



Concept Note: Coastal Resilience Regional Advisory Board (RAB)

Overview:

The Center for Sea Rise Solutions (CSRS) is committed to enhancing coastal resilience among local decision-makers around the United States. Our mission revolves around fostering collaboration, knowledge exchange, and innovative solutions to address the challenges posed by sea level rise and climate change impacts in coastal communities.

Over the last 2 years we have conducted discovery workshops across the United States in Savannah, GA; Tampa, FL, Sausalito, CA, and Providence, RI. We have also led international collaboration sessions in France, Portugal, and Spain designed to test our understanding of why more communities have not yet taken action towards coastal resilience. Our key learnings have distilled causation into 3 main obstacles:

1. Lack of funding, to get beyond planning to shovel ready
2. Lack of expertise, engineering, grant writing etc.
3. Difficulty accessing key stakeholder groups, and delivering equitable decision making

For more information please see, e.g. Tampa workshop findings [here](#) and 2023 Brown workshop agenda [here](#)).

Problem Statement:

The efficacy of solutions to address sea-level rise is often limited by jurisdictional boundaries. Effective strategies to combat sea-level rise typically extend across these boundaries, necessitating a unified regional and multijurisdictional strategy. If sea level rise adaptation isn't planned together, jurisdictions can potentially harm their neighbors by pushing floodwaters from one part of the Bay to another. This reality requires us to work together in completely new ways. Cities and counties around a region can have different levels of risk and resources to address these challenges. Regional coordination can ensure nobody gets left behind and that vulnerable places, particularly those with underrepresented and underserved communities, have resources and plans in place to protect themselves and prepare for the future.

Proposal:

The establishment of Coastal Resilience Regional Advisory Boards (RAB) is integral to achieving our mission. RABs can serve as multi-disciplinary advisory bodies composed of seasoned experts and specialists, offering tailored support and guidance to communities within

one of four regions in the United States: West Coast, New England, Eastern Seaboard, Gulf of Mexico.

This concept note seeks funding to launch the first of four regional advisory boards. We propose that the first RAB be launched on the West Coast, and then used as a framework for developing a second RAB in partnership with Brown University as follow up to our prior work in October 2023.

Objectives:

1. **Expert Guidance:** The RAB will provide live technical expertise to assist decision-makers in identifying and implementing effective coastal resilience solutions.
2. **Resource Navigation:** It will guide communities towards relevant funding sources, technical resources, and skill sets necessary for resilience initiatives.
3. **Program Evaluation:** The RAB will evaluate proposals and initiatives generated by communities or external sources, ensuring their alignment with regional goals and feasibility.
4. **Knowledge Sharing:** The RAB will facilitate the exchange of best practices, innovative approaches, and lessons learned among communities to enhance collective resilience efforts.
5. **Coordination Hub:** The RAB will serve as a central hub for connecting community members, decision-makers, and resources, thereby fostering collaboration and coordination across the region.

Structure: Designed and managed by the CSRS team, each RAB will comprise a diverse group of individuals with expertise in various fields relevant to coastal resilience, including but not limited to climate science, engineering, urban planning, environmental policy, and community engagement. Members will be selected based on their experience, expertise, and commitment to the mission of enhancing coastal resilience in one of four regions around the United States by the Center for Sea Rise Solutions team and a group of advisors.

Implementation: Through the coordination of the Center for Sea Rise Solutions dedicated team, the RAB will convene regularly to review and provide guidance on resilience initiatives, proposals, and challenges faced by communities across the region. Through CSRS' RAB infrastructure, it will establish communication channels to facilitate ongoing support and collaboration between members and communities. Additionally, the RAB may organize workshops, training sessions, and knowledge-sharing events to further support capacity building and innovation in coastal resilience.

Program Activities and Operational Actions for the Coastal Resilience Regional Advisory Boards may include:

(NOTE: All activities are managed by the CSRS to ensure consistent and engaging RAB membership experience)

1. Virtual Sessions:

- Four virtual sessions annually, eventually inviting all regional RAB members to participate.
 - i. Each session will focus on a specific theme or topic related to coastal resilience, allowing members to share thoughts, ideas, feedback, and learnings.
 - ii. Facilitate open discussions and interactive sessions to encourage collaboration and knowledge exchange among members.
 - iii. In each virtual session, incorporate guest speakers or presentations to provide insights into relevant issues or case studies.
- 2. Ongoing Newsletters + Actions:
 - Manage ongoing newsletters to keep RAB members updated on relevant news, events, and actions across each participating region
 - i. Include highlights from previous meetings, upcoming opportunities, and resources for further learning.
 - Through ongoing communications, encourage members to share success stories, challenges, and opportunities from their respective communities.
 - Provide actionable items or calls to action to engage members in ongoing initiatives or projects.
- 3. Ongoing Webinars and Programming for Cross-Regional Learning:
 - Organize ongoing webinars and programming to facilitate cross-regional learning and communication across each participating region.
 - i. Cover a range of topics relevant to coastal resilience, such as best practices, emerging technologies, policy updates, and community engagement strategies.
 - ii. Invite experts and practitioners to present on specific topics and facilitate discussions among RAB members.
 - iii. Incorporate interactive elements, such as Q&A sessions or breakout groups, to encourage engagement and collaboration.