

Education Program Model for Local-Level Climate Resilience Planning: Partnerships for Resilience and Empowered Planning (PREP)



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Introduction

PREP was an initiative of the Southeast Sustainability Directors' Network (SSDN) in collaboration with the Urban Sustainability Directors' Network (USDN), the National Environmental Modeling and Analysis Center (NEMAC) and the University of Arkansas.

The main goal of the PREP program was to prepare participating Municipal Sustainability Directors to assist communities in climate resilience planning.

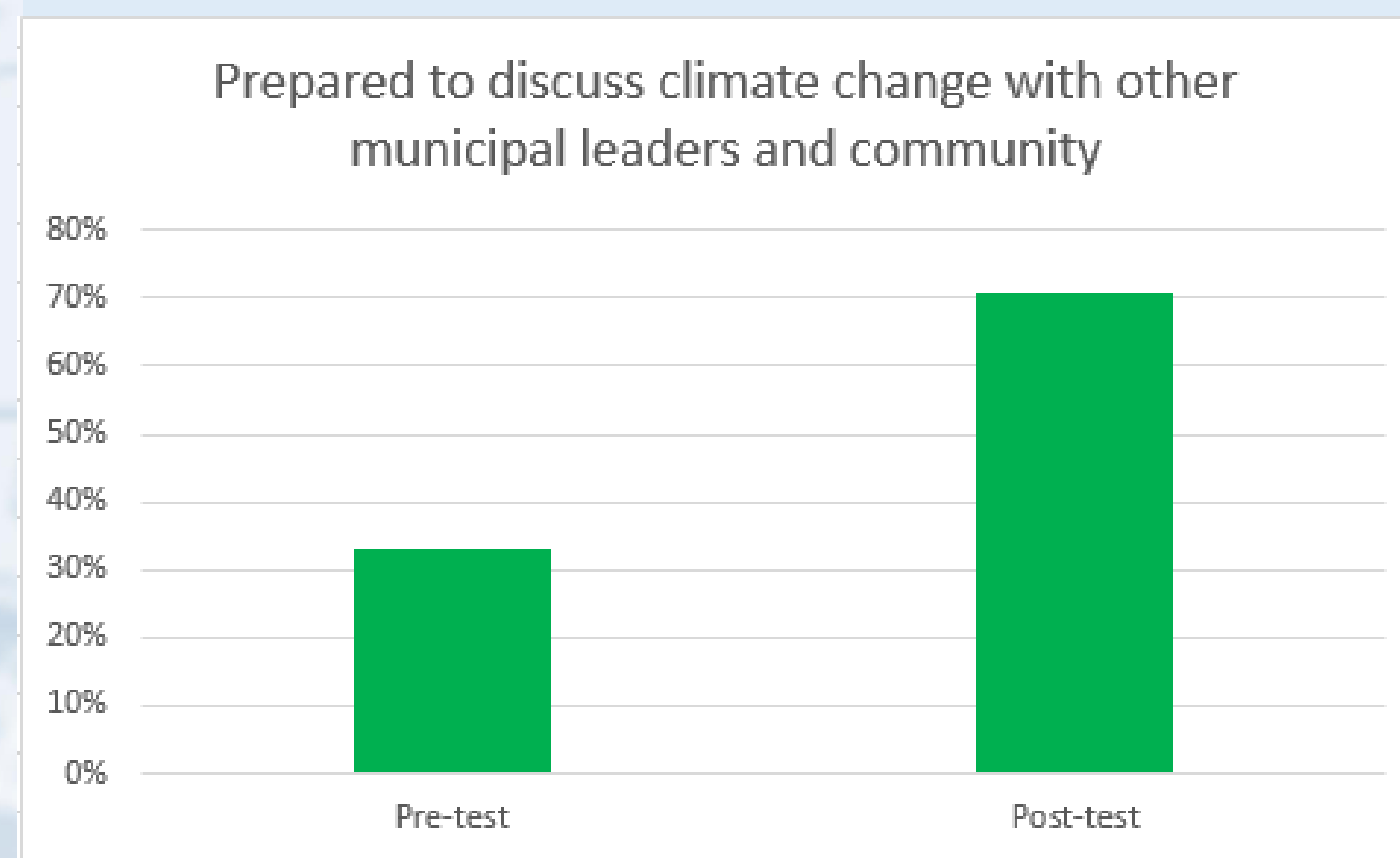
The PREP initiative included conference calls, webinars, workshops, the development of an online tool, case studies from each participating community and an electronic guidance document to familiarize leaders in community resilience planning.

The participating municipalities included Asheville, NC; Atlanta, GA; Charleston, NC; Fayetteville, AR; Huntsville, AL; Knoxville, TN; Nashville, TN; Miami, FL; Orlando, FL and Raleigh, NC. These communities have all faced extreme weather events and per the National Climate Assessment are projected to experience more frequent and severe weather events in the future.

Methods

A confidential survey was administered through Survey Monkey to PREP participants prior to initiating the PREP program and after the PREP program grant period ended.

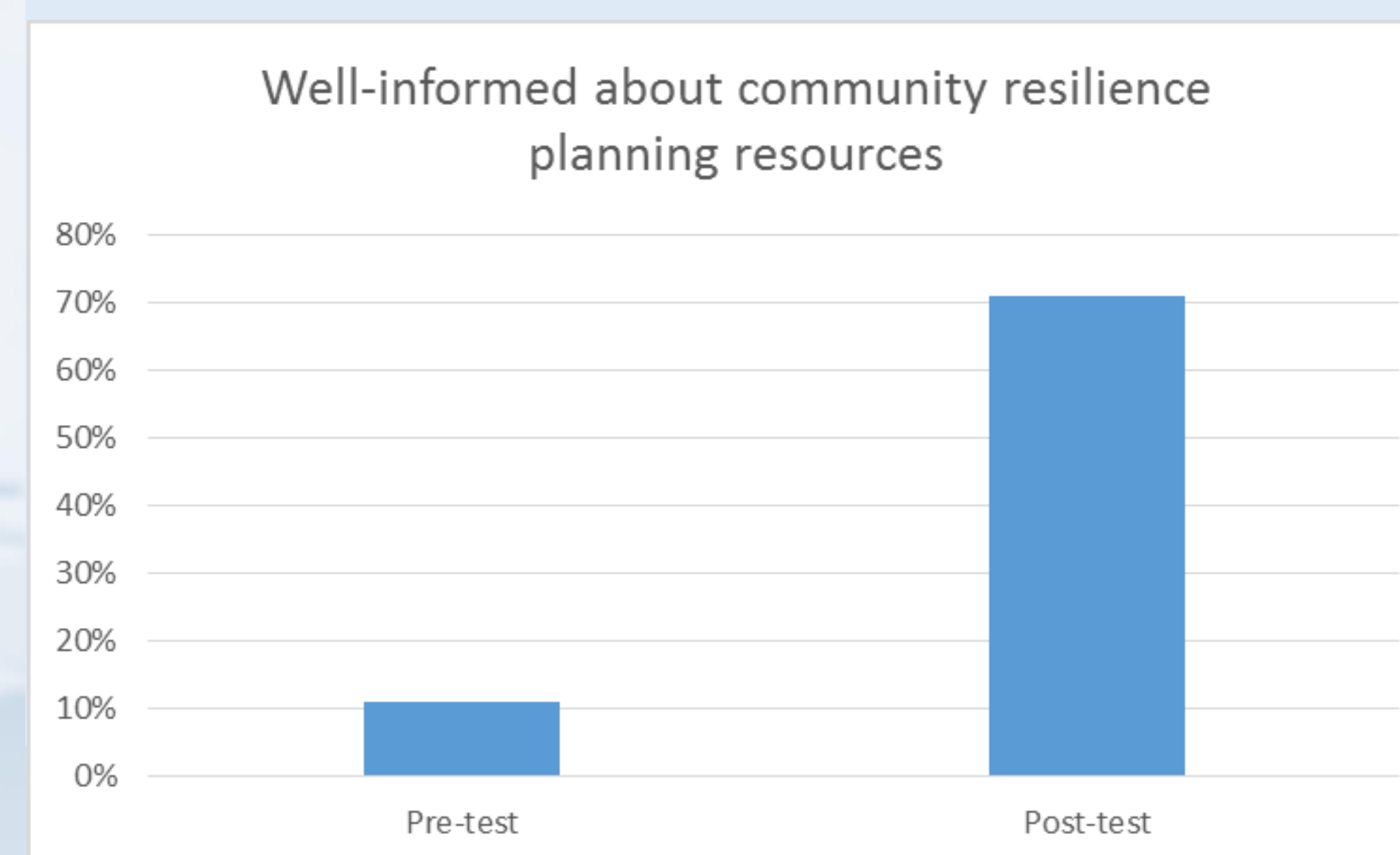
Quantitative scaled and rated queries were used as well as qualitative, open ended questions in which participants were encouraged to write brief comments. An analysis of respondent answers pre and post the PREP process were reviewed for significant outcomes in learning, resilience planning progress and network cohesion.



Results

Participant respondents showed significant increase in resilience planning progress. For example, respondents revealed a 32% increase in stakeholder engagement toward community resilience planning. Respondents also believed their knowledge of climate change had significantly increased.

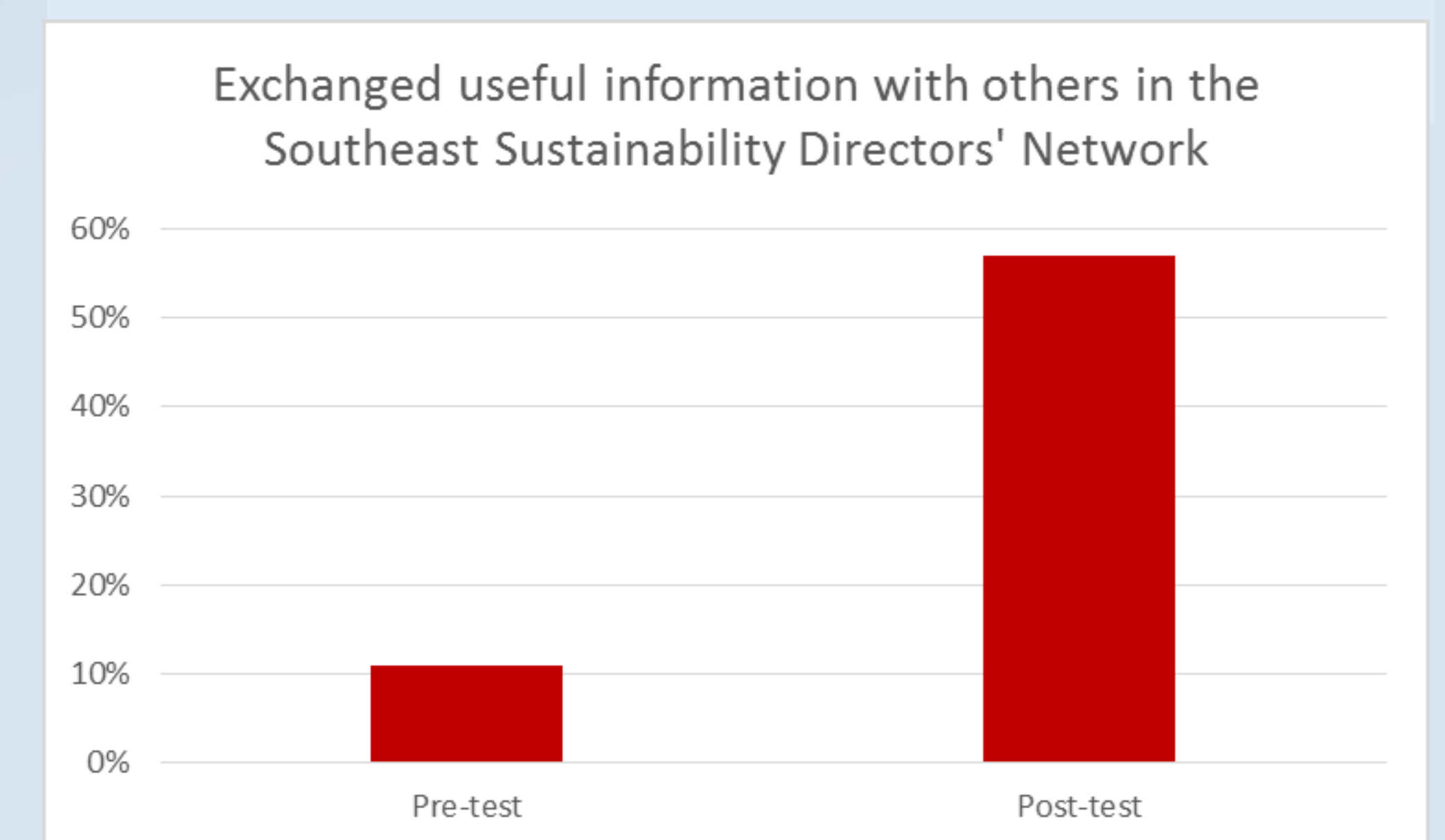
PREP increased SSDN cohesion, which was a primary goal of the grant funder and the program. Prior to PREP, none of the respondents felt efficacious in the resilience planning process and after PREP, 86% reported understanding the process. One respondent indicated "PREP jumpstarted the whole process for us."



Conclusions

One of the most valuable outcomes of PREP was enhanced collaboration between participating communities, which hopefully will have an ongoing impact.

Social cohesion is important to the community resilience planning process (Tierney, K. & Bruneau, M., 2007). The PREP administrators also believed strengthening the cohesion in the network would serve these Southeast communities well by increasing information and resource sharing, strengthening bonds and providing encouragement.



"PREP helped educate me about climate change implications in the Southeast." –PREP participant

References

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