

Local Government Leadership Outcome

Local Government Leadership Outcome: Increase knowledge and support the capacity of local government leaders in decision-making, such as land-use planning, to implement local actions that advance the Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement.

- Engage directly (e.g., roundtable discussions) with at least 400 local government leaders annually.
- Engage indirectly (e.g., newsletters) with at least 4,000 local government leaders annually.

Baseline and Current Condition

Local Government Leadership Outcome

This outcome was modified during the 2025 Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement revision process, so no baseline or current condition currently exists. The targets were developed based on estimated accounts of direct and indirect engagement, and the indicators of the previous Local Leadership Outcome can be used as a framework for developing a new baseline.

- Engage directly (e.g., roundtable discussions) with at least 400 local government leaders annually. Currently, this information is captured by the workgroup coordinator for internal purposes. A formal process for capturing direct engagement needs to be established to assess the progress of this target.
- Engage indirectly (e.g., newsletters) with at least 4,000 local government leaders annually. Currently, this information is captured by the workgroup coordinator for internal purposes. A formal process for capturing indirect engagement needs to be established to assess the progress of this target.

Local Leadership Outcome

The Local Leadership Outcome was established in the 2014 Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement. In [2022](#) and [2024](#), the [Local Leadership Survey](#) was distributed to local elected officials throughout the Chesapeake Watershed (Information Collection Request OMB Control Number 2003-0002). These data supported [two indicators](#) for measuring progress toward the former Local Leadership Outcome: local official knowledge of federal regulations and self-reported actions of local officials. Between the two surveys, the self-reported knowledge of local officials about federal water resource regulations increased. In addition, there was an increase in self-reported actions to implement or enforce local water quality rules or regulations and in self-reported actions to apply for grants or other funding for water resource projects. While the survey indicated progress, it also illuminated the need for continued engagement and education of local government leaders, especially newer officials. Findings showed that local officials with less than 2 years of experience reported higher uncertainty of federal regulations, and the percentage of local officials adopting new local rules, ordinances, or regulations decreased from 2022 to 2024. A [Data File](#) and [Analysis Methods](#)

[Document](#) is available for more information. Currently, the future of the Local Leadership Survey is uncertain and additional methods to monitor progress may need to be considered. However, results from these surveys can be used to inform future Management Approaches, including those to monitor progress.

Monitoring Progress and Indicators

Monitoring: Direct Engagement

Progress towards this outcome will be captured by documenting the direct engagement led by the LGLW and the Chesapeake Bay Program partners that increases the knowledge and capacity of local government leaders in decision-making to implement local actions that advance the Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement. Progress will be assessed on a yearly basis to quantify achievement of the target. Currently, direct engagement is captured by the workgroup coordinator for internal reporting and focuses solely on direct engagement led by the workgroup. Examples include: attendees of the [Wandering Waterways Tour Series \(Example\)](#), attendees of roundtable discussions ([Example](#)), attendees of educational workshops and trainings ([Virtual Example](#), [In-Person Example](#)). To minimize the reporting burden on local governments, the workgroup will leverage existing state and federal reporting channels to capture direct engagement. Another key element of tracking progress will be to coordinate across CBP's goal teams and workgroups to capture the full breadth of direct engagement with local government leaders across the partnership. The workgroup staffer could support efforts to collaborate across groups. To ensure consistent tracking across jurisdictions, a definition of "direct engagement" will be established by the workgroup and approved by the goal team to support monitoring.

Monitoring: Indirect Engagement

Progress towards this outcome will be captured by documenting the indirect engagement led by the LGLW and the Chesapeake Bay Program partners that increases the knowledge and capacity of local government leaders in decision-making to implement local actions that advance the Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement. Progress will be assessed on a yearly basis to quantify achievement of the target. Currently, indirect engagement is captured by the workgroup coordinator for internal reporting and focuses solely on indirect engagement led by the workgroup. Examples include: local government trusted source publications ([October 2024 Issue of Borough News \(pages 66-68\)](#)), and analytics of the use of the [Protect Local Waterways](#) website. Progress towards this target was originally envisioned to be captured by tracking the Protect Local Waterways website analytics, including unique visits to the site and resource downloads. Protect Local Waterways is an online resource hub that serves as a guide on how local government leaders can help protect the health and vitality of local waterways. The future of Protect Local Waterways is uncertain. To minimize the reporting burden on local governments, the workgroup will leverage existing state and federal reporting channels to capture indirect engagement. Another key element of tracking progress will be to coordinate across CBP's goal teams and workgroups to capture the full breadth of indirect engagement with local government leaders across

the partnership. The workgroup staffer can support efforts to collaborate across groups. To ensure consistent tracking across jurisdictions, a definition of “indirect engagement” will be established by the workgroup and approved by the goal team to support monitoring.

Local Government Leadership Outcome Situation Analysis

The following table identifies challenges that will impact progress toward attaining this outcome and its targets. This analysis considers scientific, environmental, fiscal or policy-related developments that have already or may influence work during the upcoming six-year Management Strategy cycle. Consideration is given to which challenges are within and outside of CBP’s ability to influence. Challenges associated with Changing Environmental Conditions are denoted with an asterisk (*). Challenges listed in bold font have been identified by the Goal Team and its Workgroups as being priorities for the Workgroup to seek to address or make progress against through the development and implementation of Management Approaches.

Challenges	Within CBPs ability to influence	Outside CBP's ability to influence
Competing interests vie for local officials attention		X
Limited scientific and technical capacity of local officials, for example Changing Environmental Conditions	X	
Routine turnover of elected and appointed officials		X
Engaging newly elected and appointed officials	X	
The complexity of the Watershed and specific needs of each jurisdiction		X
Tailoring outreach, education, and information specific to needs of each jurisdiction	X	
Sustaining resources and funding for tracking knowledge and capacity of local officials	X	
Sustaining resources and funding for developing and maintaining educational events and materials for local officials	X	
Addressing needs across the Partnership workgroups to better engage local officials	X	

Snapshot of Signatory Programs

Managing a large and difficult restoration and conservation program with “no assurance about the level of funds that may be available beyond the short term” (GAO, 2028) is a challenging undertaking that requires individual and collaborative action from signatory partners, as well as the many communities and individuals who live, work, play and learn in our region. This “Snapshot of Signatory Resources” seeks to better recognize

the significant contribution that individual signatory partners and federal agencies make towards outcome attainment. The existing programs and funding spotlighted below are not intended to represent the full range of resources available or required to support progress towards outcome attainment; only the “biggest ticket” programs are included for each outcome and signatory partner. It is important to note that funding is reported from a single point in time (fiscal year 2025) and is not representative of future investments. Identifying the most critical programs and resources that exist at a particular moment in time can help the partnership focus its collaborative efforts on activities that have the greatest impact, and which don’t duplicate the work of existing programs.

Chesapeake Bay Commission

- As a tri-state legislative commission, the [Chesapeake Bay Commission](#) advances the goals of the Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement by working collaboratively with Bay Program partners to identify and pursue legislative, budgetary, and policy needs within the legislatures of our member states and the U.S. Congress. These partners include local government officials and associations engaged through topical discussions on shared priorities.

Delaware

- Delaware’s Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control conducts direct outreach to counties and municipalities. DNREC also hosts a [‘Local Government Guide to the Chesapeake Bay’](#).

District of Columbia

- Not applicable

Environmental Protection Agency

- [Region 3 Water Technical Assistance \(WaterTA\) Program](#), run by the University of Maryland’s Environmental Finance Center, provides direct training and technical assistance to local governments throughout the region.

Maryland

- Maryland Department of Natural Resources (MD DNR)’s [Watershed and Climate Services](#) provides planning assistance, GIS assistance, technical assistance, site-specific consultation, and funding guidance directly to local governments.
- [Watershed Restoration Specialists](#) provide planning and technical assistance support to local governments throughout the state.
- MD DNR and Maryland Department of Environment host regular workshops and trainings for local governments.

New York

- [Southern Tier 8 Regional Board](#) and [Southern Tier Central Regional Planning and Development Board](#) provide education and training to municipalities around clean water issues.
- The [Upper Susquehanna Coalition](#) is a partnership of county conservation districts working to improve water quality and natural resources.

Pennsylvania

- [Countywide Action Plan](#) Coordinators play a critical role in meeting local nutrient and sediment reduction goals, including directly engaging with local officials.
- The [Healthy Waters](#) newsletter, which includes local government officials as a key audience, showcases progress towards meeting state and county goals, shares reporting and data tools, highlights funding opportunities and more.

Virginia

- [Planning District Commissions](#) provide technical and administrative assistance to local governments related to nutrient and sediment reduction goals.

West Virginia

- [Region 8](#) and [Region 9](#) Planning and Development Councils directly engage with local governments in their region related to clean water and green infrastructure.

Management Approaches for Outcome 4.1: Local Government Leadership

In developing the Local Government Leadership Management Strategy, the workgroup relied on previous and existing publications that evaluated how to best increase the knowledge and support the capacity of local government leaders. This includes but is not limited to: [Chesapeake Watershed Local Leadership Development Programs](#) (2015), [Strategic Outreach Education Program for Local Elected Officials](#) (2017), [Local Leadership Baseline Survey](#) (2022), [Planning for Clean Water: Local Government Workshop Reports](#) (2023), [Local Leadership Survey](#) (2024) and [Local Government Technical Assistance Inventory and Gap Analysis Project](#) (2026).

Management Approach 4.1.1: Measure progress toward increasing the knowledge and supporting the capacity of local government leaders.

Local government leaders are defined as elected officials, appointed officials and staff who represent their local government at a meeting, training or event. Direct Engagement is defined as two-way dialogue with active participants. Examples include conference panels, peer to peer learning exchange tours, roundtable discussions, hands-on trainings, interactive webinars and more. Indirect Engagement is defined as broadcast style communications that are seen or read by a passive observer. Examples include social media posts, blog posts, newsletters, magazine articles, website views and more. Workgroup will annually track and report Direct and Indirect Engagement.

Management Approach 4.1.2: Serve as translators of complex scientific and technical resources and information.

Many local officials do not have scientific or technical knowledge, particularly around emerging or evolving environmental issues. Additionally, frequent turnover among elected and appointed officials results in loss of institutional knowledge and ongoing need to engage and educate new leaders. Moreover, a broad spectrum of important and urgent issues constantly compete for local officials time and resources. By translating scientific and technical information into plain language and demonstrating how actions to advance Watershed Agreement Outcomes align with local priorities, the

partnership can support implementation of local actions. Because of the complexity of the watershed, outreach and education material will be tailored to the unique needs of each jurisdiction.

Management Approach 4.1.3: Increase the knowledge and support the capacity of local government leaders via existing channels of trusted communications and engagement. Leverage existing channels of communication and engagement (see list of signatory programs above) to effectively reach elected and appointed officials who lack scientific or technical knowledge, particularly around emerging or evolving environmental issues. Frequent turnover among elected and appointed officials results in loss of institutional knowledge and ongoing need to engage and educate new leaders through sustained outreach, onboarding, and relationship-building efforts.

Management Approach 4.1.4: Strengthen the networks that support local government leadership capacity

Many local governments do not have in-house scientific or technical capacity and rely on networks of support such as municipal associations, planning organizations, technical assistance providers, conservation districts, and other trusted sources (see list of signatory programs above). By strengthening the capacity of these existing networks and supporting the development of engagement networks where gaps exist, the workgroup can more effectively reach local government officials and maximize limited resources across the watershed.

Management Approach 4.1.5: Support goal teams and workgroups who want to engage with local officials.

Within the goal teams and workgroups, there is growing interest in engaging local governments. The workgroup will coordinate with these groups to address needs across the Partnership to better engage local officials, with a focus on the workgroups under Engaged Communities and Healthy Landscapes.

Participating Partners

The following partners participated in the creation of this Management Strategy and expressed their intention to collaborate on Management Strategy implementation over the next six years. Per the Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement, “participation in developing Management Strategies or in the achievement of Outcomes varies by signatory based on differing priorities across the watershed. This participation may include commitments such as sharing knowledge, data or information, educating the public, working on future legislation and developing or implementing programs or verified practices” (2025). Signatory partners may join implementation efforts at any time. Partners also recognize that Signatory participation is voluntary and may vary accordingly.

- **Signatory Partners**
 - State of Delaware
 - State of Maryland

- State of New York
- Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
- Commonwealth of Virginia
- State of West Virginia
- Environmental Protection Agency
- Chesapeake Bay Commission
- **Other Partners**
 - Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments
 - District of Columbia
 - University of Maryland's Environmental Finance Center
 - Rappahannock-Rapidan Regional Commission
 - University of Delaware's Water Resource Center
 - Pennsylvania Chapter of the American Planning Association

Appendix 1. Signatory Statutory Authorities Driving Outcome Attainment

The law and regulation of signatory partners may support, justify or motivate their participation in the collaborative work of the Chesapeake Bay Program related to the attainment of specific Outcomes and Targets of the Watershed Agreement.

The following documentation identifies core statutory authorities that provide part of the impetus for the attainment of Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement Outcomes and their related Targets. While Chesapeake Bay Program partners acknowledge that the Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement is voluntary, subject to the availability of appropriated funds, and does not preempt, supersede or override any other law or regulation applicable to each signatory, they also acknowledge that the law or regulation of individual signatories can support each partner's participation in outcome attainment. The table below is not an exhaustive list of all relevant laws and regulations. Rather, this appendix identifies the driving motivators that can bring about signatory partner engagement in efforts described in this Strategic Plan, associated Management Strategies, and Workplans.

Goal [#]: [Goal Name]

Outcome: [Outcome Name]	
Signatory	Statutory Authority
[Signatory Name]	
[Signatory Name]	

[Signatory Name]	
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