

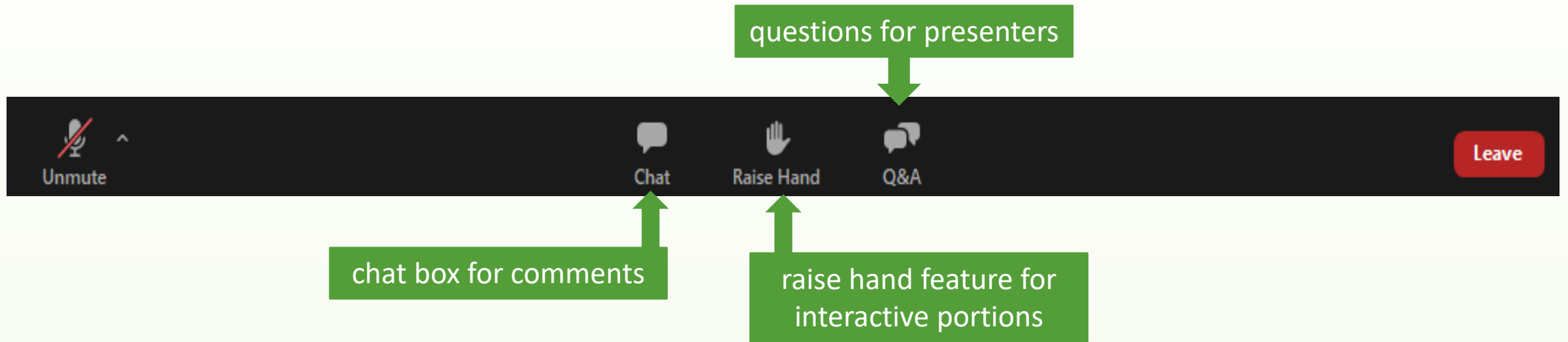


Justice40 and the Wetland Program Development Grants Workshop #5

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

JUNE 6, 2023

Webinar Logistics



To ask a question: Type your question in the Q&A box. We will take questions at the end of the webinar during the interactive discussion.

Technical difficulties: Please send a message to Gabby Vinyard, ERG (Zoom support) or email gabby.vinyard@erg.com.

A recording of the webinar and a PDF version of today's PowerPoint presentation will be posted online following today's session.

Today's Presentation Outline:

- Review Justice 40, climate opportunities, reporting benefits of Wetland Program Development Grants (WPDGs)
- Provide our findings:
 - Improved protocols for reporting progress on WPDGs
 - Suggestions to amend benefit “bins” to capture the benefits from Justice 40 projects in future Wetland Program Development Grant funding cycles.
 - Suggestions to EPA for improved technical assistance approaches and best available science to move forward on wetland program development
- Next Steps

Addressing J40 through Wetland Program Development Grants

All J40 covered programs are required to engage in stakeholder consultations and ensure that community stakeholders are meaningfully involved in determining program benefits.

Covered programs are also required to report benefits directed to disadvantaged communities.

EJ and Climate Actions and Activities were added to the Core Elements Framework.

Changes to the WPDG Request for Applications

- **New National Priority for climate change** with points for projects that address climate change.
- **New National Priority for J40 projects** in disadvantaged communities with points for projects that address benefits (outcomes) to those disadvantaged communities.
 - The tasks in your applications that affect J40 communities.
 - The outputs and outcomes in your applications that affect J40 communities.
 - List, map, or describe the disadvantaged communities affected for your state, tribe, territory or local area using the Climate and Environment Justice Screening Tool (CEJST).

WPDG J40 Reporting Metrics for FY23

EPA will be reporting on:

1. The **number of grants** awarded with J40 tasks
2. The **percentage of number of awards** made with J40 tasks
3. The **amount of funding associated** with those J40 tasks
4. The **percentage of funding** associated with J40 tasks/awards

EPA will need to report on the benefits associated with those awards at time of award and potentially when the grants close out in 1-4 years.

Engagement Workshop Findings: Feedback from WPDG Stakeholders including States, Territories, Tribes

Engagement Session Findings

- The following slides summarize:
 - WPDG and Justice 40 reporting decisions
 - General feedback on WPDG program proposed reporting categories for demonstrating benefits of actions and activities under each Core Element
 - Refined benefits reporting categories
 - General feedback on ESTP Technical assistance approaches to support States, Tribes and Territories in wetland program development, including developing successful grant project packages and Wetland Program Plans

Findings: Justice 40 Reporting

- In general, potential grantees agreed that the proposed Justice 40 reporting proposal is achievable
- Potential grantees/WPDG stakeholders provided specific suggestions on ways to improve proposed categories of benefits to Justice 40 Communities

Findings: Feedback on Reporting Benefits and Progress under WPDGs

- In general, potential grantees agreed that EPA could provide broad categories or “bins” of types of benefits to account for the benefits provided through Justice 40 projects
- Potential Grantees/WPDG stakeholders provided specific suggestions on ways EPA could solicit reporting of benefits as part of WPDG reporting protocols:
 - For each grant project proposal awarded, a mixture of identifying anticipated outcomes linked to specific tasks and narrative descriptions of benefits received by communities in state, tribal and territories jurisdictions is achievable
- Suggestions were provided to EPA to enhance the proposed “bins” that will help potential grantees capture anticipated outcome and benefits
- This input will help EPA provide aggregated benefits information to demonstrate WPDG successes

Updated Categories of Benefits of the WPDGs:

The following “bins” incorporate input received in Engagement Workshops # 2 and # 3 on:

- Improves habitat; addresses water quality and/or quantity challenges; or prevents or reduces nonpoint source pollution.
- Reduces, minimizes, or avoids wetland losses or impacts.
- Expands research, education and develops wetland assessment tools for wetland restoration and protection.
- Expands the adaptive capacity of communities, wildlife, and plants to be resilient to climate change.
- Deepens community engagement or use of wetlands for recreational and cultural purposes.

Findings: Improved Technical Assistance

Highlights of input received in Engagement Workshop #4 on the types of technical assistance used

- Affirmed the importance and usefulness of NAWM role in providing forums for peer-to-peer learning, trainings, technical guides and professional certification
- Trainings on a regional basis or provided by EPA Regions for states, tribes and territories is useful
- EPA's ESTP webpages are used by some stakeholders; unclear if the webpages are a primary source of information or how frequently the webpages are used develop grant proposals and Wetland Program Plans
- One on one conversations with regional experts helpful when discussing challenging technical issues: water quality standards, grant proposals and wetland program plans, and legal requirements related to avoidance and minimization

Findings: Improved Technical Assistance

Engagement Workshop #4 input highlights on the top technical assistance and training needs:

- Continuity
- Enforcement investigation assistance
- Quantifying phosphorus attenuation of wetlands.
- How to model flooding with changing climate and higher storm intensity at shorter duration
- Monitoring results from restoration projects, particularly stream restoration with adjacent wetland effects
- How to develop tools for field-collected data (AGOL) platforms and how we can incorporate that data into a user-friendly database
- Making it easier to collect data is helpful for capacity
- A catalog of the state of the science for pressing issues

Findings: Improved Technical Assistance

General comments on the revised Core Elements Framework with other grant project support

- Guidance would be useful for how to encourage more partners, like nonprofits, to apply for grants for our specific questions.
- Existing technical guides available through NAWM are helpful.
- Having ECOS focus some on the importance of integrating wetlands with other water programs would help elevate the importance of our work.
- A national database for wetlands data.
- Other

Next Steps

- Publish the 2023 Regional WPDG RFA
- Updates and improvements to the ESTP Website
- Link benefit “bins” to CEF activities
- In 2023-24 EPA will consider developing specific technical assistance on:
 - State of Science for each Core Element
 - Demonstrative case studies on wetland program building connections to EJ and climate decision making
 - Identify wetland information data gaps moving forward with Justice 40
 - Practical Tools to magnify the impact of wetland program building actions on EJ and climate decision making
- Follow-up engagement sessions

Please provide additional ideas and suggestions to EPA for consideration

We know after you get back to your desk you may have additional suggestions or ideas for us to consider as EPA strives to improve our technical assistance delivery.

WPDG-RFA@epa.gov

Videos, transcripts, and summaries of all the J40 Outreach Webinars will be located on our website at

<https://www.epa.gov/wetlands/justice40-and-wetland-program-development-grants> .

EPA CEF and WPP Information

- Core Element Framework and WPDGs:

<https://www.epa.gov/wetlands/core-elements-effective-state-and-tribal-wetland-programs>

http://water.epa.gov/grants_funding/wetlands/cefintro.cfm

- Approved Wetland Program Plans:

<https://www.epa.gov/wetlands/state-and-tribal-wetland-program-plans>

- October 2009 WPP memorandum from EPA:

http://water.epa.gov/type/wetlands/upload/wetland_program_plan_memorandum.pdf

- EPA Regional Grants Coordinators and ESTP Contacts:

<https://www.epa.gov/wetlands/wetland-program-development-grants-and-epa-wetlands-grant-coordinators>