

**Community Resiliency Informed by Science & Experience (C-RISE)  
Final Evaluation Report for Award #NA15SEC00080006  
by Endicott College Program Evaluation & Research Group  
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**Summative Evaluation Executive Summary**

The Community Resilience Informed by Science and Experience (C-RISE) program set out to engage citizens of the Greater Portland, ME area in an interactive learning experience that explores sea level rise and storm surge and these impacts on local communities. Designed and implemented by the Gulf of Maine Research Institute (GMRI), the main objective was to engage 1,000 citizens in an interactive presentation on the science of sea level rise and the impacts of rising waters and increasing and more intense weather events, including a hands-on opportunity to explore and interpret local data. An interactive mapping tool provided participants with the opportunity to zoom in on communities and neighborhoods, and view models of predicted impacts of sea level rise.

The goals of this program were to increase citizen's awareness and knowledge of the complex and local effects of sea level rise and storm surge, as well as to provide motivation for participants to promote resiliency in their communities. As the program rolled out, it became obvious that there existed significant interest in the topic among those living in coastal Maine.

C-RISE successfully engaged over 2,000 participants in the 60 different sessions of the program, with feedback being largely positive. C-RISE also included the creation of materials for GMRI's LabVenture program, which brings 5th and 6th grade students from across Maine, into their Cohen Center for Interactive Learning. The C-RISE project successfully developed, prototyped, refined, and implemented a 90-minute interactive learning experience with a focus on the science, data, and impacts of sea level rise.

Initial prototyping with 3 stakeholder groups found the program to be too data-and-technology heavy. Observation of and input from participants showed that they became overwhelmed and persisted on trying to analyze

specific tide and storm surge graphs, losing the bigger picture of the program in the process. The GMRI team then refined the program to begin with a content presentation, focusing more specifically on local sea level rise than on overall climate change issues. The GMRI team prototyped the program with 3 additional stakeholder groups before rolling-out with the public. The program was continuously iterated on a fine scale based on feedback from post-surveys, new data and current events, and based on the audience and location of the program. Depending on the location of the program, participants were then able to explore data and modeling maps in small groups on large computer screens or as a full- group, facilitated by the program manager.

The program was ultimately delivered to 2,045 people, easily surpassing the original goal of one thousand participants. Thirty of the 60 programs were done at GMRI, and the other 30 at coastal communities in Maine, from York to Mount Desert Island. Event promotion was done through GMRI's website, monthly event emails, social media channels, largely by word of mouth, and upon request from other organizations. Program staff did not have trouble scheduling enough sessions, as it was clear that there was public thirst for the information. The program varied a bit by location, depending on if there is ample wireless internet access. When there was no internet, the program manager prepared the presentation with screen shots of the interactive flood maps of their area, as well as storm photos, so that they could still explore them together. The program manager also included local photos and stories to ensure each program was relevant to the audience and place.