



## Exploring Climate Migration to the Rustbelt: A Regional Workshop

9:00-3:30, Friday, April 28, 2023

Borgwarner Room, Tompkins County Public Library, 101 E. Green St, Ithaca, NY

The media, elected officials, and residents are expecting, anticipating, or fearing that climate change may bring population growth to the Rustbelt. While many reasons drive migration choices, climate impacts and resiliency are a growing factor informing where people move – from individuals to land speculators to Micron. This in-migration not only brings new vitality to the region, but also places additional stress on existing housing, infrastructure, and social systems. It is increasingly important for local stakeholders to reflect on and respond to the growing national narrative that our region will, and is prepared to, function as a “climate haven.” In this workshop, participants will engage in facilitated, interactive visioning and scenario-planning exercises to begin identifying resource and policy gaps – as well as potential responses – that might affect the Rustbelt’s capacity to serve as a destination for future migrants. Key questions that will be addressed include:

- What do current demographic models of climate migration take into consideration and what are they saying? When are changes predicted to occur?
- What are the characteristics of a welcoming and caring community, both for those who are already here and those who will move here? How well do communities in our region fit that description?
- What resources would help our communities plan for future migration that is equitable and just? How can we organize and mobilize to anticipate these changes?

Please join the Partnership for the Public Good of Greater Buffalo and Cornell University from 9am-3:30pm on April 28, 2023, at the Tompkins County Public Library in Ithaca to participate in this workshop and help define what it means to be a “Climate Refuge”, and what it will take for our region to get there. Invited attendees include staff from local government agencies, nonprofits, and community organizations in Buffalo, Syracuse, Binghamton, Utica, and Ithaca.

This event is organized and supported by the NEST project (A Northeast Safe and Thriving for All), led by Cornell University and Antioch University of New England, along with 6 other schools in the Northeast. It is funded by NOAA. Several other workshops are being held throughout the region to explore whether and how local, subregional, and Northeast regional efforts can support preparedness in the face of demographic and climatological change.

Please **RSVP** [here](#) by April 15. Travel support is available for those who need it to be able to attend the workshop.

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AGENDA	
9:00 am	<b>Sign-in, Refreshments, and Networking</b>
9:15	<b>Welcome and Orientation</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Introduction to the project</li><li>• Introductions by participants</li><li>• Framing Presentation from Cornell Team</li><li>• Directions for Scenario exercise</li></ul>
10:15	<b>Break</b>
10:25	<b>World Café: Scenarios of Climate Migration and Preparedness</b>
11:45	<b>Group Discussion:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Takeaways from scenario discussion</li><li>• Reflections on what scenario discussions suggest for local and regional policy and advocacy needs on (climate) migration</li></ul>
12:30 pm	<b>Lunch</b>
1:30	<b>Presentation: Buffalo's Partnership for Public Good (PPG)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• How did Buffalo develop a powerful network of 360 organizations that sets a shared advocacy platform every year?</li><li>• How has this model helped Buffalo residents achieve their goals?</li><li>• Can their model be applied elsewhere?</li></ul>
2:30	<b>Break</b>
2:40	<b>Small Group Discussions: Local and Regional Networks</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Shared research and learning needs</li><li>• Opportunities for local and regional network building</li><li>• Next steps</li></ul>
3:15	<b>Closing Remarks</b>
3:30	<b>Adjourn</b>

## **A Northeast Safe and Thriving for All (NEST)**

### **Project Description**

A Northeast Safe and Thriving for All (NEST) examines the Upper Northeast region as a destination for future in-migration as climate change makes other parts of the country and the world less habitable. In-migration presents opportunities for economic revitalization but must address the needs of existing residents and the potential for conflict around demographic and land use changes. This project aims to broaden climate adaptation planning beyond risk mitigation and infrastructure resilience. It considers how class and race, among other factors, affect the region's vulnerabilities and preparedness for future demographic change. It also examines the regional governance gaps and opportunities in attracting and managing migrants.

### **Project Tasks**

1. Review extent to which climate adaptation research, policies, plans, and projects in the region address central concerns of equity and justice under climate migration.
2. Engage with subregional networks in the Vermont and New Hampshire Upper Valley, Coastal Maine and New Hampshire, and Rustbelt cities in Upstate New York (with a focus on Buffalo) to hear people's concerns, priorities, and visions around in-migration.
3. Focus the 2023 Local Solutions Conference hosted by Antioch University on climate migration to share findings, solicit feedback, and build a regional network on this topic.

### **Project Goals and Outputs**

By August 2023, NEST will produce a white paper reviewing progress in planning and preparedness for climate-related in-migration into the region, the social and political challenges associated with past and future in-migration, and opportunities for regional collaboration in this area. NOAA has funded RISA networks (formerly Regional Integrated Sciences and Assessments, now known as CAPs – Climate Adaptation Partnerships) in many other U.S. regions, some for decades. Pending Congressional funding authorization, this planning project will apply for funding to create a long-term, regional, research-to-practice network to help the region grapple with the challenges of climate and demographic change.

### **Opportunities to Engage**

The Local Solutions Conference on May 16, 2023, in Keene, NH, will focus on climate migration and provide an opportunity to convene regional stakeholders interested in these themes. We have limited funding support for those interested in participating in this conference.

Please contact Linda Shi, Assistant Professor, Cornell University, to learn more about this project: [lindashi@cornell.edu](mailto:lindashi@cornell.edu).