

Stories of Arctic Resilience (SOAR)

A storytelling program from Harvard's Arctic Initiative and the Arctic Mayors' Forum — turning local stories of resilience into published digital StoryMaps

APPLICATIONS OPEN: SEPTMEBER 1ST, 2026



Photos by: Dee Sullivan – MinFin Photography

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Introduction

▶ **About SOAR**

Stories of Arctic Resilience (SOAR) is about sharing the ideas, experiences, and actions that are helping Arctic communities respond to challenges and shape their own futures.

In partnership with the Arctic Mayors' Forum, SOAR invites early career individuals from Arctic communities to tell a story of resilience from their own community, or one they are closely connected to. Participants will work with Harvard's Arctic Initiative team to turn their story into an online ArcGIS StoryMap — a digital story bringing together writing, maps, photos, interviews, quotes, audio, and/or video. Contributors will receive technical support and training throughout the process as they research, shape, and present their story.

The StoryMaps will be published online and open access through the SOAR platform, with the aim to:

- Highlight resilience work taking place across the Arctic
- Support local early career participants to research and share stories from their communities
- Build skills in interviewing, communication, and digital storytelling
- Share ideas that may be adapted, expanded, or applied in other Arctic communities and/or regions
- Connect early career individuals, municipalities, researchers, practitioners, and community organizations working on Arctic resilience

▶ **Program in Brief**

The SOAR program will bring together a cohort of early career participants from Arctic communities to explore and share stories centered on the idea of “resilience.” From 1 December 2026 to 31 May 2027, participants will work with community leaders and representatives to develop a story about resilience in their own community. Topics could include responding to climate change, strengthening culture and language, improving local services, preparing for emergencies, or supporting community well-being.

Participants will meet online once a month for sessions on how to conduct interviews, gather information, communicate ideas, and turn a local story into a digital StoryMap. They will also serve to connect participating individuals from across the Arctic, hear from guest speakers, and receive support from the SOAR team throughout the process. By the end of the program, each participant will have created and published a story that highlights the strengths, ideas, and experiences of their community, and will receive a certificate and honorarium in recognition of their contribution.

Who We Are Looking For

The program is intended for early career participants who:

- ✓ Are approximately 18–30 years old
- ✓ Live in, are from, or have a strong connection to an Arctic community
- ✓ Are interested in community issues, resilience, storytelling, research, or communication
- ✓ Are willing to learn and work with people in their community
- ✓ Can participate throughout the full program
- ✓ Are able to complete a community resilience StoryMap with technical support from the SOAR team

No previous research, writing, mapping, or storytelling experience is required. Training and technical support will be provided.

► How to Apply

Participant Applications: <https://arcticmayors.com/soar-youth-storytelling-apply/>

Nominations from municipalities or community organizations: <https://arcticmayors.com/soar-youth-storytelling-program-municipality-community-nomination-page/>

How Municipalities and Community Organizations Can Help

Municipalities and community organizations can play an important role in helping local early career individuals participate, and in ensuring SOAR stories are locally grounded, accurate, and useful. They can support the program by:

- Sharing this opportunity with local early career individuals and organizations
- Nominating an early career individual who may be interested
- Helping participants identify local stories, contacts, and interviewees
- Contributing information, advice, and access to officials and experts
- Supporting the review of stories before they are published

The level of support can vary by community. Municipalities and organizations are not expected to manage the participant's work, but their knowledge and connections can help strengthen the final StoryMap. Preference will be given to candidates who demonstrate community support through a completed nomination form.

Program Timeline

The SOAR program runs from **December 1, 2026 to May 31, 2027**, with **six 2-hour online sessions over a six-month period** (meeting times TBD). Each session will feature guest experts on the monthly topic, as participants develop a community resilience story from an initial idea to a draft digital StoryMap ready for publication.



Terms of Reference

► Objectives & Benefits

Participants will:

- Develop and share a story of resilience from their community
- Build skills in research, interviewing, communication, and digital storytelling
- Explore how resilience is understood across Arctic communities
- Contribute to the SOAR platform and help others learn from local experiences
- Connect with practitioners and researchers across the Arctic

Participants will receive:

- Monthly training from the SOAR team, speakers, and mentors
- Editorial support with research, writing, and StoryMap development
- Feedback from thematic experts and/or community leadership
- An honorarium of \$500 USD
- A certificate of completion from Harvard's Arctic Initiative
- Publication of their StoryMap on the SOAR platform

► Expectations

Participants are expected to:

- | | |
|------------------------------|--|
| ① Attend sessions | Attend and actively participate in monthly online sessions. |
| ② Complete story work | Complete story development work between sessions. |
| ③ Research a story | Identify and research a community resilience-related story. |
| ④ Engage community | Conduct interviews or community engagements where appropriate. |
| ⑤ Obtain consent | Obtain informed consent before collecting, storing, sharing, or publishing data, stories, images, or information from community members, and provide proper attribution when their contributions are used. |
| ⑥ Present and respond | Present their draft StoryMap and respond to feedback. |
| ⑦ Communicate | Communicate regularly with the SOAR team and raise any concerns or issues right away. |

Code of Conduct

All participants must:

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|-----------------------------------|---|
| ① Behave respectfully | Treat other participants, speakers, community members, and program staff with respect. |
| ② Value perspectives | Listen to and value different experiences, cultures, and perspectives. |
| ③ Follow protocols | Follow local cultural protocols and community practices. |
| ④ Respect privacy | Respect privacy, confidentiality, and requests not to share sensitive information. |
| ⑤ Represent accurately | Represent community perspectives accurately and avoid making claims without evidence or permission. |
| ⑥ Use AI responsibly | Only use AI tools to support spelling, grammar, translation, or clarity. AI-assisted text must be carefully reviewed to ensure information is not invented or misrepresented. |
| ⑦ Communicate respectfully | Use respectful, inclusive, and non-discriminatory language. |
| ⑧ Give feedback | Provide constructive feedback and contribute to a supportive cohort environment. |
| ⑨ Raise concerns | Inform the SOAR team of any concerns, conflicts, or conduct issues that may affect the participant, community, or the program. |

Contact Information

Harvard's Arctic Initiative

<https://www.belfercenter.org/programs/arctic-initiative>

Arctic Mayors' Forum

<https://arcticmayors.com/>

SOAR Program Managers

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Apply Here!

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