

Postdoctoral Fellow - Caribbean Climate Adaptation
Network
Worcester Polytechnic Institute

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Posted Mar. 21, 2025, set to expire Jul. 3, 2025

Job Title	Postdoctoral Fellow - Caribbean Climate Adaptation Network
Department	
Institution	Worcester Polytechnic Institute Worcester, Massachusetts
Date Posted	Mar. 21, 2025
Application Deadline	Open until filled
Position Start Date	Available immediately
Job Categories	Post-Doc
Academic Field(s)	Ethnic/Multicultural Studies Humanities - General Anthropology Latina/o Studies Anthropology Ethnic/Multicultural Studies Latina/o Studies
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Worcester

DEPARTMENT NAME

Global School NFR - JM

DIVISION NAME

Worcester Polytechnic Institute - WPI

JOB DESCRIPTION SUMMARY

Worcester Polytechnic Institute (WPI) seeks to hire a two-year Postdoctoral Research Associate to assist the NOAA Caribbean Climate Adaptation Network (CCAN), a climate adaptation partnership for the US Caribbean region. The position will be based in St. Thomas, US Virgin Islands, from July 2025 through July 2027 (Y4-Y5 of project) with occasional responsibilities to meet CCAN members in Puerto Rico and at WPI in Worcester, MA. The research associate will assist a transdisciplinary and cross-institutional team to develop workable strategies to address gaps in decision-making, planning, and implementation of actions required to address climate extreme challenges in the Caribbean US territories. CCAN seeks to engage communities, practitioners, and stakeholders, in an effective social co-design process to support equitable climate adaptation and community resilience.

JOB DESCRIPTION

The successful candidate for this Postdoctoral Research Associate position will have a PhD in a social science field that includes empirical research on climate change, climate adaptation, community participatory research, and ideally experience working in the US Virgin Islands, the Greater Caribbean region, and/or among Caribbean diaspora communities in the USA. We invite applicants whose research bridges science, technology, engineering and social science approaches and methodologies, with experience working in interdisciplinary settings. We especially seek researchers experienced in working directly with marginalized communities or community-based organizations in Caribbean contexts. Demonstrated excellence in scholarship and a commitment to the principles of diversity and inclusion are essential.

Main tasks will include:

- Work with partners on climate adaptation, vulnerability, risk, and resilience in the US Virgin Islands, including, e.g., the USVI Department of Planning and Natural Resources, the Caribbean Green Technologies Center at University of the Virgin Islands, and the NOAA USVI Climate Adaptation Specialist.
- Plan and participate in community-based workshops and scientific network meetings that will

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facilitate exchange of information and identifying local and regional actions and strategies that support climate adaptation.

- Build relationships with other potential research participants/organizations in the US Virgin Islands, working closely with a local coordinator and partners at UVI, while helping to map existing organizational networks and their changing relationships over time.
- Design and implement collaborations between CCAN and community participants, including organizations in the US Virgin Islands, including leading workshops developed within the CCAN network (i.e. with state agencies and/or community collaborators).
- Collect qualitative data and implement co-design processes to help support equitable climate adaptation strategies and planning processes.
- Actively contribute to CCAN publications, meetings, workshops, and academic conference presentations, including drafting reports, policy briefs and blogposts on the activities of the network, and disseminating these via website and social media.
- Liaison among CCAN collaborators at UVI, UPR and WPI, including leading meetings of the CCAN Graduate Students Working Group which facilitates mentoring activities.

Qualifications required:

- PhD in Sociology, Anthropology, Geography, Latin American and Caribbean Studies, Environmental Studies, Development Studies, or other fields relating to Science, Technology and Society. The PhD must be in hand by June 30th, 2025 and must have been awarded in the last five years.
- Native or near-native proficiency in English and familiarity with other Caribbean Creole languages and Caribbean Spanish also desirable.
- Experience with qualitative research, semi-structured interviews
- 5 years of graduate research
- Proven writing skills in English
- Ability to locate in the US Virgin Islands for much of the fieldwork

Other desirable skills: experience with community-based research; good organizational skills; interest in podcasts, video-blogging, or other innovative ways of communication.

An annual salary of \$60,000 is offered, which includes a benefits package. For consideration, please submit a letter of application stating your relevant experience and interest in the topic, a C.V. and copy

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of academic transcript, a dissertation abstract and writing sample such as an article or dissertation chapter, and the names and addresses of at least two referees.

Applications will be reviewed beginning by the end of December 2024 and will be considered until the position is filled. Shortlisted candidates will be notified by the end of January 2025.

Overview of the Project

Recent extreme weather events in the Caribbean highlight the importance of the interdependencies of the critical infrastructure systems, which often lead to catastrophic failures of physical assets followed by severe adverse impacts on the health and wellbeing of their inhabitants. Island communities such as the US Territories of the Virgin Islands (USVI) and Puerto Rico (PR) are profoundly impacted by climate extremes, which are compounded by their geographic isolation that disrupts supply chains and emergency responses. These communities are also hindered by a complex governance structure composed of layers of federal and Territorial bureaucracies frequently leading to ineffective decisions.

CCAN seeks to address these issues by bringing together a multi-disciplinary team of universities, agencies, and non-governmental organizations based out of the Caribbean region and the US. We will enhance and expand partnerships through the development and convening of stakeholders in PR and USVI. The project will utilize a human-centered design, bringing together impacted community and government stakeholders, and multidisciplinary scientists to develop and co-produce community climate adaptation capacities, strategies, and actions that build on collectively produced insights and realistic locally grounded scenarios. The proposed knowledge-action network is designed to help build adaptive capacities for future climate extremes, plan responses to cascading climate hazards and governance crises. The proposed work will focus on enhancing program management and leadership through the building of internal capacity. Our goal is to enable effective decision-making that supports building just and equitable resilience in the USVI and PR.

CCAN Background

[NOAA- CPO \(Climate Program Office\)](#) has awarded a [CAP \(Climate Adaptation Partnerships\)](#) for the U.S. Caribbean Region. CAP is the new name for the program that was formerly known as RISA (Regional Integrated Sciences and Assessment). This award for a new 5-year CAP team will advance equitable adaptation in Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands through sustained regional research and community engagement. The team will focus on multiple climate and society issues and develop a set of interconnected projects that build the capacity of regional partners to act on those issues.

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The award for the "Caribbean Climate Adaptation Network: Building equitable adaptive capacities of the US Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico" supports sustained, collaborative relationships that help communities build lasting and equitable climate resilience. The work is accomplished by teams of research institutions, nonprofit organizations, and state/local governments in multi-state regions. CAP/RISA teams engage in a variety of applied and co-developed research and partnerships with communities. The lead institution is University of Puerto Rico ([Dr. Pablo Mendez-Lazaro](#)), with partnering universities and USDA Forest Service. Other partnering institutions included in this award include: University of the Virgin Islands, Worcester Polytechnic Institute, Arizona State University, University of South Florida, University of Puerto Rico-Mayaguez, University of Texas-Austin, City College of New York, University at Albany, NYU, and Caribbean Coastal Ocean Observing System.

CCAN seeks to enhance and expand partnerships through the development and convening of stakeholders in Puerto Rico (PR) and U.S. Virgin Islands (USVI). The team will utilize a human-centered design, bringing together impacted community and government stakeholders, and multidisciplinary scientists to develop and co-produce community climate adaptation capacities, strategies, and actions that build on locally grounded scenarios. This network is designed to help build adaptive capacities for future climate extremes, plan responses to cascading climate hazards and governance crises. The main goal is to enable effective decision-making that supports building just and equitable resilience in the USVI and PR. Specific attention will be given to climate hazards related to extreme rainfall, extreme heat, drought, landslides, and coastal and riverine flooding. By utilizing a human-centered approach, the network will develop effective and scalable climate actions.

During this project, the team will utilize NOAA and other data products and tools to increase local climate adaptive capacity and resilience in underserved communities. The consortium will support and sustain education, research, and professional development in NOAA mission areas. The project will engage communities that are typically underrepresented in the U.S. Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (S.T.E.M.) workforce, in decision-making and in policymaking.

FLSA STATUS

United States of America (Exempt)

WPI is an Equal Opportunity Employer that actively seeks to increase the diversity of its workplace. All qualified candidates will receive consideration for employment without regard to race, color, age, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, veteran status, or disability. It seeks individuals with diverse backgrounds and experiences who will contribute to a culture of creativity, collaboration, inclusion, problem solving, innovation, high performance, and change making. It is committed to maintaining a campus environment free of

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harassment and discrimination.

To apply, visit: https://wpi.wd5.myworkdayjobs.com/en-US/WPI_External_Career_Site/job/Worcester/Postdoctoral-Fellow---Caribbean-Climate-Adaptation-Network_R0003012

About WPI

WPI is a vibrant, active, and diverse community of extraordinary students, world-renowned faculty, and state of the art research facilities. At WPI, we have competitive and comprehensive benefits, including health insurance, long-term care, retirement, tuition assistance, flexible spending accounts, work-life balance and much more.

Diversity & Inclusion at WPI

WPI is committed to creating an inclusive workplace where everyone feels valued and respected; a place where every student, faculty and staff member can be themselves, so that they can study, live, and work comfortably, to reach their full potential, and make meaningful contributions in order to meet departmental and institutional goals. WPI thrives on innovative practice and welcomes diverse perspectives, insight, and people from diverse lived experiences, to enhance the community environment and propel the institution to the next level in a competitive, global marketplace.

Contact Information

Please reference Academickeys in your cover letter when applying for or inquiring about this job announcement.

Contact

N/A

Worcester Polytechnic Institute

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