

# Rhode Island Sea Grant

## **Rhode Island Sea Grant's Community Engagement and Communications Fellowship**

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### **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 **two** graduate fellowship positions through our Community Engagement and Communications Fellowship Program in 2026. 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.

RISG is offering two fellowship opportunities for 2026:

1. RISG-Extension Coastal Resilience Fellowship (Full-time, 20hrs/wk)
2. RISG-Extension Offshore Energy Communication Fellowship (Half-time, 10hrs/wk)

### **About the Fellowship**

This fellowship provides employment for Spring 2026 and Fall 2026 semesters during which the student is expected to work on campus at the URI Narragansett Bay Campus. **The fellowship is open to eligible URI graduate students with strong written and verbal skills and applicable interest/experience.** Both fellowship opportunities include either a half- or full-time student stipend and tuition support.

### **Eligibility requirements:**

- Student must be enrolled as a full-time graduate student between January and December 2026.
- Student must not have committed, full-time funding (20 hr/wk) for Spring 2026. This includes research and teaching fellowships/assistantships.
- Per university policy, graduate students cannot work over 20 hrs/wk without additional administrative approval.

### **Application and Selection Process**

All applicants must complete and submit a 2026 [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 fellowship preference.
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: Wednesday, November 5, 2025**

Following the application deadline, applications will be reviewed by the RI Sea Grant staff. Strong applicants will be invited to interview with fellowship mentors and RISG staff in November/early December 2025. Fellowship decisions will be finalized in mid-December. The fellowship will officially begin in January 2026.

## **2026 Fellowship Opportunities**

### **1. RISG-Extension Coastal Resilience Fellowship (Full-time, 20hrs/wk)**

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 tool 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 will 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 and sharing best practices and/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.
- Support activities to build the capacity of coastal municipalities and their residents, businesses, leaders, and decision-makers to meet changing coastal resilience needs. This may include researching good practices or tools, developing educational materials for user groups, and supporting workshops and engagement.
- 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.

**Desired Skills:** Familiarity with Geographic Information Services (GIS), Canva/design, science communication

### **2. RISG-Extension Offshore Energy Communications Fellowship (Half-time, 10 hrs/wk)**

With the accelerated growth of ocean or “blue” economy and activities such as offshore energy development, there is an increasing need to provide ocean and coastal practitioners, including Sea Grant extension staff across the country, with science and technical assistance. RISG's Offshore Energy team is looking to hire a half-time fellow to support the team with the development of digital communication products and to assist with engagement opportunities aimed at broadening knowledge-sharing and participation on these topics across local and national audiences.

This fellow will support these efforts at 10 hours/week via activities that could include:

- Fellow may help the OE team plan hands-on learning opportunities for various audiences to learn about the science behind energy in the state.
- Fellow may assist the OE team with rebuilding the Sea Grant Energy website as needed through Squarespace.

**Desired skills:** science communication; digital communication; web design; ability to work independently. Preferred: familiarity with offshore energy topics.

### **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

## 2026 RISG-CEC Fellowship

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](mailto:kohnemus@uri.edu)) with any questions or for help with your application. For more information on fellowship benefits and eligibility requirements, visit the [URI Graduate School](#) website.