

SMART SURFACES

FLORIDA PUBLIC HEALTH ASSOCIATION

PROJECT OVERVIEW

Florida Public Health Association has made significant progress in elevating community awareness, strengthening partnerships, and expanding education on Smart Surfaces as a public health strategy in Jacksonville, FL, through focus groups, city initiatives, and public outreach, to increase awareness and drive action on extreme heat issues. FPHA has integrated Smart Surfaces into student-led capstone projects, engaged urban planners and clinicians in the conversation, and contributed to building a more climate-resilient and equitable Florida. This work has strengthened the state's capacity to respond to extreme heat and inspired continued public health leadership in infrastructure planning.

HIGHLIGHTS AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Focus Groups

FPHA conducted five community focus groups in partnership with LISC Jacksonville to assess resident perspectives on urban heat, environmental stressors, and potential Smart Surface applications. Findings are guiding ongoing community engagement and informing priorities for equitable Smart Surface implementation.

Outreach and Education

FPHA also developed and delivered several outreach and educational products, including a fully prerecorded webinar for Florida Climate Week 2025, which highlighted the health, climate, and equity benefits of Smart Surfaces. This webinar helped strengthen public understanding of climate-resilient infrastructure and reached audiences statewide. PHA also expanded awareness of Smart Surfaces in academic settings. The team presented to the University of Florida College of Design, Construction, and Planning to introduce Smart Surfaces concepts and encourage students to integrate these strategies into their Jacksonville parks capstone project.

Annual Conferences

FPHA's Smart Surfaces work was featured prominently at the last two FPHA Annual Conferences. In 2024, FPHA delivered both a keynote and a breakout session introducing Smart Surfaces to statewide public health leaders. In 2025, FPHA presented a regional breakout session featuring partners from Georgia, Louisiana, and LISC Jacksonville, expanding shared learning across the Southeast. Additional presentations included multiple appearances on the South Carolina Public Health Association's networking calls, which helped broaden interstate learning and visibility of Smart Surfaces as a climate-health tool.

Member Group

Finally, through this grant, FPHA launched its first environment-focused member group, the Climate Health Interest Group, to build long-term infrastructure for climate-health education, engagement, and communication within FPHA.



Breakout session during FPHA's Annual Educational Conference in July.

INITIATIVES/COALITIONS

- **FPHA Climate Health Interest Group:** FPHA's first environment-focused member group advanced climate-health education, supported Smart Surfaces, and engaged members in climate resilience initiatives.
- **LISC Jacksonville Partnership & Community Engagement:** LISC partnered with FPHA to conduct boat-tour focus groups along the Ribault River, allowing residents to identify environmental stressors. This engaging approach deepened understanding of community needs related environmental conditions. FPHA later returned to the community to present findings from the focus groups and share potential Smart Surface-aligned solutions.
- **Climate Health Interest Group Engagement:** FPHA's EH Committee participated in planning and reviewing materials related to Smart Surfaces and climate health, including surveys, newsletters, and stakeholder outreach.
- **Social media engagement:** FPHA amplified Smart Surfaces messaging through coordinated posts with partners and the Smart Surfaces Coalition, increasing public visibility and awareness.

NEW PARTNERSHIPS

FPHA expanded partnerships across sectors to support Smart Surfaces engagement and implementation, strengthening FPHA's position as a connector between public health, planning, and community development.

- **LISC Jacksonville** strengthened FPHA's capacity to engage communities directly and interpret on-the-ground needs by serving as a key collaborator, facilitating all five community focus groups, supporting engagement with Jacksonville neighborhoods, and providing expertise on community development and equitable infrastructure.
- **Florida Clinicians for Climate Action (FCCA)** expanded statewide climate-health education through multiple webinars on extreme heat, maternal health, and hurricane preparedness.
- **City of Jacksonville partners** contributed insight into current and emerging climate resilience initiatives happening locally, helping FPHA understand potential municipal pathways for Smart Surface adoption.
- **Academic partnerships**, including the University of Florida, supported student engagement, capstone opportunities, and long-term educational opportunities with Climate Health Heat Trainings.
- **Regional affiliate collaborations** with the Georgia Public Health Association (GPHA) and South Carolina Public Association (SCPHA) advanced shared learning. Through conference sessions and ongoing communication, FPHA exchanged lessons learned, community engagement strategies, and barriers to implementation.

SMART SURFACE POLICIES

FPHA's efforts laid groundwork for future policy advancement by raising awareness, strengthening stakeholder relationships, and documenting community-driven priorities.

- Community focus groups identified clear local priorities around extreme heat reduction, shade access, and cooling infrastructure, that can inform future policy development and city planning. Smart Surfaces conference presentations, regional collaborations, and climate-health trainings helped integrate Smart Surfaces into broader climate resilience discussions across the Southeast.

Additionally, FPHA is currently developing a proposed proclamation for the State of Florida to recognize National Heat Awareness, with the goal of securing official adoption in the spring or summer of 2026, ahead of the next heat season. This effort supports statewide recognition of heat as a public health priority and aligns with future Smart Surface policy advancement.



An FPHA board member presenting at APHA presenting on Smart Surfaces work