



Regional and State Climate Services in the United States

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Climate services have been ongoing in the United States since the early 1950s beginning with the formation of state climate offices (SCOs). Originally federally-funded positions, the SCOs were turned over to the states leading to the formation of the American Association of State Climatologists in 1976. Ten years later, Regional Climate Centers (RCCs) were formed through federal funding to support regional climate services delivery. The two entities now cover all 50 states and six regions working in close partnership. The RCCs emphasis is ongoing delivery of climate services as a quasi-operational activity, breadth of service, covering sectors of society in relatively constant contact with a wide user base. They maintain tools to be nimble enough to respond to climate related decisions, which can arise unexpectedly due to a climate event and have a longstanding interest in data, observations and monitoring. The SCOs have a long history of emphasizing place-based service delivery with many of the same data, monitoring and tool development interests with extensive familiarity of state and local issues, cultures, and organizations and local climate issues. Both RCC and SCO “customers” include public, private and government entities. Both RCCs and SCOs maintain a substantial amount of historical climate data and information including supplementing federal observations with their own regional or state networks in many locations. Some work in ongoing with services related to climate change.

Climate services for the RCCs and SCOs encompasses a suite of functions, capabilities and activities primarily including: 1) data and monitoring (measurement, acquisition maintenance, quality control, archival, access and distribution; 2) product development (summary, manipulation, synthesis, visualization, dissemination); 3) information delivery and interpretation, interaction with users and outreach; 4) research (basic research on behavior of the physical climate system, applied research to meet specific users needs, and basic research on the social dimensions of service provision). State climate offices and RCCs help to serve the local and regional needs of climate services.

This presentation will provide an overview of regional and state climate services in the United States. The experiences of the RCCs and SCOs should be beneficial in discussions of the development of a global network of Climate Service Centers by providing core examples of climate services.