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Urban Waters Ambassadors: Advancing Federal and Local Priorities in Underserved Communities

Urban Waters Federal Partnership Ambassadors help urban communities — particularly those that are underserved and overburdened — **connect with and improve their local waterways and surrounding lands, making them a vital resource to help advance equity and environmental justice.**

Ambassadors are local staff from NGOs or government agencies who facilitate coordination between federal and state government agencies, local municipalities, academic and private sector partners, and local non-profits in Partnership locations. The Ambassador facilitates access for federal agencies to **learn from and support communities who have historically had difficulty accessing federal resources, tools and services.**

Ambassadors develop annual workplans that identify local priorities and advance both federal missions and local needs, guide project development and improve coordination and communication among partners at each of the Partnership locations. Ambassador salaries are funded by the federal agencies engaged in the Partnership.



THE CASE FOR THE AMBASSADOR

The Ambassador is the local leader and liaison to the federal partners and the community. Ambassadors typically have deep connections with historically excluded communities and are able to **lead collaboration among federal, state and local agencies, identifying community needs, achieving common goals and supporting on-the-ground projects** that improve the watershed and benefit residents. The Ambassador is a **low-cost investment yielding high returns for federal partners within each of the 21 Urban Waters locations.**

The Ambassador



Unites Federal and Local Priorities

Partnership projects reflect the needs of the watershed and its residents and can advance the goals of the federal agency missions. Ambassadors serve as strategic leaders identifying federal funding and coordinating among Urban Waters partners.

"Thanks to the Urban Waters Federal Partnership, we have been able to partner with USGS on a number of water quality studies and have learned critical information about the Bronx River that we otherwise would not have had the capacity or expertise to execute on our own."

— **MICHELLE LUEBKE**,
Director of Environmental Stewardship,
Bronx River Alliance



Leverages Funding

Ambassadors coordinate partner resources to make the most impact with limited dollars. Given competitive funding environments, Partnership organizations work to understand each other's valuable work and missions, build funding strategies and identify funding opportunities so funding is diversified and utilized across multiple projects.



Accelerates on-the-ground projects

Ambassadors accelerate and prioritize on-the-ground projects that are critical to improving water quality, restoring outdoor spaces and fostering community stewardship in urban watersheds. Ambassadors engage a wide network of stakeholders around particular issues, such as brownfields, resiliency, flooding and access to water, increasing capacity for effective projects.



Builds Trust and Minimizes Conflict

Ambassadors encourage transparency and network-building among local Partnership agencies and organizations. They help partners minimize competition, duplication and conflict. Having a resilient group of partners increases the likelihood of a swift and amicable resolution.



Increases Productivity of Member Organization

Ambassadors move projects forward more efficiently and quickly by leveraging the right resources, freeing up time and resources to initiate and maintain other high-impact efforts. The Partnership model also eliminates duplication of efforts by keeping partners informed of current initiatives and projects.

"Without an Ambassador in a coordinating role, it would be very difficult to have continued momentum."

— **MICHAEL LEFF**,
Former Ambassador for
the Delaware River Partnership



Measures Performance and Success

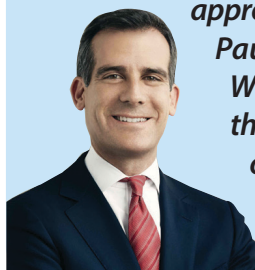
Ambassadors measure and report results to drive future success. Ambassadors routinely review and report on progress to showcase the success of the program.



Connects Urban and Rural Communities

The 21 Partnerships' approach to watershed-level management incorporates both downstream and upstream partners, incorporating a holistic and multifaceted approach to address community and watershed challenges.

"I, Eric Garcetti, as Mayor of the City of Los Angeles, do hereby commend and offer appreciation to (former Ambassador) Pauline Louie and the Urban Waters Federal Partnership for the exceptional service to the City of Los Angeles in bringing new life to our Los Angeles River."



"The Urban Waters Federal Partnership was instrumental in bringing together 1,000 volunteers to build the East Capitol Urban Farm. They actually made the connections and connected us to the groups that needed the assistance and were supportive of what we wanted to do."

— **PROF. DWANE JONES**,
University of the
District of Columbia

