

CLIMATE ADAPTATION BARRIERS AND NEEDS EXPERIENCED BY NORTHWEST COASTAL TRIBES

Key Findings from
Tribal Listening Sessions

AUGUST 2024

The coasts of Oregon and Washington are home to over two dozen Tribal nations, each contending with climate impacts including sea level rise, ocean acidification, extreme heat events, increasing wildfire risk and declining snowpack. The Northwest Climate Resilience Collaborative held a series of listening sessions with government staff, citizens, and elected officials from Northwest coastal Tribes to better understand the barriers and unmet needs they experience in responding to these and other climate risks. A summary of these barriers and needs are presented here, with additional detail and resources available in the full report, linked below.

SUMMARY OF KEY BARRIERS AND NEEDS



FUNDING

Barrier: Northwest coastal Tribes face persistent funding barriers in addressing climate risks. These include insufficient funding relative to Tribal needs, rigid rules that make it difficult for Tribes to flexibly allocate funds as needed, strict qualification criteria that limit Tribal access to funds, short-term funding cycles that are disruptive to long-term staffing and project needs, and misalignment of funds with Tribal priorities.

Needs:

- A considerable increase in the amount of available funding to meet the scale of adaptation required by coastal Tribes.
- More generalized and flexible sources of funding to maximize Tribal autonomy and responsiveness in allocating funds and reduce administrative burdens.
- Fewer stringent qualification requirements, including less burdensome match or personnel requirements, to make funding more accessible to Tribes.
- More long-term funding to make applying for funding and supporting efforts associated with new funding, such as hiring staff, worth the effort and to minimize disruptions to adaptation activities due to a lack of funding continuity.
- Funding that is better aligned with Tribal priorities, rather than the priorities of funding entities, to support community-driven priorities and the incorporation of Indigenous Knowledges.



STAFF & WORKFORCE CAPACITY

Barrier: Most Northwest coastal Tribal governments do not have adequate and consistent staff capacity to address climate adaptation priorities.

Needs:

- Tribal staff to meet the level of capacity required for effective adaptation planning and implementation.
- Support for permanent staff positions to minimize disruptions to adaptation capacity and activities associated with frequent staff turnover.
- Dedicated climate resilience staff to provide necessary expertise and focus on climate issues and prevent Tribal staff time from being pulled from other vital government functions.
- Funding to develop affordable housing near Tribal administrative centers to support staff recruitment and retention.





PARTNERSHIPS & COLLABORATION

Barrier: Northwest coastal Tribes face numerous barriers in creating and maintaining effective partnerships with federal, state and local governments; universities; nongovernmental organizations and other non-Tribal entities. Such partnerships are critical for bolstering Tribal adaptation efforts through leveraging collective capacity and resources.

Needs:

- Coordination among state and federal agencies to reduce the burden Tribes face in engaging with a wide range of disparate entities to respond to climate-related consultation requests and address adaptation needs.
- Transparent, government-to-government Tribal consultation processes that respect Tribal sovereignty while upholding the federal trust responsibility, federal reserved rights, treaty rights, and Tribal adaptation interests.
- Development of consistent, mutually agreed upon, free prior and informed consent protocols between non-Tribal partners and a given Tribe to reduce risks to Tribal information and community members.
- Partnering with Tribes and developing relationships before projects begin to help ensure Tribal values and priorities are incorporated into projects and collaborations from the outset.



TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE & CLIMATE SERVICES

Barrier: Insufficient technical assistance in the form of climate and other relevant expertise, services and data remains a significant barrier to climate adaptation for Northwest coastal Tribes.

Needs:

- Localized climate and environmental data and associated technical assistance to support Tribal climate adaptation decision-making.
- Technical expertise and services for a range of other, related fields (e.g., engineering, project management) to support Tribes' adaptation planning and implementation.
- Opportunities (e.g., funding and/or training) to build technical expertise and staff capacity internally among Tribal governments and citizens to ensure continuity of institutional knowledge and long-term capacity to address adaptation needs.



COMMUNICATION, EDUCATION AND OUTREACH

Barrier: Northwest coastal Tribes face numerous barriers in communicating their adaptation concerns, needs and priorities to both Tribal citizens and external audiences.

Needs:

- Enhanced mechanisms for Tribes to communicate climate impacts and adaptation information to engage and build support for adaptation within their jurisdictions, communities and areas of interest.
- Tribe-specific climate adaptation communication, outreach and education programs to increase community awareness and support of adaptation priorities.
- Effective communication among Northwest coastal Tribes around climate adaptation to drive regional adaptation efforts, leverage partnerships and increase support from Tribal citizens and external partners.
- Communication and education products that provide a common climate adaptation language to reduce potential for confusion and misinterpretation and increase understanding within and between Tribes and external partners.

This report was developed as part of the Northwest Climate Resilience Collaborative, a NOAA Climate Adaptation Partnerships (CAP) Program.

To access the full report, *Climate Adaptation Barriers and Needs Experienced by Northwest Coastal Tribes: Key Findings from Tribal Listening Sessions*, scan the QR code or visit: <https://tinyurl.com/4pdb2kmv>

