



OLD DOMINION UNIVERSITY

Center for Coastal Physical Oceanography

Spring 2023 Virtual Seminar Series

Title "Building Trust: Looking to Community Members and Local Government Officials on How to Improve Relationships After Repeated Hazardous Events"
Speaker Cassandra R. Davis, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
Date Monday, March 20, 2023
Time 3:30 PM EST

Zoom Info [Link](#)
Meeting ID: 910 1177 3467
Passcode: 703016

Abstract Communities, scholars, and federal agencies have noted the increase in worrisome trends surrounding climate change, specifically wildfires, hurricanes, and flooding. Emerging evidence suggests that marginalized communities are less likely to trust and depend on federal agencies after a hazardous event, making them less likely to recover fully. These results suggest a need for research to inform federal agencies and communities on building trust around disaster mitigation and recovery.

We conducted nine focus groups with community leaders, academics, and government officials and combined our results with a pilot survey administered to 179 non-profit organizations (NGOs) and 140 government agencies nationwide. Results from the advisory groups showed a misunderstanding of who was responsible for helping marginalized communities recover from a hazardous event, where all groups cited NGOs but for different reasons. Additionally, each group agreed that government officials must identify and build relationships with the invisible community leaders. Survey results showed substantial deficits in funding, lack of human resources, and minimal awareness of tools, all of which hindered their ability to assist marginalized groups in recovery from an event. Respondents recommended that federal agencies provide access to emergency funds, distribute funding to hire more staff to work emergencies, and acknowledge the value of marginalized groups and the organizations that serve them.

Biography Cassandra R. Davis is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Public Policy at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (UNC-CH). She earned her Ph.D. and M.A. from the School of Education at UNC-CH and her B.A. from Wake Forest University. She is a Fellow of the Carolina Population Center and



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a Fellow of the Center for Resilient Communities and the Environment,
Institute for the Environment. Dr. Davis' research focuses on social justice in
emergency management, assessing the extent hazards widen inequalities,
and disaster recovery for schooling communities.