

# Action Plan

## Category 8 – Flood Mitigation Planning and Coordination

### Action 8.4 – Conduct Yearly Interagency Flood Risk Outreach



## Overview and Implementation Strategy:

This Action aims to coordinate annual outreach efforts amongst the various Task Force Agencies relating to flood risk and mitigation messaging. This will involve annual or semi-annual interagency meetings to identify upcoming flood outreach campaigns, and coordinate messaging.

### Impacted City Ward/ANC:

- Wards 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8 all have homes in the FEMA-designated 100-year and 500 year floodplains. Wards 7 and 8 are the current focus areas as 98% of the District’s single-family homes in the FEMA 100-year floodplain are located in those two wards. Targeted outreach may expand if the Integrated Flood Model identifies additional areas of vulnerability to flooding.
- Citywide as there are flood vulnerable areas (from interior rainfall flooding) that are not in FEMA mapped floodplains, and flood vulnerable areas in the District are expected to increase with climate change.

### Lead Agency:

- DOEE

### Supporting Agencies, Roles/Commitments:

- HSEMA
- DC Water
- DISB
- OPC
- DC Commission on Climate Change and Resilience

## Background:

### Impact of this Effort on Task Force Goal:

- This Task Force Action Item aims to create more efficient and effective flood risk messaging campaigns across the various Task Force Agencies.

### Historical Context:

District Agencies including DISB, HSEMA, and DOEE have historically organized and led various flood risk messaging programming (included below). While each of these initiatives are helpful for District residents, proactively coordinating outreach programming will allow agencies to streamline these outreach efforts and provide a unified approach for residents to understand who to turn to for their flood risk needs.

- DISB 2021 Flood and Water Damage Forum: hosted by DISB with panelists from HSEMA and DOEE, this forum occurred 4 times in 2021 on September 23, June 24, December 10. Topics included protecting home and personal property from water

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damage or flooding due to extreme weather, and available resources and insurance products.

- Ready DC Flood webpage: an initiative led by HSEMA with assistance from DOEE, this project aims to establish an online portal for District residents to access flood risk mitigation assistance and programs
- DC Flood Awareness Week: this annual programming led by DOEE began in 2021 and involved participation from HSEMA and DISB. The Flood Week supports events across the District, working with federal, state, and local agencies to inform Washingtonians about flood risk and flood preparedness. Future messaging can include emphasis on increased flood risk due to climate change.
- WMATA advertising campaign: this campaign was initially led by DOEE to raise awareness of flood risk and flood insurance among District residents. After engaging with WMATA and their advertising representatives, DOEE determined that it would be beneficial to coordinate efforts with DISB and HSEMA to join funding and messaging to more effectively target residents living in Wards 7 & 8 along Watts Branch and Oxon Run. With more proactive planning amongst the agencies, the hope is that future years will continue to improve in targeted outreach efforts.
- Weather radio and water alarm distribution: DOEE and HSEMA has begun coordinating efforts to distribute free weather radios and water alarms to residents located in the 100-year and 500-year floodplains. The goal is to conduct outreach regarding this program at a sufficient tempo to complete distribution of supplies by January 1st, 2025. DOEE procured the radios and will create a list of addresses for residences within the 100-year and 500-year floodplains. HSEMA will then take delivery of and provide secure storage, transportation, and delivery of 1,000 weather radios and 1,000 water alarms through house-to-house pedestrian canvassing to the list of addresses provided by DOEE. HSEMA will also support supply distribution at public events.
- Following the September 10, 2020 flood, OPC focused on educating water consumers on available resources and providing case management services for consumers with flood remediation complaints. OPC received twenty-two (22) complaints from flood victims, primarily from Wards 4 and 5. OPC's Water Services Division also hosted an outreach event, "How to Prepare for Flooding," on April 27, 2021 with a panel of experts from DC Water, DDOT, DOEE, HSEMA, and DISB. The event's purpose was to take a proactive outreach approach in educating the public on how to protect one's property in flooding events, available resources, and the government's response to flooding in the District.
- DOEE has initiated focused outreach in the Watts Branch and Oxon Run floodplain areas of Wards 7 & 8. This includes, but is not limited to, attending monthly meetings with the Ward 7 Resilience Hub at the Fauntery Center, and assembling a focus group with Friends of Oxon Run in Ward 8 to seek local feedback on flood risk communication.

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## Equity

### How does this action prioritize equity and residents who are most impacted?

- This action will streamline flood risk communication and outreach to District residents and make it easier for residents to understand where to receive the help they need, whether for flood insurance information, mitigation programs, or assistance during a flood event.
- This outreach will be focused on the most flood vulnerable communities, many of whom are located near Oxon Run, Watts Branch and neighborhoods in Northeast frequently affected by rainfall flooding. These floodplains and surrounding neighborhoods are ranked as having a high or moderate-to-high level of vulnerability to disasters by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Social Vulnerability Index (CDC SVI). Because of these areas' increased vulnerability, it is especially important that flood risk communication and messaging is reaching these historically overburdened populations.
  - Wards 7 and 8 contain approximately 99% of all the single-family homes in DC's 100-year floodplain.
  - Approximately 66% of housing units in Census tracts that include the flood-prone areas of Wards 7 and 8 are rented, and over 55% of the households in those areas are paying rent that exceeds the 30% of gross household income that HUD defines as affordable housing.
  - Over 90% of the residents in these wards are Black, compared to fewer than 50% of District residents overall. Within Wards 7 and 8, the highest concentration of people living in the floodplain are disproportionately located in Census Tracts with the greatest density of people of color.
- Coordinated outreach efforts should also include outreach to communities in flood prone areas whose primary language is not English. Continuous and sustained coordination with the Mayor's Office for Latino Affairs, Mayor's Office of Asian and Pacific Islander Affairs, and Mayor's Office of African Affairs is also needed to ensure messaging is reaching flood-vulnerable populations in their primary spoken language as well.

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## Timeline:

| Fiscal Year                 | Responsible Agency | Action  |
|-----------------------------|--------------------|---|
| Every Year Starting in 2023 | DOEE               | Convene an annual or semi-annual interagency coordinating meeting to align flood risk and mitigation related outreach efforts.<br>Produce an outreach plan for the upcoming year 4 weeks after annual coordinating meeting. |
|                             | HSEMA              | Procure FEMA funding for annual outreach engagement efforts   |
|                             | Various            | Execute different actions. For example, DOEE would coordinate multiple agencies and sign a contract with WMATA advertising for bus placards. HSEMA would lead the delivery of weather radios.                               |

## Budget:

**Total Estimated Cost:** \$0 for coordination, \$70,000 for annual interagency outreach campaigns?

### Cost Breakdown by Phase / Action:

- \$0 Annual or semi-annual interagency meeting to coordinate outreach efforts
- \$70,000 amongst the interagency cohort to execute coordinated outreach programming

**Long Term Budget Requirements:** Will require continued investment of \$70,000 per year for sustained, annual flood risk outreach efforts. This will include:

- \$20,000 for WMATA advertising including targeting bus shelters within key flood focus areas
- \$10,000 for mailing outreach materials to residents in the floodplain
- \$12,000 for Flood Week event programming
- \$13,000 for social media, local television and radio campaigns relating to flood risk and mitigation
- \$15,000 for additional flood risk and mitigation outreach efforts with community partners

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| Fiscal Year                        | Responsible Agency | Funding Source | Amount to be Requested | Description   |
|------------------------------------|--------------------|----------------|------------------------|---|
| <b>Every Year starting in 2023</b> | DOEE               | Local Budget   | \$5,000                | Funding to support District-wide outreach described above. Local match for Federal grant dollars.                 |
| <b>Every Year starting in 2023</b> | HSEMA              | Local Budget   | \$5,000                | Funding to support District-wide outreach described above. Local match for Federal grant dollars.                 |
| <b>Every Year starting in 2023</b> | DISB               | Local Budget   | \$5,000                | Funding to support District-wide outreach described above. Local match for Federal grant dollars.                 |
| <b>Every Year starting in 2023</b> | HSEMA<br>DOEE      | FEMA Grants    | \$55,000               | Funding to support District-wide outreach described above. Will apply for funds from FEMA’s CAP and HMA programs. |

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## Public Outreach and Input:

### Public outreach & engagement approach/actions:

Previous outreach activities have been described above in the historical context section. Those activities could be re-used or refined. However, every year it is the intent of this Action that at least the following activities should be conducted:

- Annual or semi-annual interagency coordinating meeting to align flood risk and mitigation related outreach efforts.
- Information Mailers for every home in the floodplain
- Flood Awareness Week
- Public Advertising Campaign on a specific issue (Flood insurance, Map changes, Flood risk awareness)

### What were the Public Comments of relevance to this Action?

#### *General Comments to Date*

- So far, the District has not received any specific feedback on the types of outreach related to Flood Risk. We are aware in general that residents want to be better informed, more often, and earlier in the process for any flood projects that may be constructed in the neighborhood.

#### *Public Comments on this Action Plan from July/Aug 2022*

- From the DC Commission on Climate Change and Resilience: We request the Commission's inclusion in the coordination of public outreach.
- From the Sierra Club: Action Plan 8.4 - Conduct Yearly Interagency Flood Risk Outreach is a prudent measure to maintain an effective program plan that is responsive to change. Sierra Club suggests that for 2023 the Interagency Flood Task Force should schedule quarterly meetings to permit finetuning of the Action actions for the Residential Resilience team remain incomplete, and four actions for the Plan. Three Governance & Coordination team are incomplete. Public comments will need to be received and reviewed for possible refinements to the overall action plan; and this is likely to extend into 2023. Illustrative of the additional work that may result is Sierra Club's concern that the Flood Task Force needs to increase focus and scrutiny on progress toward plans to address interior flooding. This suggests that additional meetings should be considered to address this priority.