

# Taking Action: A Guide for States + Regions



*In RainReady<sup>SM</sup> communities, better water management means that homes, schools, and businesses are prepared for rain—whether too much or too little. RainReady programs keep residences secure and dry, services running, and rivers and lakes clean.*

With the impact of extreme weather events predicted to rise, communities are looking to states for help. Although each differs in weather, geography, urban development, and population, states can draw from a broad set of actions to help communities protect themselves now and reduce risks in the future.

Here are ten actions for improving water management in your state or region:

1

## ✓ CONDUCT A STATEWIDE NEEDS ASSESSMENT

By gathering and analyzing data on the water problems faced by its municipalities, states can develop a plan of action that supports community efforts to become RainReady. A needs assessment can analyze current problems and strategies as well as future risks and opportunities. The process usually requires collaboration with research centers, academic experts, and individual municipalities.

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## ✓ OFFER TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE TO COMMUNITIES

When municipalities face resource-related barriers to making RainReady improvements, training and assistance programs from the state can be inexpensive and impactful. States can conduct workshops and training sessions; provide assistance with financing strategies, regulatory structures, and regional collaborations; and introduce towns to existing government programs.

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## ✓ SET UP COMPETITIONS AND AWARD EVENTS

Acknowledging success is one of the simplest and most effective ways to accelerate the adoption of RainReady practices. Award events, design competitions, research innovation grants, and leadership task forces can be employed to recognize progress, generate productive discussion, and inspire further action. State leaders can work with existing agencies, nonprofits, and professional associations.

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## ✓ ESTABLISH INNOVATION AND TECHNOLOGY HUBS

Swift adoption of RainReady practices across the U.S. will offer significant business and economic opportunities, but various market innovations are required. State agencies have a key role as conveners, funders, and advocates for this innovation, which requires adequate financing and strong partnerships across sectors.

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## ✓ INCLUDE WATER MANAGEMENT IN PLANNING POLICY

Existing planning approaches, such as Smart Growth and LEED certification, can be explored, with the most promising ones incorporated into regulations and technical assistance programs. States can require that attention is given to water management issues within local comprehensive plans by encouraging or requiring communities to include a Water Resources Element (WRE) in the plan.



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## ✓ DEMONSTRATE RESPONSIBLE PRACTICES ON GOVERNMENT LAND

If managed well, state-owned properties can become symbols of sustainable water management. Where feasible, stormwater runoff can be captured and reused on property, lawns and asphalt can be replaced with native plantings and permeable pavement, and buildings can be outfitted with high-efficiency appliances and fixtures. Ensure that visitors are informed of these improvements and the benefits they yield.



Photo credit: Jamie Marley, CNT

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## ✓ MAP AND ENHANCE CRITICAL NATURAL DEFENSES

Rivers, stream banks, forest preserves, and wetlands can dampen the impact of extreme weather events and provide important recreational space for residents and tourists when there is no threat of severe weather. Make sure your state has detailed maps of its critical natural areas and that it has secured the funding, skills, and legal protection needed to maintain and enhance them.

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## ✓ PROVIDE FUNDING FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

States can channel funding, such as State Revolving Loan Funds, toward communities that adopt RainReady practices and especially those with dedicated revenue streams. This ensures that tax money is used for swift, low-cost solutions to community water issues.



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## ✓ UPDATE OR STANDARDIZE LAWS AND REGULATIONS

States can adopt regulations that apply to all development and all construction of water infrastructure. Creating consistent guidelines prevents each local government from having to adopt its own ordinances and each developer from having to cope with different sets of rules. Possible regulatory requirements include onsite stormwater retention, auditing programs, flood insurance participation, and fiscal transparency.

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## ✓ ESTABLISH MULTISTATE COORDINATION

To spur investment and bring efficiency savings, states can work with many institutions and agencies to carry out multistate needs assessments, undertake collaborative research, jointly administer technical assistance programs, coordinate public outreach efforts, and establish expert advisory panels.

For more detailed information about these ten actions, visit [www.rainready.org/for-states-and-regions](http://www.rainready.org/for-states-and-regions).

ARE YOU RAINREADY? IS YOUR COMMUNITY RAINREADY? LEARN MORE AT [WWW.RAINREADY.ORG](http://WWW.RAINREADY.ORG)