



Partnering with the Corps: Assistance to States, Tribes & Communities

U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS

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Partnering with the Corps of Engineers

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) is the Federal government's largest water resources development and management agency. USACE began its water resources program in 1824 when Congress directed USACE to survey and improve the nation's river navigation systems. In the 20th century, USACE became the lead Federal flood control agency and significantly expanded its civil works activities, becoming a major provider of hydroelectric energy and the country's leading provider of recreation. In the late 1960s, the USACE Civil Works program added aquatic ecosystem restoration to its primary mission areas. Today, in addition to its primary missions of flood risk management, navigation, and aquatic ecosystem restoration, the USACE Civil Works program implements ecological and cultural resources management programs at its water resources projects and regulates certain activities in the Nation's wetlands.

The 38 USACE Civil Works Districts located throughout the country work with State, Tribal, and local governments to provide or coordinate technical assistance and engineering expertise through a variety of programs.

Flood Plain Management Services

The Flood Plain Management Services (FPMS) program addresses the need of people who live and work in floodplains to know about flood hazards, as well as the actions they can take to reduce property damage and prevent the loss of life caused by flooding. The FPMS program's objectives are to foster public understanding of options for dealing with flood hazards and to promote prudent use and management of the Nation's floodplains.

The FPMS program covers a full range of information, technical services, and planning assistance related to flood hazards and floodplain issues under the broad umbrella of floodplain management. Through the FPMS program, USACE Districts can provide State, Tribal, and local governments with technical and quick response services: technical services and planning guidance including general information; on-hand data, materials, and publications; brief explanations and/or advice on floodplain management measures; information regarding the Federal Emergency Management Agency's National Flood Insurance Program standards; Executive Order on Floodplain Management (E.O. 11988) requirements; materials on flood control works and other flood damage mitigation measures; assistance on flood warning and preparedness (including flood emergency evacuation) planning and delineation; and floodway studies.

The FPMS program also conducts special studies to provide or develop information, technical services, planning guidance, and assistance on floods and floodplain issues. This may include obtaining, developing, and interpreting floodplain data; and providing assistance on all aspects of floodplain management planning, including for the possible impacts of off-floodplain use on the physical, socioeconomic, and environmental conditions of the floodplain. Supporting studies can be conducted to improve methods and procedures for flood risk damage prevention, reduction, and abatement. Studies can also be undertaken to illustrate alternative ways of achieving floodplain management goals.

Technical services and studies via the FPMS program are available to federal and non-federal interests and agencies. Technical services and planning guidance under the FPMS Program are provided to State, regional, Tribal, and local governments without charge, within program funding limits. FPMS

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services for federal agencies and private persons are provided on a cost-recovery or fee basis. The Corps may also accept voluntarily contributed funds to expand the scope of services requested.

Beyond direct technical assistance, the FPMS program also supports comprehensive approaches to floodplain management:

- USACE's National Nonstructural Committee provides technical expertise on all aspects of nonstructural flood risk management and reduction adaptive measures, focusing on reducing the consequences of flooding. Nonstructural alternatives focus on flood risk reduction and protecting life safety, reducing or stemming increases in loss of property and repetitive losses, enhancing resiliency to flood events, and advancing flood risk management policy that supports the use of nonstructural measures.
- Systems Approach to Geomorphic Engineering (SAGE) is a collaborative effort among federal and state agencies, non-governmental organizations, academic institutions, and both private business and engineering firms. SAGE investigates hybrid engineering solutions that integrate ecosystem-based approaches and engineered infrastructure to achieve coastal resiliency on a landscape scale.
- The USACE National Hurricane Program provides real time support during hurricanes and delivers crucial input affecting emergency management, services, evacuation, and actions to enhance preparedness.

Authority: Section 206 of the Flood Control Act of 1960, as amended (33 U.S. Code § 709a); the FPMS program is sometimes referred to as the "Section 206" program.

Interagency Silver Jackets Teams

The Silver Jackets program supports state-led intergovernmental teams addressing flood risk management and hazard mitigation priorities. Silver Jackets teams bring together federal and state agency representatives at the state level to develop and implement solutions to state flood risk management priorities by assisting state agencies and local communities in leveraging information and resources, improving public risk communication, and creating a mechanism to collaboratively solve flood risk management issues and implement initiatives at the state and local levels.

Authority: Section 206 of the Flood Control Act of 1960, as amended (33 U.S. Code §709a).

Planning Assistance to States

Two types of planning assistance are offered through the USACE Planning Assistance to States (PAS) program: comprehensive plans and technical assistance.

The PAS program can assist in the development of state comprehensive plans, include planning for the development, utilization, and conservation of the water and related resources of drainage basins, watersheds, or ecosystems located within the boundaries of that State. Comprehensive plans can extend across state boundaries, provided both states agree.

Technical assistance provided through the PAS program includes support of planning efforts related to the management of state water resources. This support includes the provision and integration of hydrologic, economic, or environmental data and analysis in support of the State's water resources management and related land resources development plans identified in the state water plan or another state planning document related to water resources management.

Any State, or group of States, may partner with USACE under the PAS program. Federally-recognized Tribes and U.S. territories are also eligible partners in the PAS program. PAS program activities are

cost shared (50 percent) with the study partner, and voluntarily contributed funds in excess of cost share may be provided by the non-Federal partner.

Authority: Section 22 of WRDA 1974, as amended (42 U.S.C. §1962d-16); the PAS program is sometimes referred to as the “Section 22” program.

National Shoreline Management Study

The National Shoreline Management Study (NSMS) documents the physical, economic, environmental, and social impacts of shoreline change at regional scales across the country. USACE initiates these studies through collaborative efforts with other federal agencies and in coordination with states. The studies describe physical coastal processes and current policies relating to shore restoration; they also provide recommendations about shoreline management policies and the use of a systems approach to sediment management.

The studies include regional assessments to evaluate shoreline erosion and accretion within a region, and the effects of those processes on coastal communities and ecosystems. The assessments focus on a systems approach to sediment management in order to understand the natural movement of sediment and prioritize actions that achieve multiple objectives, such as erosion control and habitat restoration. Using this systems approach, a range of strategies for shoreline management and needs for vulnerable areas are analyzed. NSMS activities are coordinated through the USACE Institute for Water Resources.

Authority: Water Resources Development Act of 1999 (Public Law 106-53).

Emergency Management Technical Assistance

Under its Emergency Operations mission, USACE provides disaster preparedness, response, and recovery services as well as advanced planning measures designed to reduce the amount of damage caused by an impending disaster. Technical assistance includes advice on flood fighting methods and techniques and flood risk decision support tools. Disaster preparedness assistance includes the provision of sandbags, pumps, and other types of flood fight materials, and emergency contracting for raising and stabilizing threatened flood risk management projects. Technical or direct assistance may be requested by State or Tribal officials and must be supplemental to State, Tribal, and local efforts.

“Advance Measures” assistance may be provided in order to prevent or reduce damages when there is an imminent threat of unusual flooding. Technical assistance may be provided when there is significant potential that an imminent threat of unusual flooding will develop, and is provided to Tribes and States to help them prepare for the threat. Advance Measures projects are temporary projects that establish measures necessary to prevent or reduce impacts of floods that pose a significant threat to life and/or improved property, and are beyond the capability of State, Tribal, and local interests to perform in a timely manner. Advance Measures projects must be “engineeringly feasible” and capable of being constructed in time to meet the anticipated threat.

Authority: Public Law 84-99 (Section 5 of the Flood Control Act of 1941, as amended; 33 U.S. Code §701n); support under emergency operations authorized by Public Law 84-99 is sometimes referred to as the “P.L. 84-99 Program.” PL 84-99 also authorizes rehabilitation of eligible flood protection systems if damaged by a flood event.

For More Information

For more information on the breadth of USACE Civil Works water resources development and management activities, please contact your local District: <http://www.usace.army.mil/Locations.aspx>