

News Release

For Immediate Release: March 15, 2019

Durham Selected for National League of Cities' Prestigious Resiliency Program

Durham is One of Eight Cities to Receive Financial Support & Technical Assistance

DURHAM, N.C. – The City of Durham will soon be exploring how to expand its solar capacity and improve resilience to extended power outages thanks to support and funding from the National League of Cities (NLC).

Earlier this week, the NLC announced that Durham would join seven other cities in the 2019 cohort of the Leadership in Community Resilience Program, receiving \$10,000 in direct financial support as well as technical assistance and professional development opportunities to help meet its community-specific resiliency goals as the Bull City faces more frequent and intense storms, flooding events, and hotter temperatures.

“From the western fires to the increased hurricane activity ravaging the coasts, climate change is a real threat to our nation’s cities, towns, and villages,” said CEO and Executive Director Clarence E. Anthony of the NLC. “We are excited to welcome eight new cities to our annual Leadership in Community Resilience Program. Through collaboration, innovative approaches, and an unmatched passion for supporting their communities, I’m confident that these local leaders will advance policies and programs to address their biggest local challenges.”

The City’s General Services Department is working to ensure its City-owned buildings and other critical infrastructure can be better prepared for more whatever Mother Nature brings to Durham. The experience of two extended power outages in 2018 that resulted from tropical storm damage has energized the department’s efforts to increase resilience since these City facilities can serve as emergency response shelters for residents while also providing power for emergency management efforts.

“We are excited to receive this grant because it will help jump-start our efforts to expand solar capacity and improve resilience to extended power outages, while reducing our reliance on fossil fuels and improving our air quality,” said Energy and Sustainability Analyst Paul Cameron with the City’s General Services Department.

Now in its third year, the Leadership in Community Resilience Program is supported by the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation and Wells Fargo. NLC also announced that the program had established technical assistance partnerships with the Thriving Earth Exchange and ecoAmerica, which will provide additional tools and resources to support the cohort of cities.

To apply for the program, officials from each city submitted a proposal detailing a specific resiliency challenge in their community and a proposed event or project that could address it. Past participants used their participation as a springboard to form partnerships, hold resiliency summits and workshops, and implement innovative infrastructure projects.

As part of its efforts, the City’s General Services Department will soon partner with the U.S. Department of Energy’s SolSmart Program and the National Renewable Energy Laboratory to conduct a feasibility study to determine the costs and benefits of deploying solar paired with battery storage at City Hall and the Durham Police Department Headquarters and Durham Emergency Communications Center. With support from the NLC, the department hopes to

educate its staff on the co-benefits of solar + storage and critical infrastructure and engage in a region-wide, peer-to-peer learning workshop where Durham and other solar communities can activate a broader metropolitan movement towards resilience through solar deployment.

The seven additional cities also selected for the 2019 Leadership in Community Resilience Program include Anchorage, Alaska; Ann Arbor, Mich.; Denton, Texas; Evanston, Ill.; Jersey City, N.J.; Park City, Utah; and Roeland Park, Kan.

According to the NLC, the goal of their program is to generate new insights related to the challenges and opportunities associated with local resilience initiatives. In the coming years, the lessons learned through this process will be used to help hundreds of NLC member cities achieve greater resiliency for their residents and prepare the nation for the effects of climate change and other hazards.

For more information about the City's sustainability and energy management efforts, visit the department's [webpage](#) or contact Cameron at (919) 560-4197, ext. 21244 or by [email](#).

About the City of Durham General Services Department

The [General Services Department](#) builds and maintains City properties to make Durham a great place for people to live, work, and play. Guided by the City's [Strategic Plan](#), the department's core functions include the acquisition and sale of properties, design and management of new construction and renovation projects, building maintenance, landscaping and urban forestry services, cemeteries management, sustainability and energy management, cultural and public art program management, and supporting the nonprofit [Keep Durham Beautiful](#).

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