, 2025, 12-1:30pm ET	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Centering Equity & Decolonizing Emergency Preparedness (Lily Yumagulova, Preparing Our Home) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What does decolonizing EP mean? What actions can and should be taken in communities. EP for Indigenous communities. • Equity considerations for EP, adaptation & mitigation actions being developed
Tuesday, June 10, 2025 1-3:00 ET	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community engagement beyond your typical spheres of connection (<i>how to connect with those that are systemically made difficult to reach</i>) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <u>Tailoring your engagement</u> strategies for unique audiences ○ Centering <u>healing</u> and acknowledging historical <u>trauma and distrust</u> in engagement ○ Building inclusive and accessible spaces for equity-denied communities to get involved
Tuesday, August 12, 2025 1-3 ET	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overcoming collaboration barriers through good governance and collaborative evaluation tools <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ How to <u>build collective accountability</u> ○ How to <u>evaluate collaboration</u> and course correct along the way ○ How to handle and <u>transform conflict</u>
Tuesday, November 11, 2025 1-2 ET	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Role of Belonging in Emergency Preparedness <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How does belonging fit into the equation of other emergencies and crises– safety (polarization, attacks on synagogues, hate-crime, health emergencies (pandemics)? What is needed to strengthen social connection and sense of humanity in communities?
Tuesday, December 9, 2025, 12-1:30 pm ET	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Telling your collaboration story to deepen trust, secure additional support, and scale your impact <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <u>Evaluating collaboration</u> work with tight resources ○ Telling <u>clear and compelling stories</u> about complex work

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Creative ways to tell your story
February 2026	Communities presenting their plans in national CoP

Working Group Sessions

Wednesday, March 26, 2025, 12-1:30 pm ET	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initial working group meeting to get to know each other and the participating communities. We'll take the time to go over the collaborative sessions we have planned for the year and share more details and answer questions that may come up.
Wednesday, April 16, 2025, 12-1:30 pm ET	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mapping existing assets and vulnerabilities
Wednesday, May 21, 2025, 12- 1:30 pm ET	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mapping existing municipal climate adaptation and mitigation actions and community leadership
Wednesday, July 16, 2025 12-1:30 pm ET	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus group conversation: Engaging individuals with lived experience to discuss experiences of climate inequities in community and make recommendations for local strategies.
Wednesday, September 10, 2025, 12-1:30 pm ET	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sensemaking and development session for EP Plans in Community, Peer Input Session, sharing draft versions with peers