

Overcoming The Obstacles and Capitalizing on the Incentives for Climate Change Adaptation in Coastal Environmental Justice Communities

The proposal team has spent the last two years working with residents in environmental justice (EJ) communities in the Boston metropolitan area (BMA) and along the eastern shore of the Chesapeake Bay (ESCB) to discuss the impacts of increased coastal flooding due to climate change and to present feasible adaptation strategies for these communities. One of the major outcomes of this research (Phase I) has been the identification of obstacles and incentives to adaptation in each of our study communities. In this proposed research (Phase II), we will focus on how cultural knowledge is both useful and necessary in planning and implementing climate change adaptation strategies.

Our overall objective for this research is to improve community-based adaptation planning for EJ communities. To that end, our specific objectives are:

- **Objective 1:** To address the first common obstacle we discovered in Phase I, namely lack of information and understanding about climate change, we will engage communities directly in observing and monitoring the physical processes (climate, sea level rise) involved in climate change, resulting in a better understanding of the complexities of climate and its impacts on the communities. We will also gain insight into gaps in understanding and opportunities for bridging different views and beliefs into a common goal, that of increasing adaptive capacity for these communities.
- **Objective 2:** To address the second common obstacle we discovered in Phase I, namely a lack of knowing where to turn to for help, we propose to bring together residents of EJ communities with local, state and federal agencies in a collaborative learning process which will allow us to create a protocol/guidance document for using systematic cultural analysis and collaborative learning to engage holistic and diverse climate change/adaptation end user-stakeholder groups developing adaptation plans.