Building Inclusive Partnerships through Effective Outreach and Engagement

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US Army Corps of Engineers ®

GOALS FOR TODAY

- ❑ What is Environmental Justice & Justice 40?
- ❑ Background & History
- ❑ Tools for Community Evaluation
- ❑ Outreach Strategy
- ❑ Inclusive Language
- ❑ Corps of Engineers' Programs

WHAT IS "ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE"?

"Fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin, or income regarding the development, implementation and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies, with no group bearing a disproportionate burden of environmental harms and risks."

- Assistant Secretary of the Army (Civil Works), March 2022

HOW WE ARRIVED AT ENVIRONMENTAL INJUSTICE

Differential level of air, water, and soil pollution

Limited access to credit

Unable to relocate and/or serial displacement

Residing near known environmental pollutants

Residing in a floodplain

Sit-in Against Warren County, NC PCB Landfill

*Environmental Inequality

*Environmental Racism
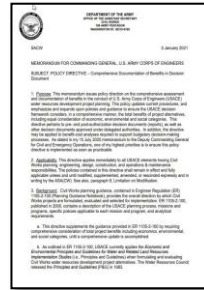
MAJOR POLICY & GUIDANCE

1994

EO 12898

Requires Federal agencies to assess impacts to minority & low-income groups as part of decision-making
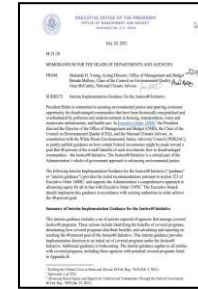
2020

WRDA 2020

Increased focus on Comprehensive Benefits.
Pilot studies to assess impacts to rural & disadvantaged communities
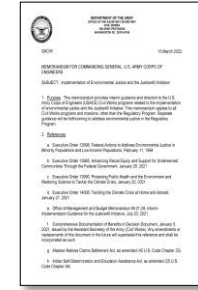
2021

EO 13985 & 14008

Establishes EJ workgroup. Provide funding for analysis, engagement, and economic opportunities to communities. Establishes Justice 40 Initiative

2022

Implementation Guidance

Outlines Corps of Engineers efforts to comply with **Justice40**, identifies recommended models for analysis, and encourages development of engagement strategies

WHAT IS "JUSTICE 40"?

Administration initiative that seeks to deliver **40% of the benefits** of federal investments in climate, clean energy, affordable/sustainable housing, clean water, and other areas to **disadvantaged communities** that are marginalized, underserved, and overburdened by pollution.

❑ Investments will help confront decades of underinvestment in disadvantaged communities and provide critical resources

❑ Implementation Guidance directing all Federal agencies to identify and begin transforming their programs covered under the Justice40 Initiative

❑ **Initial Corps focus on programs within the Corps**, including Planning Assistance to States and Tribes, Floodplain Management Services, Continuing Authorities Program and the Tribal Partnership Program

EJ TOOLS

EJ TOOLS: CEJST

- Executive Order 14008 directed the Council on Environmental Quality to develop a tool to assist in identifying Justice 40 communities →**Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool (CEJST)**

- Web-based map
- Census tract level
- Multiple data sources
  - Socioeconomic
  - Environmental
  - Climate
  - Health
- 8 "Categories of Burden" that measure multiple factors on a percentile basis
- Binary output
- https://screeningtool.geoplatform.gov/
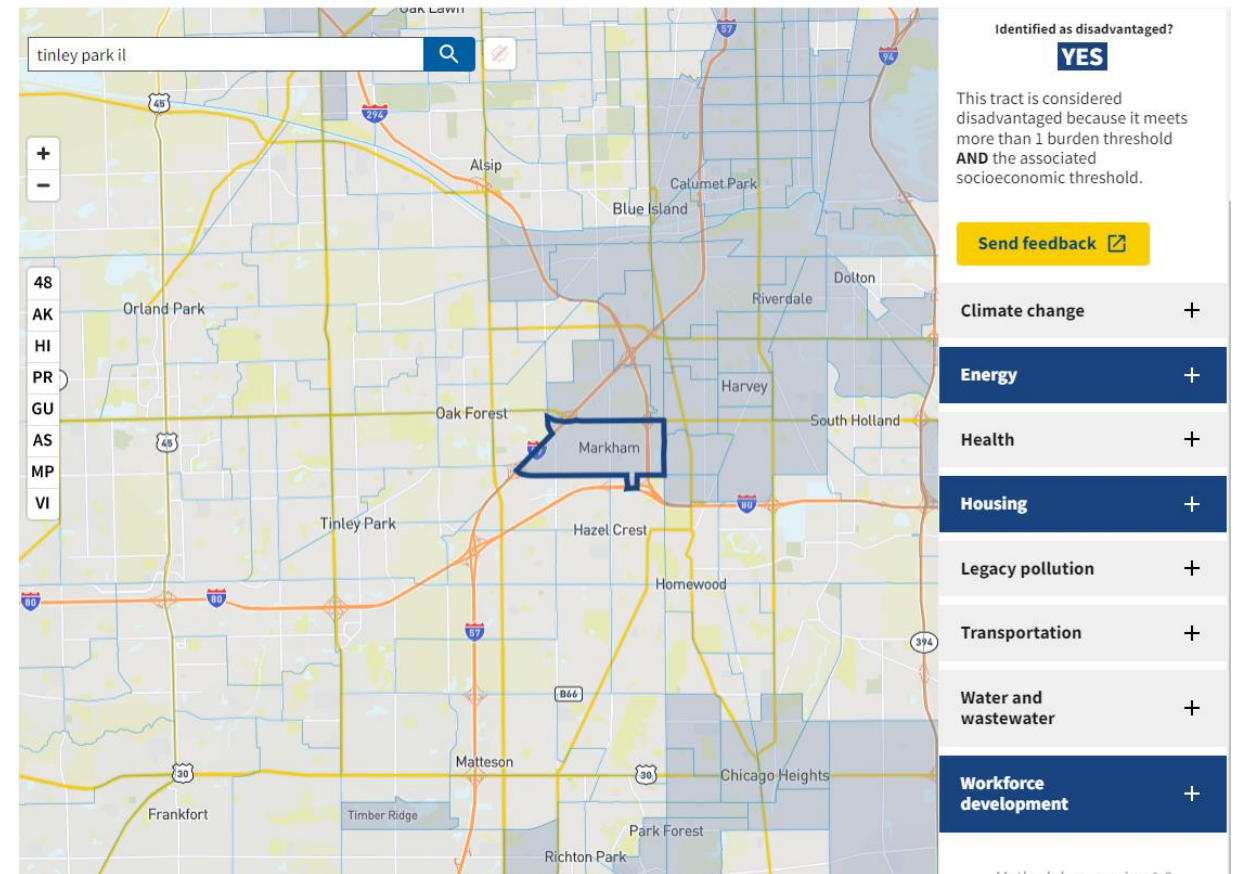
EXAMPLE BURDEN METHODOLOGY

Climate change

Communities are **identified as disadvantaged** if they are in census tracts that:

ARE at or above the 90th percentile for expected agriculture loss rate OR expected building loss rate OR expected population loss rate OR projected flood risk OR projected wildfire risk

AND are at or above the 65th percentile for low income

Low income

Percent of a census tract's population in households where household income is at or below 200% of the Federal poverty level, not including students enrolled in higher education.

Used in: All categories except for the workforce development category
Responsible party: U.S. Census

Source: American Community Survey from 2015-2019
Available for: All U.S. states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico

EJ TOOLS: EPA EJScreen

❑ USEPA developed EJ Screening Tool

❑ Web-based map
❑ Census tract level
❑ Multiple data sources
  ❑ Socioeconomic
  ❑ Environmental
  ❑ Climate
  ❑ Health
❑ More nuanced output
  ❑ Color coded percentile based
  ❑ Drill down to source data
  ❑ Multiple premade indices & reports
❑ https://www.epa.gov/ejscreen
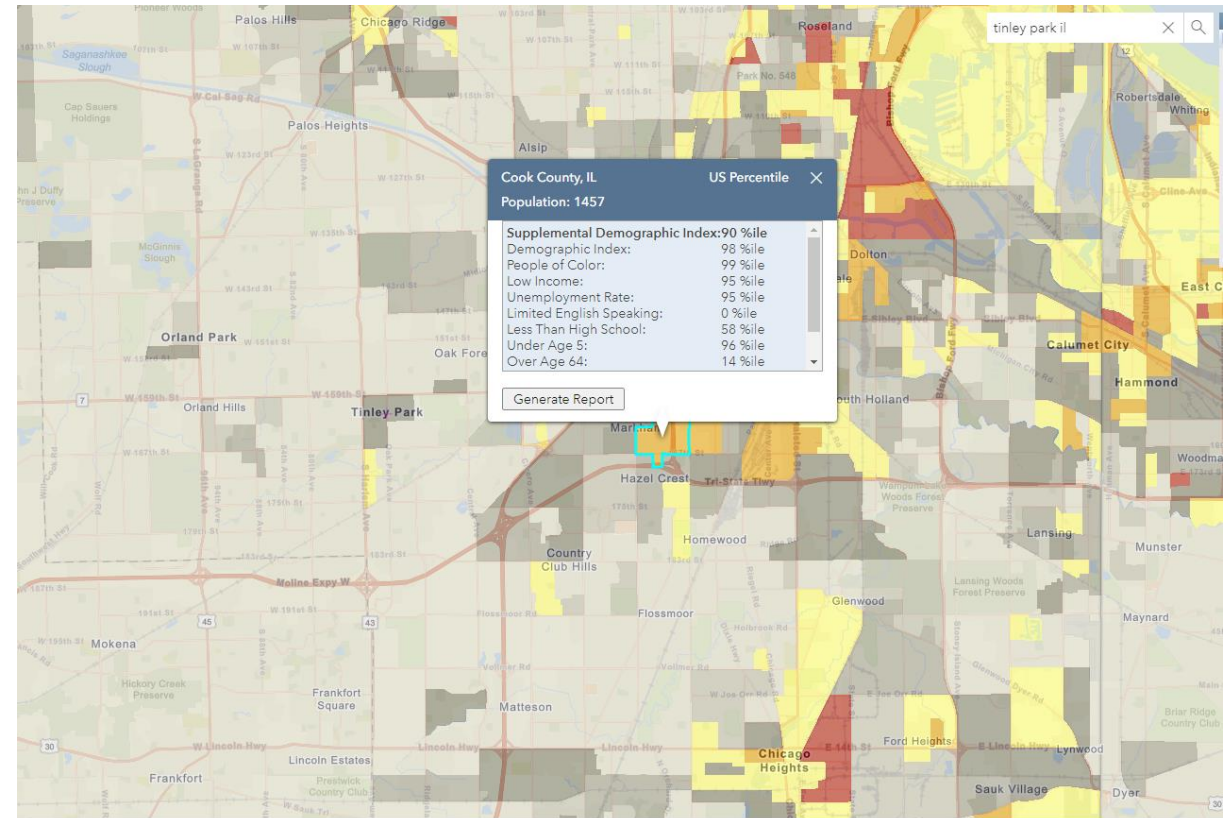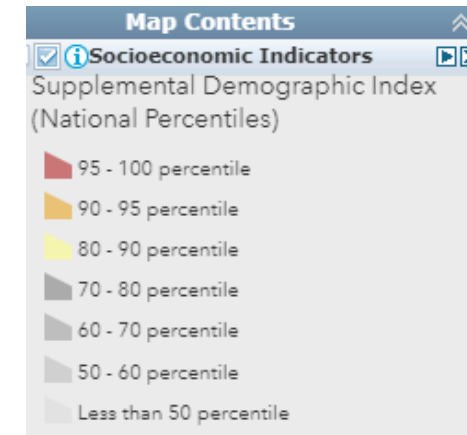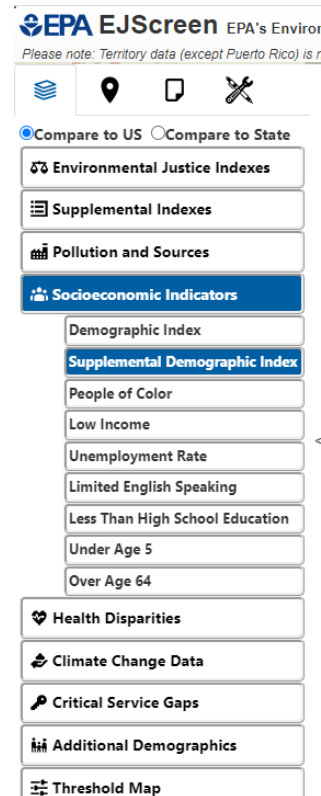
OTHER USES OF EJ TOOLS

❑ Understanding Community Demographics Helps Flood Preparedness Planning

      ❑ Low Income Populations
          ❑ Access to vehicles
          ❑ Ability to shelter temporarily
          ❑ Food

      ❑ Language
          ❑ Need for multi-lingual instructions
          ❑ Need for interpreters

      ❑ Age
          ❑ Health care needs
          ❑ Mobility
          ❑ Child care

EJ – OUTREACH STRATEGY

CHICAGO DISTRICT EJ STRATEGIC PLAN

District Environmental Justice Objectives

Develop specific and measurable district EJ objectives for the next year (or three years) related to the seven Corps of Engineers EJ Strategic Plan objectives and/or the metrics of the EJ Scorecard.

2 District Environmental Justice Strategic Plan Components

The 16 December 2022 memo on the *Implementation of the Interim Environmental Justice Strategic Plan* requires districts to write or update environmental justice strategic plans. The memo states that these plans should focus on 1) building internal and external capacity; 2) structuring the office for success; 3) assessing current relationships and capabilities; and 4) preparing for, and conducting, inclusive outreach and engagement approaches. This guide provides *recommended* content for each of these areas for districts to consider as they develop their plan, as outlined in figure 2.1. Part 5 of this guide contains a template that districts can use to start building their plans.

Building Internal and External Capacity	• Leadership Support and Reporting • Districtwide Capacity • Training • Building External Capacity
Structure the Office for Success	• District EJ Coordinator • District EJ Working Group
Outreach Strategy: Prepare and Conduct Inclusive Outreach and Engagement	• Assess Current Relationship • Identify New & Prioity Relationships • Establish a Process for Managing Relationships • Develop & Implement Communication Plans

Figure 2-1: Recommended outline for district environmental justice strategic plan.

CORPS OF ENGINEERS SEVEN EJ STRATEGIC PLAN OBJECTIVES

Improving Timing and Quality of Outreach

Developing and Optimizing USACE Resources to Broaden Internal Expertise

Improving Awareness, Access, and Participation for Technical Assistance Programs

Developing Whole-of-Government Solutions, Where Possible

Forming Strong Partnerships Within and Outside of the Government

Strengthening Tribal Relationships

Forming Effective Partnerships, Early Engagement, and Ensuring Comprehensive Analysis

CHICAGO DISTRICT EJ STRATEGY OBJECTIVES/APPROACH

Chicago District

Build relational trust and strengthen relationships with communities in the AOR

Provide paths to EJ Literacy

Expand recruitment efforts to seek out a diverse array of candidates

Deliver programs and projects with equitable outcomes

Reduce challenges to meaningful public participation

Expand opportunities for access to resources

Re-establish relationship with Tribes and Indigenous Peoples within the AOR

Establish cohesion with resource agencies, state and local municipalities, and the federal family

IDENTIFYING EJ COMMUNITIES/CEJST VS EJ SCREEN

- Created GIS application using both tools

- 2,687 of 4,281 total Chicago District Census tracts = Justice 40 using CEJST

- 2,291 of 4,281 total Chicago District Census tracts = > 80th percentile of EJScreen Demographic index

- Next steps:
  - Overlay floodplain
  - Prioritize outreach

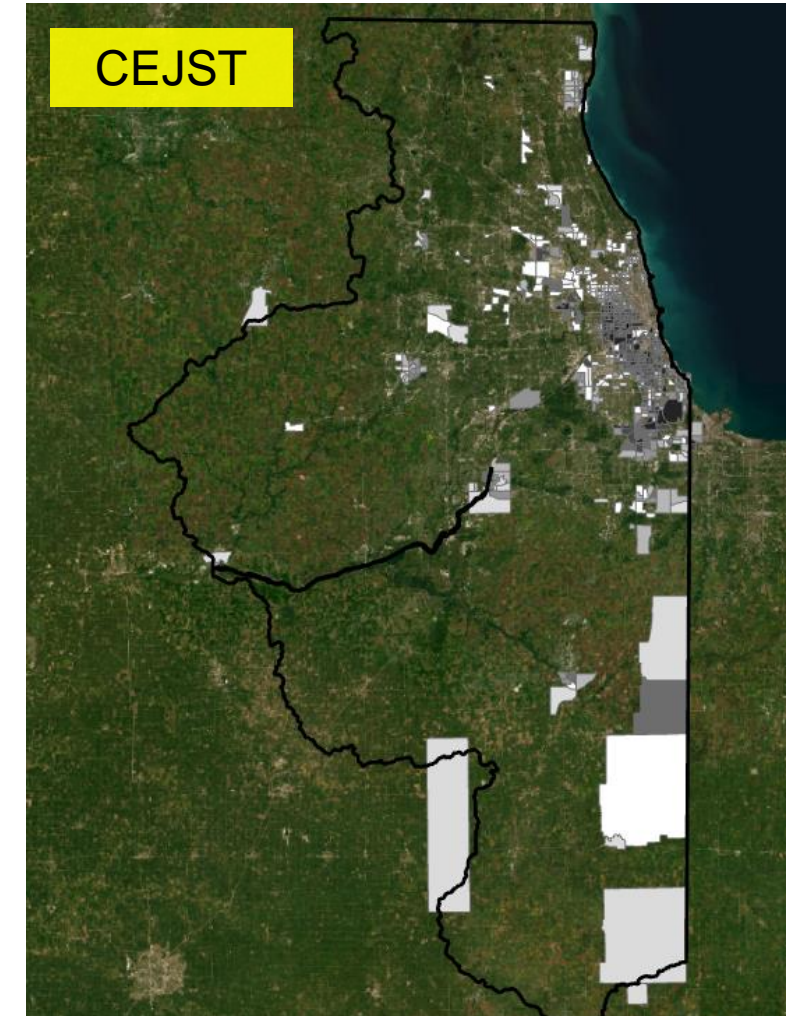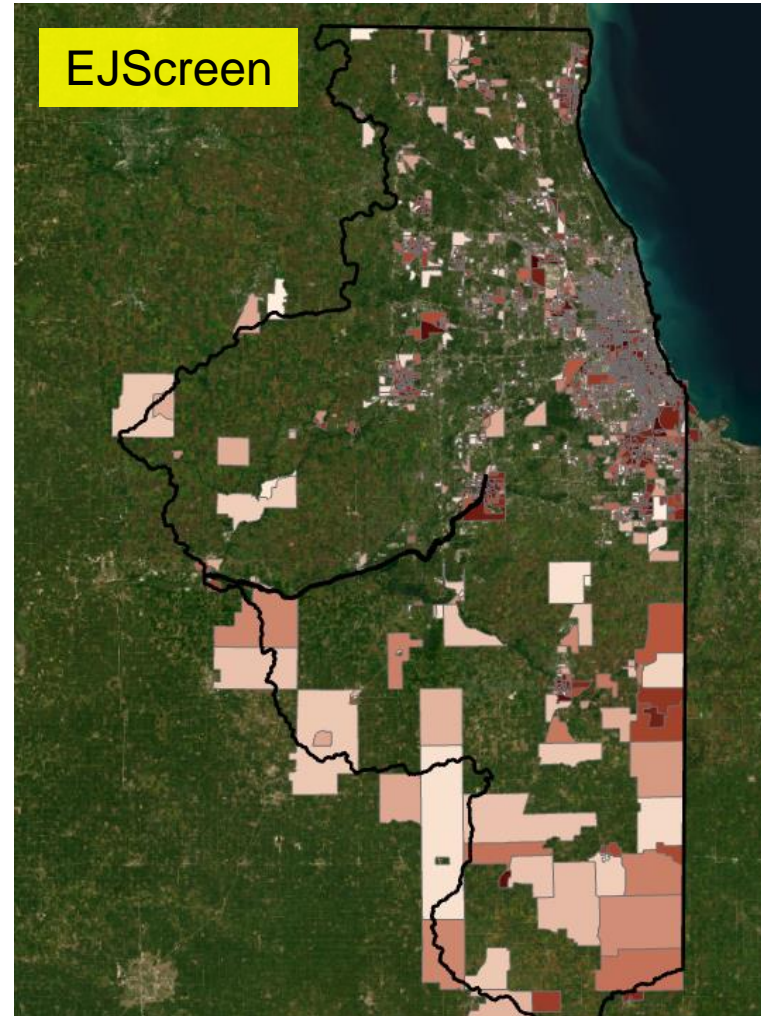# INTERNAL EDUCATION / PERSONAL & PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT BONUS SKILLS LEARNING

Environmental Justice 101	Deep Listening Skills	Language Liberation/Progressive Language	NEPA requirements and practices
Maintaining energetic relationships	Creativity in relationship development	Facilitation and outreach/communication skills	EJ Tools Training (offered via EPA, CEQ, and other agencies)

WHY USE INCLUSIVE LANGUAGE?

Patters of Negative Narratives

❑Reinforces some of the same negative stereotypes

❑Communicates the idea that these are inherent characteristics and not the result of circumstances

❑Leads to how people are treated less as partners and more like objects of charity

❑ "we see ourselves as helpers and not as partners"

Language used by governments and education systems, can deeply impact how we view race, gender, and cultures.

Words Matter
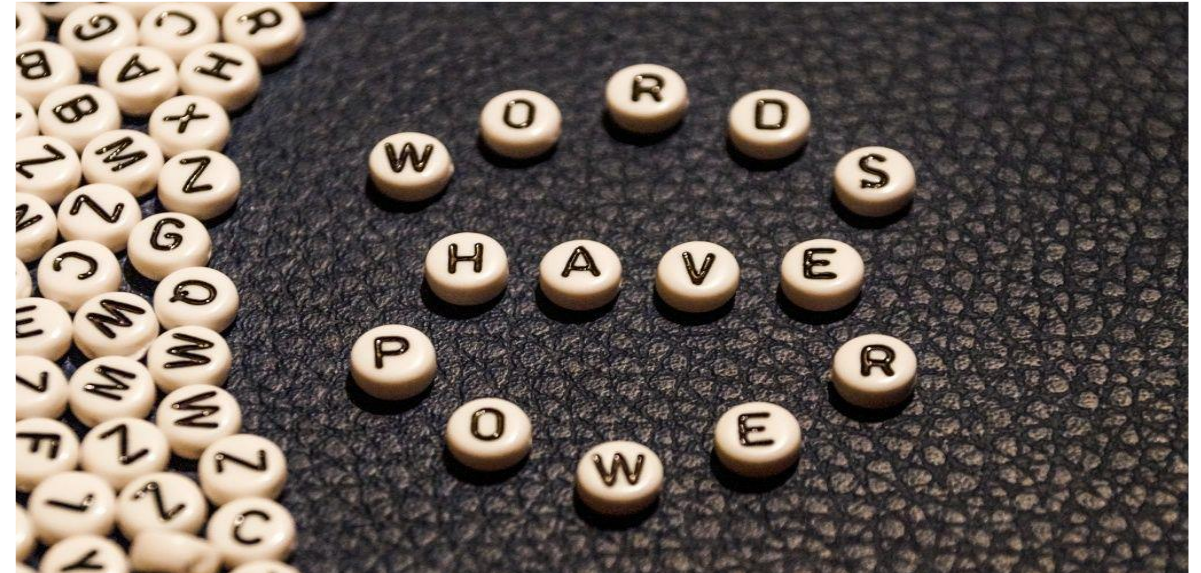
Intersectionality - the complex, cumulative way in which the effects of multiple forms of discrimination (such as racism, sexism, and classism) combine, overlap, or intersect especially in the experiences of marginalized individuals or groups.

HOW TO USE INCLUSIVE LANGUAGE

☐ Put people first/person-centered language
☐ Refrain from use of jargon and acronyms
☐ Use genderless language
☐ Be mindful of imagery use
☐ Operate from a position of solidarity rather than charity
☐ Take time to lift and celebrate communities with their stories, networks, institutions, creativity, spirit, and strengths of neighborhoods

"acknowledges diversity, conveys respect to all people, is sensitive to differences, and promotes equal opportunities"

Provide language that is inviting to all people.

INSTEAD OF USING	TRY
Inner city	Under-resourced
Disinvested	Low-opportunity
Disadvantaged	Neighborhoods with high poverty rates
Distressed neighborhoods	Neighborhoods with access to fewer opportunities

Unlearning, learning, and relearning

MEANINGFUL ENGAGEMENT

"All of our cultural forms of identities, our sense of place, our ideas of belonging, are related to nature."

Community Involvement from the Beginning

Acknowledge and Validate Community Concerns

Ensure Voice Inclusivity

Get to Know Who Lives There and What's Important to Them

SAMPLE OUTREACH TRACKING STRATEGY

EJ Community Outreach Tracker								FY23 Q3					
State	Community Name	Prioritized Community? (Near-Term Engagement) Y/N	USACE Lead(s)	POC Name(s)	POC Number(s)	POC Email(s)	Collaboration with other agencies/organizations	Date of Outreach	Type of Outreach /Tools Shared	# of Attendees/Participants	Outreach Summary and Key Takeaways	Feedback from Attendees/Participants	Next Steps

CORPS OF ENGINEERS PROGRAMS

Floodplain Management Services (FPMS) Program

- ❑ Provides information, technical support and guidance to communities on flood hazards to guide floodplain development.

- ❑ Must be flood-risk related

- ❑ Does not result in design or construction

- ❑ Typically, about 12 months but can extend up to 24

- ❑ Competitive program

- ❑ 100% Federal funded

- ❑ Not a grant

Chicago District Boundaries

Planning Assistance to States and Tribes (PAS)

❑ Planning assistance to states, Native American Indian tribes, and local governments to manage their water and related land resources.

❑ Does not provide Federal funding for project design and implementation.

❑ Broader range of services than FPMS.

❑ 50-50 Cost sharing.

❑ Non-Federal share can include work in kind.

❑ Some current examples:
  ❑ Lemont, Illinois – Water quality and stormwater management on I&M Canal
  ❑ MMSD, Wisconsin – Concrete lined channel assessment
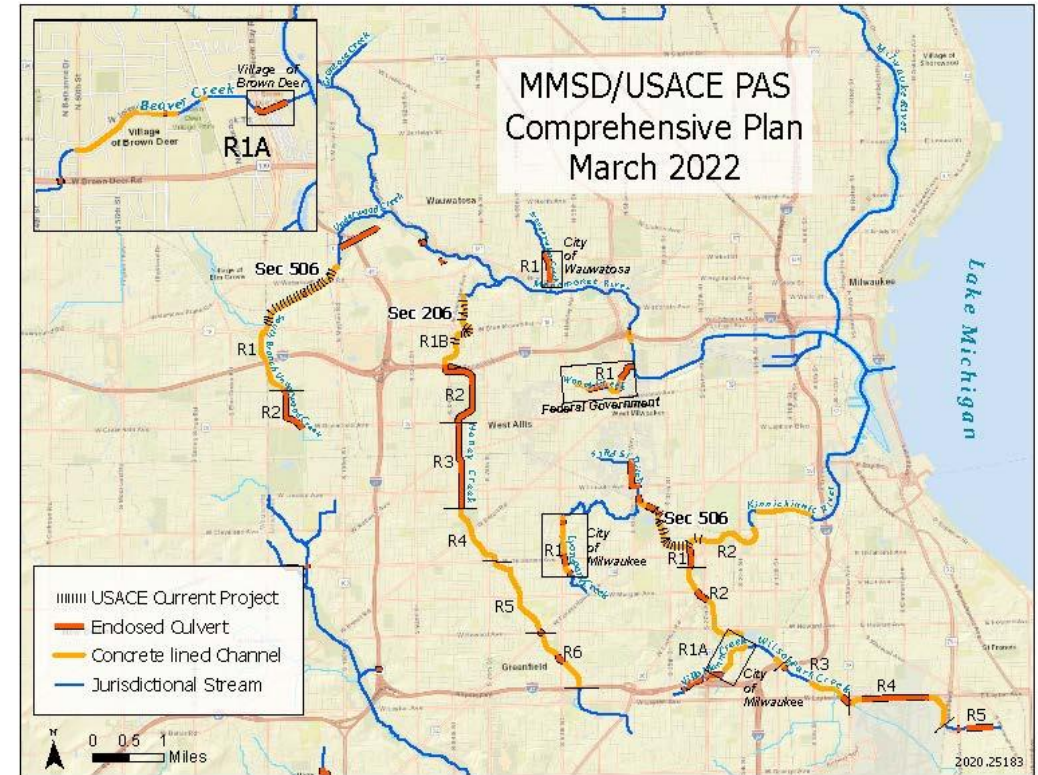
Continuing Authorities Program (CAP)

- ❑ Standing Congressional Authorizations for smaller Corps projects

- ❑ Includes Feasibility, Design, and Implementation.

- ❑ Feasibility Phase 50% Federal / 50% non-Federal cost.

- ❑ Implementation typically 65% / 35% cost share.

- ❑ Federal cost limits.

- ❑ Competitive Program.

- ❑ Some Current Examples:
    - ❑ Lansing / Calumet City, IL Levee Rehab (Section 205)
    - ❑ Joliet, IL (Section 205)

CAP Authorities and their Project Purposes
Section 14: Streambank and shoreline erosion protection of public works and non-profit public services
Section 103: Beach erosion and hurricane and storm damage reduction
Section 107: Navigation improvements
Section 111: Shore damage prevention or mitigation caused by Federal navigation projects
Section 204: Beneficial uses of dredged material
Section 205: Flood risk management
Section 206: Aquatic ecosystem restoration
Section 208: Removal of obstructions, clearing channels for flood control
Section 1135: Project modifications for improvement of the environment

Thank You for Sharing Space With Us!

Lead with values

Prioritize district coordination funding

Listen to, learn from communities

Co-Create

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

Identify communities

Initiate Contact w. communities

Navigate, advocate, problem solve

Initiate & deliver projects