

# The Urban Waters Ambassador

## Connecting People to their Local Urban Waters

The Urban Waters Federal Partnership (UWFP) created the Urban Waters Ambassador (Ambassador) positions to accelerate and coordinate on-the-ground projects, promote community engagement, and advance water and land protection and restoration. This fact sheet details the Ambassador's role, and how the Ambassador positions provide critical benefits to communities.

### THE URBAN WATERS FEDERAL PARTNERSHIP

In 2011, the UWFP was established to reconnect urban communities, particularly those that are overburdened or economically distressed, with their waterways to become stewards for clean urban waters. Through the UWFP, communities gain economic, environmental and social benefits, and collaborate with federal agencies, state and local agencies and community-led efforts to achieve common goals. The UWFP is supported by 15 federal agencies and more than 28 NGO partners working in 19 designated locations.

### What is an Urban Waters Ambassador?

Ambassadors at the 19 UWFP locations serve as local coordinators, facilitators and leaders. They coordinate communities, federal and state agencies, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and businesses to accelerate and prioritize on-the-ground projects to improve water quality, restore outdoor spaces and foster community stewardship in urban-related watersheds.

Since each partnership location is different, the role and responsibilities of an Ambassador can vary. Experience from UWFP locations shows having an Ambassador can lead to better coordination among all stakeholders and agencies, accelerating project completion and advancing success.

### Responsibilities of the Ambassador

The Ambassador serves as:

**Liaison/ Point of Contact** – The Ambassador builds solid relationships with federal, state, and local entities as well as industry, foundations, non-profits, academic institutions and community representatives, collecting and communicating insights about needs and priorities. Through these relationships the Ambassador can effectively identify diverse funding opportunities and connect resources and tools to the needs of local partners.

**Project Coordinator/ Leader** – The Ambassador navigates and follows the many moving parts of an Urban Waters Partnership, tracking what is happening and ensuring coordination between and among all partners. This includes developing a clear work plan that supports local priorities.

**Facilitator/Convener** – The Ambassador convenes and facilitates meetings and conversations between existing and prospective partners, seeking fresh collaboration outside of traditional stakeholders.

**Messenger/Reporter** – The Ambassador is at the heart of every Urban Waters Partnership, acting as the nexus of information sharing. The Ambassador circulates information to partners about funding opportunities, meetings and more. Partners also pass along information to the Ambassador for broad distribution to a national network of Urban Waters Partnership locations.

### Benefits of an Ambassador

- Strengthens ties within the community
- Builds trust among partners
- Connects needs with funding opportunities
- Leverages resources

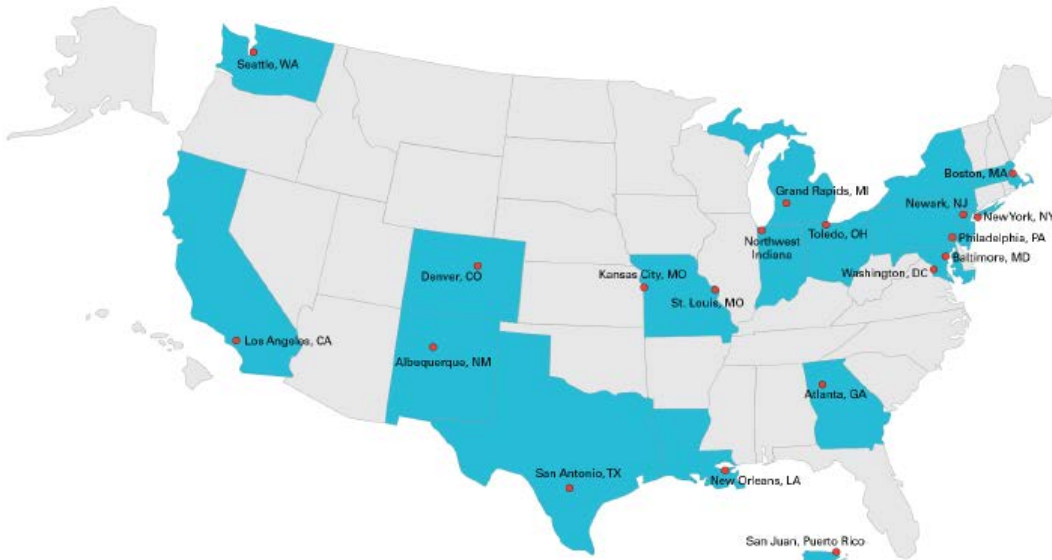
- Maximizes national networking opportunities
- Increases local capacity
- Creates network to share lessons learned
- Prevents and resolves conflicts
- Assesses and oversees watershed progress

### Examples of Ambassador Success Stories

The Ambassador position can be supported through a variety of sponsors, including an agency, university or foundation. Through their critical work, Ambassadors have provided unique benefits across the country. Examples of their diverse contributions include:

- At the **Los Angeles River UWFP location**, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) led the Ambassador position for over three years. The mayor of Los Angeles honored Ambassador Pauline Louie with a special recognition for the partnership’s achievements.
- At the **Northwest Indiana UWFP location**, the Ambassador is supported by Purdue University, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Forest Service, and EPA. The Ambassador has initiated a variety of local projects, including (1) an effort to increase tree canopy in areas impacted by the Emerald Ash Borer, and (2) Indiana’s first wheelchair-accessible canoe launches.
- At the **Kansas City UWFP location**, the Ambassador is supported by the Heartland Conservation Alliance, a local NGO. The Ambassador is leading new projects on reclaiming formerly abandoned sites and engaging new stakeholder groups in the watershed.

### Ambassadors Work in 19 UWFP Locations



### Additional Information on the UWFP

Urban Waters Federal Partnership Fact Sheet:

[https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2015-09/documents/uwfp\\_factsheet-final.pdf](https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2015-09/documents/uwfp_factsheet-final.pdf)

Urban Waters Federal Partnership Vision, Mission and Principles:

<https://www.epa.gov/urbanwaterspartners/urban-waters-vision-mission-principles>

Urban Waters Partnership Handbook:

[https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2016-07/documents/uw\\_partnership\\_handbook\\_v2k.pdf](https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2016-07/documents/uw_partnership_handbook_v2k.pdf)

