

Request for Proposals

Exploratory Scenario Planning for Climate Mobility

Summary

The [Consortium for Scenario Planning](#) at the Lincoln Institute of Land Policy invites proposals for community-based exploratory scenario planning (XSP) workshops to support climate mobility planning. These XSP workshops will build the capacity of local decision makers, practitioners, and community members; help communities develop a futures mindset; and demonstrate how scenario planning can be used as a tool to bring people together to discuss climate mobility and other social, environmental, and economic issues affecting their communities.

Background

The mission of the Consortium for Scenario Planning is to improve and expand the practice of scenario planning in communities of all sizes through research, peer learning, training, and technical assistance. As part of this mission, the consortium seeks to support exploratory scenario planning (XSP) workshops and technical assistance in communities, promoting the method while gathering insights on best practices that can be shared broadly.

[Exploratory scenario planning](#) helps planners prepare for probable, desired, and uncertain futures while pursuing an overarching vision, rather than relying on a single predicted future. By examining the root drivers of change, XSP enables consideration of multiple possible paths, and is especially valuable for planning in a context of uncertainty. While the method is gaining traction, it is still rarely applied outside large cities and regional agencies, with most documented cases focused on transportation. Yet XSP's adaptable nature makes it well-suited to addressing a variety of planning challenges in communities with different capacities and needs.

One pressing challenge XSP can be particularly valuable for is climate mobility, the movement of people in response to climate-related risks such as sea-level rise, droughts, wildfires, and stronger storms. This movement ranges from proactive relocation to forced displacement, both within and across borders. In the US, projections based on sea-level rise alone suggest that [13 million people could be displaced by the year 2100](#). Relocation is an important adaptation strategy, but many households face financial and social barriers to moving. In some cases, climate disasters like hurricanes and wildfires force people to

leave before they can relocate voluntarily. At the same time, in the US, people are [increasingly moving into areas with high climate risks](#), mainly driven by lower housing costs—which are low in part because climate risks are not adequately priced into land markets. Communities receiving new residents, often in places with historic underinvestment in resilience and infrastructure, face increased demands on housing, services, and public systems. These complex and uncertain dynamics underscore the need for planning tools like XSP that bring diverse stakeholders together to explore multiple futures and develop strategies that are effective across those scenarios.

Request

This request for proposals (RFP) will expand the consortium’s library of scenario planning resources and capture best practices for using scenario planning to strengthen community resilience.

The RFP will fund three projects to design and deliver community-based XSP workshops focused on climate mobility. Funded projects should engage a diverse range of community stakeholders, explore multiple possible futures, and identify strategies that are robust across scenarios to help communities prepare for and adapt to climate mobility impacts. Proposals are encouraged from communities anticipating an influx of residents, as well as those facing out-migration due to climate change.

For the purposes of this project, examples of driving forces¹ to consider in workshops might include, but should not be limited to:

- frequency and intensity of extreme weather events (wildfire, flooding, drought, etc.)
- food security
- water security
- urbanization and development patterns
- access to housing
- public health systems
- migration patterns
- demographic shifts (population size, age distribution, growth rate, etc.)
- municipal fiscal health.

Expected Cost

Each award will be \$15,000, with projects to be implemented within an 18-month timeline. One member from each team is encouraged to attend the 2026 Consortium for Scenario Planning Conference in Salt Lake City, Utah, on February 4–6 to learn from other practitioners. One member will be required to attend and present their project at the 2027 conference (date and location TBD). While additional team members may attend the 2027 conference, the Lincoln Institute will cover travel costs for only one participant per team. Awardees may also be invited to share their work through webinars, conferences, and other Lincoln Institute events.

¹ Driving forces, also called drivers of change, are things outside of your control that are uncertain and can affect the future in a changing world.

Upon completion of the project cycle, the Lincoln Institute may select one or more projects to pilot in other communities and further refine their methods. Final payments cannot be guaranteed for projects submitted after the deadline.

Evaluation Criteria

The Lincoln Institute will evaluate proposals based on five criteria:

- relevance of the project to the RFP's theme of exploratory scenario planning as applied to climate mobility;
- clear application and understanding of XSP methods in the proposed workshop design, demonstrated through direct reference to the Lincoln Institute publications listed below;
- demonstrated capacity (skills, resources, and community connections) and expertise of the team, supported by relevant analytical and/or practice-based experience;
- potential impact and usefulness of the project for practitioners of scenario planning; and
- feasibility of project completion within an 18-month timeframe.

During the selection process, finalists may be contacted for a virtual interview.

Deliverable Types

Selected projects will build on the consortium's existing work and generate resources that help academics and practitioners adopt and apply exploratory scenario planning. Projects should focus on creating XSP processes that practitioners can directly implement, or that integrate smoothly into existing planning frameworks.

Expected deliverables include a toolkit, guidebook, or workshop design, though other innovative formats will be considered. Final product specifications and a style guide will be provided during contracting.

Completed projects may be published or featured on the Lincoln Institute's website. In 2027, one project may be selected for a technical assistance program as part of the consortium's mission to advance scenario planning as a decision-making tool.

RFP Schedule

- Application deadline: November 25, 2025
- Notification of decisions: December 11, 2025
- Annual conference: February 4–6, 2026
- First progress report due: May 15, 2026
- Second progress report due: October 15, 2026
- Annual conference: February 2027 (exact date TBD)
- First draft due: March 15, 2027

- Second draft due: April 30, 2027
- Final draft due: June 15, 2027

Application Guidelines

This RFP is open to any individual or agency, practitioner, or academic interested in helping the institute expand its knowledge and resources on this topic. This includes applicants who represent Tribal nations, local governments, cities, counties, or neighborhoods. The Lincoln Institute welcomes international applicants.

Proposals should include:

- 1) **Cover page:** The cover page must include the title of the project and the contact information of applicant(s), including affiliation, address, phone number, and email.
- 2) **Project abstract:** Summary of the project (500-word maximum).
- 3) **Project description:** The project description should clearly convey how the project will examine the application of exploratory scenario planning in the context of climate mobility. It should describe how the proposed work will build off existing work or examples and identify any new contributions (2,000 words maximum).
- 4) **Work plan:** Briefly define the specific tasks or activities required to accomplish the project, with a projected schedule for completing each phase.
- 5) **Biography:** Please include a brief biography and resume/CV for the primary applicant and any other team members (three pages maximum).

The proposal must be written in English and submitted as a Microsoft Word document. Format the application for printing on 8.5 x 11-inch (letter-size) paper. The application may be single- or double-spaced, but each section must not exceed the maximum word count, as described above.

Submit the entire application as a single document using the online form linked on the Lincoln website by November 25, 2025, at 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time.

Ownership and Third-Party Copyrights

The Lincoln Institute of Land Policy will own all work products commissioned through this RFP, in all forms, including print or electronic, eBooks, the Web, and social media, together with all rights, titles, and interests therein, including copyrights. The Lincoln Institute's ownership and copyright conditions do not preclude the publication of commissioned works in other journals or media. Works commissioned by the Lincoln Institute may be published by a third party (journal, publishing house), but only after securing the permission of the Lincoln Institute.

Confidentiality

The information presented in the selection process and responses should be treated as confidential by the institute and the representatives involved in responding. This information is not to be distributed to

anyone except those in the institute or those involved in responding to the RFP within the organization invited to respond. Similarly, the institute will not share the contents of any one responder with any of the other responders and will treat the RFP response documents as confidential.

Questions About this RFP

For questions regarding this request for proposals, please send an email to Daniela Faria, planning analyst, at dfaria@lincolninst.edu.

Resources

Gamboa, Liliana, and Debbrah Goh. 2025. "What Is Climate Mobility, and Why Should We Care?" Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. <https://carnegieendowment.org/research/2025/06/what-is-climate-mobility-and-why-should-we-care?lang=en>.

Infield, Elizabeth, Patrick Welch, Omur Damla Kuru, Amy Cotter, and Henry Renski. 2024. "Insights for Receiving Communities in Planning Equitable and Positive Outcomes Under Climate Migration." Working paper. Lincoln Institute of Land Policy. <https://www.lincolninst.edu/publications/working-papers/insights-receiving-communities-planning-equitable-positive-outcomes-climate-migration>.

Rajkovich, Nicholas B., Terry Schwarz, Gwyneth A. Harris, and Adara Zullo. 2022. "Exploratory Scenario Planning for Climate In-Migration: A Guide for Cities in the Great Lakes Region." Working paper. Lincoln Institute of Land Policy. <https://www.lincolninst.edu/publications/working-papers/exploratory-scenario-planning-climate-in-migration>.

Schwarz, Terry, Joseph Schilling, Violet Sulka/Hewes, Catherine Tumber, and Nicholas B. Rajkovich. 2023. "Anticipated But Unpredictable: Exploratory Scenario Planning for Climate Migration in Cleveland/Cuyahoga County, Ohio." Working paper. Lincoln Institute of Land Policy. <https://www.lincolninst.edu/publications/working-papers/anticipated-unpredictable>.

About the Lincoln Institute of Land Policy

The Lincoln Institute of Land Policy seeks to improve quality of life through the effective use, taxation, and stewardship of land. A nonprofit private operating foundation whose origins date to 1946, the Lincoln Institute researches and recommends creative approaches to land as a solution to economic, social, and environmental challenges. Through education, training, publications, and events, we integrate theory and practice to inform public policy decisions worldwide.

About the Consortium for Scenario Planning

The Consortium for Scenario Planning offers a community of practice for practitioners, including access to technical assistance, educational resources, and a network of fellow innovators. This community of practice helps to foster the use of scenario planning at all scales. Through research, peer-to-peer learning, networking, training, and technical assistance, we help communities develop better plans for a

range of actions, from climate change adaptation to transportation investment. In addition to planners, the consortium convenes researchers and software providers to develop more effective tools and reduce barriers to entry.