



NWS AMS Partner Engagement Event 2023 Summary Report



Introduction

On January 8th, 2023, the National Weather Service (NWS) conducted a **Partner Engagement Event** during the American Meteorological Society's (AMS) Annual Meeting in Denver, Colorado. The NWS typically conducts a Partner meeting at AMS each year, bringing together a diverse group of individuals from the industry, government, and academic sectors of the Weather, Water, and Climate (WWC) Enterprise. This year was a little different for two reasons:

- This was the first time an in-person Partner meeting was held since January 2020
- This year the event was combined with the Weather-Ready Nation (WRN) Ambassador event, typically held on the Sunday of the AMS Annual Meeting.

Discussion Topics

This year's meeting revolved around service equity and ways that the WWC Enterprise can begin thinking about this concept from a team approach, and explore new ways to strengthen partnerships, leverage collective capacity, and interest in improving resilience. **Peyton Robertson, Director of the NWS Office of Organizational Excellence (OOE)**, welcomed the group and highlighted activities that OOE worked on during the pandemic, including the Partnership Strategy and several Partner-focused webinars. He introduced **Dr. Rick Spinrad, NOAA's 11th Administrator and the Under Secretary of Commerce for Oceans and Atmosphere** who spoke about the importance of partnerships and that this remains a key priority for NOAA.

Why are Weather-Ready Communities Important?

The first session was a dialogue about the value of Weather-Ready communities facilitated by **Allison Allen, Director of the NWS Analyze, Forecast, & Support Office (AFSO) Portfolio**. The panelists included **Doug Hilderbrand (Preparedness & Resilience Program Manager, NWS)**, **Ashley Morris (Baltimore County Office of Emergency Management)**, and **Lucas McDonald (Director, Emergency Operations - Walmart)**. The panel provided their perspectives on the uniqueness of the communities they serve and engaging those communities through a "Weather-Ready Communities" concept. The presenters challenged the audience to think about what already exists across the WWC Enterprise and how the benefits are amplified when we work together.

How do we bring the pieces together to create Weather-Ready Communities?

Next, **NWS Director Ken Graham** asked the attendees to rethink how we conduct outreach, training, and risk communications. Ken facilitated a discussion with NWS panelists regarding Impact-based Decision Support Services (IDSS) efforts. **Katie Edwards (IDSS Program Manager)** discussed the future of IDSS from a policy perspective and where the WWC Enterprise fits in.



Reid Wolcott (Warning Coordination Meteorologist, Weather Forecast Office (WFO) Seattle, WA) and Erik Heden (Warning Coordination Meteorologist, WFO Morehead City, NC) gave a local perspective on some of the efforts they are pursuing regarding service equity, including targeted outreach, and recruiting WRN Ambassadors in underrepresented communities.

Service Equity Education

The remainder of the meeting specifically focused on service equity. **Dr. Steve Smith, Director of the NWS Office of Science and Technology Integration (OSTI)**, provided an overview of the definition of service equity and the framework for action within the NWS. **Heather Lazrus (Project Scientist in the Mesoscale and Microscale Lab at the National Center for Atmospheric Research)** provided insight on using a frame of meteorological justice to build more equitable and ethical risk communication systems. **Joseph Trujillo-Falcon, a Graduate Research Assistant with the NOAA National Severe Storms Laboratory**, gave a motivating presentation on the importance of translation efforts and how Spanish-speaking communities receive, comprehend, and respond to life-threatening weather & climate hazards. In addition to a few slides from each presenter, Ken asked each of the panelists thought-provoking questions on how we can make connections in underserved communities and the next steps to making these interactions a priority for the WWC Enterprise.

Harnessing the Weather, Water, and Climate Enterprise Roundtable Discussions

Mary Erickson, NWS Deputy Director, led the final session of the meeting: **Harnessing the Weather, Water, and Climate Enterprise Roundtable Discussions**. This portion of the event was interactive, allowing each table to brainstorm and assess what the biggest challenges are and where service gaps currently exist in reaching underserved communities within the WWC Enterprise.

The consensus from the groups was that communication (i.e., how we reach these underserved communities) is the biggest challenge.

Participants were asked to choose one word to describe service gaps, with some of the most used words being **priorities, trust, and collaboration**. Lastly, the groups were asked to draft a challenge statement that completes this sentence as it relates to the discussions on service equity: ***I wish we could...*** Some discussed the dissemination of NWS products, others mentioned breaking down existing barriers to effective partnerships, and others discussed the importance of understanding human behavior and decision-making. The full list of "I wish" statements can be found in the [presentation slides](#).



Mary closed the meeting by thanking everyone and Ken mentioned how we need to ensure everything we do as an enterprise is meaningful and impactful. The NWS is motivated to work with the WWC Enterprise to address service equity challenges and is looking forward to many more conversations on this topic.