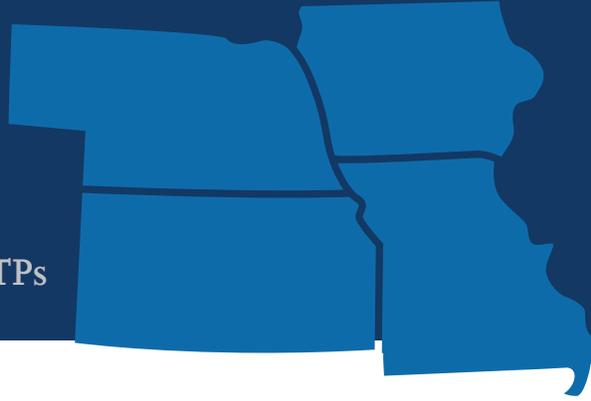


Region VII

Surpassing a High Bar for CTPs



THE CHALLENGE

In 2014, FEMA Region VII hosted its first Cooperating Technical Partner (CTP) Rendezvous stakeholder event, which brought together the region's state CTP providers from Iowa, Kansas, Missouri, and Nebraska. Over the course of the three-day event, approximately 40 attendees heard presentations on the Mapping, Assessment, and Planning Program (Risk MAP), received federal partner program updates, participated in training, and shared best practices. While the event was a success, survey feedback and subsequent conversations revealed that many Region VII CTPs still felt there was inconsistent understanding and delivery in executing Risk MAP, particularly around the Key Decision Points (KDPs) process. In 2015, the planning team faced a challenge to develop a three-day session that was engaging, productive, and informative for attendees, while also deepening the understanding and awareness of Risk MAP, regardless of participants' familiarity with the program.

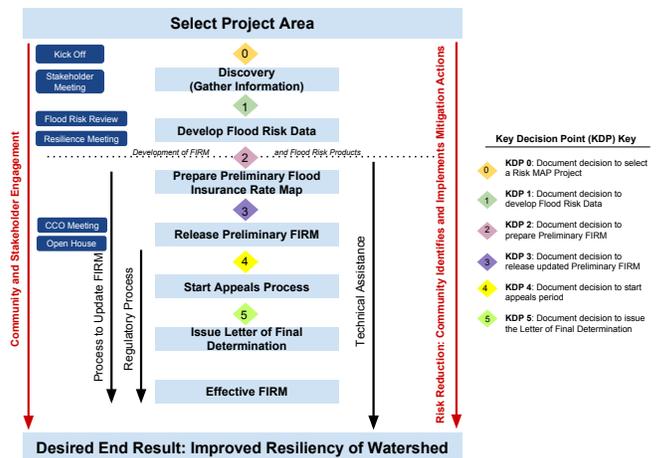
THE SOLUTION

One of the keys to developing another engaging and informative event was early planning and a highly collaborative effort. Beginning in July 2015, the Community Engagement and Risk Communication (CERC) team, the Regional Program Management Lead (RPML), and FEMA Region VII staff began the planning process. Drawing on prior CTP feedback, the planning team developed a half-day training session for the 2015 CTP Rendezvous designed to improve overall knowledge of Risk MAP, enhance collaboration among state and federal partners, and develop additional planning skills and approaches for Risk MAP projects.

As part of the exercise, attendees were separated into smaller groups with 6-8 participants. Each group included varying geographic representation, roles, and levels of Risk MAP understanding. Over the next three hours, facilitators asked each group to put aside previous experiences with Risk MAP,

Wide-ranging interests in future training: roughly 36% want additional community engagement training; another 51% were interested in various types of training around mitigation.

Risk MAP Road to Resiliency



and encouraged participants to analyze, explore, and discuss each stage of the KDP process and what things could look like between KDPs. When the full group reconvened, participants reviewed each group's common themes, new ideas, and best practices. In addition to the CTPs, contractors, and FEMA staff, participants in the exercise included representatives from other federal agencies attending the CTP Rendezvous, including federal partners such as the United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the United States Geological Survey (USGS), and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's National Weather Service (NOAA/NWS).

THE OUTCOME

Many of the 65 participants provided feedback on the 2015 CTP Rendezvous, and reported that they found it to be a very productive and informative workshop, citing the interactive Risk MAP exercise and other lessons that were applicable in their day-to-day work. By setting aside their previous experiences with Risk MAP and thinking about the program conceptually, participants were able to approach the exercise from an unbiased perspective and think about how they could ideally implement the program in the future. Dividing attendees into smaller brainstorming sessions and reconvening as a large group to identify top trends streamlined the exercise. While smaller groups allowed for targeted and concise conversations, the collaboration of the full group of attendees resulted in common themes that can be socialized not just among CTPs in Region VII, but also with other FEMA Regions experiencing similar challenges.

THE BENEFIT

By demonstrating where collaboration between communities, CTPs, and FEMA had worked in the past, workshop attendees developed a greater understanding of how these relationships can be strengthened, and where opportunities for future collaboration exist.

In addition, the goal of providing greater consistency in understanding Risk MAP is that it leads to greater consistency of execution across all states. By removing perceived barriers and roadblocks, the group gained consistent understanding about what Risk MAP should be at each KDP, rather than what it necessarily has been. In the end, this leads to improved outcomes for communities.

Finally, while the content of the CTP Rendezvous, particularly the exercise, was of great benefit to the CTP attendees, it also was a significant milestone to have the participation of the other federal agency partners, as well as representatives from other areas of FEMA Region VII, including Hazard Mitigation Assistance (HMA), Floodplain Management and Insurance (FM&I), and the Federal Disaster Recovery Coordinator (FDRC). Increasing their collective awareness, understanding, and knowledge of Risk MAP also has the potential to greatly improve outcomes and results for communities participating in Risk MAP.

KEY STATISTICS

- 39.4% of the attendees came for the first time (positive growth).
- 63% found the information presented to be “extremely” or “quite” useful; another 36% found it moderately useful.
- 75% found the Risk MAP exercise to be “extremely” or “quite” useful. Most valuable comments from the exercise included:
 - Hearing other ideas and perspectives, especially outside-the-box thoughts from non-CTPs
 - How other people unfamiliar to Risk MAP see the process
 - Identified some areas that needed connection from a hazard mitigation planning perspective
 - Process is not broken, but there is an opportunity to enhance and improve upon execution
 - Provided a holistic view of the overall Risk MAP project
- A range of interests in future training: approximately 36% suggested additional community engagement training and another 51% were interested in various types of training around mitigation, such as identifying and advancing mitigation actions, and hazard mitigation planning for non-planners.
- In relation to “Overall Satisfaction,” attendees responded in the top two tiers: 54.6% extremely satisfied; 45.5% somewhat satisfied.