



Climate-Smart Communities Initiative

NOAA Climate Program Office (CPO)
FY2022 Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO)
Competition 6

Information session for Prospective Proposers

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Agenda

- Description of the initiative
- About the grant and how to apply
- Characteristics of the successful proposal & team
- The future we envision
- Q&A



GROWING
COMMUNITIES

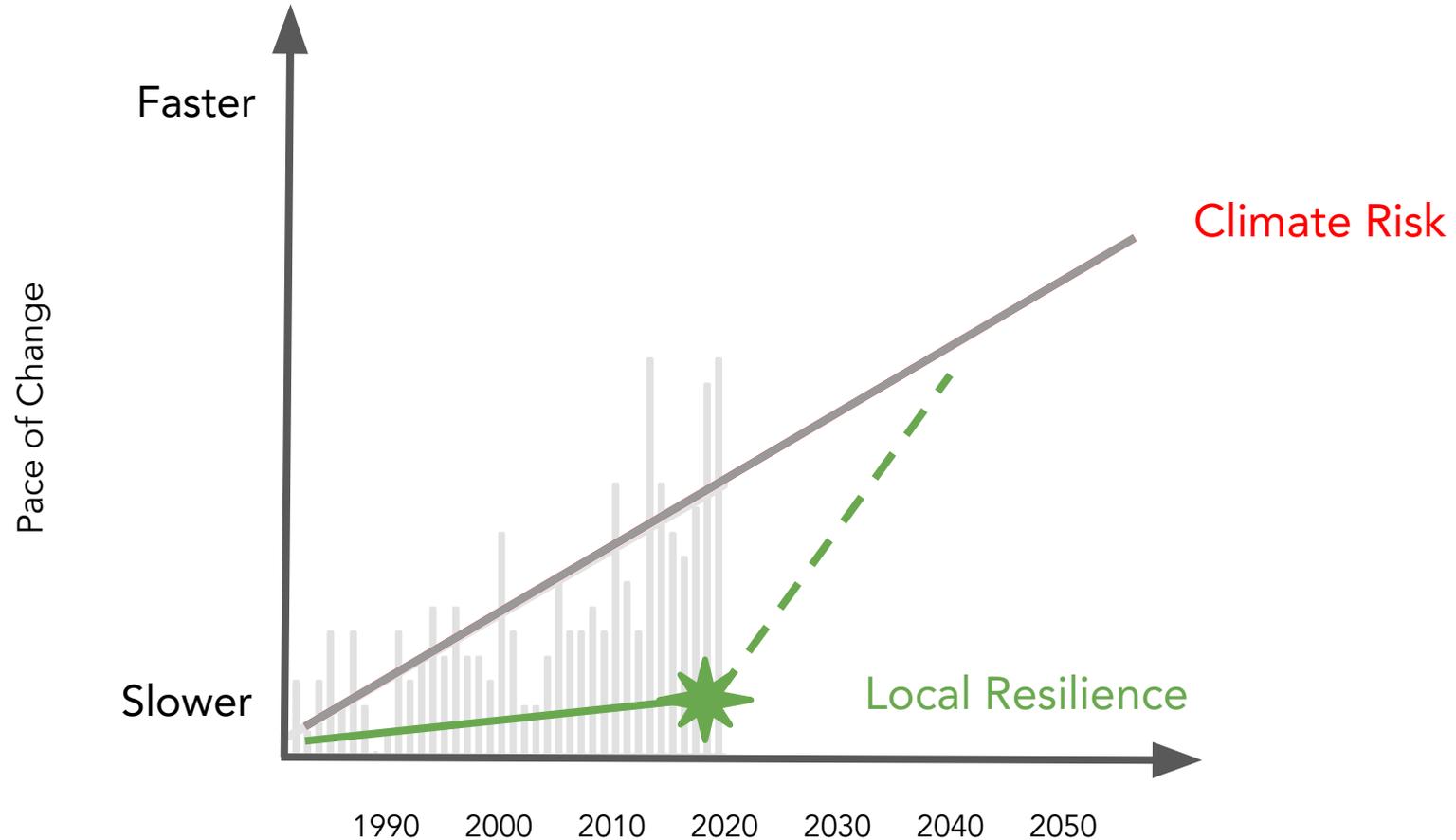


BILLION DOLLAR DISASTERS



INCREASING RISK

When will Resilience Building Catch Up with Climate Change?



The Climate-Smart Communities Initiative (CSCI) is a new cooperative agreement designed to scale up & accelerate the pace of resilience planning, equitably and inclusively, in hundreds of communities across the nation, while reducing the costs of doing so.

Background

- Without a national climate service or a common national strategy for building resilience, many groups are working in this space.
- Government, academia, non-profits, and commercial companies all have different approaches and constraints. The resulting range of efforts is broad.
- This initiative aims to enhance the entire field, building capacity for all in this rapidly evolving space.

The Climate-Smart Communities Initiative builds on principles at the core of the Resilience Ecosystem (RE), embodied in previous grant opportunities and the RE [Theory of Change](#).

- We want to generate work and revenue for the field of climate adaptation, putting practitioners to work in service to the nation.
- As climate-related impacts increase, we need all hands on deck to help the nation move forward in building climate resilience.

Who should apply?

- NOAA seeks a single entity to manage the CSCI Project.
- We assume that the awardee will make sub-awards for various elements of the project.
- The awardee will work very closely with NOAA's U.S. Climate Resilience Toolkit team, its federal partners, and a soon-to-be-formed CSCI Advisory Group.

Potential sub-awards

- Individuals and groups who don't have the capacity or desire to manage the full project, yet hope to provide services for one or more portions of the initiative, are welcome to work with multiple groups who are developing proposals.
- We encourage everyone who has a contribution to offer to the CSCI effort to promote their own capabilities and potential contributions among potential proposers across the RE.

A corollary:

Proposal teams should name their primary partners, but they won't need to produce a comprehensive list of all the practitioners they intend to work with. Rather, ...

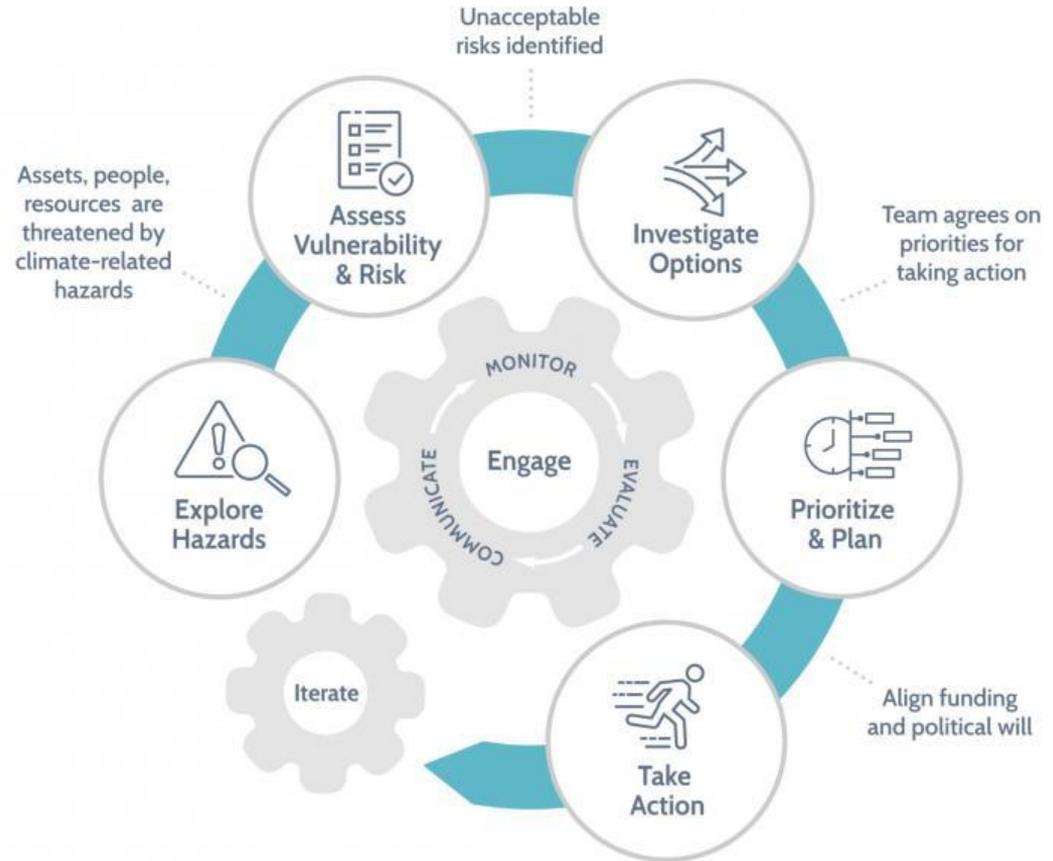
- demonstrate that you have experience in adaptation services
- provide evidence that you are a recognized/connected entity
- describe the *qualifications* of the full team you'll use to implement the initiative, and
- tell how you'll coordinate various actors to complete the work

Main tasks for the Climate-Smart Communities Initiative

- 1: Provide training to adaptation practitioners
- 2: Manage project implementation
- 3: Monitor and improve resilience-planning efforts

1: Provide training for practitioners

- Build on the U.S. Climate Resilience Toolkit's Steps to Resilience framework
- Incorporate best practices from across the rapidly evolving field of climate adaptation
- Support practitioners' progress as they facilitate inclusive community engagements to develop resilience plans



1: Provide training for practitioners

Several elements of the training package are already planned or in development.

- A Practitioner's Guide for climate service professionals ← in development

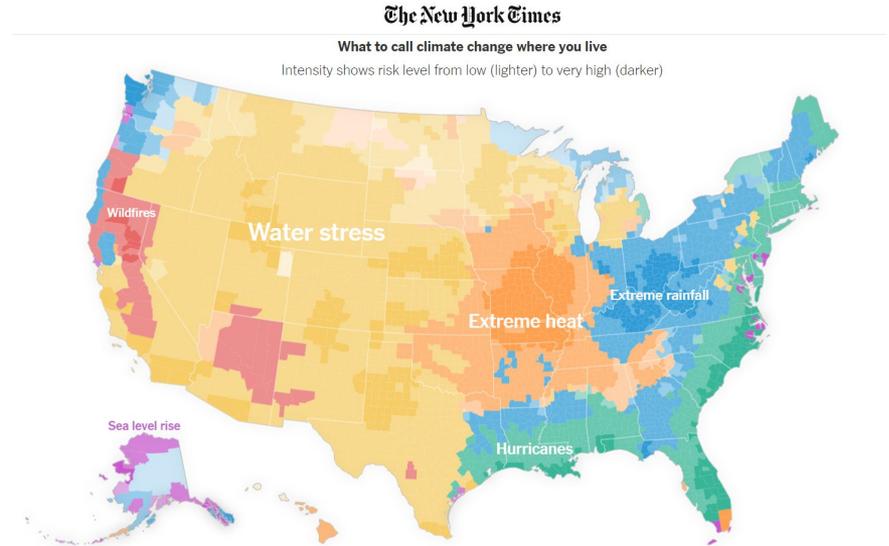
- Modules on
 - Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion
 - Nature-Based Solutions
 - Developing Finance-Ready Resilience Plans
 - Tracking Results of Climate Resilience Planswill be produced by recipients of grants

- A knowledge-sharing platform to engage residents and document and share progress ← may become available via a gov't challenge project

The awardee will evaluate and integrate these elements into a training curriculum and deliver it to practitioners.

2: Manage Project Implementation

- Recruit and engage climate service practitioners in training cohorts
- Invite community applications, screen and select participants
- Manage and distribute funding to practitioners to pair them with communities where they co-develop equitable, fundable resilience plans
- Provide ongoing education and support for practitioners, including access to subject matter experts



Match Expertise to Hazards:

- | | |
|-------------------------------|-------------------|
| ➤ Coastal Flooding / SLR | ➤ Extreme Heat |
| ➤ Flooding / Extreme Rainfall | ➤ Landslides |
| ➤ Wildfire / Drought | ➤ Tropical Storms |
| ➤ Water Shortage / Drought | ➤ Severe Weather |

2: Manage Project Implementation

Through inclusive engagements, paired communities and practitioners co-develop

- Quantitative vulnerability and risk assessments
- Equitable local resilience action plans with clearly identified priorities
- Practical plans to obtain funding for the plan
- Enhanced community capacity to support decisions

Each community gets more than a plan on the shelf. Engagements that follow the Steps to Resilience result in a prioritized list of ready-for-funding projects. And practitioners can extend their relationships with communities beyond the end of their support from the initiative.

3: Monitor and improve resilience-planning processes

To advance the field of climate adaptation, CSCI will establish reporting metrics and mechanisms to streamline the process and reduce the costs of resilience planning.

- Identify and systematize best practices for developing resilience plans; roll them into a consistent, practical system for practitioners to track and compare progress
- Perform continual, program-wide monitoring and evaluation to identify and implement opportunities for improvement
- Reflect on innovations to inform training and shape implementation
- Produce targeted solicitations for new solutions and innovations to advance the field

About the CEE/CSCI competition

- This is a 4-year cooperative agreement.
- Similar to other grants, the awardee will receive funding to carry out the tasks as proposed
- Unlike other grants, the awardee will have a built-in partner on the project. The USCRT team and an external Advisory Group will share ideas and suggestions to guide the outcomes of the initiative.

A Cooperative Agreement is the legal instrument reflecting a relationship between NOAA and a recipient whenever: (1) the principal purpose of the relationship is to transfer anything of value to accomplish a public purpose of support or stimulation authorized by Federal statute, and (2) substantial involvement (e.g., collaboration, participation, or intervention by NOAA in the management of the project) is anticipated between NOAA and the recipient during performance of the contemplated activity. (See www.noaa.gov/organization/acquisition-grants/financial-assistance)

Funding availability: Theory vs. Reality

- The NOFO states \$4 million for the first year, yet the realities of government funding mean the amount available may be different. We encourage flexibility in budget planning.
- Years 2, 3, and 4 are scoped at \$10-15 million/year. Again, we encourage flexibility.
- Acceptable performance each year is required to continue receiving funds.

One approach to accommodating budget uncertainty: Consider focusing your annual budget plan on the amounts specified in the NOFO and include a paragraph &/or a table explaining what areas of your proposed project would expand or decrease if the actual budget is greater or less than the amounts indicated in the NOFO.

Eligibility

- U.S.-based institutions of higher learning, non-profits, and commercial organizations
- No cost sharing or matching is required (though it is permitted)
- Applicants must have a DUNS (Dun and Bradstreet Data Universal Numbering System) number. If you intend to apply, check immediately if you have one. Allow at least 2 weeks to get this.
- Yes, all current and previous years' Resilience Ecosystem grant recipients are eligible for this competition.

Letters of Intent (LOIs)

- Not required, but strongly encouraged. See pages 14-15 of the NOFO.
- Due by 5:00 p.m. Eastern on Monday, August 9, 2021. Email LOIs to David.Herring@noaa.gov
- If you submit an LOI on time, you will receive feedback by September 6, encouraging or discouraging you to produce and submit a full proposal, including a description of the reasoning behind our decision.
- While reading LOIs, the competition manager may recognize opportunities for improvement or collaboration among various groups. We will include any such information we perceive in the feedback we provide.

Full Proposals

- Proposals must be submitted through Grants.gov.
- Applicants must register to obtain a user ID and password for Grants.gov. This can take up to 4 weeks. If there's a possibility you'll apply, we encourage you to register and log in early.
- See pages 15-21 of the NOFO.
- Read the instructions and follow them carefully to avoid missing out due to some technicality.
- Don't be shy about emailing David with questions.

Our guesstimates on timing

- Full proposals due by 5:00 p.m. Eastern on October 18, 2021.
- We anticipate considering all proposals and selecting an awardee before the end of the calendar year 2021.
- Award paperwork could be processed by end of March 2022.
- We optimistically anticipate being able to announce the selected awardee and begin the project as early as May or June 2022.
- NOFO states a start date of September 1, 2022

Characteristics of the successful proposal

- Provides convincing evidence that the proposal team can manage implementation of the entire initiative
- Puts diversity, equity, and inclusion at the center of their plans
- Focuses more on taking existing tools and approaches to scale rather than (re)inventing new solutions
- Acknowledges that the initiative will require more focus on building and maintaining relationships among people and groups rather than, say, performing climate analyses or developing/testing new tools and/or methods.

Characteristics of the successful proposal team

- Demonstrated understanding that collaborative science efforts require building and maintaining relationships and engendering trust among all partners.
- Commitment to the Steps to Resilience as a framework for building resilience
- Broad, current awareness of people, processes, and developing capabilities in the field of adaptation

Criteria for scoring CEE CSCI proposals

As described in the NOFO	Weight
➤ Importance and Relevance/Applicability	40%
➤ Technical/Scientific Merit	20%
➤ Overall Qualifications of Applicants	20%
➤ Project Costs	20%

CSCI is a holistic public-private partnership that promotes science-informed climate adaptation actions

The initiative encompasses a comprehensive effort to

- recruit and prepare climate services professionals to work with communities to co-develop equitable climate resilience plans
- recruit communities who are ready to make resilience plans and pair them with qualified climate service practitioners
- support practitioner cohorts as they facilitate inclusive engagements among community members and decision makers working through the Steps to Resilience
- produce a prioritized list of realistic risk-reducing climate resilience plans that help the community obtain funding to enact their highest priority projects
- encourage a collective local awareness and willingness to iteratively consider and respond to climate-related risk

CSCI is NOT

- an application or checklist or AI solution that communities can use to determine their climate vulnerability or risk (not a DIY deal)
- a local climate science assessment or modeling project

The future we envision

- Scaled up and accelerated resilience-building across the nation using proven tools and methods.
- DEI is central
- emphasis on NBS, where practicable
- Engaged communities continue working together after they have a plan.
- The USCRT's Steps to Resilience help communities recognize and respond to their exposure, vulnerability, and risk to climate-related hazards
- By quantifying potential costs and collective values, communities prioritize the things they care most about, and use a consistent decision-making process to reduce their risk
- Diverse populations in communities across the nation engage in building resilience

The future we envision

- An increased US climate adaptation workforce uses new capacities to build resilience
- CSCI efforts result in reducing the cost of per-community resilience planning by ~50% over the duration of the project.
- The field of climate adaptation uses consistent methods & metrics, and strives for continual improvement
- Plentiful funding for adaptation projects is linked to prioritized actions that reduce risk
- Communities work together, drawing on local expertise
- CSCI serves 100 communities per year by year 3
- As a result of CSCI, communities access billions in federal and other resources

Additional Information

- [NOAA Climate Program Office FY22 Notice of Funding Opportunity](#)
- [CSCI NOFO Information Sheet](#)
- Email David.Herring@noaa.gov