

Climate Resilience Regional Challenge

PROJECT SUMMARIES

ENHANCING THE UNITED HOUMA NATION'S SHORT-, MID-, AND LONG-TERM COASTAL RESILIENCE

Project Lead: United Houma Nation

Funding Amount: \$56,573,066

SUMMARY

Through this project, the United Houma Nation is pursuing a comprehensive approach to addressing coastal climate change in southern Louisiana—an area facing extreme risks and a rapidly changing landscape. The Tribe, whose citizens have lived in the region for hundreds of years and have a strong connection to the water and its resources, will bolster resilience through a cultural, environmental, economic, and emergency-response lens. Project goals will be achieved by simultaneously addressing near- and long-term resilience needs and priorities, combining the tribe's traditional knowledge and practice with the planning, technology, and resources of today.

The five phases of the Houma Nation's resilience plan are 1) enhance the central community resilience hub; 2) establish and enhance satellite community resilience hubs; 3) strengthen and expand communications; 4) build capacity for economic development; and 5) community-led migration. Funding through the Climate Resilience Regional Challenge will focus on implementing specific elements of phases one, two, three, and five.

DETAILS

Enhance Central Community Resilience Hub

The United Houma Nation's administrative building serves as a community hub for the Tribe. On most days, it provides office space for tribal administration and is a centralized gathering place. During and following disasters, it serves as a shelter and distribution site for all residents of the six parishes that make up the United Houma Nation. The project will strengthen the building with a focus on flood, wind, and energy resilience; undertake energy security measures; implement nature-based infrastructure; and develop a disaster operations plan.



Establish and Enhance Satellite Community Resilience Hubs

Because the United Houma Nation covers six parishes, it also maintains properties and partnerships across all six parishes. These locations serve a critical purpose, acting as satellite resilience hubs during disasters. During this phase, the project will upgrade the hubs to be in line with the best available building science around wind and flood resilience. The hubs will serve as convening spots, both during blue skies and in times of disaster and recovery, with working groups for each hub established to meet the needs of tribal citizens.

Strengthen and Expand Communications

This phase is focused on scaling up the tribe's communications network, including social media, web communications, and more, to ensure all community members are connected and informed during blue skies and disasters. A full-service communications and marketing firm will develop a communication needs assessment and strategy, perform technical upgrades to the different systems, and help the Tribe implement the new strategy. This phase will also focus on cultural documentation and storytelling, with an emphasis on using oral histories to demonstrate how themes of climate, resilience, and justice are integral to the tribe's story.

Community-Led Migration

To tribal citizens, relocation is associated with forced movement because of past governance and actions that were often explicitly intended to cause harm. *Community-led* migration puts the power and decision-making back into the tribal citizens' hands. In this phase, the project will undertake two critically important foundational activities: 1) community-led migration strategy development; and 2) establishing the land stewardship capacity and mechanisms necessary to support the community in these endeavors.

ABOUT THE CLIMATE RESILIENCE REGIONAL CHALLENGE

In 2022, Congress appropriated approximately \$575 million, through the *Inflation Reduction Act*, to be competitively awarded for projects that help coastal communities become more resilient as they face increasing threats from extreme weather and climate change. This historic, transformative effort is known as the *Climate Resilience Regional Challenge*.

To learn more about the program and the funded projects, visit the website.

coast.noaa.gov/funding/jira/resilience-challenge/

