



CLIMATE READY AMERICA



HELPING COMMUNITIES ADDRESS THE CAUSES AND IMPACTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE, REGARDLESS OF THEIR LOCATION, SIZE, OR WEALTH

A Nationwide System of Climate Services

Climate Ready America is a proposal for a nationwide system of climate support services to help communities do their part to address climate change. It creates a civic infrastructure that will partner with the federal government to leverage and support the climate mitigation and adaptation programs of federal agencies and other organizations, helping those tools reach the ground. This system will also gather critical information regarding emerging community needs for research and tools to be developed by federal and state agencies, academic institutions, and other organizations.

State-specific **Climate Innovation Centers** in all fifty states and Puerto Rico/US Virgin Islands will help local governments reduce greenhouse gas emissions and adapt to changing climate conditions. They will:

- help communities develop socially equitable, ecologically sound climate solutions;
- be led by a **Climate Leadership Circle** made up of existing climate service organizations in each state;
- be hosted by the state-wide institution best suited to the task;
- strengthen and build on existing climate service capacity in each state;
- provide a one-stop-shop for communities seeking help taking climate action;
- be supported by **Regional Support Teams** of experts from agencies, academia, and nonprofits;
- be networked with each other to support rapid uptake of successful innovation; and
- gather data on emerging needs and climate action to monitor progress on national climate targets.

A **National Strategy Team** will provide support to the entire system and develop system-wide partnerships with the federal government and other national and international entities.

Our team conducted a 50-state Landscape Analysis to understand what climate services already exist and how to knit them together into a cohesive system. This proposed system is the result of 18 months of collaborative work building on that analysis with federal agencies, state governments, academic institutions, nonprofits, and local governments. It has been received enthusiastically by all audiences to date.



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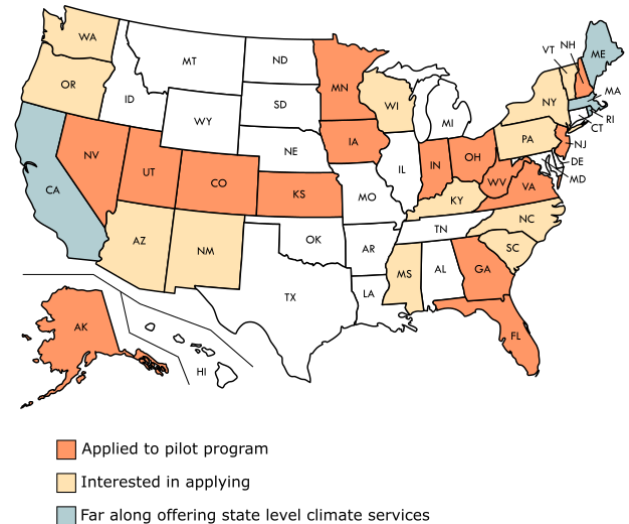


The Demonstration Program

Climate Ready America is actively engaged with 31 states and reaching out to others. This past spring, Geos Institute issued a nationwide call for state governments and state-level organizations to pilot (demonstrate) various pathways to develop Climate Innovation Centers. We received proposals from state governments or state-wide organizations in 15 states, another 12 are ready to apply, and four already have state level climate service programs in place.

Five states have been selected to demonstrate different pathways for creating Climate Innovation Centers:

Georgia (nonprofit host), **Indiana** (academic host), **Utah** (Extension Service host), **New Hampshire** (in-state regional approach) and a state government that cannot be publicly announced until funding is secured and their legislature has accepted it. The purpose of this phase is to learn lessons about different Climate Innovation Center pathways to help the states that follow move quickly from planning to launch as they enter the program. If sufficient funding is available, the next 15 states will begin their planning process as the initial five pilots complete their planning and launch their centers.



Timeline

The most ambitious timeline has all Climate Innovation Centers launched within two years with the National Strategy Team and Regional Support Teams operating nationwide and a public-private partnership in place with the federal government. Each Climate Innovation Center will go through a six-month planning process followed by a six-month launch process before moving into an annual maintenance phase.

A deep understanding of human systems is needed in this effort, particularly during the rapid expansion of the first two years. The timeline accommodates the need for the Climate Leadership Circle in each state to form, identify anchors and gaps in climate services in their state, develop a strategic plan for the first three years of operation, and launch or be prepared to launch their Climate Innovation Center. The operational structure for the Climate Ready America program includes expert assistance to develop and support the National Strategy Team and Regional Support Teams, establish an effective public-private partnership with the federal government, and help the Climate Leadership Circles in each state prepare and launch their Climate Innovation Centers.



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Resources Needed

Funding needed depends on how quickly these Climate Innovation Centers are established across the nation. Given the escalating climate impacts and the potential for these centers to assist the federal government in making the best use of its climate investments over the next several years, the figures in this document represent an aggressive two-year timeline.

This proposed timeline requires \$12.3 million in year one, \$42.5 million in year two, and \$86 million annually from year three on. The federal government is the only entity likely to make a sustainable investment of this size, but Geos Institute is continuing to approach private philanthropy to secure funding to plan the demonstration pilot projects. Seed funding of \$450,000 is needed for a six-month planning process to prepare the five pilots for launch.

Operational Structure

The civic infrastructure of the Climate Ready America system must be built and maintained in such a way that it is responsive to the needs of federal agencies, communities, and climate practitioners across the nation, while being insulated from shifting political winds. We believe the best way to do this is through a federally funded nonprofit organization that receives and disseminates the funding for the National Strategy Team, the Regional Support Teams, and the state governments and statewide organizations that host the Climate Innovation Centers. This organization will provide organizational support to the entire system and accountability to Congress, while identifying and addressing obstacles in the system as it evolves over time. Importantly, Climate Ready America will be an innovative demonstration of a shared leadership model that will be inclusive and broadly representative across the field of climate expertise.

Geos Institute

For 14 years the Geos Institute team has been a leader in the climate resilience field, helping develop best practices and building capacity to meet increasing demand for climate services from communities. More information about Climate Ready America can be found [at our website](#), including the initial [concept paper](#), a [statement of principles](#) for a nationwide system of climate services, and the latest [white paper](#) with more details about how to build this network given the urgency with which we must act.

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