

PROJECT: Assessing Sea Level Rise Adaptation Planning at the Local Level in Florida
RECIPIENT: Florida State University
FCMP FUNDS: \$49,195.13

SUMMARY: Florida is at the apex of impacts associated with rising sea levels in the United States. Florida's 2,276 miles of coastline is lined with multiple major ports, dense urban centers, state parks and beaches and critically sensitive ecosystems. Rising sea levels accelerated by a changing climate put Florida's low lying social, economic and ecological assets at risk of inundation and land loss (FOCCC 2009; NOAA 2014). Research led by the Organization for Economic and Community Development (OECD) places the Miami (2) and Tampa (7) metropolitan regions among the top ten the most economically vulnerable regions in the world to coastal flooding associated with sea level rise and other climate change enhanced hazards (Hallegatte et al. 2013). Given these future impacts, the flood risk associated with sea level rise and coastal hazards is acute for many Florida communities and constitutes one of the most significant threats to coastal community resilience in the state. This project aims to assess the extent to which barriers remain in the way of Florida coastal communities engaging in adaptation planning and action and explore how they might be overcome. Florida's sea level rise planning context changed in 2015 with the Peril of Flood Act (PoFA) which requires local governments in coastal counties to assess sea level rise as one of the sources of flood risk that they face. To date, there has not been an assessment of what SLR adaptation planning actions have been taken or, equally importantly, what are in the works either in advance of or in response to the PoFA. This research will explore what local coastal communities in FL have done, what they are doing, and what they hope to do within the realm of SLR adaptation planning. It also seeks to identify what techniques and approaches they have been taking in planning for SLR, what support they have used, and to reflect on the support they envision needing. Finally, it will seek to identify the motivating factors that have led some communities to engage in planning and action that is beyond the bare minimum response to the act. The project team will conduct a comprehensive plan review of coastal communities throughout Florida, a survey of local government planners, and initial interviews with a select group of those planners to determine activities and capacity of FL coastal communities to plan for and address the threat of sea level rise in Florida.