



New York Sea Grant (NYSG) is a collaborative program of the State University of New York, Cornell University, and NOAA (National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration).

With 3,400 miles of coastlines, New York is the only U.S. state bordering both the Great Lakes and the Atlantic Ocean. More than 85% of NY's population lives in a coastal region.



NYSG provides research, education, and extension services enhancing coastal community economic vitality, environmental sustainability, and citizen awareness of NY's marine and Great Lakes resources.

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NYSG Focus Area for this project:
Resilient New York Communities and Economies
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Risk and Crisis Communications for Flood Readiness Training for Local Officials

New York Sea Grant facilitated training to enhance municipalities' ability to communicate flood readiness and risk messages.

Floods are increasing in frequency and intensity throughout New York's Hudson Valley. Since 2018, the Hudson Valley Flood Resilience Network has connected local governments working to manage current and future flood risks. The Network's Flood Emergency Communications Working Group determined that cities, towns, and villages are often limited in their capacity to make complex decisions around communications internally and with the public, often relying on one person with little to no communication training.



Cornell Health Impacts Core Associate Director Danielle Eiseman, Ph.D., teaches a class on risk and crisis communications for flood readiness in Pomona, NY. Photo: Jessica Kuonen/ New York Sea Grant

New York Sea Grant, a co-facilitator of the Network since 2022, worked with Danielle Eiseman, Ph.D., a risk communication researcher from the Cornell Health Impacts Core, to adapt a risk and crisis communications training for the Network's municipal audiences with a focus on flooding. The Network hosted two trainings in partnership with emergency services in Rockland County and Ulster County. The daylong training sessions covered techniques in risk and crisis communication, strategies for communicating in a crisis, knowing your audience, designing messages, establishing partnerships, and controlling misinformation. An interactive tabletop exercise allowed attendees to practice the skills learned.

In total, forty participants from fifteen municipalities and seven partner organizations attended the two trainings. When asked how the information had been applied six months later in a follow-up evaluation, attendees shared that they had referenced what they learned in a Climate Adaptation Plan and a local flood response guide, and in developing the scope of work for a Hazard Mitigation Plan update, "particularly with respect to engaging more people in more meaningful ways about flooding." Attendees also used the information and tips to "express information clearly to the public for our comprehensive plan workshops" and for "communicating with constituents about local flooding."

Project Partners:

- Cornell Health Impacts Core
- Hudson River Watershed Alliance
- Rockland County Office of Fire and Emergency Services
- Ulster County Department of Emergency Services