

## **Watershed Resilience Program – Spectrum of Community Engagement**

As defined by the US Water Alliance<sup>i</sup>, water equity “refers to just and fair inclusion—a condition in which everyone has an opportunity to participate and prosper. Water equity occurs when all communities have access to clean, safe, affordable drinking water and wastewater services; are resilient in the face of floods, drought, and other climate risks; have a role in decision-making processes related to water management in their communities; and share in the economic, social, and environmental benefits of water systems.”

The Spectrum of Community Engagement (Spectrum) is provided as a framework to Watershed Grantees to assess how they are engaging their Watershed Network(s) and where there are opportunities to more effectively co-develop watershed resilience solutions and achieve water equity. The Spectrum doesn't help determine if you have a well-represented Watershed Network (Network) – rather, it assesses how effectively the Network is being engaged in achieving watershed resilience goals.

Adapted from the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2)<sup>ii</sup>, the Spectrum uses developmental stages to allow Watershed Grantees to build capacity for Network collaboration and governance, using these steps to acknowledge where they are, and to set goals to achieve greater inclusion and more equitable participation<sup>iii</sup>.

DWR recommends Watershed Grantees achieve “Involve” and above in its Network engagement and are encouraged to progress towards increasing watershed network participation. This may be challenging given limited financial or technical resources and an accelerated timeline of Funding Agreement deliverables. Nonetheless, DWR is committed to creating an equitable and inclusive process around Network engagement in pursuit of water equity. While recognizing that not all members of a Network will be satisfied, the Spectrum and other resources are intended to help build bi-directional trust that create forums for tough conversations and collaborative decisions.

For any questions or additional resources, please contact the Watershed Equity Coordinator Jordi Vasquez at [Jordi.Vasquez@water.ca.gov](mailto:Jordi.Vasquez@water.ca.gov)

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<sup>i</sup> [US Water Alliance: Water Equity](#)

<sup>ii</sup> [IAP2 – The 3 Pillars of Public Participation](#)

<sup>iii</sup> As defined by [The United Nations World Water Development Report 2023](#), whole of society governance involves “civil society as well as the public and private sectors in the joint pursuit of common solutions to complex problems – contributes to building effective partnerships and cooperation. A whole-of-society approach embraces both formal and informal institutions in seeking a generalized agreement across society about policy goals and the means to achieve them.”

**Increasing Watershed Network Participation**

	<b>Inform</b>	<b>Consult</b>	<b>Involve</b>	<b>Collaborate</b>	<b>Empower</b>
<b>Watershed Network Participation Goal</b>	Watershed Grantee to provide the Watershed Network (Network) with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding watershed problems, alternatives, opportunities, and/or solutions.	Watershed Grantee consults to obtain Network feedback on analysis, alternatives, and/or decisions.	Watershed Grantee works directly with the Network throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered.	Watershed Grantee partners with the Network in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred watershed resilience solutions.	Watershed Grantee empowers the Network to maintain shared leadership in co-developing watershed resilience solutions.
<b>Promise to the Watershed Network</b>	Watershed Grantee will keep the Network informed.	Watershed Grantee will keep the Network informed, listen to and acknowledge concerns and aspirations, and provide feedback on how input influenced the decision.	Watershed Grantee will work with the Network to ensure that concerns and aspirations are directly reflected in the alternatives developed and provide feedback on how Network input influenced the decision.	Watershed Grantee will look to the Network for advice and innovation in formulating solutions and incorporate its advice and recommendations into the decisions to the maximum extent possible.	All representatives of the Watershed Network are part of the shared leadership.
<b>Example Techniques</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fact sheets</li> <li>• Web sites</li> <li>• Open houses</li> <li>• Email</li> <li>• Newsletters</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public comment on Watershed Resilience Vision aspects</li> <li>• Focus groups</li> <li>• Surveys</li> <li>• Public meetings</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Workshops</li> <li>• Deliberate polling of Watershed Resilience Vision aspects</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advisory committees (e.g., centered on Environmental Justice or Tribal affairs).</li> <li>• Consensus-building</li> <li>• Participatory decision-making in Watershed Resilience Vision development</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Actively draft Watershed Resilience Vision</li> <li>• Diverse topical working groups (e.g., groundwater, Tribal components)</li> <li>• Voting seats on Boards, etc.</li> </ul>