

MONTREAL HEAT WAVE SURVEY

GOAL

The goal of our Community Engagement Initiative was to gather information on the experiences of people in heat waves in Montreal by conducting a survey. We were especially interested in understanding how heat waves are impacting people with disabilities and older people, and how best practices for community resilience can be identified and strengthened. We also wanted to conduct a qualitative analysis of how individuals experience heat and if factors such as the structural make-up of neighbourhoods (demographics, income) have an influence on the comfortability of temperature.

“Ce serait magnifique d’avoir des piscines accessibles et des gyms équipés pour les personnes à mobilité réduite dans l’Ouest de l’île”

- Survey Respondent

PARTNERS

The survey was conducted in collaboration with fellows Tuvire Onookome-Okome and Ellen Spannagel from the the Samuel Center for Social Connectedness, in collaboration with the Data-Driven lab at the University of North Carolina Chapel Hill. We also received support in our outreach from partners such as Selma Khoudiri from L’Institut National pour l’Équité, l’Égalité et l’Inclusion des personnes en situation de handicap (INÉÉI-PSH)

How do heat waves in Montreal impact you?



Quel impact les canicules à Montréal ont-elles sur vous ?



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ENGAGEMENT

The target audience was residents of the Island of Montreal. We chose the medium of a survey for the Community Engagement Initiative given its ability to be easily shared and was disseminated with repeated and ongoing outreach over a period of one month between mid-July and mid-August, 2021. The survey was disseminated in both French and English. Overall, we received 38 responses to our survey, including 31 responses in English, and 7 responses in French. While we saw the value of the survey in its ability to be widely shared, surveys are 1) not accessible for people without internet access, and therefore represent a limited section of Montreal’s population, and 2) Surveys are limited in their ability to collect detailed and personal responses about experiences with heat.



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HIGHLIGHTS

LACK OF CONSULTATION

No respondents were consulted by the City of Montreal or any other organization in developing heat responses.

PRODUCTIVITY

Most of the survey respondents also highlighted that their productivity was impacted during heat waves.

ACCESS TO AIR CONDITIONING

Most of the survey respondents indicated they did not have access to air conditioning.

RELIANCE ON SOCIAL NETWORKS

Most of the respondents indicated that if they needed to go somewhere cool during a heat wave, they typically went to a family member's home. This showcases how social connectedness, and vice versa, social isolation, play a key role in mitigating a person's experience during a heat wave.

INFORMATION

Most of the survey respondents indicated they receive most of their information about heat waves via social media.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- The City of Montreal should consult with groups such as older persons, people with disabilities, and their organizations in developing heat responses and strategies.
- Given the role of social isolation in mitigating the impacts of heat, the City of Montreal should prioritize in-person and telephone outreach in communicating information about heat waves especially for older adults. Social isolation is of particular percent in Canada where 1 in 3 seniors are at risk of becoming socially isolated. 24% of Canadian residents over the age of 65 feel isolated.
- The City of Montreal should prioritize the establishment of access to free air conditioned spaces. For example, ensuring there is proportionate access to mistating stations and public pools across neighbourhoods. One respondent stated, "ce serait magnifique d'avoir des piscines accessibles et des gyms équipés pour les personnes à mobilité réduite dans l'Ouest de l'Île." However, this should be done alongside ensuring there is accessible air conditioned transportation to such locations.
- The City of Montreal should invest in research in urban green spaces. Green spaces has been shown to mitigate the worst of heat events.



Downtown

"Habiter dans une zone avec des arbres matures fait une énorme différence"

- Survey Respondent



Outremont