

Community-Driven Relocation

Recommendations for the U.S. Gulf Coast Region and Beyond

There is a limited body of research that specifically analyzes the processes and outcomes of community-driven relocation. A need remains for investigations on the impacts on the individuals who relocate, the communities they leave (including ecological outcomes), the communities that receive them, and the individuals who choose to remain in place. In writing *Community-Driven Relocation: Recommendations for the U.S. Gulf Coast Region and Beyond*, the committee identified several areas warranting further investigation. Each of these areas intersects with multiple disciplines and would benefit from the consideration of researchers from multiple fields.

AREAS NEEDING FURTHER RESEARCH

Mental Health

There remains a need for research on the well-being implications of climate change, and specifically, of climate-induced relocation. Investigations that compare well-being outcomes across different relocation programs and processes, and across groups that decide to remain in place and those that decide to relocate, would be valuable.

Renting, Affordable Housing, Flood Risk

Relocation-related policies and the researchers who study them tend to focus on homeownership and public housing. Thus, there is a limited understanding of the issues that commonly affect renters, such as housing

availability and affordability and flood risk disclosure. This gap is significant because many flood-prone areas include a disproportionate number of rental units, including those defined as affordable housing.

Incentivizing Receiving Communities

More research is needed to understand how receiving communities might be incentivized to welcome people relocating from other places. Research would benefit from efforts that investigate why people decide to relocate from or remain in environmentally high-risk areas. Such research could help understand the motivations and needs of people relocating and how to better prepare receiving communities.

Communication and Transparency

The report lists several ways that communication can contribute to improved transparency, such as providing time for people to prepare psychologically and to prepare their families for possible relocation and allowing people to make their own decisions about where they wish to go. However, further research into how relocation programs, such as buyouts, can be more community-driven through improved communication, transparency of process, and outcomes would be informative.

Insurance

Although parametric insurance has not been directly tied to community-driven relocation, additional research

and piloting of community-based parametric insurance may shed light into whether and how this option could be applied more broadly and in a way that facilitates community-driven decision-making.

Disaster Recovery Model Versus Year-Round Support

Research shows the disaster recovery model is a major challenge to achieving equitable and community-driven relocation because much of the available funding and assistance is only accessible after a disaster occurs, rather than being available year-round. Year-round funding would allow communities to make plans before a disaster occurs. Research examining the most suitable funding model for community-driven relocation and the steps funding agencies need to take to realize such a model would be beneficial.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

This policy brief was prepared by National Academies' staff based on the Consensus Study Report *Community-Driven Relocation: Recommendations for the U.S. Gulf Coast Region and Beyond* (2024). The study was sponsored by the Gulf Research Program of the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine.

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