WEBINAR SERIES HIGHLIGHTS | September 1s, 2020

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Based on our surveys and focus groups, we designed a three-part webinar series to meet the needs of our target audience of small- to medium-sized utilities across the Northwest region. The series was designed to introduce climate impacts that surveying and focus group interviews revealed as high-priority (e.g. extreme precipitation, drought, and flooding). The webinars also profiled regional case studies based on the desire expressed by interviewees to learn from their peers who have experience with “boots on the ground” climate adaptation work. Below is a summary our key highlights and outcomes from this webinar series.

WEBINAR SERIES OVERVIEW

Our series included three, 1.5 hour-long webinars with the following key presentations:

1. **Learning How to Adapt to a Changing Climate: A Collection of Case Studies from Water Agencies Throughout the U.S.**, with Julie Vano, Research Director at the Aspen Global Change Institute

2. **Climate Adaptation in Public Works**, with Fred Buckenmeyer, Director of Public Works, City of Anacortes

3. **Throw Away Your Crystal Ball: A Stress Testing Approach to Infrastructure Planning Under Climate Change Uncertainty**, with Nishant Parulekar, Civil Engineer, City of Portland Bureau of Environmental Services

In addition to the main presentation, each webinar included a shorter session intended to engage attendees, share knowledge, or introduce resources and tools of relevance to the audience. For the first webinar, we hosted a series of break-out groups (~5 participants per breakout) to discuss the five Leading Practices in Adaptation introduced by Julie Vano during her presentation. We had participants share both barriers and opportunities they experience for one specific leading practice. In the second webinar, we had Katherine Hegewisch from UC Merced present about the Climate Toolbox. In the third webinar, we provided a brief overview of relevant NOAA and EPA tools including the US Climate Resilience Toolkit, the Water Resources Dashboard and the Climate Resilient Water Utilities platform. This webinar also included panelists from these agencies to answer audience questions.
WEBINAR HIGHLIGHTS

1. Participation and Audience

Registration for each webinar was around 90 people and each webinar ended up with ~66 attendees. Attrition occurred throughout each webinar with ~35-45 people staying on the webinar for the full 1.5-hour session. We had around 197 connections to the webinars with approximately 125 unique attendees across the three webinars. A majority of attendees were from state and local governments (n=85). Other sectors represented included Universities (n=5); NGOs (n=10); Consulting, Engineering Firms and the Private Sector (n=20); and the Federal Government (n=5).

In each webinar we conducted an introductory poll to learn about our audience, including their location (a), their service area size (b), climate change information use by their organization (c) and the service(s) provided by their organizations (d):

2. Presentation Highlights

- All of the presentations were well-received and the case studies really resonated with the audience.
- Each of the presenters were given a set of guiding questions designed, in part, around the concepts of the Leading Practices (presented by J. Vano). This common set of questions for structuring the presentations helped to create cohesion between the separate webinars despite the different topic areas and geographies of each speaker.
- The 35-minute main presentation and 10 minutes for Q&A seemed appropriate to communicate the key points and engage the audience.
Attendees reported that they thought the content was well-presented and that the webinars gave them “new ideas on how to use climate data.” Attendees also appreciated hearing from subject matter experts and their peers.

Practice runs were essential but technological glitches still happened. The audiences did not seem to be bothered by these minor interruptions.

3. Break-outs and Tools Introduction Highlights

The interactive break-out session was lukewarm in its reception. The break-out sessions should have been longer and we needed to find ways to encourage participation and keep people from leaving when we transitioned to breakout rooms.

While there needs to be a way to carve out more time for break-outs, people appreciated the opportunity to have a small group interaction. Several mentioned wanting the webinars to be longer if it meant more time for interaction.

For the tools-based webinars (numbers two and three in the series), we conducted a second poll to learn about if and how people use/will use the resources presented. The Climate Toolbox was new to 46% of attendees and 94% of poll respondents said they were very likely or somewhat likely to use the tool in the future. Similarly, 84% said they were very likely or somewhat likely to use the U.S. Climate Resilience Toolkit, 75% said they were very likely or somewhat likely to use the Water Resources Dashboard. For all of the tools presented, participants indicated the tools would be most useful for “planning and decision-making” or “project design and asset management”. Other options included internal communication, public engagement, or personal interest.

While our post-surveys were not widely completed, of those who did respond (n=17), 100% of our post-survey respondents were either very interested or interested in attending similar webinars in the future. To get better participation in the survey, we suggest making sure the survey is integrated into the webinar platform and is set up in a way that automatically takes attendees to the survey when the webinar applications closes (e.g., this functionality is available in Zoom.)

**Project Next Steps**

Potential next steps following this webinar series include:

- Explore the opportunity of using the annual Northwest Water Year Workshop as another avenue to continue to engage with small- to medium-sized utilities. This workshop is typically held in October or early November. This year it will be held on October 28th and 29th.
- Continue to work with WRF, NOAA, WUCA, and others to develop additional resources, tools, training modules, or other content that helps to support climate resilience in the water sector beyond climate science data and information. This would include developing content to support Leading Practices like implementation, communication and engagement, planning and sustaining adaptation efforts.
- Develop additional webinar concepts and case study presentations that could be hosted in the Northwest region or at the national scale. These sessions would address needs identified throughout this project including topic areas like financing and grants for adaptation work in the water sector, internal and external communications, and case studies that addressing other climate impacts (e.g. drought, wildfire, sea level rise) and showcase other Leading Practices.
- Engage more deeply with boundary organizations and consultants who provide the water sector with technical analyses by helping to build partnerships with utilities in need of technical support or information.
- Develop trainings, or facilitate peer learning networks, to build capacity for climate adaptation among water utility staff.
- Further regional conversations around Atlas14 and the equity issues that result from its omission for the Northwest region.