

## **How Local Governments Respond to and Communicate about Climate Change**

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As human-caused climate change threatens North Carolina municipalities, local governments can play a key role in reducing municipalities' contributions to climate change and increasing their resilience to climate threats. This research study aimed to understand how North Carolina local governments communicate with residents about their responses to climate change. The study involved conducting 12 qualitative interviews with sustainability employees in North Carolina local governments. Results were coded and analyzed to find several themes about the ways participants said local governments communicated about climate responses, received resident input, and implemented successful climate initiatives with public engagement. The majority of participants said they framed climate initiatives to connect with what matters to residents, which is a strategy that aligns with Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change communications recommendations. While participants commonly identified funding, metrics, and partnerships as factors for successful climate initiatives involving public engagement, COVID-19 emerged as a barrier for communicating and engaging with residents. The strategies and factors that led to successful initiatives and communication as well as barriers to responding to climate change can inform future local government responses to climate change as well as future research on this topic.