

Advancing Resilience in Underserved Communities: Creating a University Support System

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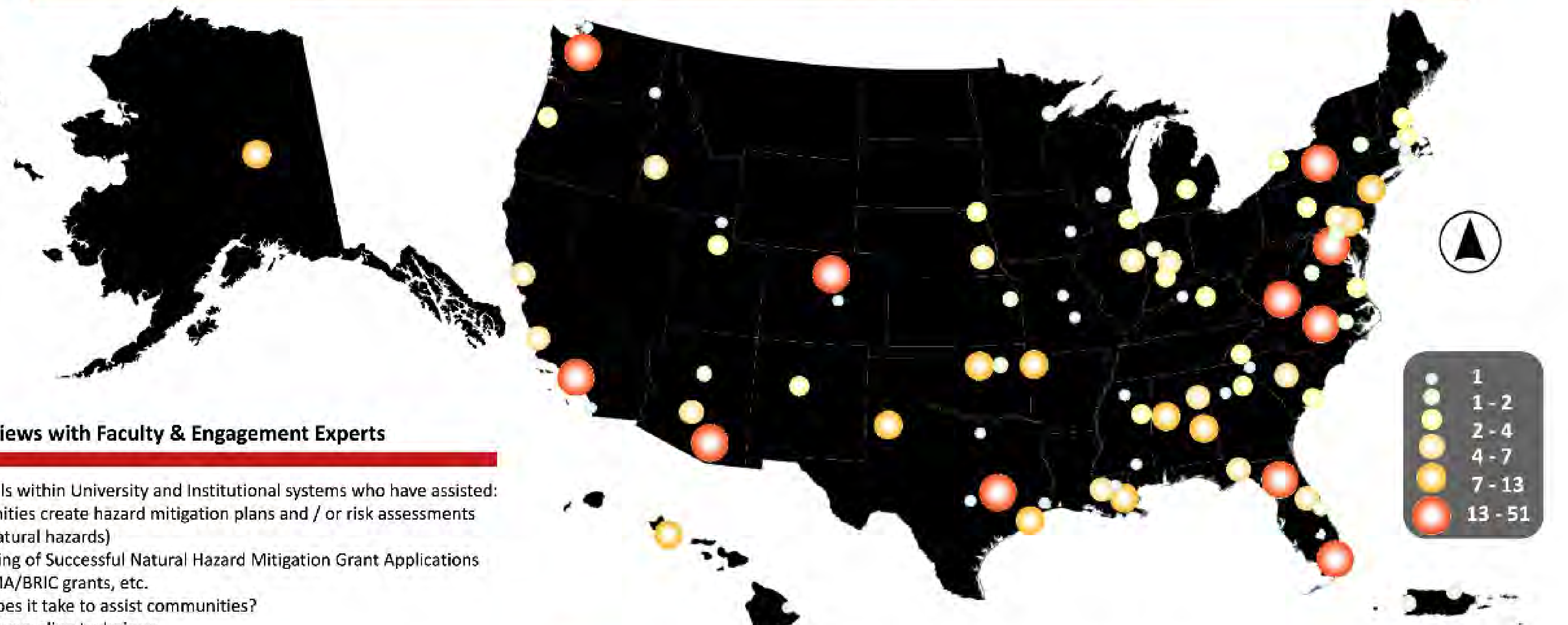
Introduction:

Despite documented need for support, many underserved communities are struggling to access the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) Hazard Mitigation Assistance (HMA) grants. In order to increase access to these grants, FEMA asked researchers from North Carolina State University to assess the potential to develop a national network of university experts that would bolster FEMA's direct technical assistance (DTA) program. Interviews were conducted to begin assessing the capacity to implement this network model. Interviewees were selected based on their experience partnering with underserved communities to apply for or implement a FEMA HMA grant. Interviews revealed findings that focused on these topic areas: **1) the ways in which the interviewees have successfully partnered with communities, 2) the capacities at the institution, program, or individual level that allowed them to successfully partner with communities, and 3) the barriers to providing effective support to communities.** For the next phase of the project, interview responses will be used to inform a national survey of experts. This survey will evaluate the willingness and capacity of university experts to make a long-term commitment to join the DTA network. Based on the results of the survey, the research team will develop an implementation framework, to include how university faculty will be compensated for their efforts. While the survey results are forthcoming, this study will provide the information necessary to establish an early version of this new model of DTA, with the expectation that it will allow more underserved communities to access FEMA HMA grants and university expertise.

Project Overview

YEAR-ONE TASK: Assess Nationwide Capacity and Commitment to the University Network Concept & Initiate the Establishment of the University Network and National Framework

Figure 1. Network of Identified Potential Experts



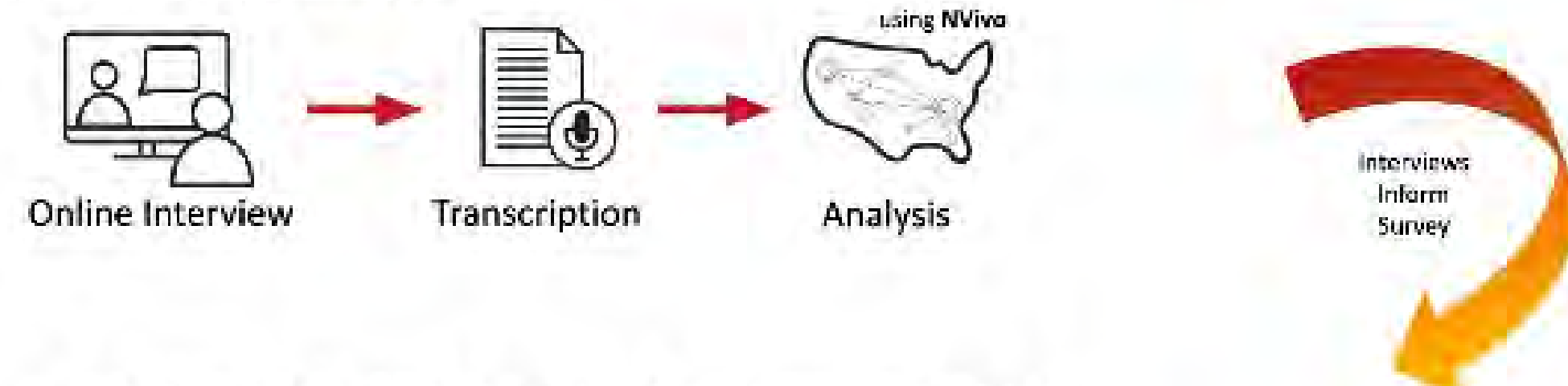
609 individuals with expertise in the Hazard Mitigation sphere have been identified using the snowball sampling technique. 591 individuals are associated with a University, while the remaining 18 individuals are associated with other institutions or nonprofit organizations.



Phase 1

Conduct Interviews with Faculty & Engagement Experts

- Focus on individuals within University and Institutional systems who have assisted:
 - Local communities create hazard mitigation plans and / or risk assessments (strike from natural hazards)
 - With the Writing of Successful Natural Hazard Mitigation Grant Applications
 - FEMA HMA/BRIC grants, etc.
- Question: What does it take to assist communities?
- Method: Snowball sampling technique



WE ARE HERE!

Phase 2

Conduct National Survey to Assess Capacity & Commitment to Assist with BRIC Grants Management

- Purpose: Determine the technical capacity and willingness of faculty and engagement experts to assist with all aspects of BRIC grants management
- Areas of Focus:
 - Write Hazard Mitigation Assistance (HMA) grants
 - Conducting vulnerability & risk assessments
 - Proposal Development
 - Grant writing, data collection & analysis, budgeting
 - Understanding FEMA HMA grant rules & eligibility
 - Project Implementation & Management
 - Grant administration, monitoring, & finances (reimbursements/closeouts)
 - Long-Term Site Management
 - Open space management of buyout sites
 - Issues associated with Nature-based solutions
 - Design, maintenance, compliance

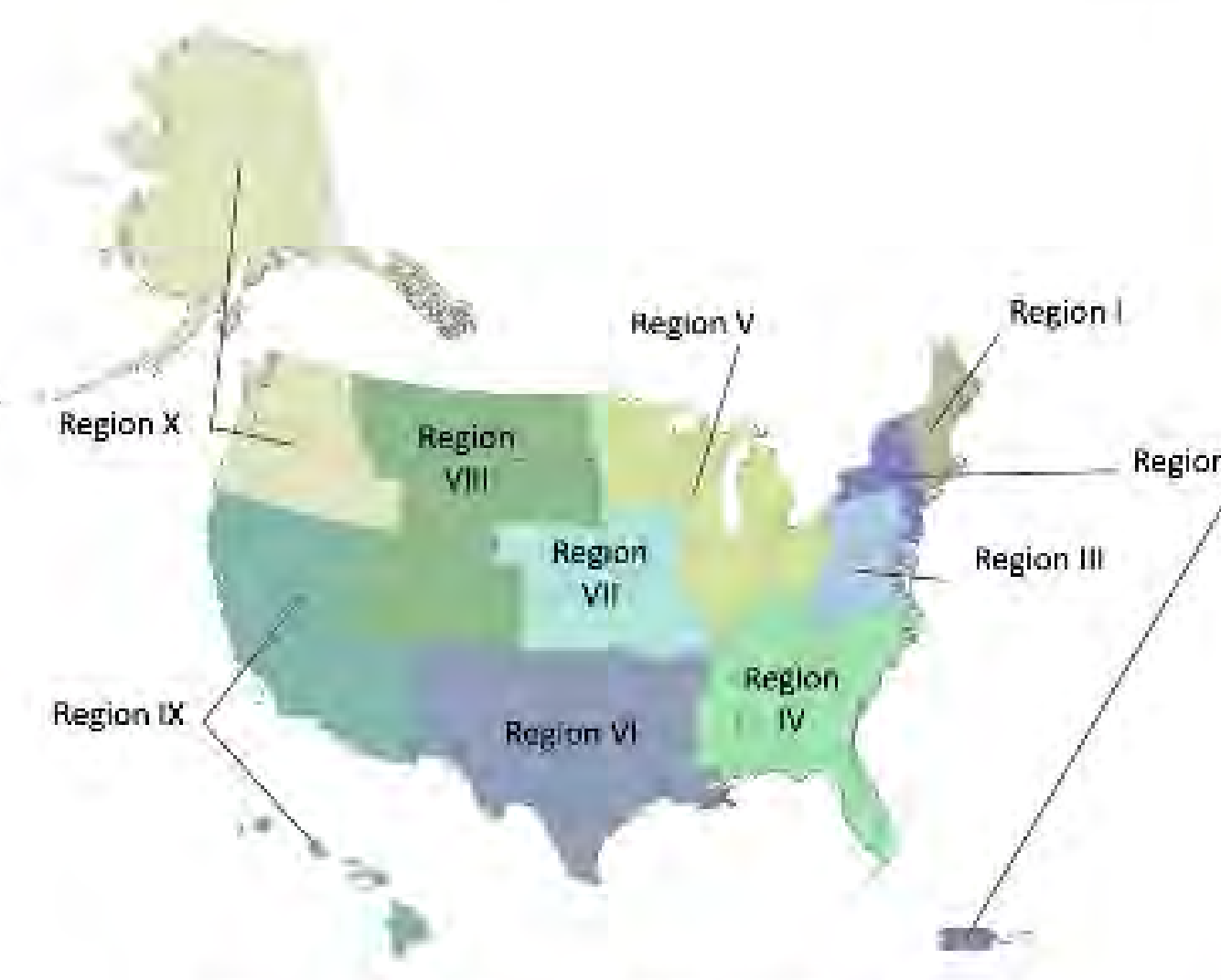


Figure 2. Map of FEMA Regions

FEMA Region	# of Experts
I	13
II	41
III	68
IV	162
V	28
VI	92
VII	12
VIII	42
IX	80
X	53



Phase 3

Initiate the Creation of an On-Call Network to Assist BRIC Applicants

- Goal: Generate a pilot assistance node for active BRIC grants
 - Identify strong, geographically diverse nodes to assist in generating a clear organizational structure
 - Use the survey to determine individuals with the capacity and willingness to pilot direct technical assistance from the university level
 - Create training materials for experts within the network to learn from
- Draws together the results of the interview, survey, and identified potential experts (Fig. 1) to identify a strong node with the capacity and willingness to pilot the On-Call Assistance Network
- Allows for the testing of the assistance concept and training materials prior to extending the Network throughout the US States and Territories



Seeking Survey Participants*!

Study exploring the capacity and interest of university affiliated faculty and staff to provide technical assistance to U.S. communities engaging in FEMA Hazard Mitigation Assistance Programs.

Survey URL:
https://go.ncsu.edu/dta_survey

Survey QR Code:



*To be eligible to participate, you must be 18 years of age or older, reside in the United States, and be currently employed by or have a professional affiliation with an institution of higher education (e.g. a 4-year university). Participation in this study is voluntary.

Initiate the Establishment of a National Framework to Institutionalize the University Network Concept

- Goal: Propose a draft framework model for the university assistance network
 - Original draft model based off literature review of:
 - Existing network structures
 - Cooperative Extension Service (Fig. 3)
 - Sea Grant
 - Extension Disaster Education Network (EDEN)
 - NOAA Climate Adaptation Partnerships (CAP) (Fig. 4)
 - Formerly Regional Integrated Sciences & Assessments (RISA)
 - USDA Climate Hubs
 - National Extension Climate Initiative (NECI)
 - Theoretical Network Models
 - Generative Social Impact Networks
 - Collaborative Governance
 - Lessons learned from failed or permanently failing organizations
 - Time is required to establish relationships and build trust (Sarasini 2015)
 - Learn from every failure & Incorporate regular feedback (Cannon and Edmondson 2005)
 - Draft models will follow based off interview data, survey data, and feedback from FEMA

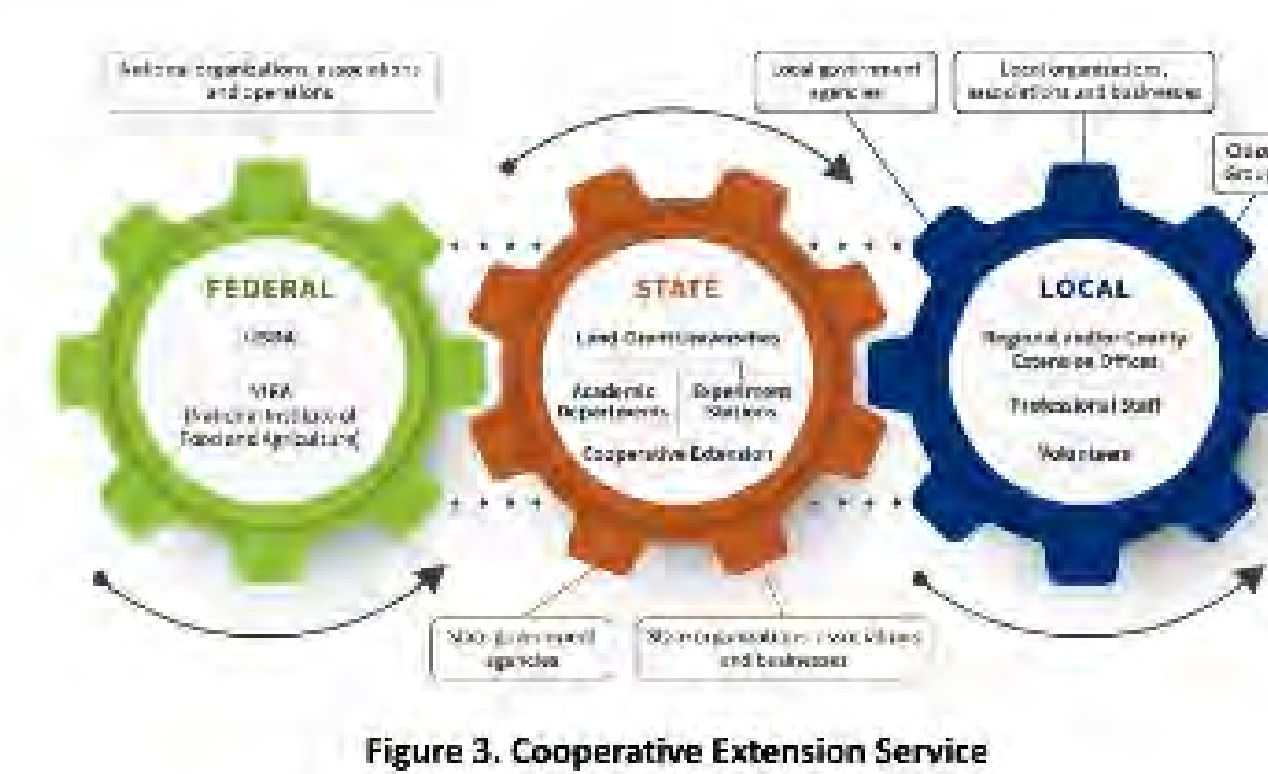


Figure 3. Cooperative Extension Service



Figure 4. NOAA Climate Adaptation Partnerships