



For Immediate Release

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Climate Ready America Looks to Expand Nationwide After Demonstrating Success in the Southeast

More than 226 resilience projects and growing partnerships demonstrate a scalable model that could help communities across the U.S. prepare for climate impacts.

September 9, 2026 — Building on a successful Southeast launch, Geos Institute is expanding Climate Ready America nationwide to help communities prepare for climate impacts that increasingly threaten homes, infrastructure, public health, local economies, and natural resources. While local leaders recognize the need to prepare for these impacts, many struggle to access the expertise, funding, technical assistance, and partnerships needed to take effective action. Climate Ready America is being built to close that gap.

Developed by Geos Institute with support from Walmart Foundation, Mosaic Fund, and CO2 Foundation, Climate Ready America is building a nationwide climate services system designed to connect communities with the resources, knowledge, and support they need to reduce climate risks and strengthen resilience. Following a successful demonstration phase in the Southeast, the initiative is now preparing for expansion into additional states, and ultimately nationwide implementation.

Since launching in late 2023, Climate Ready America has delivered real world climate support to communities in Georgia, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Florida—states facing significant climate risks and rapidly growing populations. Through its innovative Navigator Network and collaborative partnerships, the initiative has helped communities accelerate planning, secure resources, and implement practical climate solutions.

Climate Ready America takes a systems approach to resilience, aligning organizations, service providers, government agencies, researchers, funders, and local leaders into a coordinated network. The initiative reduces duplication, identifies gaps, strengthens partnerships, and helps communities access proven solutions more efficiently.

At the center of the model are Navigators—experienced climate professionals embedded within trusted state-based partner organizations. Navigators work directly with local governments, community organizations, and other stakeholders to identify priorities, connect communities with resources, facilitate partnerships, and support project development.

Navigators are supported by Climate Innovation Centers, statewide hubs that bring together climate expertise, tools, training, funding opportunities, technical assistance, and a staffed Help Desk. These Centers create a coordinated support system that enables communities of all sizes to access the services they need to advance local climate action.

Climate Ready America's impact to date includes:

- More than 226 community climate resilience and mitigation projects initiated
- Support provided to 64 communities and jurisdictions
- More than \$7 million in funding and pro bono services leveraged
- \$548,000 directed to 34 community projects
- Development of Climate Insights, an AI-powered climate planning and resilience support tool
- Creation of the first Climate Innovation Center, scheduled to launch in Georgia through partnerships with the Georgia Conservancy, University of Georgia, and a Leadership Circle of climate service organizations
- Engagement of more than 280 government staff and elected officials in resilience planning conversations
- Training provided to more than 130 local government staff and officials in climate resilience strategies and solutions
- Partnerships developed with organizations positioned to host Climate Innovation Centers and/or Navigators in 46 states and three U.S. territories as funding becomes available

Over the past two years, we've seen communities across the Southeast turn climate concerns into meaningful action," said Tonya Graham, Executive Director of Geos Institute. "Through the support from Climate Ready America, local leaders have secured resources, built new partnerships, and advanced projects that make their communities more resilient. The lessons we've learned and the outcomes we've achieved in the Southeast demonstrate the value of this approach and its potential to help communities across the country prepare for a changing climate."

Climate Ready America's value extends beyond individual projects by also helping organizations better understand the challenges communities face and where additional support is needed. “Hosting a Climate Ready America Navigator has strengthened our ability to connect what we do with real-world community needs,” said Andrew Predmore, Executive Director, Shi Institute for Sustainable Communities at Furman University. “The Navigator works directly with local leaders in South Carolina to identify challenges, opportunities, and emerging priorities. That on-the-ground engagement not only helps communities advance their resilience projects, it also informs our work, ensuring it is relevant, actionable, and responsive to the needs of the people we serve.”

“We were drawn to Climate Ready America because it transforms investment into lasting community capacity,” said Brooks Nelson, Director, Walmart Foundation. “This model helps communities move from planning to implementation while building the partnerships and local leadership needed for long-term success. That combination of immediate action, measurable outcomes, and scalability makes it a powerful model for expanding climate resilience across the country.”

With strong results emerging from the Southeast, Climate Ready America is now working with partners across the country to expand the initiative and ensure communities everywhere can access the support needed to prepare for a changing climate.

Geos Institute is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization with a mission to build innovative systems to help communities access the support services they need to address the climate crisis, regardless of their size, location, or wealth. For more information on Geos Institute and Climate Ready America, see www.geosinstitute.org.

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