Outreach Projects

for Credit under the
Community Rating System
of the
National Flood Insurance Program

2017

NFIP/CRS

CONTENTS

Outreach Projects for Credit under the Community Rating System

Introduction

Through public information programs, people at risk can learn about the hazards they face, prepare for flooding, and take steps to reduce their exposure to flood damage. Research has shown that public information programs work. When such programs are properly designed and administered, people do get the message and they protect themselves and their property, often at little cost to the government.

Accordingly, the Community Rating System provides credit points for programs that follow the research findings. These are listed in the 300 series, Public Information Activities. The credited activities range from notifications to people considering purchasing a property, to providing general information about the hazard and protection measures, to sharing extensive knowledge through libraries, websites, and expert advice.

All public information activities have the same objective: to get people to act, i.e., to take flood protection steps, such as buying flood insurance, developing a family emergency plan, retrofitting a building, or complying with floodplain management regulations.

Activity 330 (Outreach Projects) is central to this effort, because it is often the first contact people have with a community's public information efforts. Outreach projects should provide a relatively brief message that tells the recipient what should be done. The message can also refer the recipient to places where more information can be obtained, such as the library, a website, or a community office.

> **Findings from Research on Public Information**
>
> The objective is to change behavior
>
> Good programs work: behavior changes
>
> Good programs
>
> ✓ Are tailored to the local situation,
> ✓ Are positive,
> ✓ Say what people should do,
> ✓ Repeat the message,
> ✓ Repeat the message from different sources, and
> ✓ Are evaluated and revised periodically.

> **CRS Public Information Activities**
>
> 310 (Elevation Certificates)
> 320 (Map Information Service)
> 330 (Outreach Projects)
> 340 (Hazard Disclosure)
> 350 (Flood Protection Information)
> 360 (Flood Protection Assistance)
> 370 (Flood Insurance Promotion)

This Guide

It is in this context that this guide was prepared: to review how outreach projects can be most effective as part of a community's overall public information efforts. As a side benefit, there are CRS credits for such projects and this guide reviews how they can be obtained. This guide follows a four-step process for preparing outreach projects:

1. Determine who needs to know about flood hazards and flood protection ("AUDIENCES");

2. Draft the right MESSAGES for these audiences, and determine how often the messages need to be sent (e.g., annually, twice a year, or other frequency);

3. Inventory outreach PROJECTS already being done, identify the gaps, and fill the gaps with revised or new projects; and

4. DOCUMENT the old and new projects for CRS credit.

These four steps are the keys to two public information efforts that are credited under CRS Activity 330: outreach projects that are disseminated every year (OP), and flood response preparations projects (FRP) that are disseminated during and after a flood.

More credit is available if the community goes through a formal step-by-step process with a committee formed of members of the public and stakeholder organizations. This more involved process results in bonus points for OP and FRP projects via credit for a program for public information (PPI) and stakeholder delivery (STK). These credits are discussed in *Developing a Program for Public Information for Credit under the Community Rating System*, found under the 300s tab on the CRS Resources website (accessible at www.CRSresources.org/300).

This guide is not a detailed "how-to" handbook for designing and preparing a public information program. Its objective is to identify the key factors in preparing and crediting flood protection outreach projects. There are other references that can prove helpful, especially

- For an overview of all CRS credits, see the *CRS Coordinator's Manual*, available on the CRS Resources website.
- For some very effective public information tools, see *How-to Guide for No Adverse Impact (NAI) Education and Outreach*, Association of State Floodplain Managers, 2014, available on the ASFPM website (accessible at www.floods.org).

Step 1. Determine Your Audiences

The first step in developing a public information program or drafting outreach projects is to decide who should be the recipient of the information you want to share. An AUDIENCE is a group of people who would benefit from information on flood-related topics. There are two types of audiences:

- Residents and businesses located in a similar geographical area, and
- People with similar interests.

Usually the floodplain is the first geographical area that comes to mind. However, there are likely to be other places with flood hazards that are not in mapped Special Flood Hazard Areas (SFHAs). Areas with flood problems may have been described in the community's floodplain management, stormwater management, or hazard mitigation plan. Another way to identify them is to administer the CRS Community Self Assessment, which can be found under the 200s tab on the CRS Resources website.

Examples of audiences based on geographical areas include

- Floodplain residents and businesses,
- People in historically or repetitively flooded properties areas,
- People protected by a levee or a dam that could fail or be overtopped,
- Waterfront businesses, and
- Beachfront hotels and restaurants.

Audiences can also be selected based on other reasons. Examples include

- Tourists,
- Drivers,
- Building contractors,
- Elementary school students,
- Non-English speakers, and
- Community service organizations.

In most cases, once an audience is selected, it is not hard to determine what information would help them. Some examples are listed below.

- Property owners in unmapped floodplains can use information about the flood hazard, voluntary flood insurance at lower rates, property protection measures.
- Building contractors can use information about floodplain construction regulations and mitigation funding sources.
- Drivers should be reminded to "turn around, don't drown."
- Tourists should be aware of warning signals, evacuation procedures, and other safety precautions.

The general public can also be thought of as an audience and the majority of most communities' programs are directed at the whole community. This is especially important when publicizing safety precautions. For example, non-floodplain residents may have to drive through areas that have been or are likely to be flooded.

Priority Audiences

Activity 330 provides more credit for outreach projects that reach "priority audiences." Outreach projects targeted toward these audiences are explained under Step 3 on page 9. Unless a community has prepared a program for public information (PPI) that formally assesses problem areas and public information needs, only five priority audiences are recognized for this extra credit:

1. Floodplain residents and businesses,

2. Repetitive loss area residents and businesses,

3. Residents of areas protected by a levee,

4. Residents of areas subject to flooding if an upstream dam fails, and

5. Residents of areas subject to one of the credited special flood-related hazards described in Section 401 of the *CRS Coordinator's Manual*.

CRS Credit Notes

This guidance supplements the credit criteria found in the *Coordinator's Manual*.

Even if it is not mapped as 100% Special Flood Hazard Area (SFHA) on its Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM), a community that considers itself entirely floodprone may receive targeted project credit for a MAILING TO ALL RESIDENTS, provided that the notice clearly states that the reader is subject to flooding. Example: A coastal community is shown as 80% SFHA, but the X

Zone is not much higher in elevation than the A Zone. The outreach project tells everyone in the community, "Your property is likely to be flooded during a Category 3 hurricane or a severe coastal storm."

The following are audiences that do not receive targeted project credit unless they are so identified in a PPI:

— All properties in the community (see the exception, above).
— Insurance agents, lenders, or real estate agents who receive the publicity for Activity 320 (Map Information Service).
— A subset of one of the five priority audiences, such as sending an annual notice to only some of the floodplain residents or to only half of the repetitive loss areas.

Step 2. Draft your Messages

After the audiences have been selected, it is important to identify what actions you want them to take. These actions are called "outcomes." There should be a relatively small number of outcomes expected for each audience. For example, instead of understanding floodplain regulations or how to read a FIRM, appropriate outcomes could be "property owners will apply for a permit before they start filling or building" or "people will call the office to find out about their exposure to flood damage."

Messages are specific statements or directions that will help produce the desired outcomes. The messages need to do one of two things:

1. **Clearly state what the audience should do.**

   Desired outcome: Property owners will apply for a permit before
                       they start filling or building.
   Message: "Call the permit office (123/456-7890) before you fill or build."

   Desired outcome: People will not drive around barricades on flooded streets.
   Message: "Turn around, don't drown."

2. **Provide basic information with a note on where to get more information.**

   Desired outcome: People will find out about their exposure to flood damage
   Message: "You may live in a floodplain. Find out by calling 555-1234."

   Desired outcome: People will retrofit their homes to protect them from shallow flooding
   Message: "You can protect your home from drainage and flooding problems. Information on ways to protect your property can be found at www._____."

Messages need to be pertinent to the audience. A statement like "our city has a 100-year floodplain" does not convey information that meets either of the two criteria above.

CRS Credit Notes

When drafting messages, ask, **"What do we want the audience to do?"** If the answer to that question is not clear or specific, it is likely that the message will not be credited. For example, "Protect yourself from flooding" or "Take care during evacuation" are not specific enough to meet the credit criteria for Activity 330 (Outreach Projects). Note that messages that advise the audience to call for more information or to talk to their insurance agent would be credited.

A county-wide or regional project, such as special pages in a telephone book prepared by the county emergency manager, must include information pertinent to the community that is requesting CRS credit. This would be either

— Local information about the community (e.g., the local flood hazard or the phone number of each local permit office), or

— Generic information that is not related to local conditions (e.g., flood insurance or flood safety practices).

For example, a county project that states "Most cities have regulations about building in the floodplain. Contact your city permit office." would not be credited without more specific contact information.

A county-wide or regional project must be disseminated to all communities that are requesting CRS credit. If a publication is made available at a shopping mall or home improvement store that is frequented by residents of several communities, all those communities can receive the OP credit.

Just as important as determining the audiences and the messages is how often the messages should be disseminated. Research has shown that a message has to be repeated to sink in. Messages should be repeated and also repeated from different sources. The sources are discussed in the next section, Design Your Projects.

CRS Credit Note

A project must be implemented at least once each year for outreach project (OP) credit. More credit is provided for repeating the message by repeating the project and/or by using multiple projects to send the same message. See the discussion, Scoring Repeated Projects, on page 13.

Topics

Topics are a CRS scoring tool. A single project could convey a dozen messages. If a community was focusing on credit, and points were provided for each message, there would be a tendency to pack as much information into every project as would fit. Research has shown this to be counter-productive. Therefore, credit points are provided based on what topics are covered in a project.

EXAMPLE: A flyer explains the community's flood hazard with a floodplain map, information on past floods, flood depths, and velocities for each stream. For CRS credit, if these messages are in the same project, they are scored as one topic, "Know your flood hazard."

Activity 330 has six CRS priority topics for outreach projects:

1. Know your flood hazard.

2. Insure your property for your flood hazard.

3. Protect people from the hazard.

4. Protect your property from the hazard.

5. Build responsibly.

6. Protect natural floodplain functions.

> Example messages for each topic are listed in Table 330-1 in the *Coordinator's Manual*. These are offered only as examples. The list should not be considered exhaustive.

A community may cover any of these topics that it wants. The only requirement for OP credit is that at least one of the community's projects must include a message under CRS topic 2, Insure your property.

CRS Credit Notes

Topic 1. Know your flood hazard: The messages under this topic must convey information about one or more flood or flood-related hazards facing the audience. The key to this topic is know YOUR flood hazard, i.e., the hazard at the audience's location (such as a high water mark). General information about flooding in the community or the odds of a 100-year flood are not credited.

In a targeted outreach project, the message must have information about the hazard in the priority audience's area.

This topic is a good one to coordinate with the publicity required for Activity 320 (Map Information Service) and the outreach projects required for credit under Activity 620 (Levees) and Activity 630 (Dams).

Some EXAMPLES of creditable messages:

— "Your property is subject to flooding by the Roaring River."
— "Your house is located in a repetitively flooded area."
— Call 555-1234 to find out the flood hazard for your property."
— "The French River flooded in 2001 and 2004. See if your area was affected by calling us at 555-1234."
— "Your property is protected from the Roaring River by a levee and would be flooded if the levee fails or is overtopped."
— "All of Beautiful Beach Island is subject to flooding from a tropical storm or hurricane."

Messages that WOULD NOT BE credited:

— "Floodville is subject to a 100-year flood."
— "Come to City Hall and look at the Flood Insurance Rate Map."
— "Floodville's streams are subject to flash flooding," (if sent to an area not subject to flash flooding).
— "Last year, 420 homes were flooded by Hurricane Fritz."
— "Everyone lives in a flood zone," (unless the community is 100% floodprone).

Topic 2. Insure your property for your flood hazard: The messages need to either encourage the purchase or retention of a flood insurance policy or explain one or more facets of it. There is no credit for just saying that the community is in the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) or participates in the CRS.

Some EXAMPLES of creditable messages:

— "Ask your insurance agent whether if you are covered for flood damage."
— "Renters should buy flood insurance for the contents of their homes."

High water marks are good ways to convey the flood hazard at the audience's location.

- "Take advantage of a low-cost Preferred Risk Policy."
- "Do you have a flood insurance policy? If so, see if you have contents coverage."
- "There is a 30-day waiting period before a flood insurance policy takes effect, so call your insurance agent now."

Messages that WOULD NOT be credited (because they do not tell the audience what to do):

- "Flood insurance is 15% cheaper because Floodville is in the Community Rating System."
- "Most homeowners insurance does not cover flood damage."

Topic 3. Protect people from the hazard: Messages under CRS topic 3 cover life safety issues related to floods or special flood-related hazards. These messages could focus on warning signals, evacuation routes, or "turn around, don't drown." This topic is a good one to coordinate with the outreach projects required for credit under Activity 610 (Flood Warning and Response), Activity 620 (Levees), and Activity 630 (Dams).

Some EXAMPLES of creditable messages:

- "If the street is under water, turn around, don't drown."
- "Know the flood warning signals: one long blast of the siren means a flash flood along Silver Creek."
- "Designate a place where your family can rendezvous after an evacuation order is issued."

Both of these signs convey creditable messages under CRS topic 1, Know your flood hazard.

Both have messages that tell the audience what to do (or not to do) under CRS topic 3, Protect people from the hazard. They would be credited for having messages under two topics.

Topic 4. Protect your property from the hazard: The community's messages must identify appropriate flood-related property protection measures for the audience's situation. They must encourage the reader to either implement such measures or provide one or more references where more information about them can be found. This topic is a good one to coordinate with the publicity required for Activity 360 (Flood Protection Assistance).

Some EXAMPLES of creditable messages:

- "Replace your flooded furnace with one elevated above the flood level."
- "Store your valuables and insurance papers upstairs in a waterproof container."

- "Interested in a grant to raise your house above the flood level? Call us at 555-1234."
- "Protect your basement from flooding. Make sure your downspouts drain away from your house."

Some messages may be credited under either topic 3 or 4, such as "Shut off the electricity and all gas appliances before you evacuate."

Messages that WOULD NOT be credited:

- "Spring rains are coming. Time to prepare your house." (With no further information.)
- "Hurricane season starts next month. Check your shutters and tie down outdoor furniture that might blow away in high winds." (No information on flood protection.)

Topic 5. Build responsibly: Messages under this topic focus on building and land use regulations for avoiding flood damage, such as what kind of development needs a permit, and the rules related to making substantial improvements or repairing substantial damage to floodplain properties.

Some EXAMPLES of creditable messages:

- "Get a permit from the Building Department at City Hall before you build."
- "Don't build or grade within 10 feet of the property line so you don't alter the drainage between homes."
- "Use only licensed contractors who know the rules."

Topic 6. Protect natural floodplain functions: Simply knowing that a floodplain serves important natural functions does not bring changes in behavior, the ultimate objective of Activity 330. Messages under this topic need to tell the audience what they should do and why. That is, the message must state what natural floodplain function deserves protection.

Some EXAMPLES of creditable messages:

- "Don't trash the river—that's where we get our drinking water."
- "Observe our waterfront wildlife from a distance. Turtle and bird nests can be destroyed by careless or curious people. Avoid marked turtle nesting areas and leave bird eggs and nests on the beach."
- "Sedimentation is the number one pollutant in our rivers. If you see a broken sediment fence, please report it by calling 555/234-5678."
- "Sea oats and other beach plants help stabilize our sand dunes. Enjoy them, but don't pick them—it's illegal."

Messages that WOULD NOT be credited:

- "Wetlands are important for water quality." (Does not tell the reader what to do.)
- "No dumping." (Does not state what natural floodplain function deserves protection.)

This sign tells readers what to do (or NOT to do), and why.

Step 3. Design your Projects

Almost any medium that conveys a message can be an outreach project credited under Activity 330. However, some projects are more effective in reaching their audiences than others. Therefore, projects are classified under one of three types. The more effective types receive more points.

NOTE: The order of the three types of projects discussed here differs from that in the Coordinator's Manual. *Here, informational projects and targeted projects are discussed first and second. All other projects are likely to qualify as general outreach projects, the type discussed third.*

Informational Projects

These are written documents such as brochures and handouts that people may take with them. In contrast with other types of projects, informational projects only convey their messages when someone picks them up, asks for them, or otherwise searches for the information (as with a website). A sign is not an informational project because the message is apparent when one sees the sign; the audience does not have to retrieve a brochure or hunt down the message.

Informational projects are credited at one point for each topic covered and made available throughout the year.

CRS Credit Note

WEBSITES can be credited under Activity 350 (Flood Protection Information). If a website meets the prerequisites for Activity 350 credit, it can earn up to seven points per type of project under WEB1. If the website does not meet the prerequisites, it can be credited at one point per topic as an informational project under Activity 330.

A kiosk or display area with several brochures is considered one informational project (new with the 2017 *CRS Coordinator's Manual*). Therefore, a kiosk with four brochures on flood insurance is counted as one informational project with one message under CRS topic 2, Insure your property for your flood hazard. A kiosk with four brochures on flood insurance, two on protecting a building from flood damage, and one on permit requirements is counted as one informational project with one message each under Topics 2, 4, and 5.

As with all outreach projects, it doesn't matter what agency or organization prepares or distributes the material. What counts is that it reaches the audience in the community.
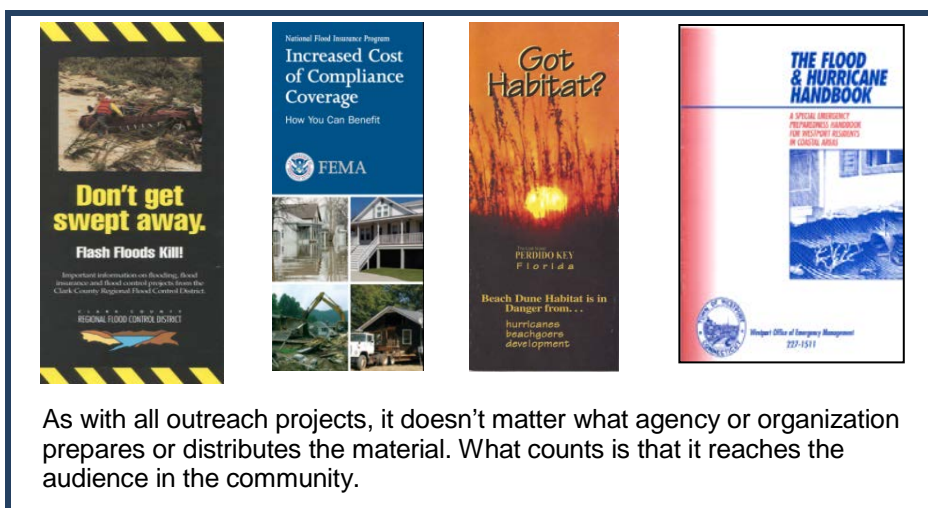
Targeted Projects

Targeted projects are designed to reach specific priority audiences at least once each year. As noted on page 3, there are five priority audiences that can be credited, unless the community has prepared a PPI. Targeted projects must clearly state that the recipient is receiving the message because he or she is part of the priority audience.

Targeted projects are credited at six points for each topic covered at least once each year to each audience.

CRS Credit Notes

An outreach project to a priority audience does not automatically receive targeted project credit. It will only receive the targeted project credit if it reaches AT LEAST 90% OF THE PRIORITY AUDIENCE. It is up to the community to document that the population is reached. The outreach project may be informational, general, or targeted.

> # Dear Property Owner
> Your property at 123 River Road is located behind a State-Federal project leve and may be exposed to potential flood risk from the Sacramento River. You property may also be at risk for flooding from other sources not identified in thi notice. Visit www.water.ca.gov/myfloodrisk and enter your address to find more

Every year, the California Department of Water Resources mails this targeted notice to owners of properties in areas protected by levees. Every community with properties that receive these notices can get Activity 330 credit for it.

- In most cases, such projects are mailed, the easiest way to be sure everyone gets the message.
- Signs posted at all the entrances to the priority audience's area (e.g., the floodplain or repetitive loss area) would qualify as a targeted project because everyone entering the area would see the message.

A face-to-face encounter that includes two-way communication and questions and answers is more effective than a mailing. Therefore, having at least 50% of the priority audience present at a meeting receives full credit as a targeted outreach project. This would be appropriate for a relatively small priority audience, such as a meeting of the residents of a repetitive loss area. A record of attendance is needed to document that 50% of the priority audience was reached.
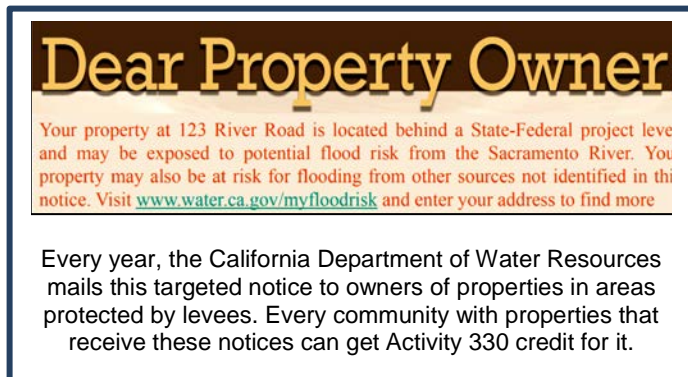
General Outreach Projects

This is the third type of outreach project credited under Activity 330. It includes all other creditable projects that are not informational projects or targeted projects.

Some EXAMPLES of annual general outreach projects include

- Materials mailed to residents and/or businesses;
- Newspaper supplements and articles;
- Newsletter articles;
- Signs such as billboards, high water mark signs, or "don't dump" stencils at storm drain inlets;
- Radio and television ads or public service announcements;
- A staffed booth or display at public functions or shopping malls;
- Presentations to homeowners' associations, civic groups, or business associations; and
- Local television shows.

General outreach projects are credited at two points for each topic covered.

| School activities | Mailers to residents | Presentations |
| High water mark signs | Billboards | Contractor fairs |

Examples of general outreach projects

CRS Credit Notes

Many communities have continued the annual mailing that they sent to everyone in the community in past years. This received up to 60 points as an "outreach project to the community" or OPC. Under the 2013 and 2017 *Coordinator's Manuals*, each topic covered receives two points for a maximum of twelve points, not the six points per type of project for an OPC. Communities are encouraged to review their past projects because there may be more effective or more economical ways of getting their messages out.

Materials or training for community officials or employees are not considered outreach projects. However, training citizens to serve on community emergency response teams (CERTs), stream teams, weather spotters, or other pertinent activities, is creditable.

Step 4. Document your Work

Documentation of the community's outreach projects is necessary for processing CRS credit. At each verification visit and at each annual recertification, the community must provide the following documentation to its ISO/CRS Specialist for each project to be credited:

- A copy of each project, i.e., the flyer or brochure, a photograph of a sign, a memo about a presentation, etc. The copies should be marked or otherwise identify where the credited topics appear.
- Documentation that the targeted outreach projects were disseminated to the priority audience. This could, for example, include a mailing list or a sign-in sheet where a presentation was given.

Credit Points for Outreach Projects

The CRS credit points for outreach projects are based on three factors:

- The type of project (informational, targeted, or general),
- The number of topics covered, and
- The number of times the project is implemented each year. Note that for CRS credit for outreach projects (OP), all projects must be implemented at least once each year. As explained in the next section, a community may receive more credit points for doing a project more than once each year.
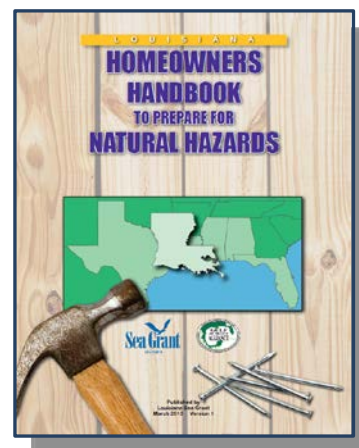
Here are some scoring examples for three outreach projects (OP#1, OP#2, and OP#3). They involve the handbook shown at right, which provides the messages listed in the table, below. Note that, although there are as many as three messages under some topics, the points are based on the number of topics in the project, not the number of messages.

Homeowners Handbook Messages and CRS Topics	
Messages	**CRS Topic**
Make an emergency supply kit for your home. Prepare a family evacuation plan. Know the evacuation procedures for a flood.	3. Protect people from the hazard.
How to wet floodproof a house.	4. Protect your property from the hazard.
See if your insurance agent offers flood insurance. Don't delay—there's a 30-day waiting period.	2. Insure your property.
Check with the permit office to see if a permit is needed. Know the substantial improvement rules. Verify whether you can do your own electrical work.	5. Build responsibly.

OP#1: Copies of the homeowners handbook are kept IN A RACK in the city hall lobby and available for anyone to pick up.

- Type of project: informational project, 1 point per topic
- Number of topics covered: 4 (see table, above)
- Number of times per year: all informational projects are counted as once each year
    1 point per topic x 4 topics x 1 time per year = 1 x 4 x 1 = 4 points for OP#1

OP#2: The handbook is HANDED OUT to people who attend a flood protection presentation.

- Type of project: general outreach, 2 points per type of project
- Number of topics covered: 4 (see table, above)
- Number of times per year: the presentation is given during Flood Awareness Week, once each year.
    2 points per type of project x 4 topics x 1 time per year = 2 x 4 x 1 =
    8 points for OP#2

OP#3: The handbook is MAILED to every property in the city's repetitive loss areas, with a cover letter that notifies the recipients that they are in a repetitively flooded area and discusses sources of financial assistance.

- Type of project: targeted project, 6 points per type of project
- Number of topics covered: 4 (see table, above)
- Number of times per year: the mailing is done the month before hurricane season each year.

> 6 points per type of project x 4 topics x 1 time per year = 6 x 4 x 1 = 24 points for OP#3

Each of these three examples can be counted as a separate project. Even though all three use the same handbook, the messages are being disseminated three different ways. If all three are implemented every year, the three projects can be added together:

> OP#1 + OP#2 + OP#3 = 4 + 8 + 24 = 36 points for doing all three projects every year.

Scoring Repeated Projects

One important finding from research about changing people's behavior is "repeat the message." It takes numerous repetitions of a message before it sinks in and people take action. Doing something only once a year is not likely to get the message to stick. Because repetition is more effective, the CRS provides more credit to a community that repeats outreach projects.

Another research finding is "repeat the message from different sources." That is why the CRS credit for repeating the same project from the same source is CAPPED AT FIVE TIMES per year. This applies to all similar projects at different locations, such as racks with the same brochures, evacuation signs, high water marks, storm drain stencils, etc.. Their credit is capped at five locations. This cap applies to having the same brochures at more than five different locations and giving the same presentation more than five times (but having different brochures at different locations and giving different presentations to different audiences can be counted as different projects).

CRS Credit Notes

For informational projects, each location is considered a repetition. Credit for more than five locations with the same materials is capped at five repetitions.

A document in two different languages can be counted either as two separate projects or as the same project implemented twice. Either way, the total credit is the same.

Here are some scoring examples for projects that are repeated during the same year.

- **OP#1:** The handbook is IN A RACK in the city hall lobby, at the visitor's center, and next to the cash registers in two local home improvement stores.

> 1 point per topic x 4 topics x 4 times per year = 1 x 4 x 4 = 16 points for OP#1

- **OP#2:** The handbook is HANDED OUT to people who attend flood protection presentations during Flood Awareness Week, once a year at a local service club, and once a year at a neighborhood association meeting.

> 2 points per type of project x 4 topics x 3 times per year = 2 x 4 x 3 = 24 points for OP#2

- **OP#4:** The community has placed 15 "tsunami hazard zone" signs (shown on page 7) ALONG THE PUBLIC BEACH.

Type of project:	general outreach, 2 points per type of project
Number of topics covered:	two (topic 1. Know your flood hazard, and topic 3, Protect people from the hazard).
Number of times per year:	although the signs are posted at 15 locations, repetitions are capped at five

2 points per type of project x 2 topics x 5 times per year = 2 x 2 x 5 = 20 points for OP#4

Credit Worksheet

The ISO/CRS Specialist uses a worksheet to facilitate recording and calculating credit points for outreach projects. The "330 Outreach Project Worksheet" is a spreadsheet available in Microsoft Excel® and can be downloaded from the CRS Resources website.

The worksheet is not a community documentation requirement, but it can help the community run "what if" scenarios to estimate likely points using different combinations of topics and projects. It can also be used to record and calculate credit points. In the sample below, OP#1 through OP#4 are the examples discussed on pages 13–14. The others are on pages 10 and 11.

Project Number — Project Name — Number of points per topic X — Number of topics covered X — Number of times per year = — Project score

330 Outreach Project (OP) Worksheet

	Outreach Projects	Points per Topic	1. Hazard	2. Insure	3. People	4. Property	5. Build	6. Natural	Times per Year	OP
OP#1	Handbook at 4 locations	1		✓	✓	✓	✓		4	16
OP#2	Handbook at 3 presentations	2		✓	✓	✓	✓		3	24
OP#3	Handbook to rep loss areas	6		✓	✓	✓	✓		1	24
OP#4	15 "Tsunami Hazard" signs	2	✓		✓				5	20
OP#5	Mailer to leveed areas	6	✓	✓	✓	✓			1	24
OP#6	Mailer to all residents	2	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	1	12
OP#7	9 high water mark signs	2	✓						5	10
OP#8	Contractor fair	2				✓	✓		1	4
OP#9										0

c330 =	cOP:	134.0	+	cFRP:	0.0	=	0	∑OP:	134

Number of OP projects: **8**   Notes: c330 ≤ 350   ∑OP ≤ 200

CRS Credit Notes

Many CRS Coordinators have submitted the same projects that they have been doing over the years without seeing how they would score under the latest *Coordinator's Manual*. In most cases, their annual projects to the community (OPC) and to floodplain properties (OPF) have lost points, while their additional outreach projects (OPA) have done better.

If a community wanted to increase its credit for OP, it could

   — Do more projects (or document more projects implemented by other organizations),

   — Do more targeted projects,

   — Cover more topics (not always possible for projects like signs), and/or

   — Do the projects in more locations or more times each year.

Flood Response Preparations

Outreach projects credited under the element OP are conducted at least once every year, usually at regular times, such as before the spring flood or summer hurricane season. However, people are much more interested in flooding and flood protection information when it floods. At times like those, projects that answer immediate questions, such as "Will the flood reach my house?" "Is it safe to return?" and "What can I do so I won't get damaged again?" can help people more than the same messages being disseminated on dry days.

To recognize projects that disseminate messages after a flood warning is received, Activity 330 has the element "flood response preparations" or FRP. For FRP credit, appropriate messages are developed for the appropriate audiences. They need to be pertinent to the situation, so advising someone to purchase a flood insurance policy that has a 30-day waiting period would not be credited.

The same four steps taken to design annual outreach projects for OP credit should be followed to develop FRP projects. They are also scored the same way.

FRP messages usually cover one or more of four topics:

- The health and safety hazards people will face during a flood and immediately after returning to their homes (CRS topic 1, Know your flood hazard).
- Warnings and messages about safety (CRS topic 3, Protect people from the hazard).
- Mitigation measures and opportunities to take during repairs and reconstruction (CRS topic 4, Protect your property from the hazard).
- Rebuilding requirements, such as the substantial damage rule (CRS topic 5, Build responsibly).

FRP is scored the same way that the annual outreach projects are under OP, according to

- The type of project (informational, targeted, or general). Note that if a project is delivered to everyone in the affected area in a timely manner, it is considered a targeted project for FRP;
- The number of topics covered; and
- The number of times the project is implemented.

Example FRP#1: To the right is a door hanger that a community puts on the front doorknob of every flooded house immediately after the water goes down. People returning to their homes will see the message.

- Type of project: targeted project, 6 points per type of project
- Number of topics covered: two—"Keep the walls open," and "Remove vinyl wallpaper" to protect people from mold (CRS topic 3, Protect people from the hazard) and the tips on the back of the card on how to restore a home so there will less damage next time (CRS topic 4, Protect your property from the hazard).
- Number of times per year: once, after the flood.

Example FRP#2: The emergency management agency publicizes that tweets will be sent during emergencies. An example is "If you are in the flooded area tell loved ones you are safe using text, social media, and http://safeandwell.org. #FloodvilleFlood." The community has a plan that says which messages are tweeted before, during, and after a flood.

- Type of project: general outreach, 2 points per type of project
- Number of topics covered by the various tweets—3: CRS topic 3, Protect people from the hazard; CRS topic 4, Protect your property from the hazard; and CRS topic 5, Build responsibly
- Number of times per year: once, after the flood.

The scores for FRP#1 and #2 are seen in the worksheet below.

HANG-ON!

You're anxious to get things back to normal, but think about the possibility of another flood. Would you invest a little now if you could
Get back home faster?
Get back to work sooner?
Have a home that's easier to restore and sell?

YOU CAN
Choose any of the tips on the back of this card, and if there is a **NEXT TIME**
- clean-up will be easier
- you'll have less damage to repair
  AND
- Avoid the headaches and hassles

For a healthier-home recovery…
Keep the walls open till they are completely dry. Trapped moisture causes mold to grow. It's bad for your house. It's bad for your health.

Remove vinyl wallpaper from your walls. Vinyl wallpaper traps moisture in the wall.

Caution: If there is mold on the back side , use an N-95 (or higher) respirator to protect yourself from the mold spores.

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Get these tips and more at
LSUAgCenter.com/FloodSmart

Flood Response Preparations (FRP) Project Worksheet													
Outreach Projects	Points per Topic	Number of times topic is repeated						Times Delivered	FRP	Multipliers		
		1. Hazard	2. Insure	3. People	4. Property	5. Build	6. Natural			PPI?	PPI (FRP)	FRP + PPI
FRP#1 "Hang on" door hanger	6			✓	✓			1	12		0.00	12.00
FRP#2 Tweets	2			✓	✓	✓		1	6		0.00	6.00
FRP#3 Backgrounders/news release	2	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		1	10		0.00	10.00
FRP#4 "How to clean up" handouts	2				✓	✓		1	4		0.00	4.00

CRS Credit Notes

A key difference between OP projects and FRP projects is that OP projects are implemented every year and FRP projects are implemented only when it floods. In order to receive CRS credit for FRP every year (even years when there is no flood),

— The community must prepare the FRP projects and have them (or printable masters) ready to go when it floods. "Ready to go" means they are readily available (e.g., not stored in the flooded area) and they can be reproduced and/or disseminated quickly.

— Simply having a collection of projects that were used in a recent flood will not qualify for credit. There must be instructions on when, how, and by whom the projects are to be reproduced and/or disseminated at the next flood.

— The community must review the projects each year and revise or update them as needed to stay pertinent. In its annual recertification, the community must confirm that it has completed this annual review. Copies of any materials that were revised since the last CRS verification visit must be attached to the annual recertification.

Crediting Social Media

Social media have become accepted practices for people of all ages to share and access information, especially on mobile devices. They are intended to create a two-way conversation that is interactive and continuous. Social media should not replace existing methods for communicating flood-related information, but they can be a supplement to reach more people in different ways.

Social media are changing constantly. Given this fluid situation, only general guidance can be given regarding potential CRS credit for the use of social media to communicate flood hazard and flood protection messages. The following guidance may be changed or augmented over time.

1. Social media that reach out to people can be credited as outreach projects (OP) and/or flood response preparations projects (FRP), provided they meet the following criteria:

   a. They convey messages that fall under one of the six credited topics.

   b. The messages must stay in place for at least several days, so the audience has a chance to see them. A message that disappears or is replaced after one or two days would not be credited. This does not apply to FRP projects during a fast-moving flooding situation.

   c. For OP credit, the messages are disseminated at least once every year. For FRP credit, the messages are drafted and reviewed every year, but disseminated before, during, or after a flood. Revisions would be needed if the annual evaluation showed that the media were not effective or could be improved.

   d. The community must document the messages and when and how they are disseminated. For example, a print screen of a Facebook page, or a log listing tweets and when they were posted, would be acceptable for OP credit. Listing when they will be posted is acceptable for FRP credit. Such documentation is due with each annual recertification and at the cycle verification visit.

e. For targeted project credit, the community must document how the priority audience was reached.

f. Websites, email, and telephone notifications are not considered social media and are scored like other outreach projects. See also the note on page 9 that more points are provided for websites that meet the credit criteria for WEB under Activity 350 (Flood Protection Information).

2. All social media are counted as one project. For example, a Facebook page with rotating flood hazard and flood protection messages is counted as one project per year. Each new message is not a new project, but each project can cover up to the maximum number of topics. Therefore, a Facebook page that covers six topics will receive more credit than one that repeats messages from only one topic.

3. There is credit for a maximum of five social media projects each year on the same topic. For example, ten Twitter tweets and three Facebook postings, all on the topic of "Insure your property," would be counted as a maximum of five projects altogether.

4. Social media projects can be counted separately for OP and FRP credit if they have both annual messages (OP) and different messages disseminated at the time of a flood (FRP).

5. Credit for in-depth information on a flood protection subject is provided under Activity 350 (Flood Protection Information). At this time, Facebook pages are not seen as providing the needed depth and breadth of information to qualify for Activity 350 credit. However, communities may submit alternatives to the credit for websites (WEB) if they can show that the alternative medium is as effective as a website and also meets the credit criteria for WEB.

6. These guidelines and credit criteria may be changed in the next *Coordinator's Manual*, based on experiences with this new credit. It would be appreciated if communities with experience using social media send their lessons learned to their ISO/CRS Specialists.

Additional CRS Credits

In addition to outreach projects (OP) and flood response preparations (FRP), Activity 330 (Outreach Projects) has two more elements:

● A program for public information (PPI) is a master plan for all the community's public information activities. It assesses the needs; identifies priority audiences; selects messages; identifies the best projects to convey those messages; and works with other organizations so that messages are consistent and projects coordinated. It is a formal process that involves a planning committee and produces a document that is adopted by the community's governing board.

Because the community has gone through a formal process to develop a program that fits its needs, bonus credit is awarded for annual outreach and flood response projects that are prepared pursuant to the PPI. More information on preparing a PPI is found in *Developing a Program for Public Information for Credit under the Community Rating System,* available under the 300s tab on the CRS Resources website.

● Stakeholder credit (STK) is a bonus for projects that are recommended by a PPI and that are implemented by stakeholders. "Stakeholders" means the public and agencies and

organizations other than the community itself. This credit is discussed in more detail in *Developing a Program for Public Information,* available under the 300s tab on the CRS Resources website.

Some activities in the CRS have requirements for publicity and some activities have their own credits for outreach projects. An outreach project is counted for credit under only one activity. However, Activity 330 OP credit can be provided if the project does not receive any points under the other activity, such as a publicity prerequisite.

The table below identifies which CRS activities and elements (1) have prerequisites that can be credited as OP outreach projects; (2) provide their own credit points and so cannot be duplicated as OP credits; and (3) can receive the bonus credit for being part of a PPI.

CRS Credit Elements with a Public Information Component			
Activity	**Element**	**OP Credit?**	**PPI Bonus?**
320 (Map Information Service)	Publicizing the service	(1)	(1)
330 (Outreach Projects)	Outreach projects (OP)	Yes	Yes
	Flood response preparations (FRP)	No	Yes
	Program for public information (PPI)	–	–
	Stakeholder delivery (STK)	–	–
340 (Hazard Disclosure)	Disclosure of the flood hazard (DFH)	No	Yes
	Real estate agents' brochure (REB)	No	Yes
350 (Flood Protection Information)	Website (WEB1)	No	Yes
360 (Flood Protection Assistance)	Property protection assistance (PPA)	No	Yes
	PPA site visits (PPV)	No	Yes
	Financial assistance advice (FAA)	No	Yes
	Publicity for PPA, PPV, and/or FAA	(1)	(1)
370 (Flood Insurance Promotion)	Coverage plan implementation (CPI)	No	Yes
504 (Rep loss area outreach project)	Repetitive loss area outreach project	(1)	(1)
540 (Drainage System Maintenance)	Stream dumping regulations (SDR)	No	Yes
610 (Flood Warning and Response)	Annual outreach project prerequisite	(1)	(1)
620 (Levees)	Annual outreach project prerequisite	(1)	(1)
630 (Dams)	Annual outreach project prerequisite	(1)	(1)
(1) OP credit can be provided for the publicity or outreach project prerequisite for this element. The OP credit can also receive the PPI and STK bonus credit if the project is in the PPI.			

In general, outreach projects under other CRS activities will score better under those activities than under Activity 330 OP. For example, projects with "no dumping" messages potentially could fall under one of three topics or areas of credit:

- Messages about no dumping of materials that will obstruct flows and divert water onto other properties can be credited under CRS topic 4, Protect your property from the hazard.
- Messages on dumping pollutants or waste that will adversely affect water quality can be credited under CRS topic 6, Protect natural floodplain functions.
- A project that states that it is illegal to dump materials that will obstruct flows (e.g., there are fines for dumping) can meet the publicity credit for stream dumping regulations (SDR) under Activity 540 (Drainage System Maintenance) and receive 10 or 15 points.

CRS Credit Notes

Different messages and different projects receive more credit. For example, in the previous paragraph's SDR example, the project could be credited as an OP outreach project under Activity 330 under CRS topic 5, which credits messages on flood protection regulations. The most it can receive under Activity 330 would be 6 points as a targeted project for the one topic. The message can only be credited under either Activity 540 or Activity 330, but not both. Because it can receive 20–30 points for publicizing stream dumping requirements if it meets the SDR prerequisites, it makes more sense to score it under SDR.

One other reason to credit projects under the other activities instead of as OP outreach projects is that some communities' outreach projects exceed the maximum amount of points available under Activity 330, so the only way to get additional credit is under the other activities.

As noted in the table above, other activities can also receive bonus credits if they are part of a PPI. All of this illustrates the need for and benefit of coordinating all public information messages and activities, especially if they are implemented by different offices and organizations.

Summary

Research has shown that public information programs work and people's behavior can change. The most effective programs are tailored to the community and tell people what they should do. Messages should be repeated and be presented from different sources. When outreach projects are properly designed and administered, people do get the message and they protect themselves and their property.

The four-step process presented in this guide encourages each community to determine the audiences that need to know about the flood hazards they face and ways they can protect themselves and their properties. Through this process the desired outcomes are identified, which form the basis for drafting the right messages for these audiences.

The community should inventory the flood hazard outreach projects that are already being done, identify the gaps in the messages and/or audiences, and fill the gaps with revised or new projects on the flood hazards and flood protection. It is important to document or keep track of the old and new projects for CRS credit.

Under Activity 330, the CRS credits outreach projects (OP) that are disseminated every year and projects that are disseminated during and after a flood (FRP). Through well-designed outreach projects and properly administered public information programs, people at risk can learn about the hazards they face, prepare for flooding, take steps to reduce their exposure to flood damage, and protect the natural functions of their floodplains.

Here are two final pieces of advice:

- Your community should implement the outreach projects and other public information efforts that best meet your needs and resources. CRS credit should be considered a bonus for your program, not the driving force that determines how your projects are designed.
- If you have a question or would like some feedback on a draft project, do not hesitate to ask your ISO/CRS Specialist for a courtesy review.