

Maine Coastal Program/Maine Department of Marine Resources Proposal - Coastal Management Fellowship Program 2025-2027

1 Applicant: Maine Coastal Program/Maine Department of Marine Resources (MCP) 21 SHS, Augusta, ME, 04333.

Fellowship Title: Building Capacity for the Climate Change Adaptation Practitioner Network

Focus Area: Resilient Coastal Communities

I. Background and Introduction

Maine's climate adaptation landscape has evolved significantly in recent years. With the implementation of "Maine Won't Wait", the state's comprehensive climate action plan, and the support of various NOAA-backed initiatives, there has been a substantial increase in staff capacity across multiple institutions to assist Maine communities in adapting to climate change.

The Maine Climate Change Adaptation Providers (CCAP) Network which was first established in 2012 has grown to nearly 100 members, each bringing unique expertise and resources to the table. This diverse group of climate professionals includes representatives from local, state, and federal government agencies, regional service providers, universities, research institutes, and non-profit organizations. The network's expansion reflects the growing recognition of climate change impacts and the need for coordinated action across the state.

While formal channels for climate adaptation work have expanded, there remains a critical need for informal, efficient, and inclusive avenues for practitioners to connect, share ideas, and collectively advance emerging best practices in climate change planning and hazard mitigation. The CCAP Network serves as a vital ecosystem for professionals working on climate adaptation in Maine, facilitating cross-pollination of ideas and fostering collaboration.

Despite the progress made, challenges persist. The diversity of funding mechanisms supporting each member's work, while beneficial for expanding overall capacity, can sometimes lead to fragmented approaches. Additionally, the rapid growth in climate initiatives has created a complex landscape of differing leadership and responsibilities across programs that can be difficult for community representatives to navigate effectively.

In this context, the CCAP Network plays a crucial role in bridging gaps, promoting knowledge sharing, and ensuring that the collective expertise of its members is leveraged for professional development across the network to maximum effect. By providing a platform for informal yet structured interaction, the network helps to relate efforts across institutions, avoid unintended duplication, and identify synergies that can amplify the impact of individual initiatives.

As Maine continues to face the multifaceted challenges of climate change, from flooding and coastal erosion and to shifting ecosystems and economies, the need for a cohesive, adaptable, and responsive network of adaptation professionals has never been greater. The CCAP

Network stands to play a pivotal role in advancing the collective capacity of Maine's professional climate adaptation community and thus improve the experience of Maine Communities seeking support in climate change planning and implementation efforts.

II. Goals and Objectives

Fellowship Project Goal:

Enhance the Maine Climate Change Adaptation Providers (CCAP) Network's ability to share information, facilitate peer learning, foster cross-institutional collaboration, and improve support for coastal communities in understanding and addressing climate-related risks and implementing adaptation strategies. This will strengthen the overall landscape and quality of available technical assistance for issues including resilience of infrastructure, economies, and neighborhoods to storm surge, flooding, and ecosystem change across Maine's coastal regions.

Project Objectives:

- Develop and implement a comprehensive coordination strategy that improves communication and collaboration among CCAP members.
- Organize and facilitate training sessions or workshops, focusing on knowledge sharing and skill development for adaptation professionals; reaching at least 50 adaptation professionals during each of the two years.
- Support partnerships or grant proposals across CCAP members that demonstrate information-sharing and coordination across the network.
- Improve efforts that centralize resources for CCAP members, compiling and sharing best practices, role-model case studies, and funding opportunities.
- Enhance the network's capacity to support underserved or underrepresented communities, with a focus on at least three such communities in the first year.
- Improve the network's online presence and communication channels, including regular updates to the mailing list and improvements to a user-friendly website.
- Secure additional funding or resources to sustain and expand the CCAP Network's activities beyond the initial coordination period.

Potential Evaluative Measures for Determining Project Success (to be finalized by the Fellow):

- Number of active CCAP members and level of engagement in network activities
- Frequency and quality of communication among network members
- Number and diversity of training sessions or workshops organized
- Quantity and quality of resources shared through the centralized hub
- Number of new CCAP Member partnerships established and their impact on the network's capabilities
- Increased capacity of CCAP members to support community climate adaptation efforts
- Feedback from network members on the value and effectiveness of coordination efforts

III. Milestones and Outcomes

We anticipate the following as milestones and outcomes for our Maine Coastal Fellow, recognizing that the successful candidate will be given the opportunity to hone their work plan and schedule and present ideas for additional outcomes and products. Note that some milestones are not scheduled below, but will happen throughout the term of the fellowship, including NOAA OCM Fellow trainings, workshops and meetings, poster sessions and full presentations at conferences such as OCM's Social Coast, Restore America's Estuaries or similar, attendance and presentations (along with other Northeast OCM Fellows) at twice-yearly meetings of the Northeast Regional Ocean Council and the US/Canadian Gulf of Maine Council on the Marine Environment, and participation in trainings and professional development.

- August 2025 - Onboarding and orientation to the CCAP Network, its members, and partner organizations.
- September 2025 - Identify professional development goals and training needs for the first six months.
- September 2025 - Design a survey to assess CCAP member needs and community climate adaptation requirements. Conduct a network gap and capacity analysis, and engage with coastal communities across different regions.
- October 2025 Co-host Annual CCAP Members Meeting.
- October 2025 - Finalize the work plan, establish success indicators, and confirm milestones and outcomes.
- November 2025 - Support short term network needs identified in October Meeting.
- November - December 2025 - Convene CCAP advisory team. Present developed ideas for collaboration, information sharing, and resource sharing.
- January 2026 - Conduct a formal six-month review.
- Spring - Summer 2026 - Deliver training on written materials, videos, tutorials, and discussion guides to support CCAP members and community climate adaptation efforts in response to Fall 2025 requests from the network. Evaluate and refine training based on CCAP and community feedback.
- August 2026 - Conduct formal year review.
- Fall 2026 - Finalize peer-to-peer learning program (or support partner institution leading adjacent efforts e.g. Wells National Estuary Research Reserve), and create an implementation schedule for network activities.
- October - November 2026 - Second round of training for CCAP and community adaptation efforts.
- December 2026 - Meet with CCAP advisory team and fellowship mentors to evaluate success of the trainings in Spring - Fall 2026.
- January - June 2027 - Implement a pilot program of enhanced network activities and technical assistance in one coastal region.
- June - July 2027 - Evaluate the pilot program and provide recommendations for future CCAP Network development. Work to establish long-term commitments with key partners to continue coordinator capacity.

- August 2027 - Complete the coordinator role, having established a more robust and effective CCAP Network with improved collaboration, resource sharing, and community support capabilities.

Project Description

The Maine Coastal Fellow will evaluate the network's current methods of sharing best practices for climate adaptation and technical assistance. They will identify effective practices to continue and develop new approaches to reach more community needs with special consideration of underserved communities and audiences. The Maine Coastal Fellow will:

- Task One: Meet with the advisory committee for the CCAP Network.
- Task Two: Develop concepts for review by the advisory committee and produce programming accordingly.
- Task Three: Create materials including fact sheets, tutorials, web-based courses, convenings, and conversation guides which complement proposed programming for CCAP Network improvement.
- Task Four: Oversee scheduling of CCAP annual meetings, CCAP peer-to-peer learning events, and communication over email list.
- Task Five: Develop shared events and project calendar for great CCAP Member awareness and potential to collaborate/magnify impact.
- Task Six: Pilot new programming to the network, evaluate its success, and ensure its continuation.
- Task Seven: Create a joint strategy and work program for coordinated implementation across coastal Maine service providers.
- Task Eight: Support CCAP Member applications for partnered research or implementation activities.
- Task Nine: Launch or assist in implementing a train-the-trainer approach to improve the knowledge, skills, and abilities of CCAP members to support community resilience actions.

Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Justice

The CCAP Network is committed to DEIJ principles throughout its operations. The Maine Coastal Fellow will:

- Receive training in DEIJ principles and practices
- Design any outreach or communication materials with user input, tailored to reach underserved communities
- Focus on direct connections between CCAP Network based on community needs on communities with populations under 5,000, rural and remote areas, flood-prone neighborhoods, areas with social capacity challenges, and towns lacking planning staff or regional planning support
- Adapt approaches to meet communities at their current level of understanding regarding issues including sea level rise, storm surge, and flooding

- Incorporate traditional knowledge, resident observations, and citizen science in their work

Fellow Mentoring:

The Maine Coastal Fellow will be co-mentored by Devin Domeyer, Coastal Resilience Specialist at the Maine Coastal Program, Nathan Robbins, Climate Specialist at the Maine Department of Environmental Protection, and Parker Gassett, Coastal Community Resilience Specialist at the Maine Climate Science Information Exchange office at the University of Maine. This diverse mentorship team brings together expertise in coastal management, climate policy, and community resilience.

The Maine Coastal Fellow will be integrated into the CCAP Network and will be advised by a group of climate adaptation and resilience experts. They will be exposed to a wide range of climate adaptation work in Maine, including:

- Participation in Maine Climate Council meetings and its working groups
- Leadership in expanding the involvement of Maine climate resilience practitioners in the NOAA Climate Resilience Regional Challenge: [Resilient Maine](#)
- Implementation of Maine's Climate Plan, *Maine Won't Wait*; particularly the action items of the Maine Won't Wait Resiliency Working Group (members include Gassett and Robbins) and the Coastal and Marine Working Group (members include Domeyer)
- Engagement with the new Maine Office of Community Affairs, to which MCP will be moving in Summer 2025
- Involvement in climate policy and regulatory reform discussions led by Robbins
- Collaboration on applied climate research projects and community resilience efforts with Gassett and Domeyer
- Leadership role with CCAP meetings

The Maine Coastal Fellow will at first participate in regular CCAP Network meetings and later play a leadership role in these activities as well as project planning sessions, and relevant workshops or conferences. They will be encouraged to connect with various stakeholders in the climate adaptation field to understand the range of professional opportunities in coastal resilience and climate adaptation.

The mentors will regularly discuss professional development needs with the Maine Coastal Fellow, ensuring dedicated time for self-study, online courses, and in-person workshops. Domeyer, Robbins, and Gassett will leverage their professional networks as well as Advisory Group networks to support the Maine Coastal Fellow's growth and future career advancement in the field of climate adaptation and coastal resilience.

Office Environment:

Remote work is possible for 50%-75% of employees' time in this position. Employees are required to attend in-person meetings as required by the mentor. When in the office in Augusta, the fellow will have a shared office space and will be provided with all needed state equipment.

Maine has hosted many NOAA OCM fellows over the years. Many choose to live in Portland, a vibrant small city in Southern Maine; a one-hour drive to the state offices in Augusta. Vanpools and carpools are often available. There are also communities in Midcoast Maine with similar commuting options to Augusta. Maine State Government is committed to work/life balance for its employees.

Existing Activities

Maine's Climate Plan is being aggressively implemented by state agencies and our academic, industry and non-profit partners. Efforts related to hazard resiliency include:

- Creation of the Governor's Office of Policy Innovation and Future (GOPIF) and successful two year launch of regional resiliency pilot programs and municipal grant program.
- Creation of the Maine Office of Community Affairs (MOCA), which will provide coordinated and efficient planning technical assistance and funding in partnership with communities across Maine to support them as they navigate increasingly complex challenges for land use planning, climate resilience, and housing planning. (Note: Maine Coastal Program will be moving to MOCA in Summer 2025)
- Recent comprehensive update of Maine's Scientific and Technical Assessment of Climate Change
- A vulnerability assessment of coastal state roads (ME DOT)
- Coastal Community Grants for climate resiliency planning (annual competition)
- Shore and Harbor planning grants for waterfront resiliency planning (annual competition)
- Creation of a State Infrastructure Resiliency Fund
- Review of Maine's land use and environmental laws and development of legislation that addresses climate resiliency in these state laws
- Formalization of DEIJ criteria in state grant programs and all climate programming
- Recent successful climate adaptation projects in dozens of Maine communities.
- The addition of one land use planner and one marine geologist at the Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry

Project Partners and Roles

- NOAA-OCM – Administers Coastal Fellowship Program (training, employment assistance and support for fellow mentors)
- University of Maine Maine Climate Science Information Exchange Office, Mitchell Center, UMaine Sea Grant, UMaine Cooperative Extension, Wells National Estuarine Research Reserve Coastal Training Program – (mentoring, Project Advisory Team, funding for project implementation, and "trained trainers", i.e., users of the Fellows technical assistance materials).
- Maine Department of Environmental Protection - (mentoring, Project Advisory Committee, office support)
- Maine Coastal Program (mentoring, Project Advisory Committee, office support, funding for project implementation).
- Maine Office of Community Affairs (mentoring, Project Advisory Committee, office support, funding support)
- ME Dept of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry – Municipal Planning Assistance Program, Floodplain Management Program, and Maine Geological Survey (Project Advisory Committee)

- Governor's Office of Policy Innovation and the Future – (Project Advisory Committee).
- Wells National Estuarine Research Reserve - (Project Advisory Committee)
- CCAP Members for participation in completion of interviews, and reviewers/adopters of concept and draft materials and programming.

Cost-Share Description

Maine will meet its \$15,000 cost-share with non-federal match contributions from partners including the University of Maine and MOCA. The Maine Coastal Program will cover the Fellow's professional development (travel, registration, meals/lodging) and will support the Fellow's travel and associated costs for a summer 2025 visit to Maine. Maine Coastal Program and UMaine are also available to provide funds for creation of programming and materials needed for enhancing the CCAP Network and community resilience outcomes.

Strategic Focus Area – Resilient Coastal Communities

Maine's 2025-2027 Fellowship proposal is centered around the NOAA OCM strategic focus area of Resilient Coastal Communities. The Maine Coastal Fellow proposal aligns with the critical need for climate change adaptation and community resilience in Maine. The network's diverse membership of adaptation professionals from various sectors positions it uniquely to address this focus area. By enhancing collaboration and knowledge sharing among practitioners and organizations, and improving the abilities of service providers, the CCAP Network aims to improve the resilience of Maine's coastal and inland communities and expand equitable participation in current statewide efforts to implement local projects, including *Resilient Maine*. In Maine, climate-resilient communities are better prepared for extreme weather events, have more robust infrastructure, and are equipped with the knowledge and tools to adapt to changing environmental conditions. To achieve this, service providers and communities need access to:

- Credible, locally-relevant scientific information and location specific guidance
- Educational programming tailored for diverse stakeholders
- Peer learning opportunities and best practice exchanges across those charged with the responsibility of providing technical assistance to communities
- Resources for implementing adaptation strategies

The Maine Coastal Fellow will play a crucial role in facilitating these needs by organizing network activities, improving communication channels, and enhancing collaboration among members to provide more comprehensive support to Maine communities throughout their evolving work on climate adaptation and community improvement.

Signed,

Kathleen Leyden
Director, Maine Coastal Program



Date Signed: 10/17/2024