

# Program Information Sheet

## Program Name

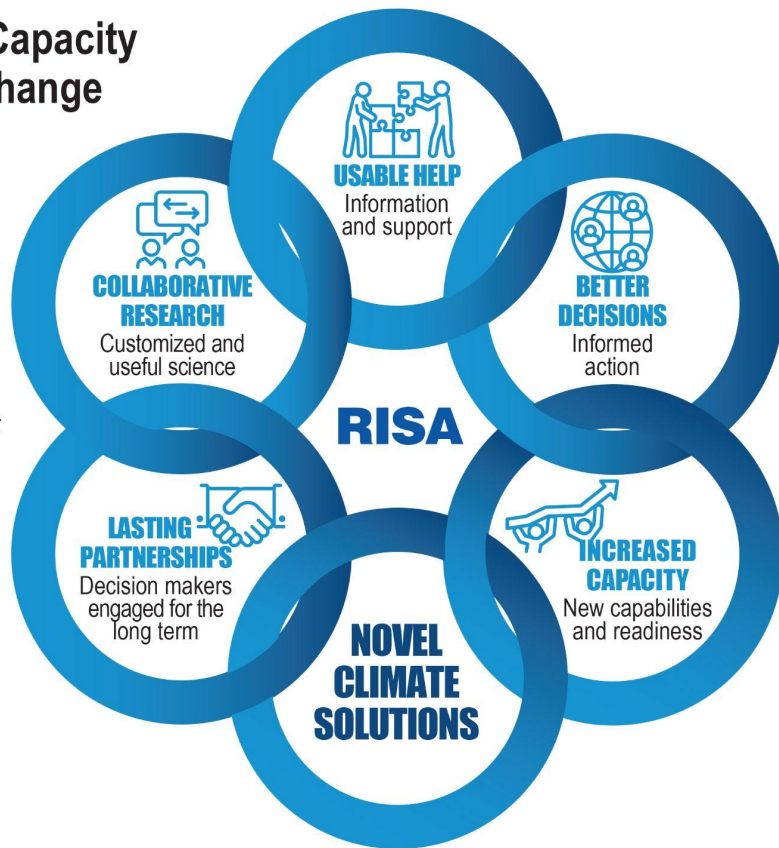
**Climate Program Office, Climate and Societal Interactions Division  
Regional Integrated Science and Assessments (RISA) Program**

## Program Mission

The RISA program expands regional capacity to adapt to climate variability and change. RISA's Regional Teams build sustained relationships between decision makers and researchers that support collaborative and equitable adaptation to climate risks.

### Expanding Regional Capacity to Adapt to Climate Change

*RISA's Regional Teams build sustained relationships between decision makers and researchers that support collaborative and equitable adaptation to climate risks*



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**Central to achieving the RISA mission are:**

- **Regional Relevance, Local Expertise**

RISA teams carry out a variety of projects focused on regional issues related to climate change and extreme weather. These projects span disciplinary, sectoral, environmental, and social concerns, but are based in bottom-up expressions of local need. In order to build trusted partnerships to address these needs, RISA teams are composed of place-based experts from universities, non-profits, and other organizations commanding local knowledge and engaged with community solutions.

- **Integrated Scientific Approaches**

RISA teams generate cutting-edge and applied interdisciplinary research on the impacts of climate on communities. RISA scientists develop unique ways of bringing together natural, physical, and social sciences around complex climatic concerns related to human-environmental interactions. RISA teams generate new scientific knowledge of how broader contexts for risk and resilience shape the successful implementation of adaptation strategies, resiliency plans, and risk-reducing activities. This work includes understanding the social and cultural impacts of climate change, governance structures, laws, and fiscal policies that shape climate adaptation and implementation processes, and how this impacts equitable adaptation strategies.

- **Knowledge to Action Partnerships**

RISA teams engage in co-production and other processes for working across organizational lines, and include scientists, cooperative extension and outreach professionals, local planners and decision makers, community members, and communicators to ensure knowledge-to-action tools, technologies, and other products that increase capacity for making decisions in a rapidly changing environment. The experimental and innovative nature of RISAs extends beyond “snapshot” assessments, tools, or other products alone. The dialogue between scientists and stakeholders also provides an ideal setting for social scientists and outreach experts, working with practitioners, to evaluate how well science is informing societal outcomes.

- **A National Network of Resilience Researchers and Adaptation Science Specialists**

Relationships across RISAs ensure that information and expertise are shared between regions to develop national capacity to adapt to climate change. This network not only spans the RISAs but also draws upon other NOAA entities and federally-funded state and regional partners, where relevant. This network ensures best practices, data access, coordinated efforts, and leveraged funding. RISAs also build the network through education and professional development, engaging a variety of early career professionals, including students across undergraduate, graduate, post-graduate, and continuing education/professional levels in learning and mentoring activities that equip them to effectively address climate variability and change in the workforce.

## Focus for FY22

In FY22, the RISA program is soliciting proposals for 4 competitions:

**Competitions 1 and 2** will fund full RISA teams in each of the following four regions: West, Southwest, U.S. Caribbean, and Central Midwest

**Competition 3** will fund collaborative planning activities in the Appalachia and Upper Northeast regions of the United States.

**Competition 4** will fund research projects on complex fiscal pathways for climate adaptation in rural areas of the United States.

## Funding for FY22

### Competitions 1 & 2

Proposals being solicited for a full RISA team award should be up to \$1,000,000/year for core RISA work. The program anticipates funding up to one award for each of the four regions.

**Small-Grant Competition Supplement:** Applicants can propose up to \$180K total for the duration of the project (in addition to the core full team award) to support a small grants competition. The Program anticipates funding no more than 2 small-grant components across the RISA network; therefore, not all RISA team awards will include this component.

### Competition 3

For proposals being solicited for collaborative planning activities, awards will be at a funding level of up to \$100,000 total per award for projects up to one year in duration. The program anticipates funding 4- 6 awards.

### Competition 4

For proposals being solicited for fiscal pathways research, awards will be at a funding level of up to \$150 total per award for projects up to 2 years in duration. The program anticipates funding 4-6 awards.

## Competition Information

### 1. Determining Geographic Scope (Relevant to Competitions 1, 2, 3)

Regions have been an organizing influence for both decision makers and scientists working on climate adaptation. Beginning with shared climate shifts and extreme weather events, critical resources for society like water, electricity, and transportation are managed in a context of regional systems. Regions also possess a cultural identity (or identities), a set/s of practices and beliefs shaped by the subgroups of people living within and interacting with a common climate and environment. These identities, along with the historical context and other social structures

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of a landscape, make decision-making within a region unique. Climate information (i.e. data, science, research, etc.) working across spatial and temporal scales must resonate with people making decisions on the ground and their socio-cultural frameworks. The role of RISA as a federally funded, regional scale, climate adaptation and resilience program is to understand and build relationships and capacity across state lines and jurisdictions, that include a variety of local, state, federal, and tribal governments, and public and private institutions to improve shared knowledge and management efforts.

Proposals for RISA teams should cover a significant portion of the general regional geographies listed below and should strive for geographic balance across the region in terms of research expertise, community partners, project focus, and engagement activities. When determining the geographic scope of your RISA, applicants should consider what is manageable to effectively work with stakeholders. Current RISA regions (see map below) generally cover two to four states, large watershed boundaries, or issue-focused areas (e.g., the urbanized, heavily populated corridor along Boston, New York, and Philadelphia).

The geographic focus should allow for work within and across sectors. For example, a geographic focus defined by a watershed area should not preclude research on urban health or agriculture, and vice-versa. The focus of proposals that include both coastal and inland areas should be balanced across contexts. Proposals exclusively focused on coastal areas will not be deemed relevant because other NOAA programs such as Sea Grant and the Office of Coastal Management invest significantly along the coasts. An ideal proposal will include some coastal work focused on known gaps in research or service but otherwise have a majority of projects dedicated to inland or region-wide climate issues. The geographic scope does not need to follow state boundaries and can include border areas of neighboring regions when there are significant environmental or cultural similarities that would benefit from inclusion in the RISA. For example, portions of New York State are currently covered by multiple RISA teams based on the regional definition of their team.

The following are the Geographic Areas being competed in FY22:

### **Competition 1 - RISA Teams in Continuing Regions**

1. **West-** California, Nevada
2. **Southwest-** Arizona, New Mexico

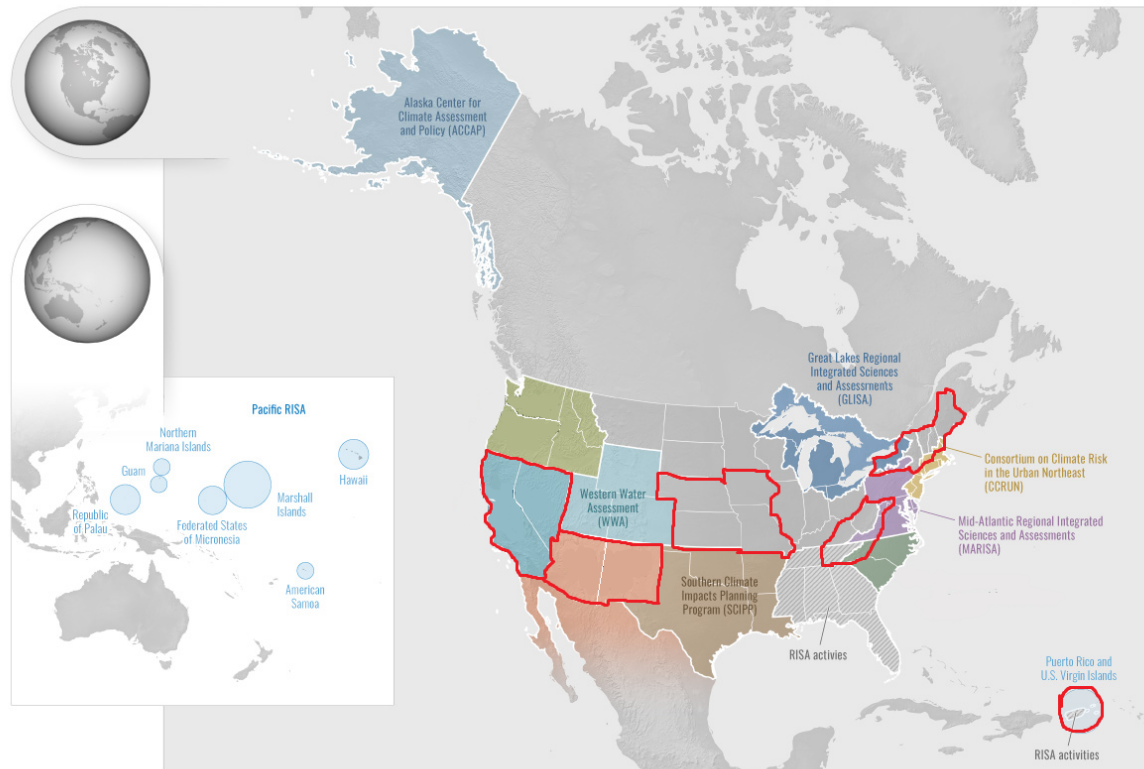
### **Competition 2 - RISA Teams in New Regions**

1. **U.S. Caribbean-** Puerto Rico, U.S. Virgin Islands
2. **Central Midwest-** Iowa, Missouri, Kansas, Nebraska

### **Competition 3 - Collaborative Planning Activities for Upper Northeast and Appalachia**

1. **Upper Northeast-** Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, western Massachusetts, Upstate New York
2. **Appalachia-** West Virginia, eastern Kentucky, eastern Tennessee, and mountainous areas of western North Carolina and western Virginia

## Currently funded RISAs & special projects



## 2. Additional Resources Related to RISA Teams (Relevant to Competitions 1 & 2)

### Developing Partnerships in New & Current RISA Teams

Establishing trust with partners takes time. Incumbent RISA teams have spent years building relationships prior to writing a proposal for a new region. New RISA applicants are not expected to have demonstrated the same level of cohesion across partner relationships. Rather, a new team should leverage existing relationships and establish a robust plan for developing partnerships in the first 2-3 years of the cooperative agreement. This may include activities such as workshops, listening sessions, surveys, and interviews among regional decision makers. A strong proposal will demonstrate how these activities formulate a team's research and project strategy. The statement of work and budget should reflect this planning and flexibility.

A successful RISA team will have the flexibility in later years to respond to new events or pursue partnerships that deliver at the appropriate scale for the partner while continuing to integrate across a regional context. An effective demonstration of this linkage between local and regional may include arranging a set of partners across the region, or creating outputs that will be tested and refined across the whole region. Teams should consider all partnership development within a lens of justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion, acknowledging that the needs of partners vary by identity and context.

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For more information on currently funded RISA teams please see:

<https://cpo.noaa.gov/RISA/RISA-Teams>

For information on key characteristics of impactful RISA teams please see:

<https://www.cpo.noaa.gov/risa/risa-team-structure>

For an additional reference, see:

Combest-Friedman, C., C. Nierenberg, C. Simpson 2019. “Building a Learning Network: Reflections from the RISA Program” *Current Opinion in Environmental Sustainability*. 39: 160-166

Parris, A.S., G. M.Garfin, K. Dow, R. Meyer, S.L. Close, Eds. 2016. *Climate in Context: Science and Society Partnering for Adaptation*. Hoboken, NJ:John Wiley & Sons, Ltd

### **3. Guidance on Small-Grants Component (Relevant to Competitions 1 & 2)**

The purpose of the optional small-grants component is to directly connect a RISA team’s core expertise with community-based organizations experienced in serving under-resourced frontline communities. The outcome of this partnership should benefit the community directly through the transfer of funds to build climate adaptation capacity, access to RISA expertise, and the establishment of foundational relationships for future collaboration. The RISA program is looking for a process that is open and competitive to encourage new relationships. The applicant has flexibility in how the process is designed but care should be given to reduce burdens and encourage a long partner relationship. Applicants can propose a variety of administrative approaches for executing the competition and distributing funds that suit their institutional infrastructure. While the majority of funds should go to community-based organizations, a reasonable and justified amount of funding can be used to support the administration of the competition.

## **Additional Factors for Proposal Preparation**

This section is intended to provide additional information for successful submission across all competitions

### **Proposal Writing Guidance**

Competitive proposals will show that the work being produced will build on what is already known from practitioner experience, traditional knowledge and the published literature about the proposed topic. The proposal should demonstrate that the PIs have a comprehensive knowledge and expertise and that their proposed work will augment the existing knowledge and engagement. It is strongly encouraged to maximize readability by using plain language, structuring content logically, placing figures near relevant text, and using graphics, maps, or tables for appropriate content.

### **Nature of Investigator Teams**

Multidisciplinary teams of investigators are best suited for addressing the complex issues related to climate, society, and enhanced adaptation through the use of science and technology in full RISA teams and collaborative planning activities. Previous successful projects/teams have integrated strong social with natural or physical science components to form a more comprehensive analysis of the dynamics of climate-human interactions. Prioritizing social science expertise that can investigate socio-cultural issues of climate risk and barriers, and opportunities for climate resilience and adaptation is highly encouraged. The proposal should include an explanation of the roles of the investigators and how the team will interact and integrate the multiple components. Investigators who will not be requesting funds for salaries must also be listed, along with their estimated time of commitment.

### **Partners**

Partnerships and collaborations between researchers and critical decision-making institutions in the region of study are expected and might include: NOAA and other federal agencies, tribal governments, non-governmental organizations, boundary organizations, international organizations and regional networks, extension services, state and local governments, and representative private sector organizations. Any in-kind time should be reported within the proposal. It is highly encouraged to include a list or table of major partners with relevant information, such as their role or level of support to the project.

### **Letters of Support**

Letters of support are not required. However, up to 10 letters may be submitted and can be used to supplement information included in the full proposal if submitted as part of the application. Letters will be taken into consideration when evaluating the proposal generally and the proposed partnerships specifically. When deciding who to gather letters of support from, consider the centrality of the partner's role in the project and the relevance of justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion. The letters supplement the reviewers' understanding from the full proposal, so letters are particularly useful where they provide a sense of the prior relationship or level of interest from critical and/or nontraditional partners. In situations where partners represent underserved communities, letters indicate the community's willingness and choice to engage.

### **Additional Proposal Questions:**

See the Frequently Asked Questions at

<https://cpo.noaa.gov/Funding-Opportunities/RISA-NOFO-FAQ>

### **Contact Information**

Questions for competitions 1-3 should be directed to the RISA Program Managers at [oar.cpo.risa@noaa.gov](mailto:oar.cpo.risa@noaa.gov).

Questions for competition 4 should be directed to [AdSci-RISAcompetition@noaa.gov](mailto:AdSci-RISAcompetition@noaa.gov).

