



National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Inflation Reduction Act Climate Resilience Regional Challenge

This document provides an overview of the [Climate Resilience Regional Challenge](#) funding opportunity. It is not a substitute for the [notice of funding opportunity](#), posted at [Grants.gov](#), which is the official source for obtaining the requirements associated with this funding competition. This overview provides potential applicants with a condensed version of some aspects of the program. Specific requirements are fully described in the [notice of funding opportunity](#); nothing in this document supersedes the official [notice of funding opportunity](#).

Contact Information: resiliencechallenge@noaa.gov
Program Website: coast.noaa.gov/funding/ira/resilience-challenge

Letter of Intent Deadline: August 21, 2023 **Full Application Deadline:** February 13, 2024
Award Selection: Summer 2024 **Start Date:** October 2024

Available Funding: \$575 million
Track One: \$500,000 to \$2 million (\$1 million typical) per award; \$25 million available
Track Two: \$15 million to \$75 million (\$25 million to \$50 million typical) per award; \$550 million available
Period of Performance: Applicants may submit applications covering up to a 60-month period, with an anticipated start date of October 1, 2024.

Eligible Entities

- Coastal states, territories, or tribes;
- Counties, cities, or other political subdivisions of a coastal state or territory, including special purpose units of government engaged in economic or infrastructure development activities;
- The District of Columbia;
- Institutions of higher education;
- Non-profit organizations or associations, including those acting in cooperation with a state, tribal, local or territorial government;
- Tribal organizations; and
- Regional councils of government and regional planning councils.

Technical Assistance

Applicants are encouraged to reach out to NOAA as part of the application development process to request assistance navigating the process and to access expertise in climate science, resilience, and adaptation. Although NOAA employees are not allowed to assist with application writing, they can provide other assistance to support application development and project implementation (e.g., scientific expertise, knowledge of coastal resource management, technical and training capabilities). NOAA intends to also support award recipients by complementing regional and local knowledge and expertise with additional science and services. Specific roles and responsibilities will be negotiated and formalized as part of the grant's final cooperative agreement. For more information: [NOAA technical assistance](#).

Program Objective

The Climate Resilience Regional Challenge supports collaborative approaches to achieving resilience in coastal regions, with an emphasis on risk reduction, regional collaboration, equity, and enduring capacity. The program has two exclusive funding tracks:

- **Regional Collaborative Building and Strategy Development (Track One)**
- **Implementation of Resilience and Adaptation Actions (Track Two)**

Drivers

- Climate change is compounding pre-existing social inequities; coastal communities are facing difficult questions about the costs and tradeoffs associated with adaptation strategies.
- Climate change does not respect jurisdictional boundaries, necessitating cross-jurisdictional and cross-sectoral adaptation solutions.
- Regional collaboration can dramatically improve coastal resilience by aligning adaptation strategies across jurisdictions and sectors to achieve co-benefits.

Program Priorities

Applicants should consider the four program priorities during proposal development.

- 1. Risk Reduction.** Building resilience requires implementing adaptation actions that reduce risk to coastal populations, infrastructure, economies, and ecosystems from drought, extreme heat, sea level rise, floods, and wildfires, and other future weather and climate related challenges. All proposals should focus on regional efforts that provide local and regional benefits.
 - For Track One, applicants should assess weather and climate risks, and identify, plan, and design adaptation actions.
 - For Track Two, applicants should propose adaptation actions (approximately three to eight) that collectively reduce risk by increasing community preparedness, decreasing community exposure, or improving community recovery.
- 2. Regional Coordination and Collaboration.** Critical for addressing weather and climate impacts: regional collaboration, driven by an integrated, achievable, and ambitious vision for how to improve the resilience of the region.

Regional collaborative are groups of collaborators and partners that are

- unified by a common vision for how to significantly increase the resilience of their region;
- are led by or include locally-oriented institutions and governments; and
- share adjacent or overlapping geographical interests or administrative boundaries, or benefit from the same natural, social, economic, or infrastructure systems.

The following considerations apply to this program priority.

- All applicants must identify the geographic region they propose to serve. The geographic region must be located within one or more coastal states or territories as defined in the Coastal Zone Management Act. The region should be of a size and scope to demonstrate significant, tangible resilience and adaptation outcomes that benefit the region and local coastal communities.
- A region may include multiple parts of geographically connected states or tribal lands facing similar weather and climate impacts.
- Applicants should identify shared local and regional needs, priorities, challenges, and strategies being addressed.
- All applicants should ensure that relevant entities within the region are engaged in building resilience across states, counties, cities, and tribes. All proposals should build upon previous and ongoing efforts.
- NOAA encourages applications that benefit tribal lands or tribal priorities. A region may include tribal land.
- Successful applicants will use public engagement to inform planning efforts and build effective relationships between government entities and communities.
- Successful proposals will leverage scientific information, indigenous knowledge, and local knowledge and technical skills across a diverse group of organizations and sectors, including NOAA and other federal, state, tribal, and local government agencies.
- Leveraging opportunities may include previous or ongoing investments in resilience and adaptation.

3. Equity and Inclusion. All proposals should focus on advancing equity through meaningful community involvement in the identification and implementation of holistic, regional resilience and adaptation strategies. This requires co-development of the proposals with marginalized, underserved, and underrepresented communities to ensure benefits flow to them. These adaptation strategies and actions should include tribes, tribal priorities, and indigenous knowledge.

4. Enduring Capacity. “Enduring capacity” means sustaining a level of community readiness that promotes continuous adaptation to changing weather and climate, including developing and maintaining workforce capabilities and capacities.

- Applicants should focus on building adaptation capacity that can be sustained into the future, to include community-based organizations and marginalized, underserved, and underrepresented communities.
- Successful proposals will include efforts to extend benefits beyond the proposed region through information sharing.

TRACK ONE: REGIONAL COLLABORATIVE BUILDING AND STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT

Successful applicants will receive **\$500,000 to \$2,000,000** to support resilience and adaptation using regionally-scaled coordination, engagement, planning, advancement of equitable outcomes, and capacity building. **Typical award amount is anticipated to be \$1,000,000.** NOAA anticipates selecting between 20-25 winning collaboratives, but may select more or less based on the merits of the applications. Total funding for all Track One awards may be up to \$25 million.

Regional Collaboratives. Funding under Track One supports the development and operation of regional collaboratives to generate transformational resilience and adaptation strategies for coastal communities, including those that have been marginalized, underserved, or underrepresented. NOAA strongly encourages new collaboratives to form and apply. Existing collaboratives are also encouraged to apply and build upon current efforts and expand involvement to new collaborators and partners.

- Each collaborative must identify an eligible entity that can apply for and receive federal funds if the application is selected for funding.
- The regional collaborative itself is not required to be a legal entity, although this funding could be used to support establishment as a new legal entity.

Resilience Vision. Applicants should have a unified vision for increasing resilience at a regional scale. This shared vision should reflect the interests of relevant coastal tribes and jurisdictions, (e.g., states, territories, counties, parishes, cities, towns, villages, tribal lands, and culturally significant areas). This vision and the preliminary strategies and activities needed to advance that vision should be clearly articulated in the letter of intent and, if selected, the full application. This funding can support further development of the vision and strategy, including necessary coordination, engagement, and planning.

Engagement. Engagement must include convening multiple stakeholders from the public and private sectors (e.g., federal, state, and local agencies; tribes and tribal organizations; non-governmental organizations; community-based organizations; and business and industry) and include marginalized, underserved, or underrepresented communities.

Collaborators and Partners. The regional collaborative should have a clear and shared sense of the need for action, as well as a willingness to engage in a collaborative process that links diverse interests to achieve shared goals in a regional setting. Collaboratives should include or engage with representatives from relevant jurisdictions and sectors.

Demonstrating Progress. Track One funding will support the building and strengthening of collaboratives toward identifying joint actions that advance the region's climate resilience and adaptation. Applicants should include a clear strategy for making significant progress toward implementing adaptation actions within two years. See page nine of the official notice of funding opportunity for examples of milestones that would reflect this progress.

Examples of Eligible Track One Activities
Establishing and expanding durable regional partnerships, including organizational development of a regional collaborative, identifying strategies and actions, and strategic planning;
Conducting outreach and communication activities related to regional resilience and adaptation;
Convening inclusive and accessible engagement activities to enhance the breadth of the collaborative teams, especially with marginalized, underserved, and underrepresented communities;
Analyzing risk, vulnerability, and adaptation actions for the region and conducting related assessments;
Planning for the implementation of equitable resilience and adaptation actions, including integration with other planning efforts;
Undertaking the environmental and engineering reviews needed to support future resilience and adaptation actions;
Developing and implementing laws, regulations, and policies related to resilience and adaptation actions;
Identifying and pursuing funding and financing options for resilience and adaptation actions;
Identifying the workforce requirements to implement resilience and adaptation actions into the future;
Developing and implementing training and capacity building for resilience and adaptation in coastal communities, especially for marginalized, underserved, and underrepresented communities;
Designing, planning, and implementing performance management and evaluation activities related to the collaborative partnerships; and
Pursuing other activities essential to moving forward with regional coastal resilience and adaptation activities.

TRACK TWO: IMPLEMENTATION OF RESILIENCE AND ADAPTATION ACTIONS

Track Two supports implementation of transformational resilience and adaptation strategies and associated actions. Applicants must propose a suite of complementary adaptation actions that build the resilience of multiple coastal communities, including those that have been marginalized, underserved, or underrepresented. Applicants can apply for **not less than \$15,000,000 and not more than \$75,000,000**. NOAA anticipates that most awards will be between \$25,000,000 and \$50,000,000. NOAA expects to award no more than 15 Track Two awards. Total funding available for all Track Two awards is up to \$550,000,000.

Funding under Track Two supports transformational resilience and adaptation actions that are ready for implementation and will reduce risk and vulnerability in coastal areas while advancing equity. Successful applicants will use the funding for adaptation actions (approximately three to eight) that collectively

- extend benefits beyond the boundaries of one town and avoid detrimental consequences for others;
- are holistic and provide co-benefits; and
- provide equitable outcomes that benefit the entire community, including marginalized, underserved, or underrepresented residents.

The following factors should be considered for Track Two efforts:

- Applicants for Track Two funding may be a regional collaborative or a single entity. All applicants for Track Two funding should be committed to working closely with relevant partners, including representatives of underserved communities.

- The collective vision of the collaborators should be clearly identified in the letter of intent and full application.
- The adaptation actions should align with the overall climate resilience and adaptation vision for the region and be developed through engagement with multiple stakeholders, especially those that have been marginalized, underserved, and underrepresented.
- The proposed suite of actions should measurably reduce risk, build resilience, and provide benefits to those that are most at risk. Applicants must include metrics for risk reduction.
- Applicants should propose ways to build enduring capacity for equitable adaptation and include activities meant to share lessons learned with other regions.
- Proposed adaptation actions can include nature-based and hybrid green and gray actions, but should also provide co-benefits (e.g. improving public health, reducing pollution burden, enhancing habitat, providing access to natural areas).
- Applicants should consider the workforce requirements for successful implementation of the adaptation actions, to possibly include the development of training programs or other capacity-building services.

Examples of Eligible Track Two Activities
Planning (including design and permitting) and construction of natural infrastructure that reduces weather and climate impacts;
Acquiring land to reduce the impacts of weather and climate and to protect coastal habitats and communities;
Strengthening or protecting public access to ocean and coastal resources and related activities, including working waterfronts;
Pursuing new or updated outreach and risk communication efforts;
Planning, designing, or preparing to implement community-led relocation efforts;
Advancing state, tribal, and local standards, policies, and codes to build resilience;
Acquiring coastal data and developing decision-support tools to inform resilience and adaptation actions;
Pursuing hybrid green (natural) and gray (structural) projects, including the modifications of public infrastructure to deliver multiple benefits and return significant positive impact for the long term;
Establishing resilience hub(s) that use pre-existing facilities to support residents and coordinate resource distribution and services before, during, or after a natural hazard event;
Develop and implement performance measurement, monitoring, evaluation, or reporting mechanisms;
Efforts that support relevant workforce needs, in line with Department of Commerce's best practices ; and
Activities under Track One that support the implementation of adaptation actions.

Note: There are very specific requirements related to **construction** and **land acquisition**. We recommend looking at sections within the Notice of Funding Opportunity that speak to these requirements (pages 10, 11, 12-13, 24, 27, 30-31, 33, 35-36, 39-40, 59-62).

Cost Sharing or Matching Requirement: There is no matching requirement, but applicants are encouraged to leverage other funds or in-kind contributions from a broad range of other public and private funding sources. The budget narrative should describe any sources of leveraged funds and in-kind services to identify leveraging opportunities and any associated challenges.

Letter of Intent Guidance

For this funding competition, a letter of intent is required before submitting a full proposal. This letter should provide a concise description of the proposed work and its relevance to program priorities. NOAA will invite applicants to submit a full proposal if their letter of intent strongly aligns with the program priorities and includes the required components listed below.

The required letters of intent shall be sent to resiliencechallenge@noaa.gov with “NOAA Climate Resilience Regional Challenge – Letter of Intent” as the subject line. Letters of intent must be received by electronic mail by 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time on August 21, 2023. See pages 21 to 23 of the full notice of funding opportunity for a complete description of the information required on the letter of intent cover page and in the body of the letter. A [letter of intent template](#) is available.

Full Application Guidance

Applicants should submit full applications through [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov). If necessary, applicants may provide an original paper copy of their full application by mail.

Invited full applications must be postmarked, provided to a delivery service, or received by [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov) by **11:59 p.m. Eastern Time on February 13, 2024**. See pages 23 to 37 of the full notice of funding opportunity for a complete description of the information required. In addition to the federal application forms found on [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov), applications must include the following five files (PDF files only):

PDF 1. Project Summary (three-page limit)

PDF 2. Project Narrative (25-page limit), including:

- Background;
- Overall Resilience Vision, Strategies, and Activities;
- Framework for Collaboration;
- Engagement, Workforce Development, and Knowledge Transfer;
- Strategy for Advancing Equity and Support for Underserved Communities; and
- Evaluation.

PDF 3. Budget Narrative (no page limit).

PDF 4. Supplemental Materials, Appendices (50-page limit recommended).

PDF 5. Letters of Support and Collaboration (no page limit).

Disclaimers

- Applicants are strongly encouraged to begin the application process through [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov). All interested parties should immediately register at [SAM.gov](https://www.sam.gov) or check that their previous registration is up to date.
- NOAA will not accept applications requesting less than \$500,000 or more than \$75,000,000.

- Applicants should submit a proposal for a Track One or Track Two grant based on the evaluation criteria. If not, NOAA will identify the category when reviewing the application. The exact amount of funds will be determined in pre-award negotiations between the applicant and NOAA. NOAA may reduce the scope and budget of a proposed award.
- Selected applications will be funded through cooperative agreements (described in 31 U.S.C. 6305 and 2 C.F.R. 200.1). NOAA expects to be substantially involved in many aspects of the awards.
- The exact funding, scope of activities, project duration, NOAA involvement with specific activities, and other relevant application details will be determined in pre-award negotiations among the applicant, NOAA Grants Management Division, and NOAA Office for Coastal Management officials.
- Per 2 CFR 200.458, NOAA authorizes award recipients to expend pre-award costs up to 90 days before the period of performance start date, at the applicant’s risk, without approval from NOAA and in accordance with the applicant’s internal policies and procedures. Incurring pre-award costs before the NOAA Grants Management Division provides an award document is at the applicant’s own risk.
- Letters of support from NOAA employees are not allowed.

Reporting: Award recipients will be required to submit financial and performance progress reports on a semi-annual schedule.

Definitions

- › “**Resilience**” is defined as the ability of a coastal community to prepare and plan for, absorb impacts of, recover from, and more successfully adapt to hazardous weather and climate change.
- › “**Adaptation**” refers to adjustments in ecological, social, or economic systems in response to actual or expected climatic changes and the resulting impacts.
- › “**Regional collaborative**” or “**collaborative**” or “**collaborative teams**” are interchangeable terms; each is defined as a group of individuals or entities with a unified vision for resilience who choose to apply to this grant opportunity together. Collaboratives are collaborators with a unified vision for resilience and are led by or include locally-oriented institutions and governments. This group shares adjacent or overlapping geographical interests or administrative boundaries, and may benefit from the same natural, social, economic, and infrastructure systems. Applicants to Track One must be collaboratives. Applicants to Track Two may be collaboratives.
- › “**Collaborator**” is defined as an eligible entity who contributes substantially to the regional team’s overall strategic direction and decision-making, and is committed to long-term interactions based on shared missions and goals. Collaborators may receive federal funds as the lead recipient, or through subawards and contracts, or may participate without federal funding. Collaborative teams in Track One must have collaborators and regional implementation; efforts under Track Two may have collaborators.
- › “**Partners**” are individuals and entities that are supportive of the proposed effort but do not participate in overall decision-making and do not commit to regular and sustained engagement in collaborative activities. Applicants to both Track One and Track Two may have partners. If the applicant to Track Two is not a collaborative, it must have strong partners. In both Track One and Track Two, partners may receive funds through subawards or contracts from the applicant, or may participate without federal funding.

- ▶ “**Equity**” means the consistent and systematic fair, just, and impartial treatment of all individuals, including individuals who belong to underserved communities that have been previously denied such treatment (E.O. 13985).
- ▶ “**Underserved communities**” refers to populations sharing a particular characteristic, or geographic communities that have been systematically denied a full opportunity to participate in aspects of economic, social, and civic life (E.O. 13985).
- ▶ “**Marginalized**” refers to populations excluded from mainstream social, economic, educational, or cultural life. Examples of marginalized populations include, but are not limited to, groups excluded due to race, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, physical ability, language, or immigration status (National Institutes of Health).
- ▶ “**Underrepresented**” means a population that is typically underrepresented in service provision, and includes populations such as persons who are minorities, poor persons, persons with limited English proficiency, older individuals, or persons from rural areas (see 29 U.S.C., 3002(18)).
- ▶ “**Environmental justice**” means the just treatment and meaningful involvement of all people, regardless of income, race, color, national origin, tribal affiliation, or disability, in agency decision-making and other federal activities that affect human health and the environment.
- ▶ “**Disadvantaged communities**” is defined by the Council on Environmental Quality as those communities that are marginalized, underserved, and overburdened by pollution, and are identified by the [Climate and Economic Justice Screen Tool](#). NOAA uses the phrase ‘**marginalized, underserved, and underrepresented**’ throughout the notice of funding opportunity, and encompasses the concepts of environmental justice and disadvantaged communities.

Evaluation Criteria

See pages 41 to 43 of the full [notice of funding opportunity](#) for a complete description of the evaluation criteria for a Letter of Intent and pages 43 to 49 for the full application.

Additional Information and Questions

- For additional information on the NOAA Climate Resilience Regional Challenge program, visit coast.noaa.gov/funding/ira/resilience-challenge.
- For administrative or technical questions regarding this announcement, contact the grants coordinator for NOAA’s Office for Coastal Management at resiliencechallenge@noaa.gov.