

Rhode Island Sea Grant

Rhode Island Sea Grant's Community Engagement and Communications Fellowship

Overview

In our pursuit to support and train the next generation of coastal researchers, managers and leaders, Rhode Island Sea Grant (RISG) is excited to offer **three** graduate fellowship positions through our Community Engagement and Communications Fellowship Program in 2025. The purpose of this program is to provide students with hands-on opportunities to apply their knowledge to address real-world coastal management issues. Each fellowship opportunity will pair fellows with RISG-funded scientists, extension agents and state resources management professionals to develop solutions to the problems facing coastal and marine communities. Full descriptions of this year's fellowship positions can be found on the following page.

Fellowship opportunities for 2025 include:

1. RISG-Extension Resilient Communities and Economies Fellowship
2. RISG-Offshore Wind Energy Fellowship
3. RISG Communications Fellowship

About the Fellowship

This half-time fellowship provides employment for Spring 2025 and Fall 2025 semesters during which the student is expected to work on campus at the URI Narragansett Bay Campus. The fellowship package includes half tuition for the academic year and a 10 hour-per-week stipend. **The fellowship is open to URI graduate students with strong written and verbal skills. To be eligible, students must be enrolled as full-time graduate students between January 1 and December 31, 2025.**

Application and Selection Process

All applicants must complete and submit a 2025 [CEC Fellowship Application](#) including all requirements listed below.

Application packages must include (as PDF):

1. Applicant information including applicant name, contact information, academic program/department, name of major professor/graduate director and which fellowship is being applied for,
2. A one-page letter describing applicant interest in the fellowship, career goals and how the experience would enhance their career objectives,
3. At least two (2) original writing samples,
4. Resume/CV,
5. At least one letter of reference (can be submitted separately).

Application deadline: Friday November 8, 2023

Following the application deadline, applications will be reviewed by the Workforce Development Coordinator and RI Sea Grant staff. Strong applicants will be invited to interview with fellowship mentors and RISG staff in late November/early December 2024. Fellowship decisions will be finalized in mid-December. The fellowship will officially begin in January 2025.

2025 CEC Fellowship Opportunities

1. RISG-Extension Resilient Communities and Economies Fellowship

Coastal resilience in Rhode Island is of paramount importance due to the state's extensive coastline, vulnerability to sea-level rise, and the increasing frequency of extreme weather events. As one of the most densely populated states in the U.S., with a significant portion of its population living along the coast, RI faces unique challenges and opportunities in its efforts to enhance coastal resilience.

This fellow will support coastal resilience extension activities, with a focus on applying relevant science to supporting tools (e.g. flood maps, policy development) and actions at the local, and municipal level. The student will assist in the coastal resilience extension team's technical assistance that supports research, policy, GIS mapping/interactive Storymaps, decision support tools, and stakeholder engagement related to flooding and shoreline change from storms and rising seas. The student could assist in general work across multiple projects, and more specifically in the following ways:

- Support various aspects of the RI Climate Resilience Learning Network, an emerging community of practice that fosters knowledge exchange on enhancing climate community resilience against challenges. Team efforts include hosting webinars, compiling good practices for dissemination, or facilitating working group meetings.
- Assist the MyCoast participatory monitoring program, where volunteers photograph flooding and damage through data synthesis to better understand the trends, communicate the science through written and visual products, and create outreach products for volunteers and their communities to use for educating, decision-making, and taking action. Learn more at: mycoast.org/ri.
- Support activities to build the capacity of coastal municipalities and their residents, businesses, leaders, and decision-makers. This may include researching good practices or tools for sharing with partners, developing presentations/videos for user groups, and supporting workshops and engagement studios across the state to address adaptation options. Learn more about these initiatives on the Providing Resilience Education for Planning in RI website: prep-ri.org
- Support public outreach and engagement with local communities on coastal resilience efforts and assist in developing communication materials to support the coastal resilience program.
- Collaborate with Sea Grant extension, legal, research, and education portfolios in determining coastal community needs and opportunities.

2. RISG-Extension Offshore Wind Energy Fellowship

With the accelerated growth of ocean or "blue" economy activities such as Offshore Wind Energy (OWE), there is an increasing need to provide ocean and coastal practitioners, including Sea Grant extension staff across the country, with science and technical assistance. Our goal is to build their OWE capacities to serve constituencies – government, private sector, community, academia, students, advocacy and workforce development interests – competently and confidently. Among the key areas of effort for the extension team are implementing the National Sea Grant Offshore Wind Energy Liaison Initiative, providing the University of Rhode Island and the State with OWE and blue economy problem-solving support, and fostering the growth of opportunities for a diversity of students and jobseekers to potentially enter the quickly evolving blue economy and OWE workforces. This fellow will support this effort at 10 hours/week via activities that could include:

- Assistance with logistics and work surrounding the development and crafting of a needs assessment for the West Coast OWE Sea Grant practitioners.
- Developing materials and implementing tasks related to a project focused on understanding and mapping recreational fishing issues in the OWE arena locally and regionally.
- Support for the creation of the OWE podcast series to engage a broad constituency in OWE topics and issues, such as ocean viewsapes, shared use of ocean spaces, and diverse perspectives of the OWE arena.

3. RISG Communications Fellowship

Rhode Island Sea Grant Communications seeks to foster a diverse, environmentally literate public that participates in lifelong learning opportunities related to oceans and coasts. We do this through publication of *41°N*, Rhode Island's Ocean and Coastal Magazine, in partnership with the URI Coastal Institute; through our website and social media channels; through public events; and through working in partnership with our Sea Grant-funded researchers and our extension, legal, and education programs.

Rhode Island Sea Grant Communications seeks a Fellow who has strong writing abilities to create brief articles for our website and social media posts featuring our funded research, outreach, education, and legal programs, as well as to promote and cover events. The Fellow will do background reading/research, conduct interviews, and attend lectures and events to generate content for these articles. In addition, the Fellow will help organize and staff events and, depending on their skills and interests, provide photography, videography, fundraising, design, and/or marketing assistance as well. This Fellowship will provide the selected candidate with a variety of opportunities not only to learn and strengthen communications skills, but also to learn about a variety of coastal environmental and community issues and the research, education, and outreach that Rhode Island Sea Grant and partners are providing to address them.

About Rhode Island Sea Grant

Rhode Island Sea Grant is one of 34 programs in the National Sea Grant College Program working to enhance environmental stewardship and long-term economic development and responsible use of coastal and marine resources. Located at the URI Graduate School of Oceanography, Rhode Island Sea Grant supports research, outreach, and education programs designed to foster the resiliency of local and regional communities and marine environments. Rhode Island Sea Grant also partners with the University of Rhode Island Coastal Resources Center for our extension program, and with the Roger Williams University (RWU) School of Law on our legal program, located at the Marine Affairs Institute at RWU. The National Sea Grant College Program is a network of 34 programs nationwide representing partnerships between universities and the federal government's National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. Sea Grant directs federal resources to pressing problems in local communities by drawing on the experience of more than 3,000 scientists, engineers, public outreach experts, educators, and students from more than 300 institutions.

Questions? Please contact Kim Ohnemus, RISG Workforce Development Coordinator (kohnemus@uri.edu) with any questions or for help with your application.