

Planning Mentor Program

1 June 2023

Q&A Session

This webinar provided an update on the availability of USACE planning mentors to assist planning project delivery teams (PDTs) navigate new activities and requirements during the feasibility study process, such as vertical alignment and comprehensive benefit evaluation. PDTs can request a Planning Mentor to provide support in implementing risk-informed planning methodologies, or they can assist in helping PDTs with any area of planning where some oversight or expertise would be beneficial in advancing the study. This webinar was presented to the USACE Planning Community in June 2023.



This summary of the Question/Answer session of the webinar is not a transcription; questions and responses have been edited and reordered for clarity.

Planning Mentors

How do you become a planning mentor?

Several members of the USACE Planning Community (PCoP) were trained to become Planning Mentors with a focus on risk-informed decision making during a [workshop on risk-informed planning and decision-making](#) in 2018, and these members remain available as resources. Additionally, all Water Resource Certified Planners (WRCPs) are eligible for consideration to become a mentor; the list of current WRCPs is available on the [Planner Database](#). Interested Water Resource Certified Planners do not need to undergo any additional training to serve as a planning mentor. If you are not a Certified Water Resources Planner but have a mentoring skill-set and interest, reach out to Karen Miller to find out more about how you can be involved.

How are planning mentors matched to a study?

Once HQUSACE receives information on a study and the areas which a mentor is being requested to provide assistance or guidance, they will match an interested and available mentor to the study based on whether they possess the skill sets needed by the PDT.

When the concept of planning mentors was first developed, it was mandatory for new start General Investigation (GI) studies to have a planning mentor assigned to it, and then it was up to the District to determine which tasks the mentor should help with. Does each new start GI study still have that requirement for a planning mentor assignment?

While this requirement no longer holds, PDTs always have the option to request a planning mentor. Funding for planning mentors from the Planning Support Program (Investigations Remaining Item) is limited, so generally new start feasibility studies are prioritized for planning mentors. Several districts and studies also have formal or informal mentoring opportunities, which the PCoP encourages and supports.

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Dam Safety Modification Study Planning Advisors

Are Planning Advisors for Dam Safety Modification Studies always project-funded, or is PCoP planning mentor funding available for these studies?

To date, Planning Advisors have been funded by the Dam Safety Modification Study itself. Note that within the Dam Safety Program, the role of a Planning Advisor is more defined, tasked with executing and gaining approval for a Dam Safety Modification Study.