Justice40 and Water Equity in Florida

A case study of climate risk and water infrastructure investment in frontline coastal communities

Ocean Conservancy®

Justice40

is a whole-of-government effort to more equitably distribute benefits from federal climate investments to disadvantaged and under-resourced communities.

Critical Water Infrastructure (CWI), like stormwater, wastewater, and drinking water systems, is vulnerable to changing climate patterns and rising sea levels. Intense storms and flooding overwhelm water treatment facilities and storm drains, contaminating coastal waters and threatening public health. Across the U.S., CWI is aging and failing, unable to protect and sustain communities, particularly disadvantaged peoples serviced by underfunded infrastructure. Failing CWI also threatens our ocean and coastal waterways, as untreated storm and wastewater flow into water bodies and cause cascading environmental effects. Federal programs like the EPA Clean Water and Drinking Water State Revolving Funds (SRFs), which are covered by the Justice40 framework, are tasked with delivering resilience funding and benefits to disadvantaged communities, who are often most affected by climate change.

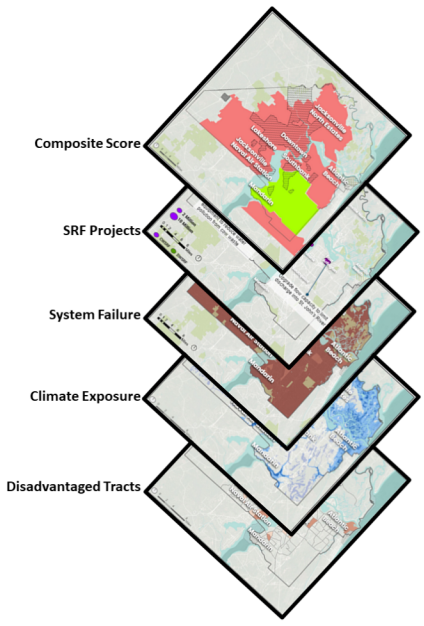
As a trusted convener of federal, state, and community partners, Ocean Conservancy conducted a case study of climate exposure, water quality impacts, and SRF allocations between disadvantaged and not-disadvantaged communities. The results of this study highlight disparities in exposure and funding both between Florida regions and within the areas studied. Although the EPA's SRF programs were in the initial Justice40 designation in 2021, there is still work to be done to achieve the goals of the framework.

2,311,954

people across Jacksonville, Orlando, and Miami- Dade County are living in census tracts identified as "disadvantaged" by the White House.

C

Florida's CWI rating from the American Society of Civil Engineers.



This case study combined geospatial analysis and qualitative interviews to understand community exposure to climate impacts, water quality risks, and funding disparities.

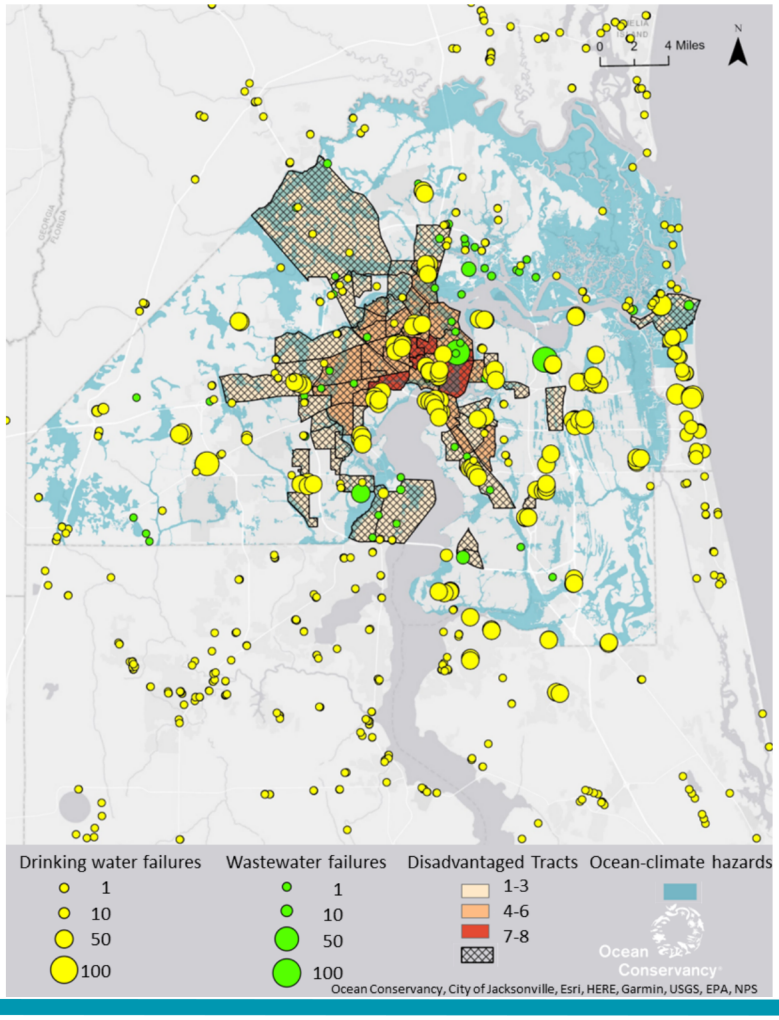
Full Report and Additional Resources

https://oceanconservancy.org/climate/publications/justice40-water-equity-florida/

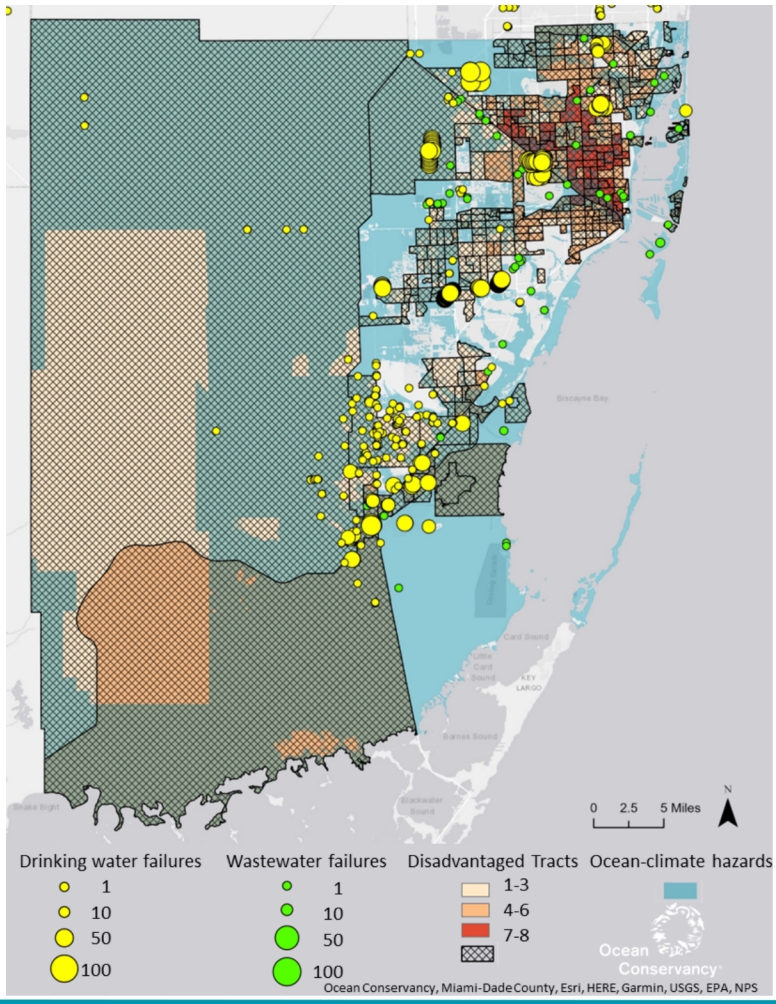
Making the case for SRF investment

Both Jacksonville and Miami-Dade County have substantial climate hazard exposure *(blue shading)*, CWI failures *(green and yellow circles)*, and tracts experiencing up to 8 disadvantages as identified by the White House *(black hatching and red shading)*.

Jacksonville

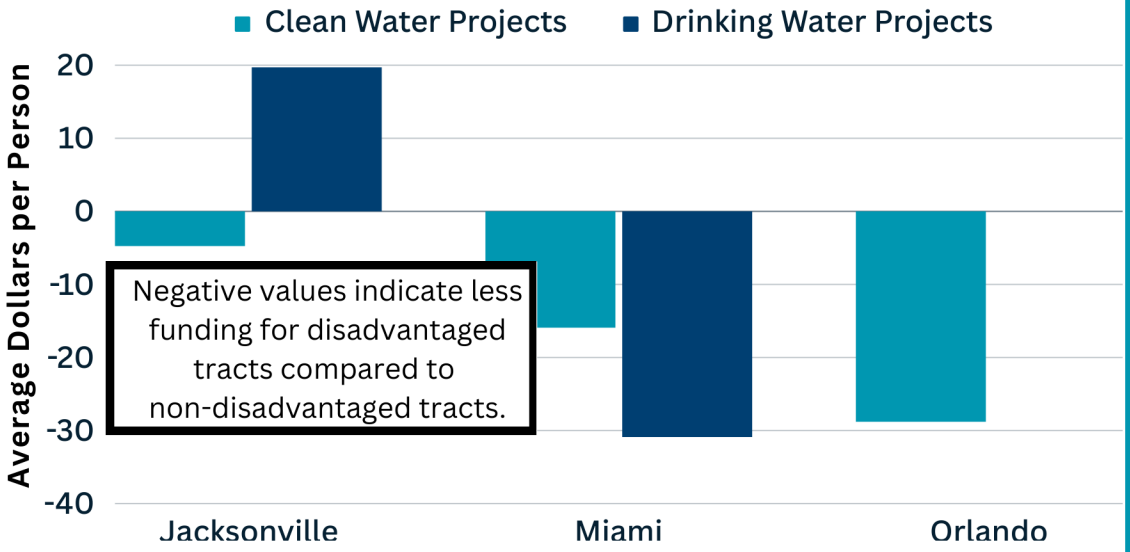


Miami-Dade County



GAPS IN FUNDING

Most study areas have less funding going to disadvantaged census tracts when compared to non-disadvantaged tracts. Only Jacksonville allocates more funding to disadvantaged tracts and only for Drinking Water projects.



Visit Ocean Conservancy.org or contact us for the full report!

Olivia Lopez, Senior Specialist, Climate Policy
olopez@oceanconservancy.org

Dr. Eleanor Pierel, Manager, Climate Science
epierel@oceanconservancy.org