

PLANNING ASSISTANCE TO STATES & FLOODPLAIN MANAGEMENT SERVICES WORKSHOP: LEVERAGING TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS TO ENGAGE AND UNDERSTAND COMMUNITY NEEDS

26 – 28 April 2022



US Army Corps
of Engineers®



WORKSHOP PURPOSE & OBJECTIVES



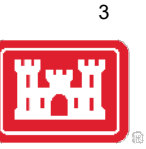
Purpose: Enhance District understanding and implementation of USACE technical assistance (TA) programs, focusing on Floodplain Management Services (FPMS) and Planning Assistance to States (PAS).

Objectives:

- Ensure common understanding of the foundational policies and purposes of the FPMS and PAS programs.
- Explore outreach strategies to reach and engage key audiences and increase internal and external collaboration.
- Increase awareness of enterprise strategies for executing PAS and FPMS funding from regular and supplemental appropriations.
- Identify areas where Headquarters, national PAS and FPMS program managers, and MSC and District leadership may further support program execution.



ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE INTERIM GUIDANCE



- Issued by ASA(CW) on 15 March 2022
- In general, USACE Civil Works will focus environmental justice activities into three broad areas:
 - 1) improving outreach and access to USACE Civil Works information and resources;
 - 2) improving access to USACE Civil Works technical service programs (e.g., Planning Assistance to States and Floodplain Management Services programs) and maximizing the reach of Civil Works projects to benefit the disadvantaged communities, in particular as it relates to climate resiliency; and,
 - 3) ensuring any updates to USACE Civil Works policies and guidance will not result in a disproportionate impact on disadvantaged communities.



ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE INTERIM GUIDANCE



- Environmental justice and disproportionate impacts to disadvantaged communities shall be considered throughout the Civil Works programs and in all phases of project planning and decision-making
- In studying, planning, designing, constructing, and operating USACE Civil Works projects or providing assistance, USACE shall work to meet the needs of disadvantaged communities by reducing disparate environmental burdens, removing barriers to participation in decision-making, and increasing access to benefits provided by Civil Works programs to disadvantaged communities within USACE authorities.
- Environmental Justice is not an “add-on” for NEPA.
- Environmental Justice is not just a “do no harm” approach.



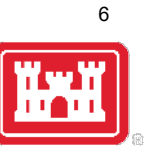
USACE COMMUNITY OUTREACH AND ENGAGEMENT STRATEGIC PLAN



- Will be submitted to ASA(CW) on 29 April 2022
- The Strategic Plan will be further shaped and informed by this session today as well as planned national level engagement and outreach by the ASA(CW).
- We are not starting from scratch; we will capitalize on existing experience, resources, and relationships that have already been established.
- Given the limited resources (both financial and personnel) available within disadvantaged communities, we need to be strategic and efficient in outreach efforts where possible, both within USACE and with other federal partners.



USACE COMMUNITY OUTREACH AND ENGAGEMENT STRATEGIC PLAN



Districts

- Each district will establish an environmental justice and outreach strategy that is specifically targeted to its area of responsibility.
- Each district will designate and maintain a single point of contact that will be responsible for managing the district strategy and vertical coordination with the division and headquarters.
- Training and resources will be made available to District employees conducting outreach activities.
- Coordination across districts will be led by national program managers, and outreach resources will be shared and tailored to local needs.



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MSCs

- Each division will provide oversight for district integration of environmental justice in their programs and activities, and will serve as a regional integrator of each district's individual environmental justice and outreach strategy.

HQUSACE

- Will identify a dedicated environmental justice coordinator (similar to the Headquarters Tribal liaison) who will report progress and key issues to leadership for resolution/action.
- Will be responsible for maintaining communication with division and district points of contact.
- Additionally, the coordinator will establish and maintain relationships with environmental justice program leads from other federal agencies to facilitate information exchange and investigate opportunities for mutual advancement of policy goals.

USACE Command

- Will ensure that outreach to communities and meeting the intent of the environmental justice policy receives prioritization at all levels, within each mission area, and within each element of the Civil Works project development process to include planning, design, construction, and operations and management.



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Build on Existing Relationships:

- Federal agencies (e.g., FEMA, EPA, NOAA, CEQ)
- State government
- Local government
- Regional government
- Tribal government
- Territorial government
- Nongovernmental organizations (e.g., Association of State Floodplain Managers, National Association of Flood and Stormwater Managers, American Rivers, The Nature Conservancy, American Flood Coalition)



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- Interagency Silver Jackets team partnerships will be leveraged to coordinate outreach efforts with other federal partners to more efficiently reach communities with relevant information without overwhelming community partners.
- General knowledge and understanding among federal agencies will allow agency representatives to point disadvantaged communities toward the more appropriate federal agency based on understanding of the need.



USACE COMMUNITY OUTREACH AND ENGAGEMENT STRATEGIC PLAN



Technical Assistance Outreach and Engagement

- District-based PAS and FPMS programs are critical to execute expanded outreach and engagement because of the availability of program funds to support outreach.
- Within FPMS, “Unit” funds are available to district staff to coordinate with potential partners to identify needs and determine whether FPMS can support a need.
- Within PAS, coordination funds are available to district staff to work with potential partners.
- Both FPMS and PAS have increased the amount of funding available to districts to conduct outreach, with the intent to support more targeted outreach toward disadvantaged communities.



USACE COMMUNITY OUTREACH AND ENGAGEMENT STRATEGIC PLAN



Technical Assistance Outreach and Engagement

- As districts vary in size, organization, and regional priorities, there are a number of circumstances where staff availability to conduct outreach is limited.
- Technical assistance program staff will be supported by USACE specialists and disciplines versed in communications and engagement, such as public involvement specialists.
- Each district's outreach strategy will investigate where additional resources are needed to perform outreach and draw upon public information specialists and the CPCX for support to aid districts.
- It is critical that staff that conduct outreach are well versed on USACE programs, to include but not limited to FPMS and PAS, to effectively match assistance with the potential partner's needs.



USACE COMMUNITY OUTREACH AND ENGAGEMENT STRATEGIC PLAN



Tribal Engagement - Four current avenues for Tribal engagement will be strengthened and continued:

- Many districts and District Commanders have regular meetings with Tribes in their area of responsibility. Key personnel and district leadership need to be aware and ready to discuss the various programs, including TPP, to Tribes when the opportunity is available.
- USACE district and division staff regularly attend regional Tribal meetings and conferences when funding is available. These meetings are excellent opportunities to engage with multiple Tribes at a single venue.
- USACE attends the National Congress of American Indians Mid-Year and Annual Conferences. USACE headquarters staff and local district staff conduct outreach to Tribes on USACE programs that can assist their water resources needs, including the TPP.
- District Tribal liaisons conduct targeted outreach and coordination with Tribes and to learn more about the Tribes' water resources needs, discuss the USACE processes required to get a water resources study including cost share requirements, and learn about the Tribe's internal processes required for a water resources project.



ANALYSIS OF BARRIERS AND KEY ISSUES



- Standard identification and outreach tools.
- Outreach Models and Instruction Manuals
- Best approaches for Specific Study Areas
- Language and Accessibility
- Technical Communication Barriers (ability to explain complex issues)
- Cultural differences
- Mistrust of government
- What is consistently the largest barrier for the Corps?