A disaster-resilient community not only learns from and improves on preparedness and response from its experience during a disaster but is able to think more broadly about how it can design its recovery process to lessen its vulnerabilities to such events. The previous section of this toolkit describes the growing body of evidence suggesting that collaborative long-term recovery planning after a disaster can aid in carrying out such a process. This section is intended to guide community leaders in taking the specific steps necessary to plan a community engagement process that can incorporate these concepts into disaster recovery plans.

Module 1: Planning the Meeting

**Form a Planning Committee**

The first step is to identify a number of stakeholders to serve as a planning committee for the community’s disaster recovery planning meeting. The exact number does not matter; what is important is ensuring that they are representative of the community and invested in the meeting’s outcome. The planning committee is responsible for identifying and inviting guests and informing them of the meeting’s purpose, as well as preparing meeting activities and materials and handling logistics. A successful meeting requires that a number of roles be filled, including those listed below:

* The community lead or **host** is responsible for coordinating meeting logistics, including inviting participants, identifying a meeting space, securing supplies, and communicating about the meeting. This person should understand the concept and value of incorporating health into disaster recovery planning.
* The **facilitator** is responsible for guiding the meeting participants through the agenda. This individual shapes how the group relates and works together, identifies and solves problems, makes decisions, and resolves conflict. The facilitator should be comfortable taking an objective stance yet serving as a commanding presence in the room. General facilitation tips are provided in this toolkit.
* **Presenters** are responsible for providing information about two topics during the meeting. The first is disaster recovery, while the second is local context. For the latter topic, the presenter provides guidance prior to the meeting on collecting information about the community’s assessment and planning efforts and about the environment in which these efforts are occurring (Worksheet 1 for use in collecting this information is provided in Appendix A). This information should be compiled into a summary slide deck and report for use during the meeting. Template slides are provided at http://www.nationalacademies.org/hmd/Reports/2015/Post-Disaster/PDRtoolkit.aspx. Each of these presentations should be about 15–20 minutes long. The presenters should be knowledgeable about their topics and viewed as authorities by participants.
* The **note taker** is responsible for documenting the major discussions, decisions, and outputs of the meeting. A “Notes Template” is provided in Appendix A.

**Arrange Meeting Logistics**

The community meeting that is the subject of this toolkit is designed to be held in one day, with an estimated preparation time of 3–4 months. However, its duration can be modified to be shorter or longer. Once the duration of the meeting has been determined, the planning committee will need to finalize the meeting agenda and activities. A “Model Agenda” with suggested timing is provided in Appendix A. This information is intended only to be suggestive, and can be tailored to the specific circumstances and needs of the community.

The meeting space should be large enough to accommodate the invited stakeholders comfortably, comply with requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act so as to accommodate any special needs of participants, and allow participants to move about the space. Round tables that seat six to eight people are ideal. Flipchart pads, easels, a projector, a screen, and appropriate audio-visual equipment should be provided (see the [“Supplies](#NotesTemplate) and Set-up Checklist” in Appendix A).

Arrangements should be made for delivery of meals, snacks, and beverages as appropriate or for breaks that are long enough for participants to obtain food. It is important to ensure that the meeting environment is pleasant and welcoming for the participants.

**Identify Organizations and Individuals to Invite**

Stakeholder groups comprise individuals and organizations with common social, political, economic, and cultural values and interests. The meeting should include representatives from all sectors with a vested interest in disaster recovery or in community development and improvement.

**Sectors to Consider Inviting**

* Agriculture and food
* Business
* City planning/zoning\*
* Community and economic development\*
* Disaster recovery
* Education
* Emergency management\*
* Health care
* Housing\*
* Law enforcement and criminal justice
* Philanthropy
* Public health\*
* Public works
* Social/human services\*
* Transportation
* Youth development

\* Denotes key sectors for inclusion.

One way to identify potential stakeholders is to focus on the social determinants of health (the conditions in which people are born, grow, live, work, and age; see the earlier section on “Rebuilding for a Healthier Community”). These circumstances are shaped by the distribution of money, power, and resources at the global, national, and local levels, including education, income, poverty, employment, housing, power, prestige, social support, and access to health care. In determining which stakeholders to invite, it is useful to consider what agencies and organizations in the community are working to address these topics. For example, a business improvement council might be working on an economic development plan; a public health department might be developing a community health assessment; a hospital system might be compiling a disaster contingency plan; a law enforcement agency might be working on a violence prevention plan; and a city’s transportation department might be developing a pedestrian safety plan. All of these stakeholders represent opportunities to integrate health and disaster recovery into those existing planning efforts.

When inviting representatives from these organizations and sectors, it is important to consider the level of influence and authority they bring to the table. The individuals engaged in the meeting should have the ability to disseminate the concept of integrating health and disaster recovery within their spheres of influence and to sustain the momentum generated during the meeting. The following questions can serve as a guide when considering whom to invite:

* Who provides a big-picture perspective for the organizations that need to be represented at the table?
* Who are community champions for innovation?
* Who has authority to make decisions?
* Who is responsible for day-to-day implementation of the plans for the organizations to be represented?

Appendix B provides guidance on making the case for integrating health into disaster recovery planning for five key sectors. This guidance can be used to frame messaging and communication with representative from these sectors. More information, including a table of the key stakeholders recommended in the report *Healthy, Resilient, and Sustainable Communities after Disasters: Strategies, Opportunities, and Planning for Recovery* can be found in the report brief at <http://nap.edu/18996>.

**Communicate with Attendees**

An invitation or save-the-date notification should be sent to invitees at least six weeks before the meeting. If face-to-face or phone invitations are the norm in the community, that method should be used instead. The [“Invitation Template](#EmailInvitation)” in Appendix A and the value statements in Appendix B, “Making the Case”can be usedto prepare this messaging. Invitees should understand the importance of their attendance and the goals of the meeting. An [agenda](#ModelAgenda) (see the “Model Agenda” in Appendix B), logistical information, background reading (such as the section on “Understanding Disaster Recovery Planning” in this toolkit), and other instructions (e.g., to bring a copy of the plan of one’s organization) should be sent to all confirmed attendees at least one week prior to the meeting.

**Prepare Meeting Materials**

Prior to the meeting or upon arrival, each participant should receive a packet of information and materials that may be useful to them during the meeting. This packet should include an agenda, a name tag/table tent, a list of participants, background reading, handouts and worksheets, slide decks, relevant reports, an evaluation form, and other information as appropriate. Templates for many of these materials are provided in Appendix A. The materials can be tailored to meet local needs.

As previously mentioned, two presentations should be included in the meeting agenda. The first, on disaster recovery, occurs during the “Welcome and Overview” portion of the meeting. Template slides for this presentation with notes are provided at http://www.nationalacademies.org/hmd/Reports/2015/Post-Disaster/PDRtoolkit.aspx. Additional information can be taken from the “Understanding Disaster Recovery Planning” section of this toolkit and the participant material found in Appendix B, “Making the Case.”

To support the second presentation, on the local context, it is important before hosting the community meeting to document existing local public and organizational plans and planning processes related to disaster recovery and community improvement or development. As noted earlier, it can be helpful to engage meeting participants in the plan identification process to ensure that this inventory is comprehensive. A simple questionnaire ([Worksheet 1](#Worksheet1) in Appendix A) can be distributed to partners and community organizations prior to the meeting to screen for relevant plans. Following up with brief interviews can help address any questions and elicit more detailed responses.

In preparation for the meeting, members of the planning committee should review the inventory of plans and planning processes and work with the sponsoring organizations to answer the following questions:

* What was the process for creating this plan? Who was involved?
* Where is the plan in the development process (e.g., development, implementation, evaluation)?
* What community priorities is the plan designed to address?
* What opportunities are there to influence the plan during its development?
* Who is responsible for implementing, enforcing, monitoring, and evaluating the plan?
* How are stakeholders and community members learning about the plan and its implementation?
* How far-reaching is the plan? Whom does it affect?
* To what extent does the plan meet the expectations and needs of stakeholders?
* What challenges arose during the development, implementation, and evaluation of the plan, and how were they addressed?
* To what extent does the plan address health, resilience, and sustainability? Does it include specific reference to health or the social determinants of health?

Many of the plans in the inventory were likely informed by assessments designed to identify gaps between the current and desired states and aid in formulating goals, priorities, and strategies. To assist the meeting participants in understanding the common gaps and needs in the community, it may be helpful to provide an overview of the major findings from these assessments, perhaps organized according to the determinants of health and health indicators. Particularly useful are assessments related to community- or sector-specific indicators (e.g., demographics, health status, social determinants, asset maps), vulnerability or risk assessment data, and partnership or network analysis data.

All of this information should be aggregated and included in the presentation on local context to paint a picture of the community that answers the following broad questions:

* What do we know about the community’s demographics, health status, social determinants, assets, and needs?
* What do we know about the community’s vulnerability or level of risk for a disaster or adverse outcomes?
* What do we know about the existing partnerships or networks relevant to disaster recovery? What are the successes and challenges of their working together?
* What current investments in or plans related to disaster recovery and community development and improvement exist?
* How do different sectors conduct planning processes? Who is engaged/involved?

**Prepare to Host and Facilitate the Meeting**

Once the planning committee has customized and finalized the agenda, the host and facilitator should prepare for the meeting by reviewing the agenda and rehearsing their talking points and activity set-ups. Facilitation tips are included in the following sections, and additional guidance can be found at [http://ctb.ku.edu/en/table-of- contents/leadership/group-facilitation/facilitation-skills/main](http://ctb.ku.edu/en/table-of-%20contents/leadership/group-facilitation/facilitation-skills/main).

The discussion and reflection prompts provided in this toolkit were designed using the focused conversation method, which was created by the Institute for Cultural Affairs as a means of improving conversations to lead to well-informed decisions. During a focused conversation, a facilitator leads participants through a series of questions designed to elicit four types of thinking: objective, reflective, interpretive, and decisional. This method generates shared understanding. For more information about this method, visit [https://www.ohrd.wisc.edu/ home/Portals/0/Week4Ch2TheFocusedConversationMethodAnOverview.pdf](https://www.ohrd.wisc.edu/%20home/Portals/0/Week4Ch2TheFocusedConversationMethodAnOverview.pdf).