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Living by the levee: flood resilience with and for unsheltered communities

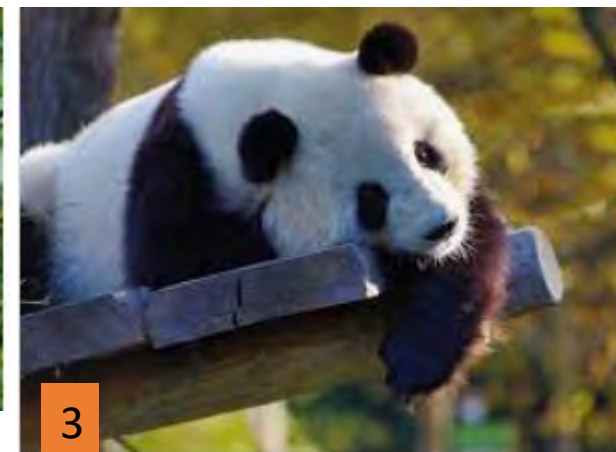
California Silver Jackets Interagency Program
October 8, 2024



Jessica Ludy, San Francisco District
Emily Marcil, Detroit District

Good Morning!

What kind of panda do you feel like today?



Hello and reflection: *what brings you to this space today?*



Jessica Ludy
Flood Risk Program Manager
San Francisco District



Emily Marcil
Lead Planner
Detroit District

Why we are here today...

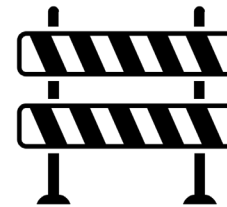
Flood safety



Whole-community well-being,
including unhoused
communities



Systemic barriers to
flood resilience



Interagency collaboratio
n



Outline

- US Army Corps of Engineers Background
- Project Overview
- Findings
- Actions for Change
- Discussion



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Who are we and what do we do?

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers San Francisco District

US Army Corps of Engineers Missions

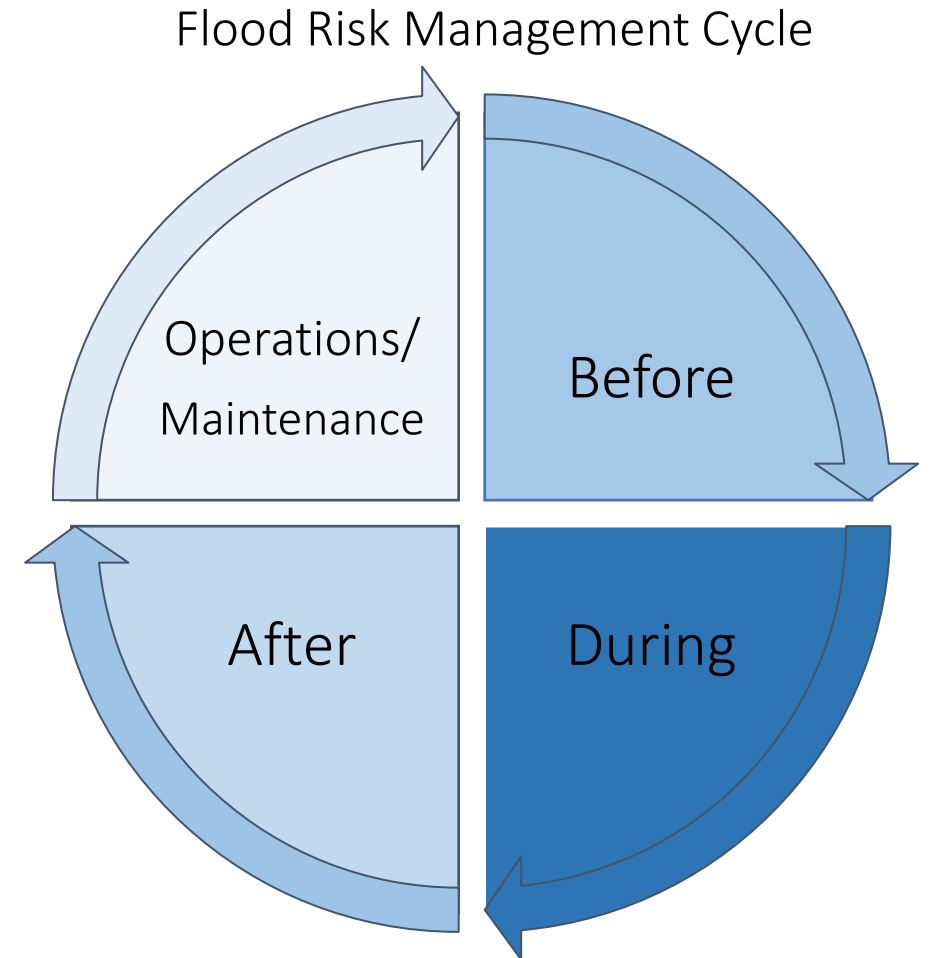
1. We **implement** water resource projects:
 - Ecosystem Restoration
 - Navigation
 - Flood Risk Management
 - Multipurpose
2. We **permit** projects along waterways
3. We **operate** and **maintain** water infrastructure (federal ship channels, dams)
4. We support state **emergency management** and **response** activities

Project funded: Congressionally authorized + congressionally appropriated.



National Silver Jackets Interagency Program

- State-led collaboration with federal & local agencies, community partners
- Technical assistance to communities to reduce flood risk across the disaster cycle
- Whole of government and community approach.



Why are we involved in this discussion?

Our work affects and is affected by all communities living in and near water resources infrastructure.

- We build and manage infrastructure
- Our local partners are concerned about levee performance & safety
- Issue is growing nationally and we are concerned

WORLD & NATION

A life saved from the shadows



Steve, right, and his girlfriend Kathryn (they asked that their last names and ages not be used) lie in their large bed in a storm drainage tunnel under the city of Las Vegas. The pair, who have one of the more elaborate encampments among the tunnel-dwellers, have many of the comforts of a real home, but lack electricity and running water. (Brian Vander Brug / Los Angeles Times)

BY ASHLEY POWERS

DEC. 22, 2009 12 AM PT





Benchland Camp, San Lorenzo River, 2021-2022

Administrative priorities for environmental justice call for centering the experiences of marginalized communities in our work





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What did we do?

The project

The Problem as it came to us



Unsheltered Flood Resilience Project

Goals

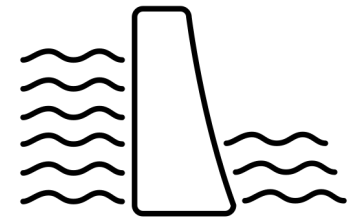
- Improve the **life safety**, public health and **long-term well-being** for unsheltered individuals and households before, during, and after floods
- Help **flood and water agencies** build the **capacity and resources** they need to manage flood risk at this interface

Approach: Workshops

- Center the needs of flood-prone unsheltered communities across the flood risk management cycle
- Increase collaboration & knowledge exchange between & across disciplines and agencies
- Identify barriers
- Develop set of care-centered flood risk management recommendation



Created by very poernomo
from the Noun Project



Created by Bakunetsu Kaito
from the Noun Project



Workshop #1 – Los Angeles, July 19, 2022

Participation

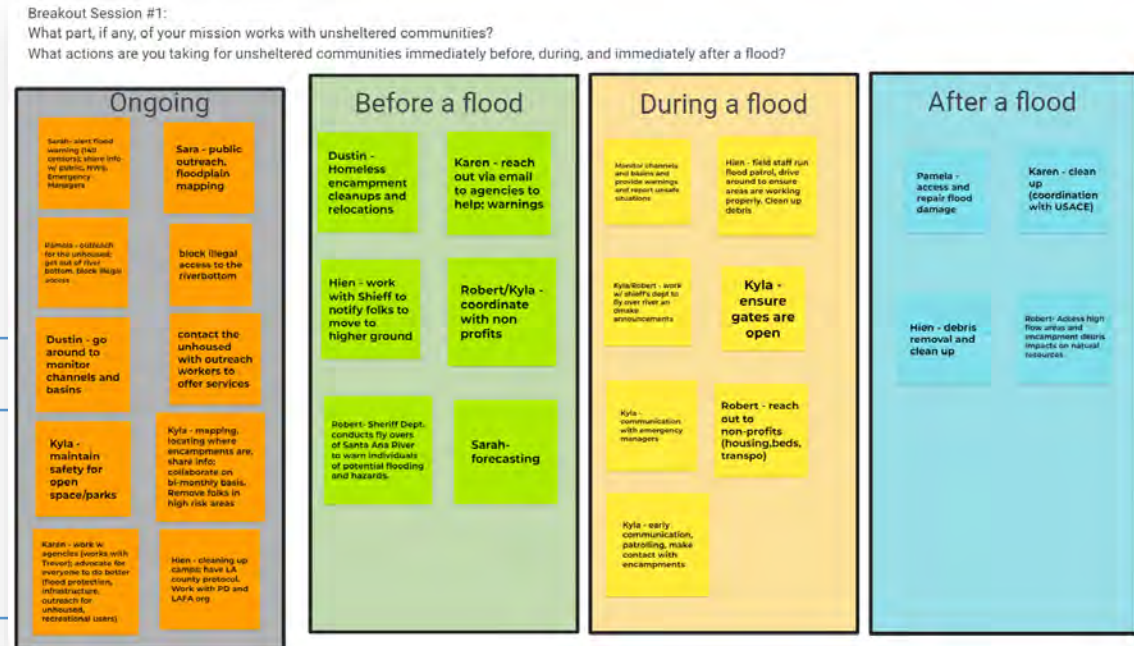
- Parks & recreation
- Public works
- Water resources managers/dam operators
- County social services
- Law enforcement

Format

- Breakout session
- Jam board

Goals

- Identify local needs and future actions for care-driven FRM response



Workshop #2 - San Francisco Bay Area – Nov 9, 2022

Participation

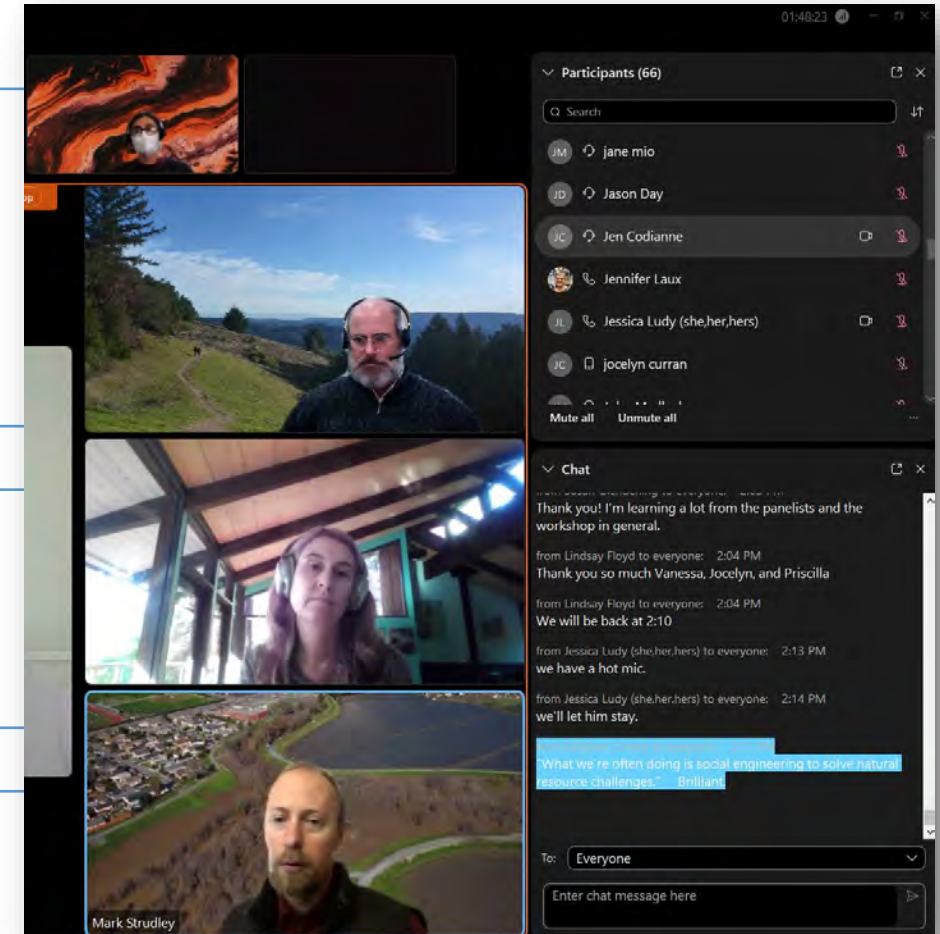
- flood risk & emergency managers
- health & social services
- environmental interests
- grassroots orgs for unsheltered communities
- state & federal agencies

Format: Panel Discussion

- Subject matter experts in issues of homelessness
- Infrastructure operators & managers
- State and federal agencies (California Of. Emerg. Svc, HUD, USACE)

Goals

- Shared understanding of lived experience of flood-prone unsheltered communities
- Shared understanding of risks to levee safety and infrastructure
- Identify care-informed actions & resources to move the needle





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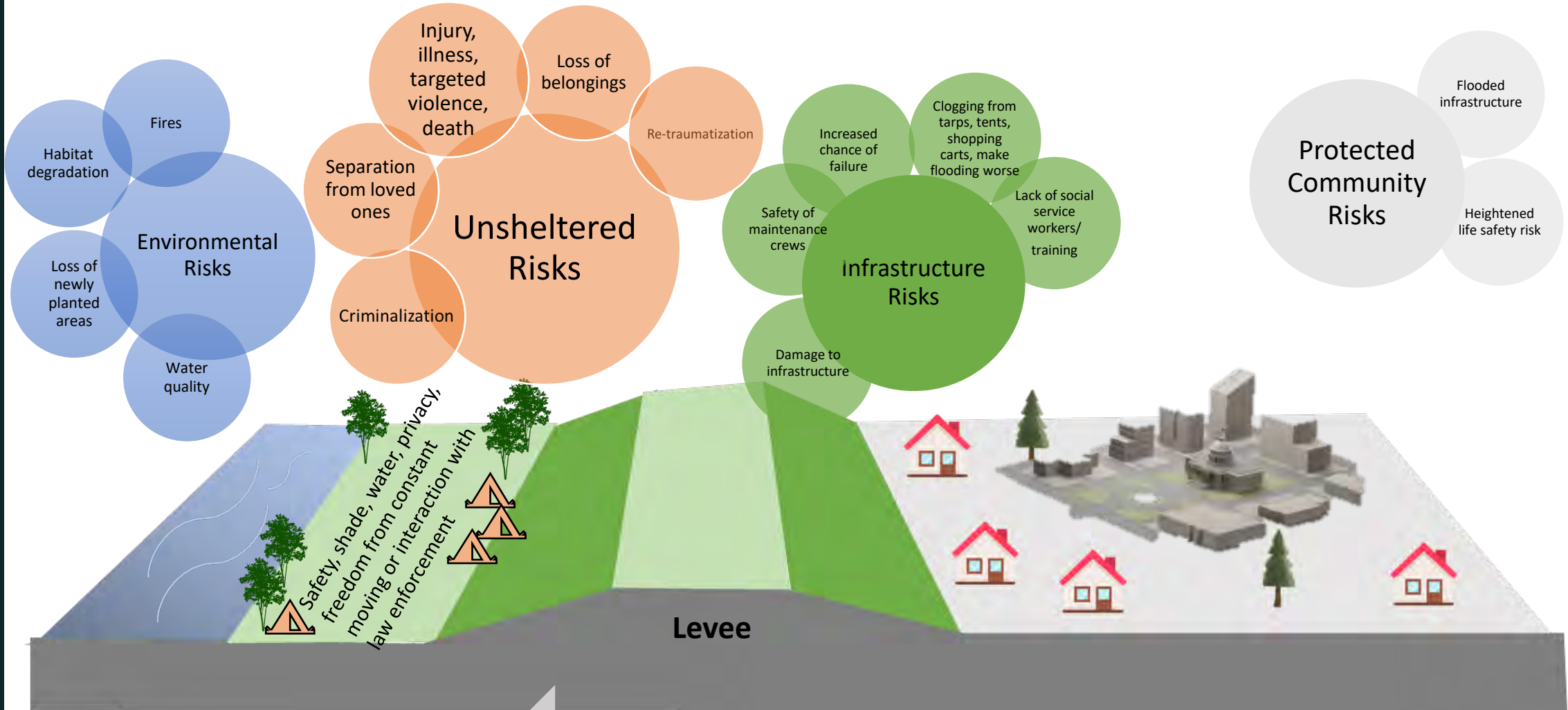


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What did we learn?

Outcomes

UNSHELTERED PEOPLE LIVING IN WATERWAYS



Flood Risk

Unhoused communities in waterways

Global contributors to homelessness in waterways:
Systemic inequity; lack of affordable housing & health care; low wages; lack of shelter resources; safety concerns; & restrictive rules at shelters

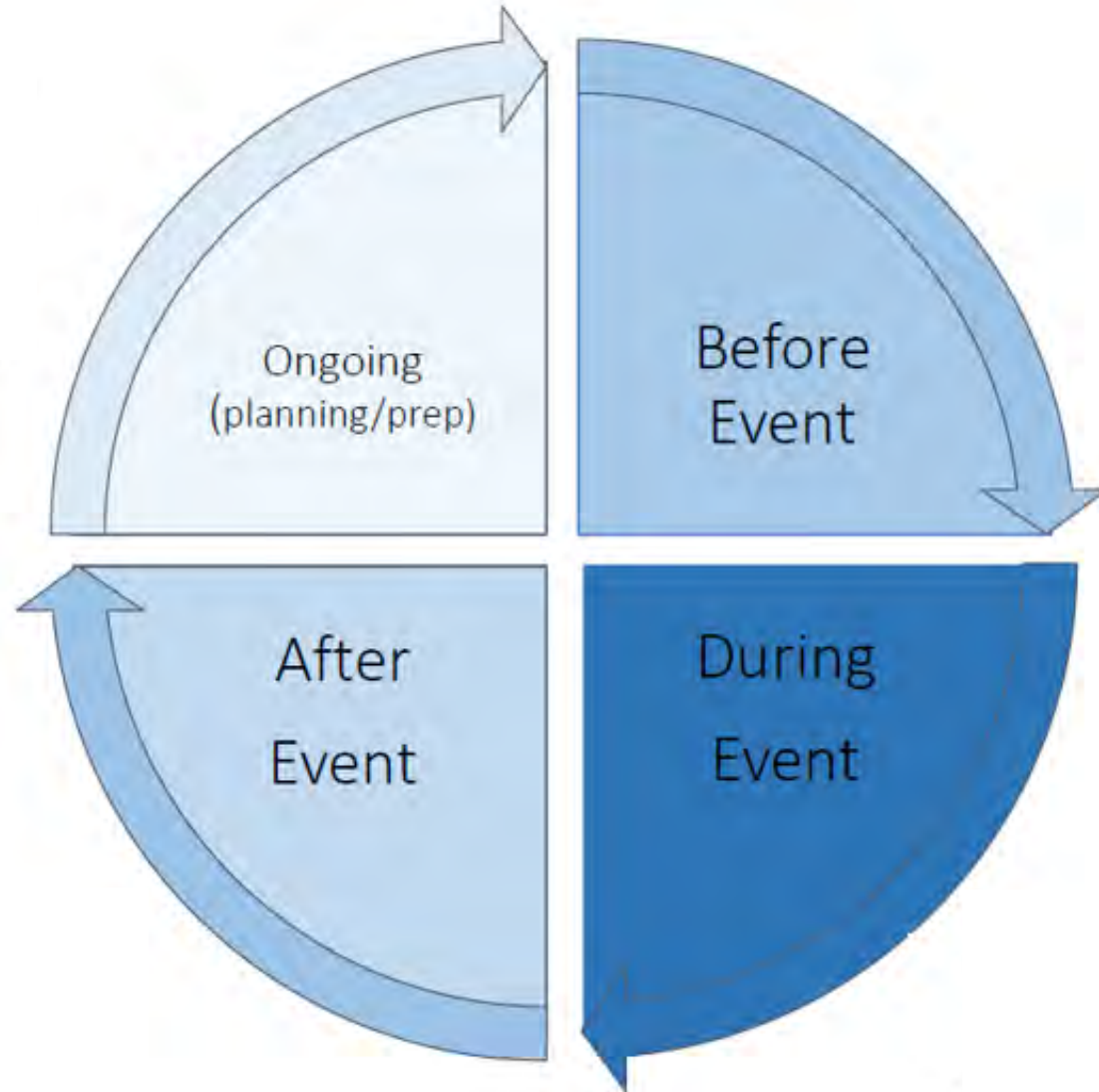
Los Angeles Workshop Findings

What they are doing

Coordinating evacuations and outreach to camps

Hiring staff with social work and behavioral health expertise

Consistent levee repair and O/M



What else is needed

Information and clarity on various agency roles and responsibilities.

Pre-storm coordination on clean up and rapid permitting.

Multijurisdictional coordination in advance.

More staff, shelter space, and resources to connect individuals during a flood.



Bay Area Workshop Findings: Panel 1

Experience of unhoused people living in & near waterways

- Majority of people experiencing homelessness in SF Bay Area are 25, single, and unemployed
- Shelters may not be a preferred solution (mistrust, fear of assault, stringent rules, separation from partner/pets)
- Flood impacts are traumatic, often there is no individual capacity for flood preparedness
- Recognize homelessness is an experience, not an identity



Bay Area Workshop Findings: Panel 2

Managing flood risk infrastructure w. presence of unhoused people

- Encampments in flood safety infrastructure pose threats to those living in the infrastructure, the infrastructure itself, and operators
- Some communities dig into levee systems for shelter, creating expensive repairs
- Water quality and environmental degradation concerns from household debris and human waste
- Clean up activities are not well funded
- Some cities/water districts would like to-down coverage for moving folks out of high-risk flood areas



Bay Area Workshop Findings: Panel 3

Care-driven floodplain and flood risk management

- Focuses on reducing trauma while safeguarding lives and belongings
- Centers needs of the individual rather than government agenda
- Disasters disproportionately impact to people with disabilities and functional or access needs
- Trust-based relationships with unhoused communities are essential - work with groups and agencies who have a preestablished relationship
- Need collaborative, community-oriented solutions that bring individuals with lived experience to the table



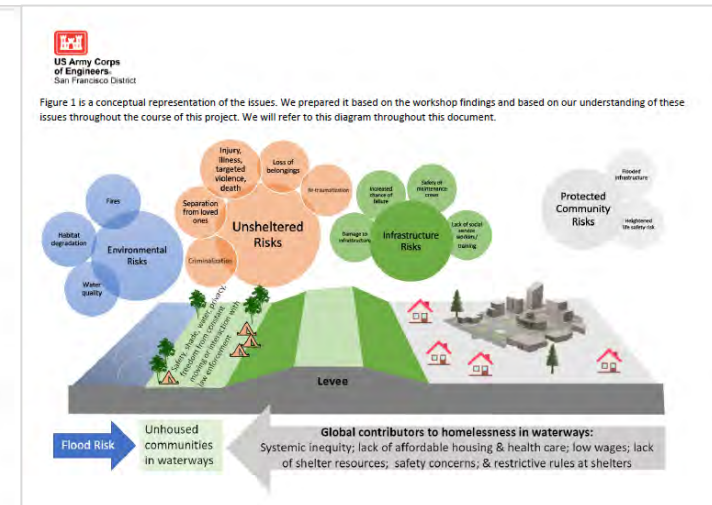
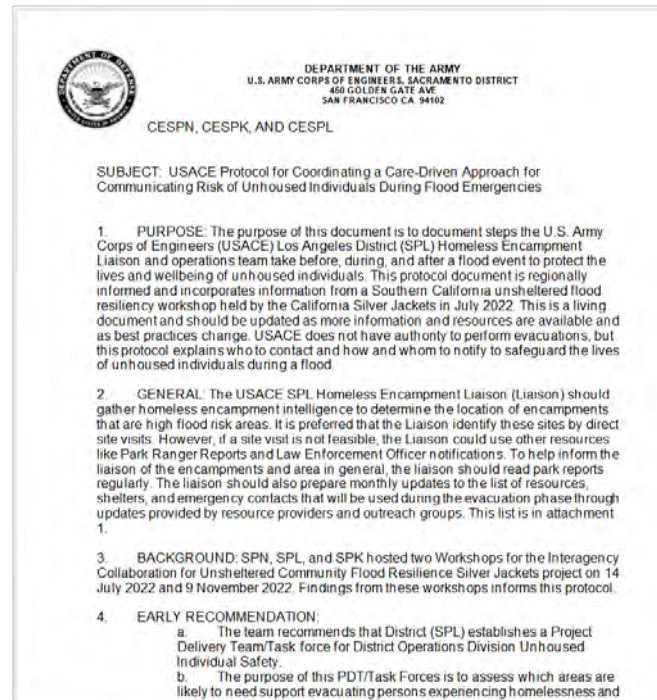


Actions for change

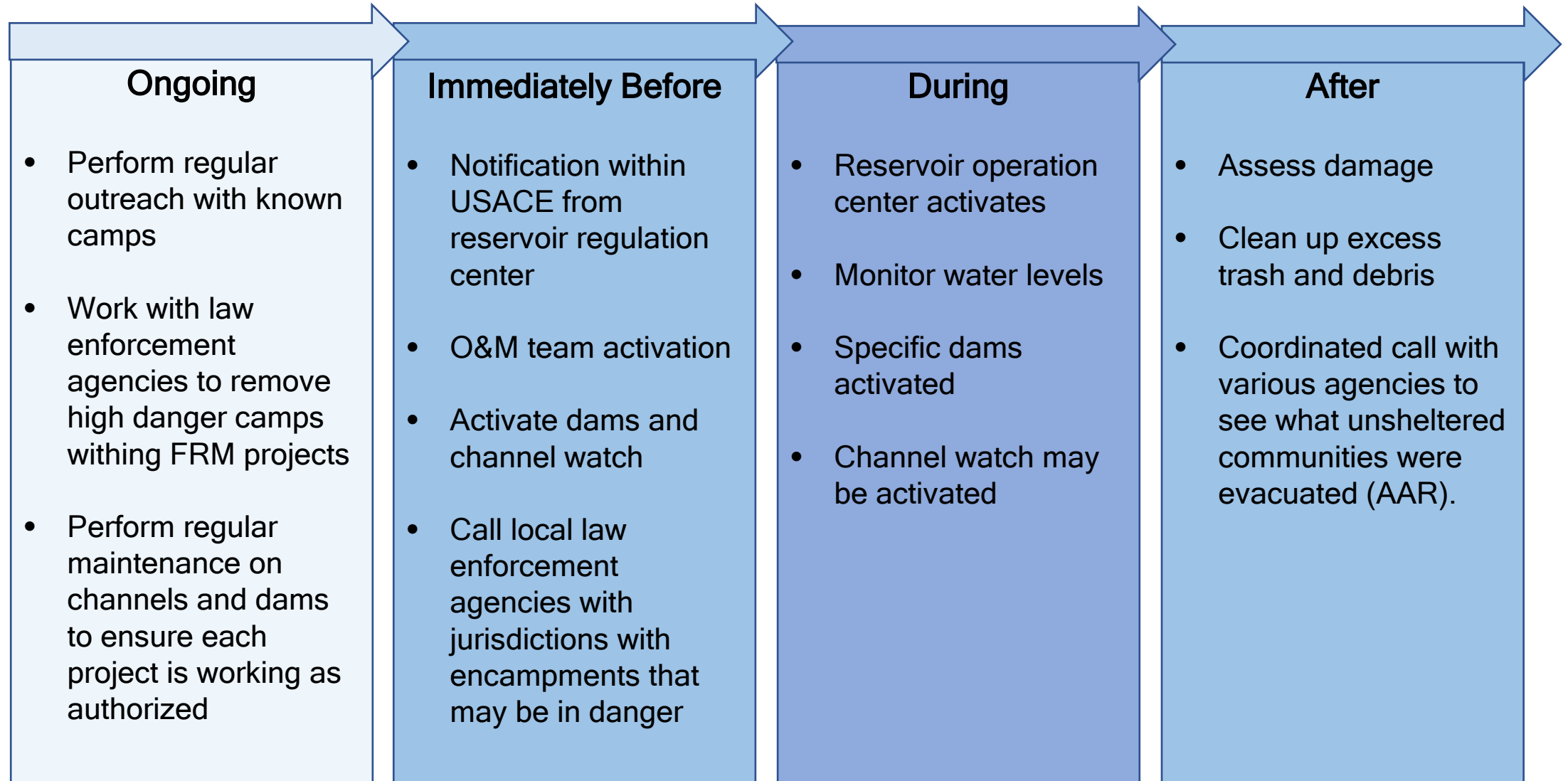
Next Steps

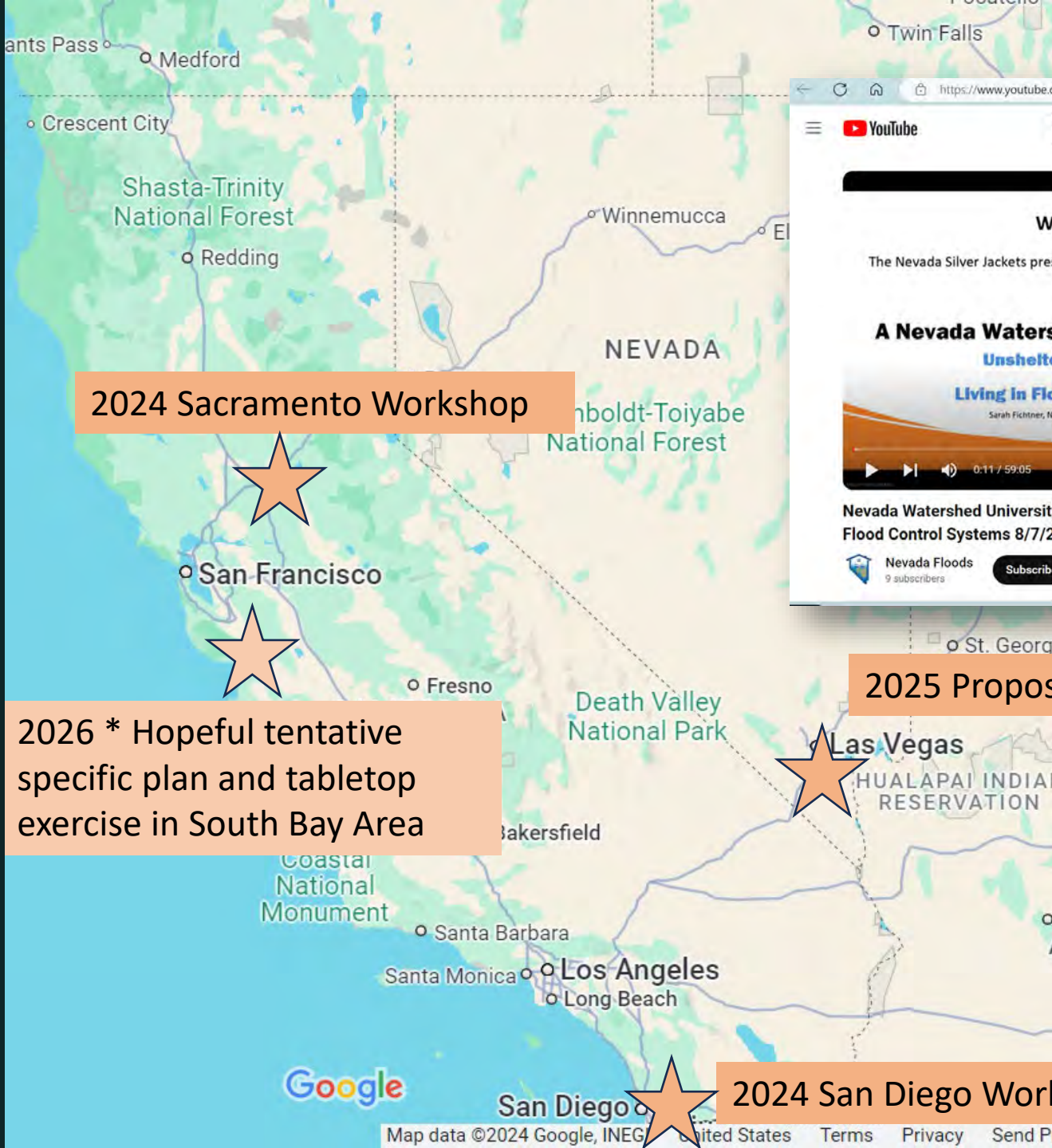
Project products and next steps

- Project Summary Report
- Internal protocol + Phone tree*
- Follow on proposals for other regions.
- Connecting w. unlikely agencies to brainstorm and elevate discussion, creative problem solving.



USACE - Los Angeles Area Dam Operations Protocol





2024 Sacramento Workshop

2026 * Hopeful tentative specific plan and tabletop exercise in South Bay Area

2025 Proposal Las Vegas

2024 San Diego Workshop



Nevada Silver Jackets Webinar

Ongoing and future efforts

San Diego Workshop April 2024 - Key (additional/new) takeaways

- Homelessness is a policy choice and a failure of system rather than a failure of the individual.
- Emergency housing should include options for individuals, families, and safe places for people not wanting to be in a facility.
- When conducting outreach to connect people with housing and resources, practice neighborhood-based, trust-based, and persistent outreach strategies.



7 actions for care-informed floodplain management *(& hazard mitigation)*

1

Use humanizing and respectful language to and about.

2

Leverage all resources to improve outcomes in unsheltered communities during floods.

3

Integrate unsheltered and functional needs into Emergency Action Plans

4

Contact HUD Continuum of Care Providers

5

Build trust and coordinate w. orgs who work regularly w. unhoused communities

6

Bring unsheltered communities to the table

7

Connect with Interagency Council on Homelessness



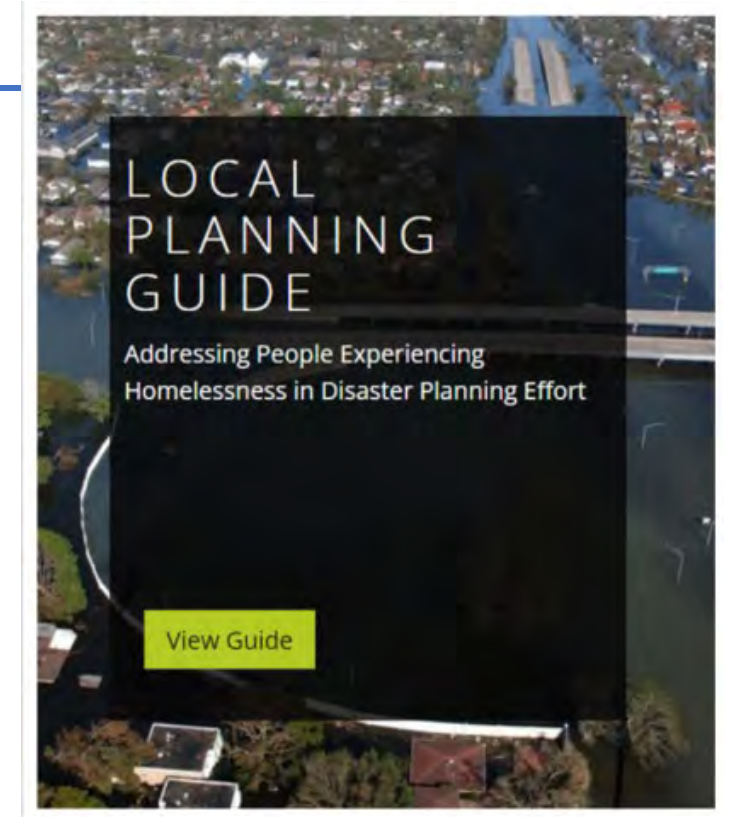
Additional Resources

HUD Disaster Recovery Homelessness Toolkit

When Crisis Collide: Supporting the Homeless Through Community Resiliency and Service Coordination

HUD Region IX

- National Association of Flood and Stormwater Management Agencies (NAFSMA) is engaged.
- Interagency Council on Homelessness is working this issue.



Post workshops: What are we hearing?

- People internal and external to the Corps are eager for this type of information.
- Lots of people care about this, were inspired by this, and wanted to have more workshops, etc.
- This work can inform more of USACE activities, and all types of hazard mitigation activities.
- Requests for presentations/findings, and for additional projects.
- Prepare for reluctance and discomfort in being involved- “It’s not my responsibility”

Look ahead

PUBLIC SAFETY

Supreme Court reverses Oregon homelessness case, finds Grants Pass public camping laws aren't 'cruel and unusual'

Updated: Jun. 28, 2024, 4:44 p.m. | Published: Jun. 28, 2024, 7:11 a.m.



Advocates for the homeless marched and rallied outside the US Supreme Court on Mon., April 22, 2024, as it heard arguments in the Grants Pass case. Maxine Bernstein | Staff

HOUSING & HOMELESSNESS

Mayor Thao issues executive order to close homeless camps

Closures won't be "delayed for shelter availability," Sheng Thao announced today. Her order follows a controversial Supreme Court ruling and comes as the mayor faces a recall election.

by Natalie Orenstein
Sept. 23, 2024, 1:47 p.m.



AP WORLD U.S. ELECTION 2024 POLITICS SPORTS ENTERTAINMENT BUSINESS SCIENCE FACT CHECK ODDITIES BEWELL ...

Oct. 7 anniversary Live: Hurricane Milton Supreme Court abortion Nobel Prize AP SETS THE STANDARD FOR POLITICAL REPORTING. SUPPORT INDEPENDENT, FACT-BASED JOURNALISM. DONATE

U.S. NEWS

Gov. Newsom passed a new executive order on homeless encampments. Here's what it means

7 of 6 | Tents are setup on a sidewalk, Thursday, July 25, 2024, in Los Angeles. California Gov. Gavin Newsom issued an executive order Thursday to direct state agencies on how to remove homeless encampments, a month after a Supreme Court ruling allowing cities to

BY JAIMIE DING
Updated 5:34 PM PDT, July 25, 2024

Share



Parting words: yes/and

Either/or thinking limits our solutions.

Systems thinking presents a systems opportunity for the future we all want.



Reflection and thank you for showing up:

What is something you learned that you can put into action?

Does something you learned make you feel stuck?

Who in your community helps you feel unstuck?



Jessica.J.Ludy@usace.army.mil



Emily.M.Marcil@usace.army.mil



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Extra slides

Technical Assistance programs provide funding for Corps staff to work with communities and agencies on water supply, water quality, **flood risk management**, coastal storm risk management and ecosystem restoration planning efforts.

Technical Assistance and Planning Support Programs

Planning Assistance to States and Tribes

- Develop plans and products to support state water resource planning priorities related to water quality, water supply, quality, flood risk management, climate adaptation, etc.
- *50% Federal; 50% Non-Federal.* Up to \$665,000 cost-share waiver for tribes; 100% Federal if benefitting disadvantaged communities*
- Rolling funding requests
- Typically 12 - 24 mos.
- Project budget ~\$400k - \$1m

Floodplain Management Services

- Study and communicate flood risk; identify solutions for local flood risk management challenges.
- 100% Federal cost share. Sponsor can contribute funds to increase scope.
- Rolling funding requests
- Typically 12 - 24 mos.
- Project budget up to ~\$250k

Silver Jackets Interagency Program

- Convene interagency (local, state, federal) partners to develop flood risk management solutions with shared responsibilities.
- 100% Federal cost share
- Annual application deadline March 31. Funding typically granted in October.
- Typically 12 - 18 mos.
- Project budget up to ~\$150k

How to request Technical Assistance and Planning Support funding



Identify your flood risk management or water resource need



Work with San Francisco District to identify best funding program




Submit project letter of request to San Francisco District (templates available)



Work with San Francisco District to develop funding request



Submit funding request! *Wait time varies based on program



If funding is granted...



Write formal project scope and budget



Start Project