

# DISASTER PREPAREDNESS FOR COASTAL COMMUNITIES

For the third year in a row, NOAA's Office Response and Restoration Disaster Preparedness Program and National Sea Grant College Program (Sea Grant) are partnering to support coastal communities to prepare for, respond to and recover from natural or human-caused disasters. A total of \$791,395 in fiscal year 2024 federal funds is anticipated to support four projects over two years in Alaska, Connecticut, the Northern Gulf of Mexico region and South Carolina, focused on strengthening local disaster readiness and recovery in underserved communities.

## **Enhancing landslide warning system and awareness in southeast Alaska**

Alaska Sea Grant

PI: Allison Rice

Federal funding: \$200,000

This project will contribute to the creation of an innovative regional landslide warning system for Southeast Alaska, bringing critical and lifesaving information to a severely underserved region. This project will be an extension of work using models recently developed in Sitka, Alaska by the Sitka Sound Science Center in partnership with Central Council Tlingit and Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska and six communities in the region, which helps communities prepare for landslide and other geohazard events and prevent the loss of human life. It extends that work by adding two additional communities, Wrangell and Petersburg, that recently experienced fatal or disruptive landslides.

**Filling the emergency preparedness gap for older and underserved populations in select coastal Connecticut communities**

Connecticut Sea Grant

PI: Nancy Balcom

Federal funding: \$198,126

This project will develop an emergency preparedness programing, training and partnership platform to be piloted in the cities of Stamford, West Haven and New London, Connecticut that will provide preparedness instructions, supplies and companionship/ambassador training in support of aging residents and their caregivers to ensure they are properly equipped ahead of weather events. After identifying and supporting the current and anticipated preparedness needs of this population, a system of long-term preparedness support for aging community members that can be expanded to other coastal communities will be established.

**Enhancing capacity for risk communication in Vietnamese-American communities**

Mississippi-Alabama Sea Grant Consortium

PI: Tracie Sempier

Federal funding: \$191,482

This project aims to improve the ability of underserved Vietnamese-American communities in the Northern Gulf of Mexico (Mississippi, Alabama, Louisiana) to manage impacts from natural and anthropogenic disasters. In partnership with Boat People SOS, this effort will increase awareness among weather communicators regarding the language and cultural barriers faced by Vietnamese-American communities and equip them with strategies to effectively address gaps in their communication efforts.

**Identifying adaptation and limits in the face of persistent river and coastal flooding and its impacts on the Gullah communities**

South Carolina Sea Grant Consortium

PI: Lori Pennington-Gray

Federal funding: \$198,187

This project will evaluate and enhance the resilience of the Gullah communities—one historically marginalized group from South Carolina that is facing increased social vulnerabilities due to persistent flooding. Researchers will assess the efficacy of existing adaptation measures to flooding that protect the communities' physical and cultural integrity, particularly on Sandy Island and St. Helena. Through mixed-method research, including oral histories and policy analysis, the project will forge culturally informed, sustainable adaptation strategies, which will be shared in detailed reports, outreach presentations, and resource manuals for officials, outlining new adaptation approaches that respect Gullah traditions.

**CONTACTS**

Jessica White  
NOAA Disaster Preparedness Program  
jessica.white@noaa.gov

Kelly Samek  
NOAA National Sea Grant Office  
kelly.samek@noaa.gov