

Department of the Interior Executive Order 13985 Final Findings Report

This report was prepared for the U.S. Department of the Interior by Kearns & West, Inc. pursuant to an existing IDIQ contract held by the Office of Collaborative Action & Dispute Resolution.

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Executive Summary

President Biden issued Executive Order 13985: *Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government* which lays out a vision for federal agencies, stating that “Entrenched disparities in our laws and public policies, and in our public and private institutions, have often denied that equal opportunity to individuals and communities.” This policy directs federal agencies to pursue a comprehensive approach to advancing equity.¹

The Department of the Interior (DOI or the Department) identified three focus areas to more deeply understand the experiences of underserved populations. These included access to recreation on public lands and waters, access to contracting opportunities for small and disadvantaged businesses, and applying for and accessing Tribal discretionary grants (with an added focus on addressing climate change impacts for Tribal communities).

The Department contracted with the Kearns and West (the Facilitation Team) to coordinate external stakeholder and Tribal engagement to better understand underserved communities' perceptions of the barriers that exist with regard to accessing DOI-provided services and opportunities as well as to hear recommendations for actions to address barriers. Over the course of 15 listening sessions, Tribal members and stakeholders shared their experiences, identified barriers, and most importantly, made recommendations to inform DOI as it works to develop an equity action plan.

The Facilitation Team has produced this summary report describing barriers, along with recommendations for actions to address those barriers, and next steps to advance equity across the Department.² The full report provides detail about DOI's process for gathering input, and greater detail about what was shared and learned through the listening sessions. This executive summary focuses on recommendations that emerged from the conversations.

Cross-Cutting Recommendations

Across all 15 listening sessions, there emerged several high-level themes that are tied to internal practice and culture within the Department. Recommendations linked to these themes offer opportunities for immediate areas of prioritization for DOI:

- **Workforce Demographics:** In all the sessions, the importance of shared lived experience and relationships with impacted communities were mentioned. Example statements included, “seeing people that look like me,” or the importance of staff who have existing relationships with communities and/or understand the experiences and needs of communities, whether around Tribal, business, or recreation issues.

¹ <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2021/01/25/2021-01753/advancing-racial-equity-and-support-for-underserved-communities-through-the-federal-government>

² The contents of the Facilitation Team's summary report do not necessarily reflect the views of the Department of the Interior. The Department will give consideration to the report's themes and recommendations.

- ***Cultural Competency and Responsiveness:*** Participants continually identified the need for staff training (especially as it related to Tribal relationships and engagement around recreation access for underserved communities) that speaks to the importance of ensuring that all DOI employees are trained to work with many different communities and are responsive to the needs of underserved populations.
- ***Relationships:*** The importance of building and sustaining relationships permeated every conversation held during the listening sessions. The relationship between the Department and the communities, and the role the Department can play in connecting communities to each other, both merit attention. Possible responses could involve supporting business to business relationships; holding more forums where Tribes could collaborate and connect on discretionary grant opportunities; and helping organizations working to improve access to nature to build stronger relationships, learn from each other, and leverage community connections to build capacity and improve access.

Specific Focus Area Recommendations

While there was overlap, each listening session focus area had specific recommendations that were identified by participants. The Kearns and West Facilitation Team captured the following and recommends DOI teams discuss where there are opportunities to move actions forward and continue to engage with Tribes and community and business stakeholders to prioritize such opportunities.

Recreation

Creating more Welcoming Environments

- It's critical to understand the needs and ways that different communities utilize public lands and waters. DOI should continue to pull from existing research and continue to engage with underserved communities to ensure strategies will meet community needs.
- DOI should invest in multilingual outreach materials, signage, and resources for communities having limited English proficiency. DOI should also utilize images in marketing materials that reflect the full diversity of the United States and ensure that communities "see themselves" as being marketed to and invited into these spaces.
- Offer informational materials and programming that promote awareness of the history and harm related to public lands and waters and acknowledge Indigenous peoples as the original stewards of the land.
- Recruit, hire and train DOI staff to ensure cultural humility and an awareness and ability to engage with and understand different communities' needs and experiences. Focus on hiring staff with lived experience in disadvantaged communities.
- Explore policy that sets expectations and creates accountability for user behavior that results in harm, including bias-motivated incidents.¹⁵

Reducing Physical barriers and Improving Accessibility

- Increase dedicated permits for culturally specific organizations (not-for-profit) and provide resources to support transportation, outreach, and engagement.
- Invest in, or partner to ensure public transit access. Examine and seek to replicate local efforts, like King County “Trailhead Direct” to mitigate barriers created by lack of access to personal vehicles.¹⁶
- Develop accurate and detailed mapping and descriptions of public lands and waters, with input specifically from people with disabilities, on accessibility for limited mobility populations. Ensure this information is easily accessible via Department websites.
- Analyze and budget for improved accessibility for limited mobility populations. Invest in infrastructure to identify improvements in currently accessible places.

Develop Educational and Youth Programming that Encourages Future Generations to Value the Outdoors from a Young Age

- Explore the creation/support of community programs, such as community science and community photography programs, which can be both an educational and innovative way to expose new visitors and sustain connections with DOI managed lands and waters.
- Promote and support more partnerships and mentorship opportunities that could exist between DOI and organizations that are looking to create more inclusive outdoor programming.

Contracting

Improving Access to Information

- Maintain updated and accurate Departmental websites and explore opportunities to enhance forecasting to ensure businesses have access to upcoming opportunities.
- Identify more opportunities to provide technical support. This includes avenues to respond to questions and provide feedback for contract applicants who did not receive awards.

Address Structural Issues

- Examine size of projects and explore and develop methods to scope projects with small and disadvantaged businesses as a focus. The “bundling” of projects that are larger in scope creates additional barriers, including bonding and licensing, up-front capital costs, and other challenges for smaller businesses.
- Require and create accountability for subcontracting. While limitations may exist for DOI to require specific quotas, participants described a need to ensure that goals had some level of accountability attached for primes who are subcontracting with small and disadvantaged businesses.

- Collect and analyze data to understand disparities, and more clearly understand what businesses are being excluded from these opportunities.

Relationships

- Provide spaces and support for networking to improve business to business relationships.
- Increase opportunities and create additional technical and educational resources to support businesses interested in pursuing contracting opportunities.
- Develop contract-specific communications and outreach to businesses around new and potential opportunities.
- Partner with local business associations to connect contractors and the DOI through conference and networking spaces.

Tribal Discretionary Grants

Access to Information

- Make improvements to web-based platforms for information. Tribes specifically named grants.gov as an example that is not user-friendly or straightforward.
- Develop a “one-stop-shop” for grant information, with customizable applicant profiles for Tribes connected to a mechanism that would send email alerts for opportunities that are relevant, based on profile and areas of interest/need/eligibility.

Improving Communications

- Develop clear timelines, templates, and examples of successful proposals within a centralized location that is user friendly.
- Provide feedback with unsuccessful applications to give applicants tools to have more robust future applications.

Investments in Relationships

- Designate a support person to clearly communicate to the Tribes about opportunities, provide technical support and respond to questions.
- Invest in liaisons in each region to assist Tribes in being competitive in the process and create more intentional and sustainable relationships between the Department and Tribal nations.

Tribal Climate Change Impacts

In addition to the listening sessions dedicated to Tribal discretionary grants broadly, the Department also held three listening sessions specifically focused on understanding how DOI could better support Tribes facing climate change impacts. These sessions were designed around three subjects:

- Youth experience and vision for climate change impacts and response
- Adaptation planning and mitigation efforts

- Relocation, protect in place, and managed retreat in the contiguous United States

Youth

Inclusive and Supportive Spaces

- Establish a Tribal Climate Action Working group with Tribal leaders and Tribal elders, youth, environmentalists and others with shared interests and different perspectives.
- Support for re-invigoration of traditional language to promote intergenerational transfer of Indigenous traditions and knowledges.
- Continue to listen to and share dialogue with Tribal youth through future listening sessions and other forums with the Federal government. Additionally, invite youth to be part of working groups.

Sustainable and Resilient Best Practices

- Promote best practices on how to be environmentally friendly specifically cover cropping, recycling programs, composting systems, as well as kelp farms, grasslands, and forests as carbon sinks, etc.

Investing in Opportunities

- Increase funding to Tribal nations directly to increase activities like replanting of grasslands or controlled burns, allowing for Tribes to have direct decision-making on how to prioritize and allocate resources.
- Increase long-term investment in scholarships and mentorships to Native youth, and invest in and support teachings and training in environmental and climate science.
- Improve federal government and Tribal partnerships and develop more initiatives with/for Tribes.

Sharing Wisdom

- Acknowledging the importance of connecting youth and future generations to know and learn traditional knowledge to understand strength and resiliency. Share information across Tribal Nations on the impacts of climate change and the threats to treaty rights, natural resources, Mother Earth and future of Tribal Nations.
- Set in place procedures on how to be environmentally friendly in industries such as farming, encouraging and providing educational opportunities for cover cropping and improved harvesting techniques.
- Provide education on lowering carbon emissions, recycling, composting techniques and other climate-impact and environmentally beneficial practices

Adaption and Mitigation

- Increase access to funding for technical knowledge, infrastructure improvements, training, and career development for environmental science and other fields that can support adaptation planning and mitigation efforts.

- Invest in the formal relationship between Tribes and the federal government as well as relationships with Tribal Colleges and Universities, Non-Tribal landowners within reservations, community based and non-governmental organizations, and other community partners resulting in collaboration around shared climate issues and planning.
- Direct funding for developing Tribal utilities and for training and business operations for renewable energy installation and maintenance.
- Design workshops and support conferences that would support skills for grant-writing and technical training. Survey Tribes around additional curriculum including:
 - Carbon reduction and getting to “net zero” carbon emissions
 - Data governance and utilizing data to inform plans and evaluate implementation actions
 - Indigenous knowledge and environmental science
 - GIS (geographic information system) and cartographic software systems
- Support for engaging and completing thorough Traditional Ecological Knowledge/Indigenous Knowledge (TEK/IK) interviews with Tribal community members and elders
- Increase access to implementation funding for projects to transition from a planning document to on-the-ground actions.

[Relocation, Managed Retreat and Protect in Place](#)

- **Identifying a process to collect stories**-storytelling— being both a cultural norm and a critical way to share information, understand needs, and develop appropriate supports and resources— could enhance Tribal actions to adapt and mitigate impacts.
- **Increase capacity and funding**- Tribes need support that is sustainable and consistent and addressed the needs of the community. Many Tribes specifically highlighted the need to increase technical assistance and funding for vulnerability assessments (see below).
- **Increase capacity and resources to create a vulnerability assessment**-while resources do exist, Tribes discussed additional need to build capacity through (staffing, and for staff to build professional and technical skillsets) to create assessments.
- **Streamlining fee-to-trust processes**- Tribes that are considering relocation have limited choices for deciding where to relocate or retreat infrastructure to due to reservation checkerboard jurisdiction in the Contiguous U.S. One way to amend that is by expanding reservation boundaries to include trust lands.

Background

Executive Order 13985

President Biden's Executive Order 13985: *Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government* (EO 13985) directs agencies to conduct equity assessments of select programs to determine whether underserved communities face systemic barriers in accessing benefits and opportunities. Underserved communities are defined as, "populations sharing a particular characteristic, as well as geographic communities, that have been systematically denied a full opportunity to participate in aspects of economic, social, and civic life...such as Black, Latino, and Indigenous and Native American persons, Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders and other persons of color; members of religious minorities; lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ+) persons; persons with disabilities; persons who live in rural areas; and persons otherwise adversely affected by persistent poverty or inequality."³ As part of implementing EO 13985, the Department of the Interior (DOI or the Department) is assessing the equity of its programs related to three initial focus areas that support the agency's mission and have high potential for equity impact: (1) contracting, (2) recreational visitation, and (3) Tribal discretionary grants. Following this assessment, DOI will develop an equity action plan to address barriers to full and equal participation related to these three focus areas.

Kearns & West⁴ (the "Facilitation Team") is the prime contractor for DOI's Office of Collaborative Action and Dispute Resolution IDIQ contract. The Department contracted with the Facilitation Team to coordinate external stakeholder and Tribal engagement to better understand underserved communities' perceptions of the barriers that exist with regard to accessing DOI-provided services and opportunities as well as to hear recommendations for actions to address barriers. The Facilitation Team has produced this summary report describing barriers, along with recommendations for actions to address those barriers, and next steps to advance equity across the Department.⁵

³ <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2021/01/25/2021-01753/advancing-racial-equity-and-support-for-underserved-communities-through-the-federal-government>

⁴ Kearns & West is a woman-owned small business that brings more than 37 years of experience to designing and facilitating collaborative processes that help organizations identify priorities and develop strategies for advancing their missions. Kearns & West professionals are skilled in bringing together individuals with a wide range of perspectives and create safe environments for participants to share convergent and divergent perspectives and move candid conversation toward capacity building. Kearns & West brings experience in facilitation, equitable and inclusive stakeholder engagement and strategic communication, process design and project management.

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Engagement Strategies and Listening Sessions Approach

Kearns & West⁶ (the “Facilitation Team”) is the prime contractor for DOI’s Office of Collaborative Action and Dispute Resolution IDIQ contract. The Department contracted with the Facilitation Team to coordinate external stakeholder and Tribal engagement to better understand underserved communities’ perceptions of the barriers that exist with regard to accessing DOI-provided services and opportunities as well as to hear recommendations for actions to address barriers. The Facilitation Team has produced this summary report describing barriers, along with recommendations for actions to address those barriers, and next steps to advance equity across the Department.⁷

The Facilitation Team designed and conducted 15 listening sessions (5 focused on contracting, 5 on recreation, 2 on Tribal discretionary grants broadly, and 3 on Tribal climate issues) over the course of two weeks. The sessions were designed to ensure the voices of underserved populations were prioritized by developing targeted stakeholder engagement lists, conducting outreach via social media and targeted emails with language outlining the goal of hearing from underserved communities, using and framing questions that asked participants to reflect specifically on their and their communities’ experiences, and providing guidance during sessions asking participants to identify the community they are a part of or represented. The Facilitation Team designed the listening sessions to ensure collected data were actionable and would inform the Department of specific concerns, experiences, and recommendations that could impact future quality improvement.

The Facilitation Team worked with program staff and subject matter experts from across the Department to inform the entire project, including the Office of Policy Analysis; Office of Diversity, Inclusion and Civil Rights; National Park Service; Bureau of Land Management; U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service; Bureau of Reclamation; Bureau of Indian Affairs; Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization; and the Office of Property and Acquisition Management.

While each listening session included topic-specific questions, sessions were designed to consistently address key issue areas of discussion broadly focused on 1) deeper understanding of perspective or experience with the issue/focus area, 2) exploration of what is working well and what challenges participants have experienced, and 3) recommendations for quality improvement that will address barriers.

⁶ Kearns & West is a woman-owned small business that brings more than 37 years of experience to designing and facilitating collaborative processes that help organizations identify priorities and develop strategies for advancing their missions. Kearns & West professionals are skilled in bringing together individuals with a wide range of perspectives and create safe environments for participants to share convergent and divergent perspectives and move candid conversation toward capacity building. Kearns & West brings experience in facilitation, equitable and inclusive stakeholder engagement and strategic communication, process design and project management.

⁷ The contents of the Facilitation Team’s summary report do not necessarily reflect the views of the Department of the Interior. The Department will give consideration to the report’s themes and recommendations.

A virtual/online environment presents inherent challenges for creating authentic and relational discussions. The process design required approaches that allowed for mixed methods of engagement. In the design of the sessions, the project team utilized virtual-based technologies, including:

- Miro,⁸ a virtual whiteboard that allows participants to use virtual “sticky notes” to contribute their comments directly,
- Poll Everywhere,⁹ which encourages participants to share background information and respond to topic-specific questions via text or online contribution, and
- Zoom chat functions for participants to provide general comments and/or additional written responses to discussion questions.

In addition to these virtual methods of engagement, the Facilitation Team utilized facilitation best practices and techniques for all listening sessions including open spaces for reflection and discussion with notetakers who captured contributions. DOI also issued focus-specific Federal Register Notices¹⁰ to allow those who could not attend a listening session an opportunity to provide their comments and recommendations. It will be important for DOI to cross-reference the findings from listening sessions with comments gathered through the Federal Register notice.

The contributions from participants across the listening sessions were diverse and insightful. The analysis in this report reflects a qualitative methodology that provided clear themes that both cut across the listening sessions and were unique and specific to each of the focus areas.

The Facilitation Team engaged in a qualitative coding process which grouped similar contributions to establish themes. The coding process was designed to integrate the multiple methods of qualitative contributions (including participant written responses using the virtual “whiteboard,” notes taken during sessions reflecting verbal responses, and participant comments in the Zoom chat).

Meeting summaries were created as another methodology to ensure that this report’s findings and themes are consistent with participation and not “cherry picked” by the Facilitation Team to support any particular outcome. All data were shared with the DOI project team, meeting summaries were made public, and participants had access to the Miro boards (virtual whiteboard) to add or refine contributions for 48 hours after each session.

Engagement Strategies

A key component of planning for listening sessions was the creation of engagement strategies to inform outreach design. These strategies, developed in partnership between the Facilitation Team and multiple DOI working groups, outlined several areas for consideration:

⁸ <https://miro.com/>

⁹ <https://www.polleverywhere.com/>

¹⁰ Links to the federal registers can be found here: [recreation](#), [contracting](#), and [tribal climate change and discretionary grants](#).

- Key messages for communication that informed outreach via email, social media, newsletters, and other media outlets
- Overall goals to ensure that agendas and the design of listening sessions were consistent with the goals of the Department and connected to EO 13985
- Pathways and relationships for stakeholder and Tribal engagement
- Discussion of challenges and risks to ensure transparency around some of the challenges, including the reality of trying to do authentic and meaningful engagement during a pandemic requiring virtual methods, the short project timeline, and the many demands on underserved community members' time
- Engagement strategies were critical to identify the best approaches to reach underserved communities. Leveraging existing DOI relationships and knowledge of organizations and key contacts was an initial step supplemented by additional research, leveraging of existing regional relationships from the Facilitation Team across the country, and "word of mouth" strategies to increase participation. For recreation, this meant researching culturally specific organizations engaged in improving access to nature and the outdoors. Tribal outreach utilized existing communication networks through the Bureau of Indian Affairs and supplemented by additional outreach to schools and academic institutions. Contracting focused on researching and identifying small business associations and regional and local culturally specific Chambers of Commerce.

Recreation Focus Area

Background

The listening sessions are a direct response to the reality that while recreational opportunities are abundant across the more than 480 million acres of public land managed by the Department, public land visitation data collected from the Department's bureaus suggests that certain underserved communities are underrepresented as public land visitors relative to their presence in the U.S. population at large.

Addressing this disparity is important: public lands enable physical activity, promote mental health and wellness, and foster a sense of community through the preservation of ecosystems and interpretation of a shared heritage. 400 million people visit DOI-managed lands annually, with visitation totals increasing in recent years. Although the Department has made sustained efforts to increase the number of areas the public can access and expand the variety of activities available to all, opportunities to develop and implement new strategies and plans for the advancement of accessible and equitable access to public lands deserve attention.

Supporting Research

The findings and key themes that follow are meant to be a starting point for further engagement and provide a platform for additional work. While the qualitative information captured in the listening sessions appears actionable on its own, the sentiments expressed and themes that emerged are consistent with other reports, advocacy efforts, and existing research. This summary report does not include an exhaustive literature review but rather illustrative examples. Research

around this issue is robust. In their article, “People of Color and Their Constraints to National Parks Visitation,” the authors describe specific barriers to National Parks, including limited socioeconomic resources, cultural factors and boundary maintenance (what activities are “culturally appropriate”), and discrimination and white racial frames. These last two items are connected and impactful, but specifically the impact of “white racial frames”, defined as “an overarching white worldview that encompasses a broad and persisting set of racial stereotypes, prejudices, ideologies, images, interpretations and narratives, emotions, and reactions to language accents, as well as racialized inclinations to discriminate.”¹¹

The “National Park Service Comprehensive Survey of the American Public: 2018 – Racial and Ethnic Diversity of National Park System Visitors and Non-Visitors” found the most common barriers to national park visitation endorsed by non-visitors were related to travel distance, transportation, and expenses associated with travel and entrance to national parks. These barriers were disproportionately endorsed by Hispanic non-visitors and African American non-visitors as compared to white non-visitors. Other barriers highly endorsed by underserved populations related to a lack of interest or a lack of knowledge regarding national parks.¹²

These two examples reflect much of what was heard in listening sessions around feelings of belonging, issues of safety, and cultural unfamiliarity with these public lands and waters.

Listening Session Approach

The Facilitation Team facilitated five listening sessions related to underserved community access to recreation on DOI-managed public lands and waters. Questions covered during these sessions included:

- What do you feel are the benefits of visiting public lands and waters?
- Do you feel that you/your community is welcomed and is able to easily get to public lands and waters?
- How would you describe your and your community’s relationship to public lands and waters?
- What prevents you from or acts as a barrier to visiting public lands and waters managed by the DOI?
- How can the DOI remove or reduce barriers (e.g., update policies, practices, or programs) that underserved communities and individuals face when they recreate or attempt to recreate on DOI-managed lands and waters?
- What recommendations should DOI adopt to ensure that you and your community have more enjoyable visits and/or improved ability to visit public lands and waters?

¹¹ <http://www.georgewright.org/351scott.pdf>

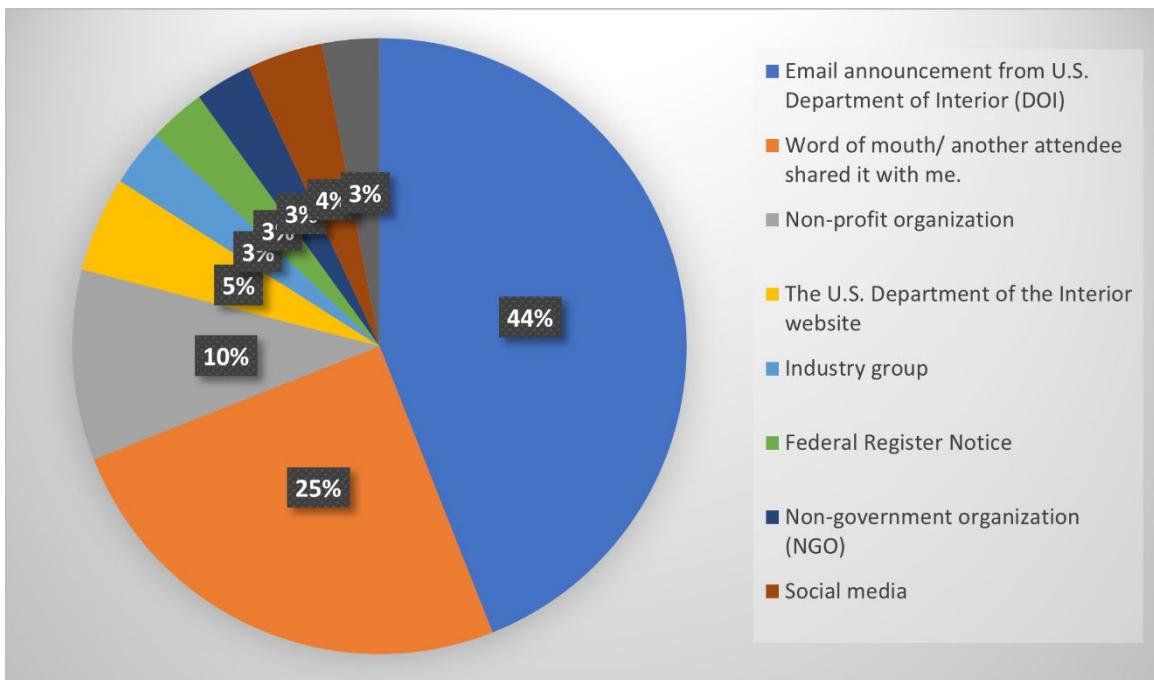
¹² Resource Systems Group (RSG) and Wyoming Survey and Analysis Center (WYSAC). 2019. National Park Service comprehensive survey of the American public: 2018 – racial and ethnic diversity of National Park System visitors and non-visitors. Natural Resource Report NPS/NRSS/EQD/NRR—2019/2042. National Park Service, Fort Collins, Colorado.

- How can DOI best engage with community members in the future?

Listening Session Participation

Of the 686 total registered participants, 243 completed the voluntary polling activities. 27% of those who voluntarily responded were representative of a racial or ethnic minority group, 21% identified as living in a rural area or community. Of note, while only 3% of those who responded to the polling survey identified as living with a disability, the Facilitation Team heard strong personal testimony about barriers specific to those communities.

Below are the collective responses across the five sessions summarized in a pie chart to the following question: **“How did you learn about today’s session?”** Most participants learned about the listening sessions through an email announcement sent by the Department or word of mouth.



Below are the collective responses across the five sessions for the following question: **“From where are you participating in today’s listening session?”**

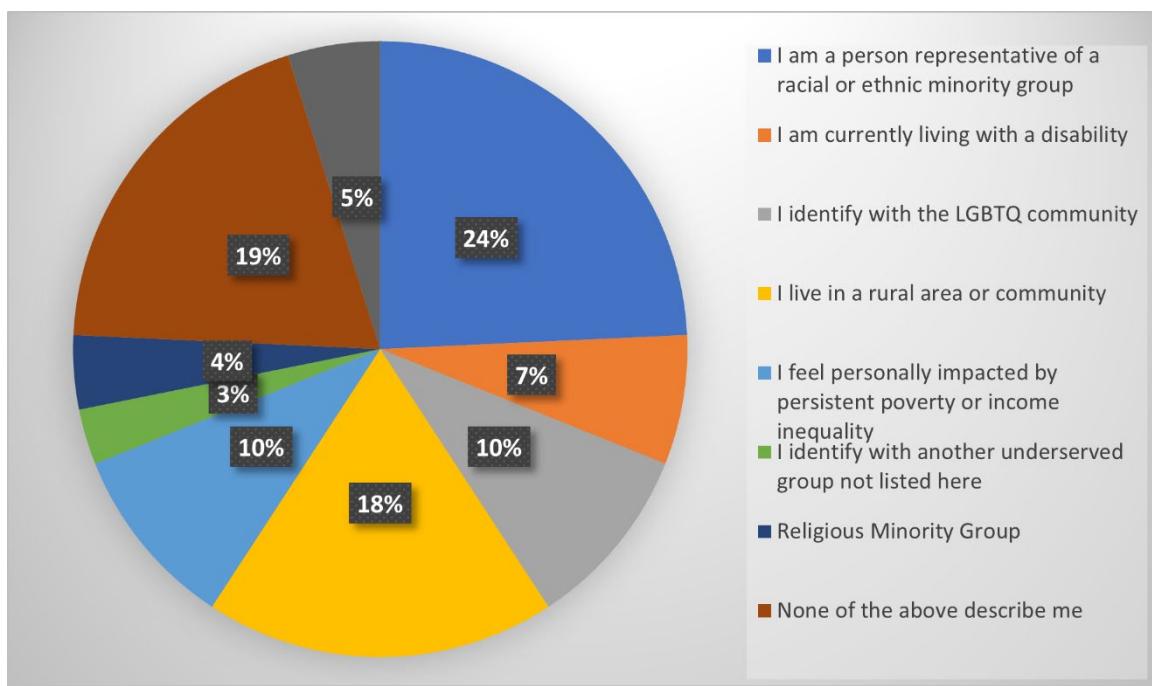
The following answers include cities, states, specific locations, etc.

Responses
Boise; Phoenix; Alaska; Olympia, WA; Wyoming; Tumwater, WA; Nevada; Ohlone land (today known as Oakland, CA); Maryland; Oregon; Denver, CO; Montpelier, VT; Fairbanks, Alaska; Utah; Las Cruces, NM; Ottawa; Nevada; Jefferson County, Iowa; Washington, DC; Washington; California; The University of Wisconsin Madison Institute for Environmental Studies; Salem, OR; Alameda, CA; Arizona; Sacramento,

Responses

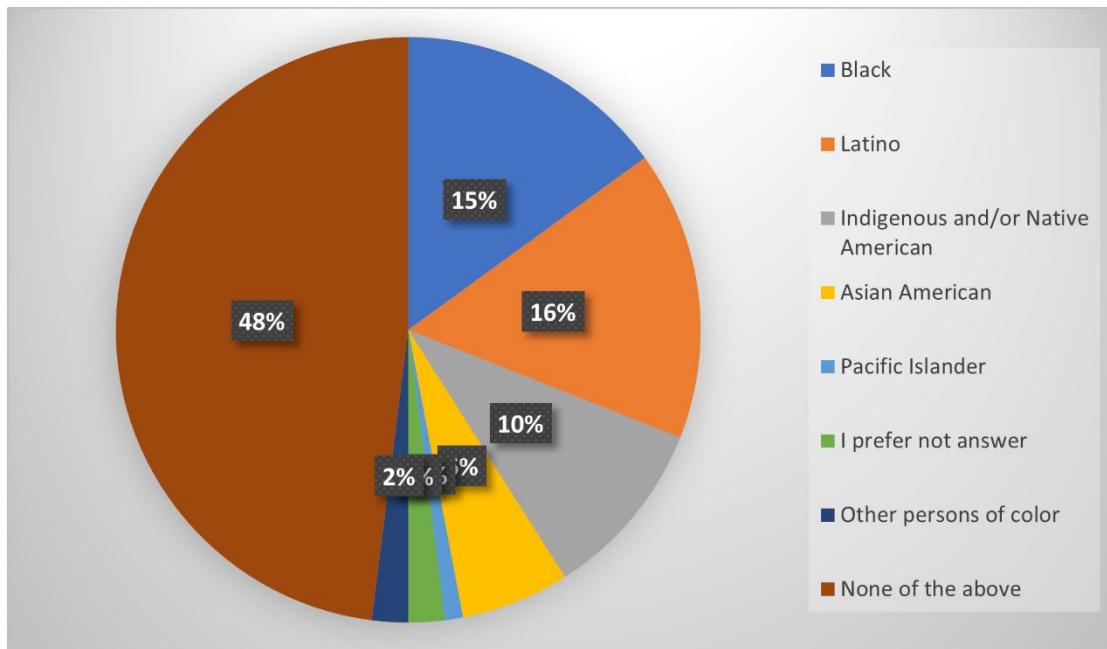
CA; Eureka, MT; Vermont; Atlanta, GA; Truckee, CA; Salt Lake City, UT; San Francisco; New Mexico, ancestral and present homelands of Pueblo people; Colorado; Houston, TX; Santa Fe, NM; Michigan; Vermont; Portland; San Luis Obispo; Kanab, Utah; Victor, ID; Colorado; Flagstaff, Arizona; Jackson, Wyoming; Seattle, WA; Coachella, CA; New Mexico; Seattle, Washington; Montana; Olympia, WA; San Diego; Washington; Seward, AK; Virginia; Latham; Miami, FL; Seattle, WA - Coast Salish lands; Tuscaloosa, Alabama; Long Island, NY; Illinois; Los Angeles, California; Phoenix, AZ; Arlington, VA; Vancouver, WA; Philadelphia; Gunnison, Colorado; Olympia; Richmond, Virginia occupied Rumsen, Ohlone land aka Monterey Bay, CA; Lewistown, Montana; Florida; Boulder, Colorado; Champaign County IL; Mason Neck, VA; Fairfax County, VA (Manahoac ancestral land); Wyoming; Atlanta, GA; Maryland; Lansing, Michigan; New Hampshire; Tennessee; West Virginia; Houston, Texas; North Fork, CA (30 minutes from Southern border of Yosemite National Park); Boston, MA; Phoenix; Flagstaff; Pennsylvania (Lenape Land); Virginia; Asheville, North Carolina; Vermont; SW Arizona, on the border with Mexico; Prescott, WI on traditional Dakota lands; Maryland; Auburn, CA; Olympia, WA; Manteo, NC

When asked **“How do you self-identify (select all that apply),”** 24% of participants across the five listening sessions identified as a person representative of a racial or ethnic minority group and 18% identified as living in a rural area or community.

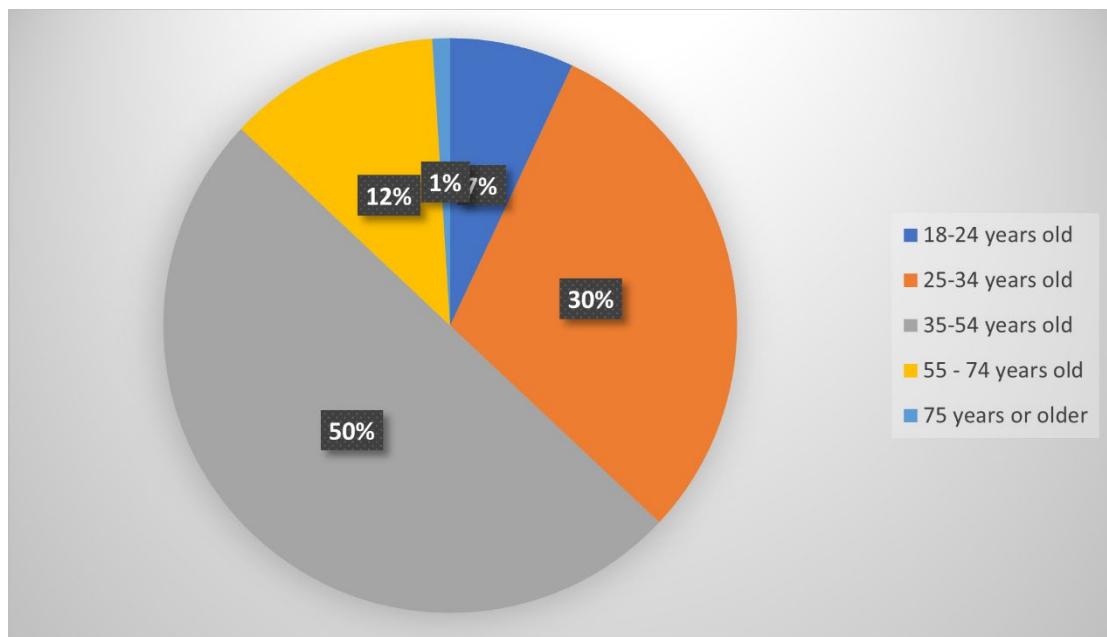


Below are the collective responses across the five sessions for the following question: **“Do you identify with or represent any of the following racial or ethnic groups (select all that apply)?”**

In summary, 16% identified as Black, 15% identified as Latino, and a majority of participants did not identify as a listed minority group.



Below are the collective responses across the five sessions for the following question: "**What is your age?**"



Barriers

Participants in the listening sessions were asked to explain the barriers they face when accessing or recreating on public lands and waters. This set a foundation for the participants to move towards recommendations by reflecting on these barriers to identify strategies to mitigate or eliminate them.

Listening session participants identified barriers including:

- **Limited Transportation Options**-both in access to personal vehicles and limitations in public transportation that accesses public lands and waters
- **Large Physical Distances to Travel**-participants discussed how far away many of these DOI managed lands and waters are from their communities, often in rural areas well away from urban centers
- **Limited Infrastructure Supporting Accessibility**-for those with mobility challenges, even if other barriers are accounted for, the infrastructure for those with limited mobility is lacking, limited, or absent
- **Lack of Time**-time was recognized as a privilege, and the day to day balancing of employment, childcare and education can be challenging for those who don't work a "9 to 5" or have the resources of time that enable opportunities to recreate in these spaces
- **Lack of Money**- not having the resources to buy equipment (i.e., camping and fishing gear, hiking boats, etc.), as well as the cost of entry, transportation etc.
- **Difficulty Accessing Permits**- challenges accessing individual permits for public lands and the inequitable distribution of permits provided to "for profit" entities like tour agencies
- **Lack of Representation in Public Lands Frontline Staff**- some listening session participants reported feeling less welcome as they did not see themselves reflected in staff they encountered when visiting
- **Lack of Multi-lingual Resources**-participants whose native language was not English reported feeling like outcasts due to limited materials and interpretation in other languages
- **Fear of Encountering Unwelcoming Staff or Other Visitors**- feeling targeted, overpoliced, questioned and unsafe both from staff and from other visitors. This lack of belonging was reflected in personal stories of not feeling welcomed, invited, or included in the relationship with public lands and waters
- **Uncertainty About the Spaces**-awareness of where to go, what is available in these spaces, and general lack of knowledge and experience in these spaces creates trepidation. Some examples reflected the work that participants do to research where to go, whether others from their communities had positive and safe experiences, and trying to access basic information about amenities and what's available
- **Unsatisfactory Amenities**-some participants reported feeling as though community needs will not be met with current amenities. This could include restrooms, picnic tables, parking lots that can accommodate multiple families and other resources that provide multiple ways to engage with these public lands and waters

Participant Recommendations

After reflecting on barriers, participants were asked to identify recommendations, providing an opportunity to build upon their personal and community experience and work towards resolution of issues. Recommendations included:

Creating more Welcoming Environments

- It's critical to understand the needs and ways that different communities utilize public lands and waters. DOI should continue to pull from existing research and continue to engage with underserved communities to ensure strategies will meet community needs.
- DOI should invest in multilingual outreach materials, signage, and resources for communities having limited English proficiency. DOI should also utilize images in marketing materials that reflect the full diversity of the United States and ensure that communities "see themselves" as being marketed to and invited into these spaces.
- Offer informational materials and programming that promote awareness of the history and harm related to public lands and waters and acknowledge Indigenous peoples as the original stewards of the land.
- Recruit, hire and train DOI staff to ensure cultural humility and an awareness and ability to engage with and understand different communities' needs and experiences. Focus on hiring staff with lived experience in disadvantaged communities.
- Explore policy that sets expectations and creates accountability for user behavior that results in harm, including bias-motivated incidents.¹³

Reducing Physical barriers and Improving Accessibility

- Increase dedicated permits for culturally specific organizations (not-for-profit) and provide resources to support transportation, outreach, and engagement.
- Invest in, or partner to ensure public transit access. Examine and seek to replicate local efforts, like King County "Trailhead Direct" to mitigate barriers created by lack of access to personal vehicles.¹⁴
- Develop accurate and detailed mapping and descriptions of public lands and waters, with input specifically from people with disabilities, on accessibility for limited mobility populations. Ensure this information is easily accessible via Department websites.
- Analyze and budget for improved accessibility for limited mobility populations. Invest in infrastructure to identify improvements in currently accessible places.

Develop Educational and Youth Programming that Encourages Future Generations to Value the Outdoors from a Young Age

- Explore the creation/support of community programs, such as community science and community photography programs, which can be both an educational and innovative way to expose new visitors and sustain connections with DOI managed lands and waters.

¹³ Participants referenced Oregon SB 289 as an example,
<https://olis.oregonlegislature.gov/liz/2021R1/Measures/Overview/SB289>

¹⁴ <https://www.yesmagazine.org/environment/2021/07/16/cities-public-transit-nature-accessible>

- Promote and support more partnerships and mentorship opportunities that could exist between DOI and organizations that are looking to create more inclusive outdoor programming.

Contracts for Businesses with Characteristics that Align with the Definition of Underserved Community Focus Area

Background

The focus on improving access for small and disadvantaged businesses is rooted in an understanding that expanding access to and approval of contracts for these businesses will provide greater opportunities for economic growth and development in underserved communities. Identifying and addressing barriers in the Department's procurement process, with a particular emphasis on outreach and stakeholder support strategies and processes, may improve opportunities for successful engagement of businesses that possess characteristics that align with the definition of underserved communities.

Supporting Research

The findings and key themes that follow are meant to be a starting point for further engagement and provide a platform for additional work. While the qualitative information captured in the listening sessions appears actionable on its own, the sentiments expressed and themes that emerged are consistent with other reports and existing research. This summary report does not include an exhaustive literature review but rather illustrative examples.

In the study, "Contracting Barriers and Factors Affecting Minority Business Enterprises: A Review of Existing Disparity Studies," several barriers aligning with listening session data were identified. These included pervasive and disparate access to capital, access to networks and marketplace discrimination. They also identified other barriers such as timely bid notifications, bonding and insurance requirements, pre-qualification, timely payments etc.¹⁵

A former Administrator of the US Small Business Administration summarized in a memo over a decade ago three themes reflecting the opportunities to build capacity and improve access to contracts for small businesses. Like listening sessions data gathered through this process, these three elements offer an ongoing opportunity for DOI to continue to strengthen policy, practice and programming.

- **Clearer, stronger policies at federal agencies**, including better guidance on how to do small business set-asides and implement effective mentor-protégé programs.
- **A better-trained federal workforce**, with stronger certification and training requirements, coupled with meaningful incentives to help agencies reach their goals.

¹⁵ https://archive.mbda.gov/sites/mbda.gov/files/migrated/files-attachments/ContractingBarriers_AReviewofExistingDisparityStudies.pdf

- **More user-friendly tools and technologies**, such as improving FedBizOpps to be a one-stop resource for small businesses looking for matchmaking events, subcontracting opportunities, agency contact information, and more.¹⁶

Listening Session Approach

The Facilitation Team facilitated five listening sessions related to advancing equity in procurement and contracting. Questions covered during these sessions included:

- What types of opportunities do you know exist?
- Do you feel that your business is competitive for Department of the Interior contracts? Why or why not?
- Have you applied for or accessed procurement and contracting opportunities with DOI in the past? If so, please describe what you liked and did not like about the process. If not, why not? What would have made it easier for you to apply or access procurement and contracting opportunities with DOI?
- What are the barriers to applying for procurement and contracting opportunities with DOI? How can DOI remove or reduce barriers (e.g., update policies, practices, or programs)?
- How can DOI establish and maintain connections to a wider and more diverse set of stakeholders representing underserved communities?
- How can DOI better share information with underserved stakeholders about procurement and contracting opportunities?
- What could immediately help your business (or those you represent) to be more competitive and "procurement ready" for federal contract awards?

Listening Session Participation

Of the 256 total registered participants, voluntary polling data was collected for less than 10% the participants (27 polling responses). Of these, the highest percentage (33%) of those polled were representative of a racial or ethnic minority group. More details on specific polling questions can be found below.

Below are the collective responses across the five sessions for the following question: “**From where are you participating in today’s listening session?**”

The following answers include cities, states, specific locations, etc.

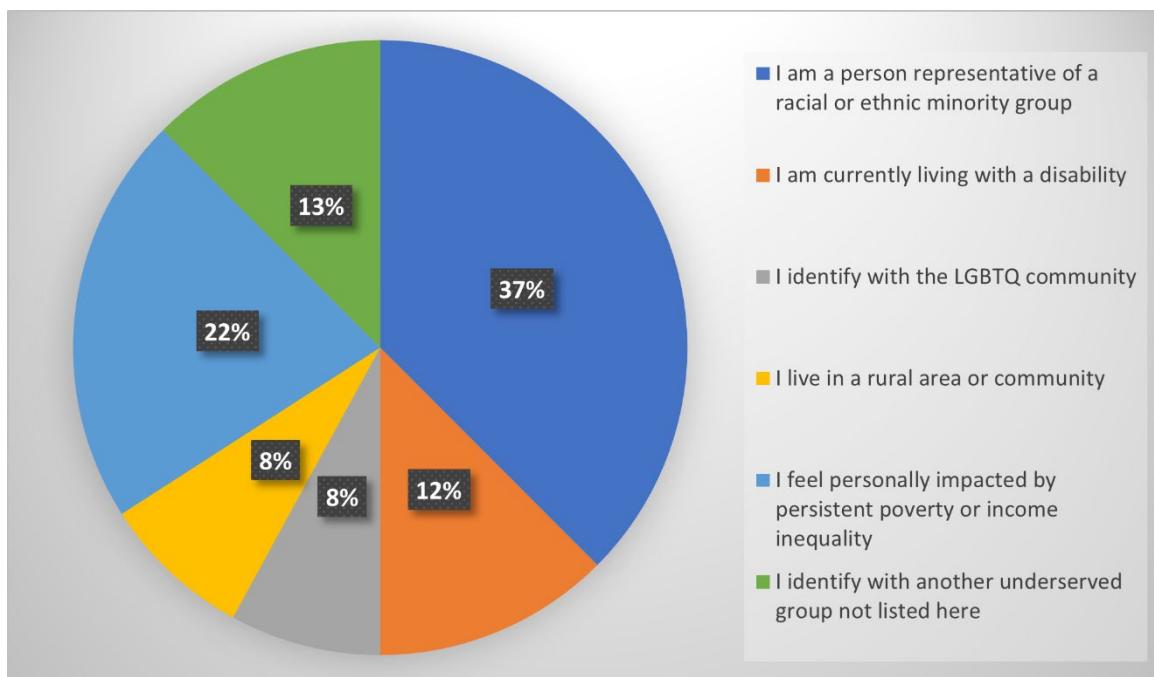
Responses
Alaska; Jefferson County, Iowa; California; Ohlone land (today known as Oakland, CA); Nevada; Phoenix; Vermont; Seattle, WA; Alameda, CA; San Francisco; Victor, ID; Fairbanks, Alaska; Colorado; Atlanta, GA; Alaska; Jackson, Wyoming; Las Cruces, NM; Boise; Sacramento, CA; Salt Lake City Utah; Salem, Oregon; Arizona; Maryland; Eureka, MT; The University of Wisconsin Madison Nelson Institute for Environmental Studies; Seattle, Washington; Wyoming; Tumwater, WA; Houston, TX; Portland; Coachella, CA; Vermont; Santa Fe, NM; Ottawa, Canada; Washington, DC; Montpelier, VT; New Mexico;

¹⁶ <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/blog/2010/09/15/new-plans-underway-increase-contracts-small-business>

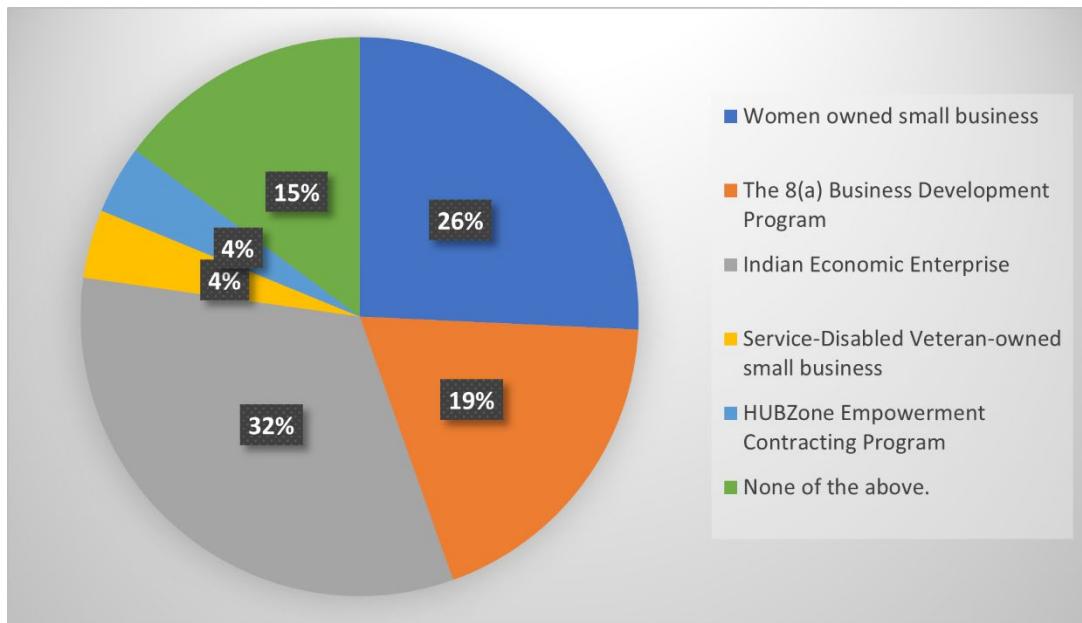
Responses

San Luis Obispo; Kanab, Utah; Nevada; Flagstaff, Arizona; Oregon; Truckee CA; Colorado; New Mexico, ancestral and present homelands of Pueblo people.; Michigan; Olympia, Washington; Detroit; Texas; Birmingham, AL; North Dakota; San Antonio; South L.A., Cal Albuquerque, NM; Virginia; Georgia; Breaux Bridge, Louisiana; Springfield, Ohio; Charlotte NC; Atlanta; Chicago; Nebraska

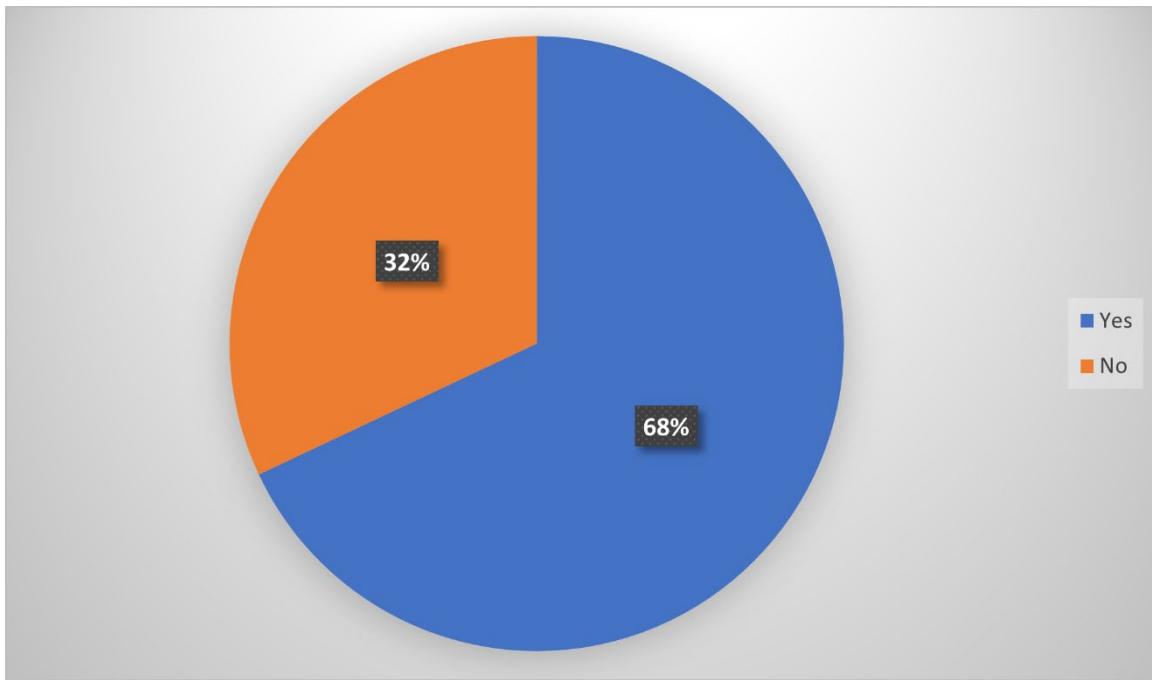
When asked “**How do you self-identify? Do you identify with any of the categories of underserved communities (Select all that apply),**” 37% of participants identified as a person representative of a racial or ethnic minority group, 22% as feeling personally impacted by persistent poverty or income inequality, and 12% as an underserved group not listed.



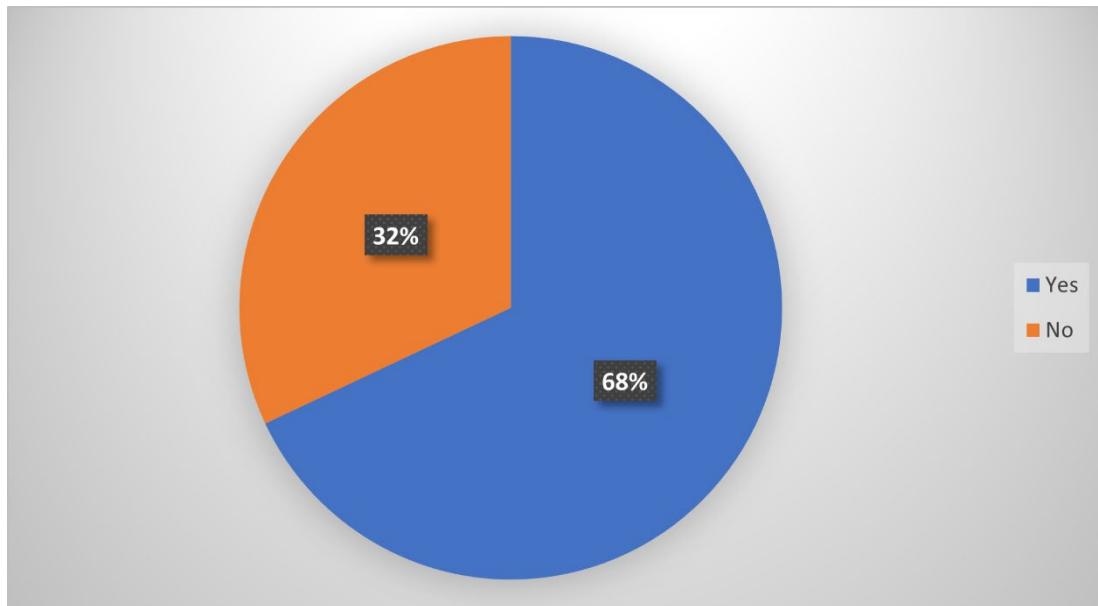
Below are the collective responses across the five sessions for the following question: **“Are you a participant in any Small Business Administration Small Business Programs (select all that apply)?”** In summary, 32% have participated in the Indian Economic Enterprise, 26% in Women Owned Small Business, and 19% in the 8(a) Business Development Program. None reported participating in the Veteran-owned Small Business Program.



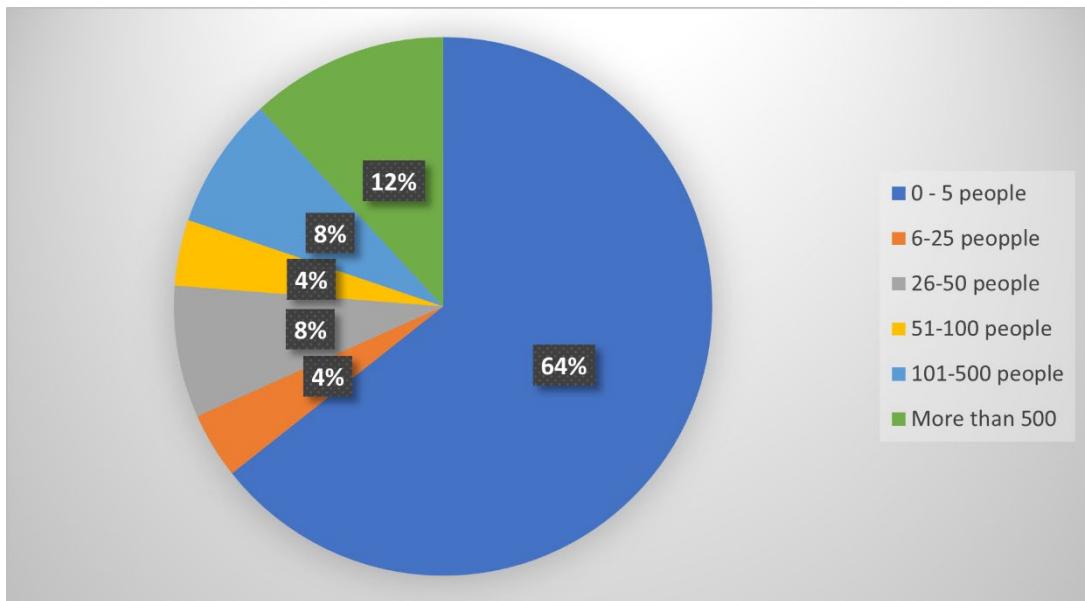
Below are the collective responses across the five sessions for the following question: **“Have you submitted a proposal or offer for a federal solicitation award?”** Collectively, 68% of participants have submitted a proposal or offer for a federal solicitation award.



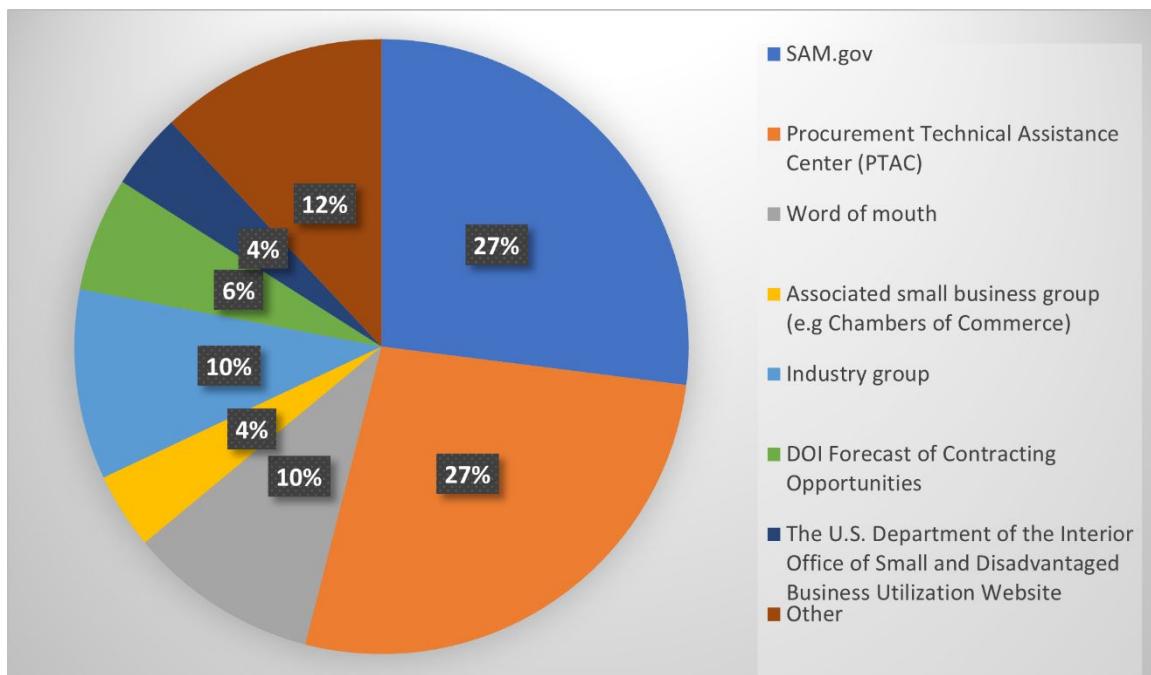
When asked **“Have you received an award,”** 68% answered yes. It should be noted that not all participants answered all questions (and responses were anonymous), so we cannot conclude this means all those who submitted a proposal or offer for an award actually received an award.



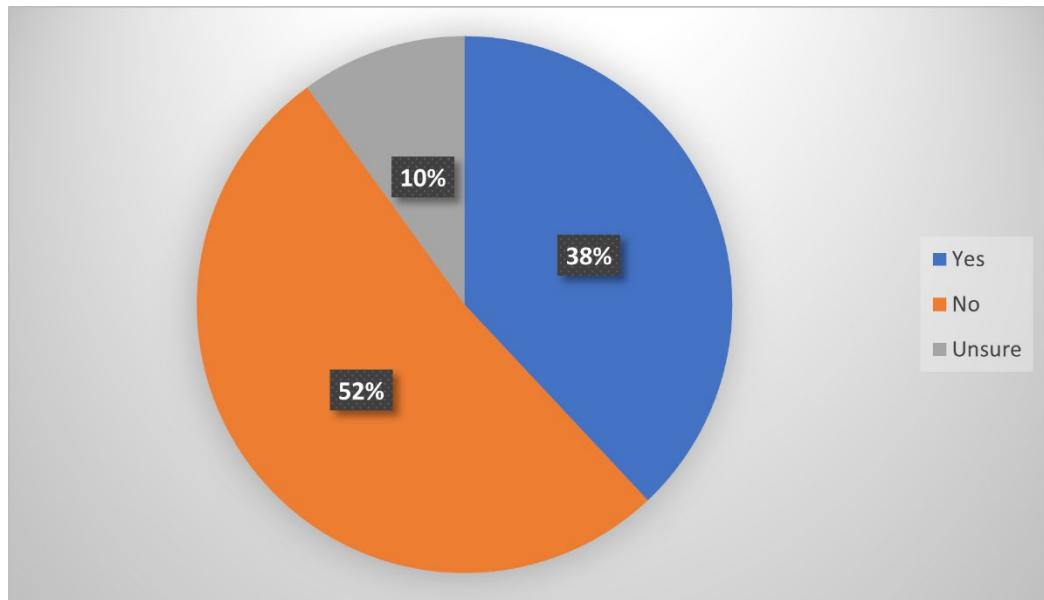
When asked “**How many people does your business employ**,” 64% responded between 0-5 employees.



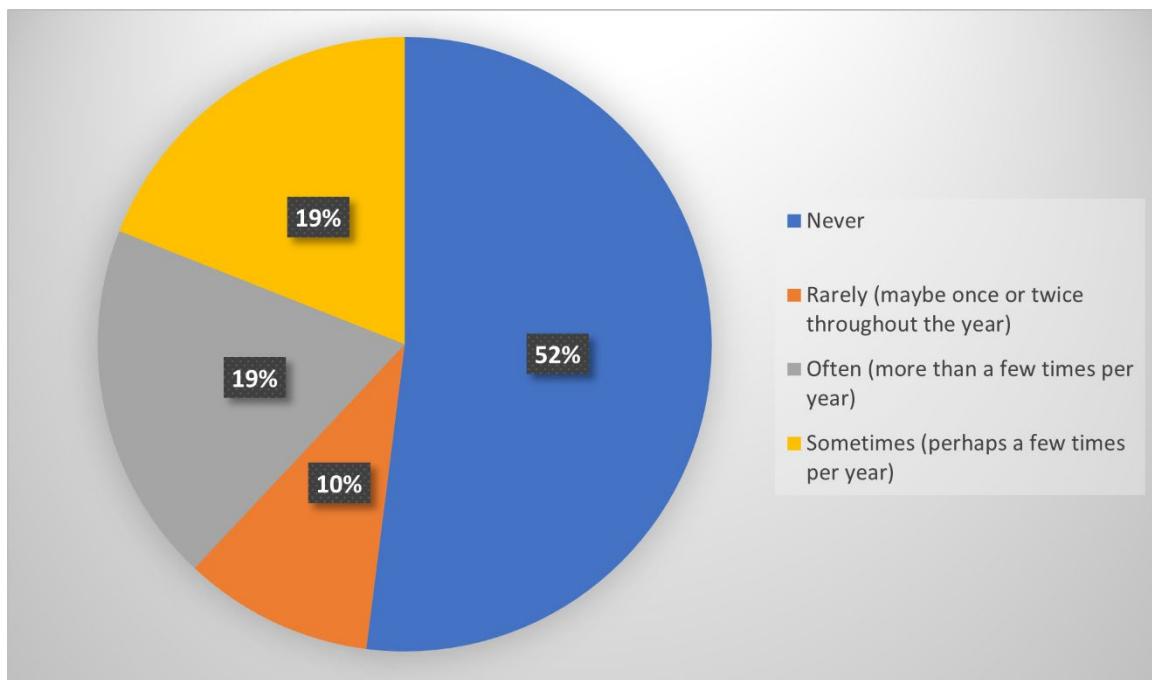
Below are the collective responses across the five sessions for the following question: “**Where do you typically learn about small business opportunities?**” In summary, the top two areas participants learn about small business opportunities are SAM.gov and Procurement Technical Assistance Centers (PTACs).



Below are the collective responses across the five sessions for the following question: **“Are you familiar with the Department of the Interior’s (DOI) Forecast of Contract Opportunities webpage?”** Most participants were not familiar with DOI’s forecast of contract opportunities webpage.



Below are the collective responses across the five sessions for the following question: **“How often do you visit the DOI Forecast of Contracting Opportunities webpage through the year?”** More than half of the participants have never visited a resource website.



Barriers

In the listening sessions, participants were encouraged to move from their perceptions of the federal contracting system to describing their experience with the system. Additionally, participants were asked to identify challenges of working within the federal contracting system. This identified barriers including:

Limited Capacity

- Requires resources and energy to track, identify and access procurement opportunities. Because of the competitive nature and uncertainty of winning the award, the return on investment can be seen as not worth the time. Small businesses often lack a business development team that leads this work.
- There are challenges to finding teaming partners and the size of contracts makes it difficult for small, disadvantaged businesses to serve as leads or primes on contracts.
- Qualifications for contracts often include previous experience. For small firms, who are trying to enter the contracting award systems, the lack of demonstrated work with the federal government creates a “catch-22” situation where you cannot get the work because you do not have demonstrated qualifications, and you cannot gain qualifications because you cannot win the contract.
- Inability to bid lower compared to larger companies who can do so to win a contract

Complicated Process of Winning Contracts

- Requests for proposals can be long and technically written. Many small businesses don't understand how to read and understand a solicitation.
- Opportunities can be difficult to find.
- Short application windows can inhibit small businesses' ability to develop a strong proposal.
- Uncertainty around what it means to meet requirements (e.g., GSA requirements to bid on sole-source contracts).
- Difficulty understanding complex scopes of work for solicitations. Often scopes of work do not use language easily understood by different cultures and levels of education.
- Challenges around pricing services competitively and understanding key words to describe services

Lack of Relationships and Support

- Difficulty in receiving helpful communication and technical support from DOI, while acknowledging that Procurement Technical Assistance Centers offer supportive resources.
- Finding primes to subcontract with, or other small businesses to partner with to strengthen applications. The lack of opportunities for business-to-business relationship building specific to these opportunities adds to the challenge.

Participant Recommendations

After reflecting on barriers, participants were asked to identify recommendations, providing an opportunity for them to build upon their experiences and work towards resolution of issues. These included:

Improving Access to Information

- Maintain updated and accurate Departmental websites and explore opportunities to enhance forecasting to ensure businesses have access to upcoming opportunities.
- Identify more opportunities to provide technical support. This includes avenues to respond to questions and provide feedback for contract applicants who did not receive awards.

Address Structural Issues

- Examine size of projects and explore and develop methods to scope projects with small and disadvantaged businesses as a focus. The “bundling” of projects that are larger in scope creates additional barriers, including bonding and licensing, up-front capital costs, and other challenges for smaller businesses.
- Require and create accountability for subcontracting. While limitations may exist for DOI to require specific quotas, participants described a need to ensure that goals had some level of accountability attached for primes who are subcontracting with small and disadvantaged businesses.
- Collect and analyze data to understand disparities, and more clearly understand what businesses are being excluded from these opportunities.

Relationships

- Provide spaces and support for networking to improve business to business relationships.
- Increase opportunities and create additional technical and educational resources to support businesses interested in pursuing contracting opportunities.
- Develop contract-specific communications and outreach to businesses around new and potential opportunities.
- Partner with local business associations to connect contractors and the DOI through conference and networking spaces.

Applying for and Accessing Tribal Discretionary Grants Focus Area

Background

DOI is the primary federal agency charged with carrying out the United States' trust responsibility to American Indian and Alaska Native people, maintaining the government-to-government relationship with the federally recognized Indian Tribes, and promoting and supporting Tribal self-determination. By addressing barriers to applying for and accessing DOI grants, the Department can better support Tribes in improving government infrastructure, community infrastructure, education, job training, climate adaptation planning and implementation capacity,

and employment opportunities along with other components of long-term sustainable development that work to improve quality of life for their members.

Supporting Research

The findings and key themes that follow are meant to be a starting point for further engagement and provide a platform for additional work. While the qualitative information captured in the listening sessions appears actionable on its own, the sentiments expressed and themes that emerged are consistent with other reports and existing research. This summary report does not include an exhaustive literature review but rather illustrative examples.

The United States Commission on Civil Rights in 2003 described the challenges in a report entitled “A Quiet Crisis: Federal Funding and Unmet Needs in Indian Country” examining funding of programs intended to assist Native Americans that revealed funding directed to Native Americans through programs at these agencies has not been sufficient to address the basic and very urgent needs of Indigenous peoples.

Listening Session Approach

The Facilitation Team facilitated two listening sessions related to accessing and applying for Tribal discretionary grants. Questions covered during these sessions included:

- What types of discretionary grant opportunities do you know exist?
- What types of grant opportunities do you wish existed? Or best align with the needs of your Tribal community?
- Do you feel that your Tribe/Tribal organization is competitive for DOI administered discretionary grants? Why or why not?
- If you have applied to discretionary grants administered by DOI in the past, what has been your experience?
- If you have not applied for discretionary grants administered by DOI, why not? What would make it easier for you to access grant opportunities with DOI?
- What are the barriers to applying for grant opportunities with DOI? How can DOI remove or reduce barriers that Tribal Nations and communities face when participating or attempting to participate in DOI-administered grant opportunities?
- What could immediately help your Tribe (or those you represent) access discretionary grant funding?
- What are the best ways to notify you and your community about discretionary grant opportunities?

Listening Session Participation

Of the 165 registered participants, 18% participated in voluntary polling activities. Polling questions asked focused on participants experience with discretionary grants. More detailed polling information below.

Below are the collective responses across the two sessions for the following question: **“From where are you participating in today’s listening sessions?”**

The following answers include cities, states, specific locations etc.

Responses

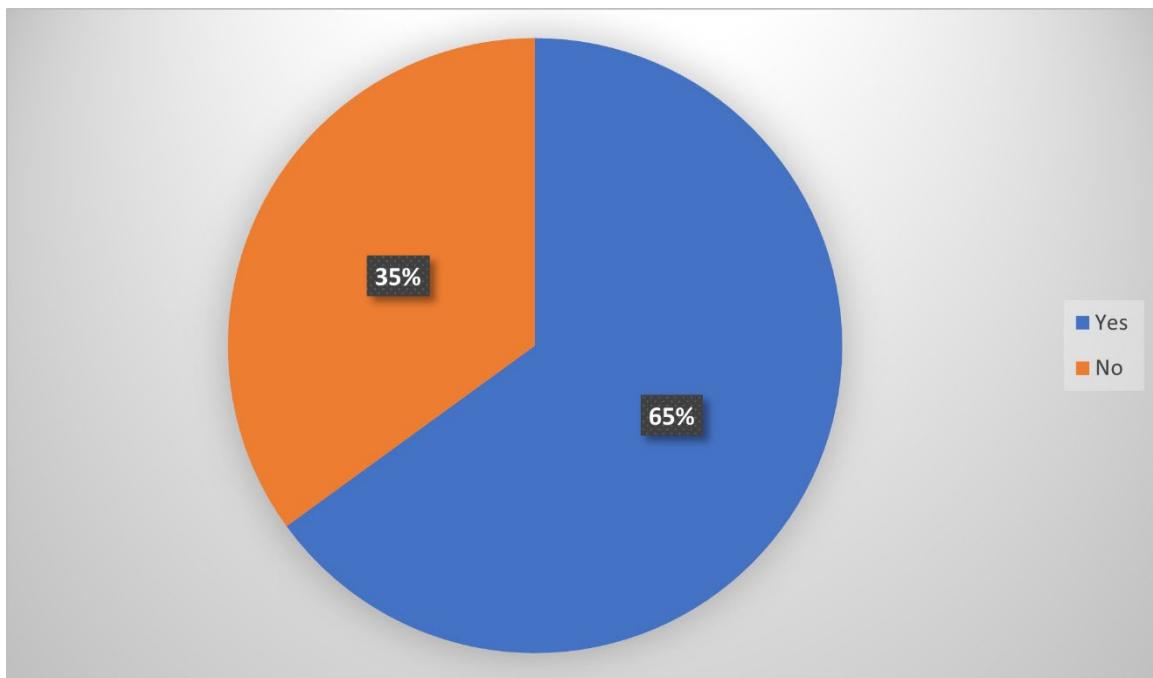
Mississippi; Washington DC; Olympia, Washington; Window Rock, AZ; California; Tulsa, Oklahoma; SW Washington State; Winnebago, NE; Northern California; Sacramento, CA; Red Lake, MN; Oklahoma; Colville Reservation; I work for Shoalwater Bay Indian Tribe in Tokeland, WA; Florida; Austin, TX; Philadelphia; Arizona; Olympia, Washington; Nebraska; Northwest - Salish Sea – Skagit; Butte County; California; Alaska; Siloam Springs, AR; New Mexico; Utah; Oklahoma; New Mexico; Suquamish, WA; Kamilche, Washington

Below are the collective responses across the two sessions for the following question: "**What is your Tribal affiliation or citizenship?**"

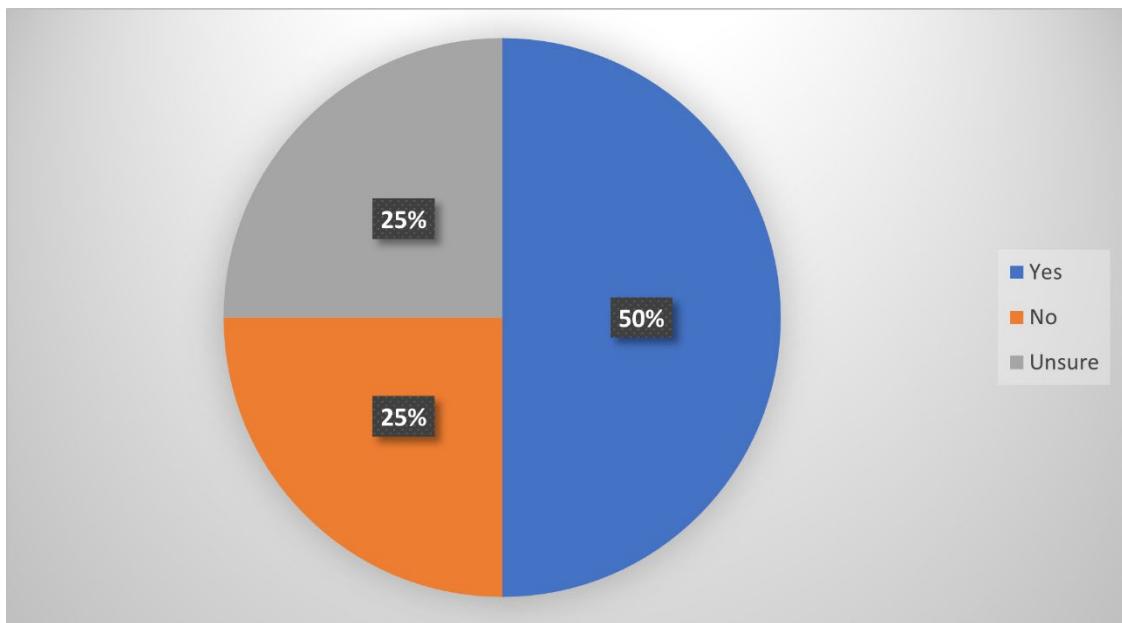
Responses

Mechoopda Indian Tribe; Karuk; Red Lake Band of Chippewa Indians; Cherokee; Pueblo of Isleta; Karuk Tribe; Swinomish; Squaxin Island Tribe; Dine'; Karuk Tribe; Suquamish Tribal Member. US citizenship; Cherokee; Washington; Cherokee Nation; Paiute; Wyandot; Choctaw; Me-Wuk; Cowlitz; Indian Tribe; Comanche Nation; Suquamish; Mvskoke (Muscogee Nation); Navajo Nation; Nisqually

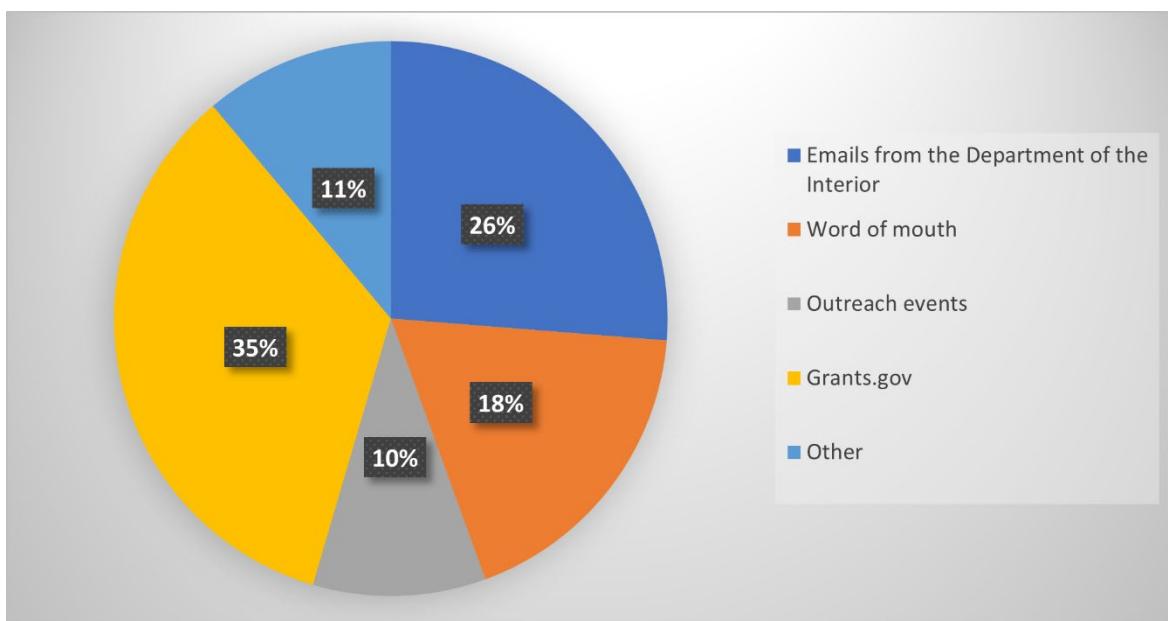
More than half of the participants had applied to a grant administered by the Department when asked: "**Have you ever applied for a grant administered by the Department of the Interior (including Bureau of Indian Affairs, Bureau of Indian Education, National Park Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Geological Service, etc.)?**"



50% responded that they did receive a grant administered by the Department when asked:
"Have you ever received a grant administered by the Department of the Interior (including Bureau of Indian Affairs, Bureau of Indian Education, National Park Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Geological Service, etc.)?"



When asked **"Where do you typically learn about the Department of the Interior grant opportunities? Please select all that apply,"** the top three areas identified were Grants.gov, Emails from DOI, and word of mouth.



Barriers

Identifying the challenges Tribes face when seeking access to discretionary grant funds provides an opportunity to explore recommendations that are specific to Tribes' needs. The barriers that were identified through the listening sessions include:

- **Lack of Awareness-** Participants reported that many were not aware of the full suite of grant programs that existed. Some also reported that grant opportunities are sent only to Tribal leadership and they not be forwarded appropriately.
- **Lack of Consistent Communication between the Federal Government and Tribes-** This includes limited information about grantmaking opportunities, limited forecasting of opportunities (so Tribes cannot prepare and ensure capacity to apply), and limited DOI points of contact who can assist Tribes with navigating the grantmaking process.
- **Limited Capacity and Resources -** Many Tribes lack the technical expertise and capacity to apply for grants. Smaller Tribes with less resources and staff infrastructure than more resourced and populated Tribes have difficulty developing competitive grant applications.
- **Competition-** Competing for discretionary grants was discussed as being antithetical to the trust obligation that the United States has with Tribes.
- **Strict Funding Guidelines-** Participants described eligibility requirements that were limiting (e.g., requirement for projects to be implemented on Tribal lands when many Tribes have diminished land base, data collection requirements, etc.), as well as challenges associated with the limited ability to revise awarded projects.

Participant Recommendations

The barriers described were the basis for participants moving into discussion of strategies. A range of recommendations were identified:

Access to Information

- Make improvements to web-based platforms for information. Tribes specifically named grants.gov as an example that is not user-friendly or straight forward.
- Develop a “one-stop-shop” for grant information, with customizable applicant profiles for Tribes connected to a mechanism that would send email alerts for opportunities that are relevant, based on profile and areas of interest/need/eligibility.

Funding Guidelines and Award process

- Examine Code of Federal Regulations for requirements, policies, and systems that make the application process longer and more complicated
- Provide greater flexibility in revising awarded projects.
- Prioritize community-specific projects and explore awarding funding based on risk analysis
- Eliminate eligibility requirements that require projects to be implemented on Tribal lands when many Tribes have diminished land base.

- Conduct overall review of award requirements that create barriers, including data collection requirements, allowable costs that don't support Tribal protocols including food, giveaways etc.,

Improving Communication

- Develop clear timelines, templates, and examples of successful proposals within a centralized location that is user friendly.
- Provide feedback with unsuccessful applications to give applicants tools to have more robust future applications.

Investments in Relationships

- Designate a support person to clearly communicate to the Tribes about opportunities, provide technical support and respond to questions.
- Invest in liaisons in each region to assist Tribes in being competitive in the process and create more intentional and sustainable relationships between the department and Tribal nations.

Climate Change and Tribal Nations

Background

Climate change effects on Tribal communities across Indian Country and Alaska Native villages include specific and disparate environmental, economic, and cultural impacts. As Tribes prepare for and respond to impacts, these sessions were designed to ensure that the efforts and initiatives DOI develops meet the priorities of Tribes and are shaped and designed by feedback and information received from Tribal communities during each session.

All Tribal Climate Listening Sessions informed DOI of concerns, priorities, and experience to shape the Department's policies and programs that promote and advance Tribal climate resilience.

Session 1 on Tribal Youth & Climate focused on giving Tribal youth a space to voice their priorities and concerns about how their communities are being impacted, and actions that need to be taken based on those priorities.

Session 2, Part I on Adaptation & Mitigation focused on the unmet needs of Tribes working to build internal capacity, develop formal plans, and create and improve foundational structures to address climate change impacts.

Session 2, Part II focused on the decisions Tribes are facing around community relocation, managed retreat, and protect-in-place issues in the Contiguous U.S./Lower 48 States.

Supporting Research

The findings and key themes that follow are meant to be a starting point for further engagement and provide a platform for additional work. While the qualitative information captured in the listening sessions appears actionable on its own, the sentiments expressed and themes that

emerged are consistent with other reports and existing research. This summary report does not include an exhaustive literature review but rather illustrative examples.

The Status of Tribes and Climate Change (STACC) Report released in August 2021, seeks to uplift and honor the voices of Indigenous peoples across the U.S. to increase understanding of Tribal lifeways, cultures, and worldviews, the climate change impacts Tribes are experiencing, the solutions they are implementing, and ways that all of us can support Tribes in adapting to our changing world. The report highlights the severe impacts of climate change on Tribal communities and emphasizes that the challenges they face responding to impacts are daunting (such as lack of funding and technical resources, as well as legacies from colonialism and discrimination).¹⁷

[Listening Sessions Approach](#)

The Facilitation Team facilitated three listening sessions related to Tribal climate issues: one on Tribal youth, one on adaptation and mitigation, and a third focused on relocation, managed retreat, and protect-in-place issues in the contiguous U.S./lower 48 states. The first session provided an opportunity for Tribal youth to voice concerns, priorities, and experience to help shape policies and programs that promote and advance Tribal climate resilience. Participants answered questions, like:

- How is climate change impacting your Tribal nation and / or your community?
- How can you help connect people of all generations to work together to solve community problems with honor & respect for the land and environment?
- What types of projects would make a difference in your Tribal community to help with the climate change impacts that are affecting your community? What areas of expertise does your community need to accomplish those projects?

The second session focused on informing DOI priorities, efforts, and policies around Tribal climate adaptation planning and mitigation efforts and focused on answering the following questions:

- What are your top priorities surrounding climate adaptation and mitigation, and what are the science needs to support these priorities?
- Has your Tribal Nation engaged in activities to mitigate greenhouse gases (e.g., renewable energy development, carbon sequestration, etc.) and if not, is there interest?
- Are there best practices related to climate adaptation and mitigation strategies that your Tribe has experienced? What are the barriers to implementing them?

¹⁷ [Status of Tribes and Climate Change Working Group \(STACCGWG\). \(2021\). Status of Tribes and Climate Change Report, Institute for Tribal Environmental Professionals, Northern Arizona University, Flagstaff, AZ. \[Marks-Marino, D. \(ed.\)\] http://nau.edu/stacc2021](#)

Finally, the third session focused on Tribes facing decisions around community relocation, managed retreat, and protection-in-place issues due to climate change in the contiguous U.S./lower 48 states. General questions discussed included:

- Is your Tribe dealing with more frequent and severe climate change impacts (e.g., flooding, erosion, sea level rise, drought, etc.) that are likely to require partial or complete infrastructure relocation?
- If so, what are the resources (financial, technical, etc.) needed to assist the process? What are the barriers?

Listening Session Participation

A range of polling questions were asked during the three Tribal climate change listening sessions on participant's Tribal affiliation, location, and questions related to youth, relocation, and adaptation and mitigation. Polling summaries have been organized by listening sessions.

Tribal Youth

Of the 101 registered participants, 24% participated in voluntary polling activities. More detailed polling information below.

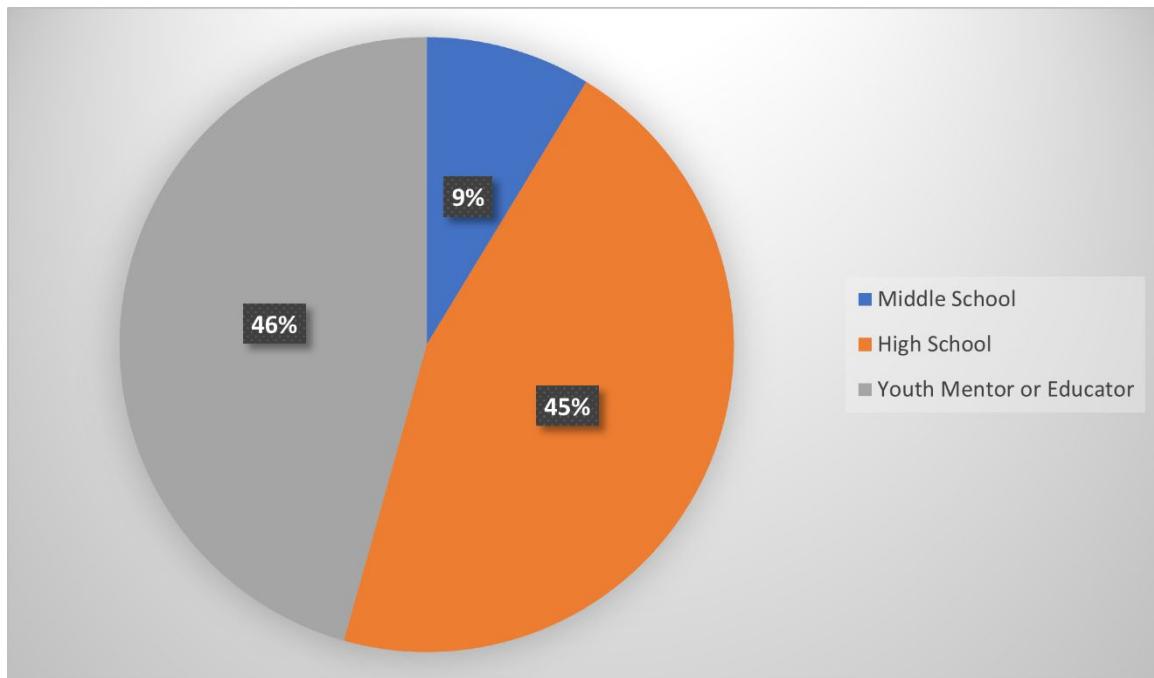
Below are the responses for the following question: **"Where are you joining from today?"**

The following answers include cities, states, specific locations etc.

Responses
Dena'ina; Port Lions, Alaska; Choctaw, Mississippi; Navajo Preparatory School, NM; South Dakota MN; Cayuse, Umatilla, Walla Walla homelands in so-called Oregon and Washington; Denver traditional lands of the Dena'ina Athabascans in Eagle River Alaska; Arizona; San Felipe Pueblo, New Mexico; Seattle area; Michigan; Central California; Oregon; State of Washington - Lower Elwha Klallam Tribe; Anchorage, Alaska; Puyallup, Washington; California; Mesa, Arizona; Colorado; Phoenix

Participants were asked the following question: **"What is the first thing that comes to mind when you hear climate change?"** There was a collective concern to a change of the traditional lifestyle due to climate change. A few participants also noted extreme weather changes such as forest fires, water drought, and temperature rises as the first things that comes to mind when hearing climate change.

Below summarizes the responses to the following question in a pie chart: "**How old are you?**" There was an about an equal level of participation between high schoolers and youth mentors or educators. Some participants indicated they were college students but that was not captured in these categories



Below are the responses for the following question: "**What Tribe do you represent, serve, or work with?**"

Responses
Lac Vieux Desert Band; Alutiiq; Yup'ik from St. Mary's Alaska; No affiliation or citizenship...here to learn how I can be a better ally; San Felipe Pueblo; Diné/Navajo and Chippewa Cree; Employee of Aleut Community of St. Paul Island Tribal Government (but not Alaska Native); Chippewa; Metlakatla Indian Community; Alutiiq; Non-Indigenous Tribal government staff; North Fork Rancheria of Mono Indians; Dena'ina Athabascan from Tyonek Alaska; Puyallup Tribe; San Carlos Apache; Lower Elwha Klallam "The Strong People"; Hopi; QVIR; Choctaw; Blackfoot and Cree; San Carlos Apache Tribe; Spokane Tribe

Participants were also asked: "**Where do you learn about climate change?**" Most responded that they learn about climate change through education institutions, other Tribal members especially elders, news, and social media.

Additionally, participants were asked: "**Who inspires you to tackle climate change?**" Elders and youth/future generations were the most common responses. There was an agreement that Tribal elders need to collaborate with the youth to pass on their wisdom to provide with the knowledge needed to tackle the issues of climate change. Other items who inspire participates to tackle climate change include mother earth, animals, and ancestors.

Below are the responses for the following question: “**What are the most important activities/traditions etc. that are already being impacted by climate change?**”

Responses
Tradition; fishing, hunting, tide pooling; Irrigation/Water Access; Lands; Seasons; Seasonal harvest, Tribal sovereignty; Traveling; Water ways; salmon returns, water quantity and quality, timing of harvesting and hunting; The migration patterns and behavior of the animals Cultural artifacts; Our natural resources which we use in cultural ceremonies; Ways of life In the Bering Sea - wildlife habitat, fisheries, subsistence practices; Treaty Rights: Fishing, Hunting, Gathering; food, shelter, plants and animal species; Foods; Potlatch; Harvest of Culturally important species; Ceremonies; growing food and raising crops and ceremonies Harvesting of traditional foods; Fishing; Wild Rice; Farming; Subsistence fishing and hunting Harvesting; Music; Ceremonies

Barriers

After moving through discussions of climate change impacts, the conversation focused on barriers. Tribal youth spoke about several challenges:

- **Weak Intergenerational Relationships**-there is a need to build stronger connections among the elders and the youth. Native youth are not always at the table discussing issues within communities. Tribal leaders, environmentalists, elders and Medicine men and women need to work together to combine all knowledge and perspectives.
- **Limited Education and Training:** There is a need for improved access to youth leadership programs, mentorships and skill development. There is limited funding for youth to create projects that are environmentally friendly.
- **Limited Focus on Tribal Initiatives.** Participants reported that the federal government can be too focused on states and not focused enough on Tribes' needs.

Participant Recommendations

As the listening session discussion moved towards actions and strategies, recommendations included:

Inclusive and Supportive Spaces

- Establish a Tribal Climate Action Working group with Tribal leaders and Tribal elders, youth, environmentalists and others with shared interests and different perspectives.
- Support for re-invigoration of traditional language to promote intergenerational transfer of Indigenous traditions and knowledges.
- Continue to listen to and share dialogue with Tribal youth through future listening sessions and other forums with the Federal government. Additionally, invite youth to be part of working groups.

Sustainable and Resilient Best Practices

- Acknowledge best practices on how to be environmentally friendly specifically cover cropping, recycling programs, composting systems, as well as kelp farms, grasslands, and forests as carbon sinks, etc.

Investing in Opportunities

- Increase funding to Tribal nations directly to increase activities like replanting of grasslands or controlled burns, allowing for Tribes to have direct decision-making on how to prioritize and allocate resources.
- Increase long-term investment in scholarships and mentorships to Native youth, and invest in and support teachings and training in environmental and climate science.
- Improve federal government and Tribal partnerships and develop more initiatives with/for Tribes.

Sharing Wisdom

- Acknowledging the importance of connecting youth and future generations to know and learn traditional knowledge to understand strength and resiliency. Share information across Tribal Nations on the impacts of climate change and the threats to treaty rights, natural resources, Mother Earth and future of Tribal Nations.
- Set in place procedures on how to be environmentally friendly in industries such as farming, encouraging and providing educational opportunities for cover cropping and improved harvesting techniques.
- Provide education on lowering carbon emissions, recycling, composting techniques and other climate-impact and environmentally beneficial practices.

Tribal Climate Adaptation and Mitigation

Of the 467 registered participants, 23% participated in voluntary polling activities.

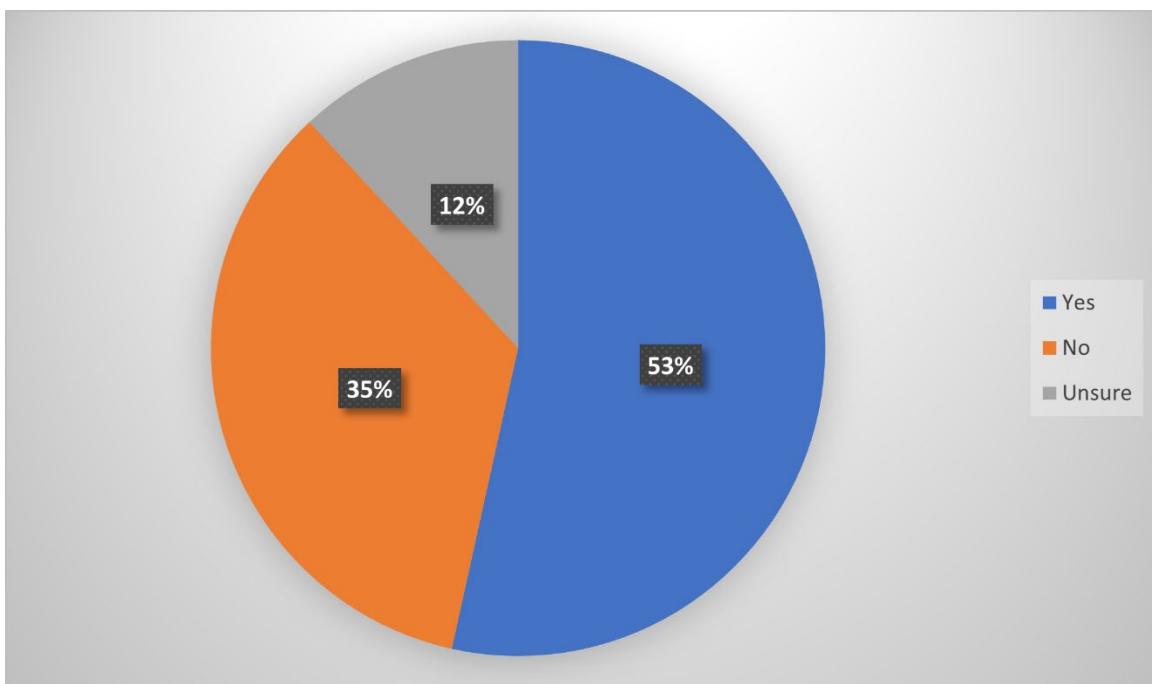
Below are the responses for the following question: **“What Tribe do you represent, serve, or work with?”**

Responses
Aleut Community of St. Paul Island, Alaska; Arikara, Hidatsa, Mandan Nation; Assiniboine; Blackfeet; Blackfoot & Cree, Bois Forte Band of Chippewa and Grand Portage Band of Lake Superior Chippewa; Campo Kumeyaay; Cherokee; Chippewa Cree; Coleville, Dine, Eastern Band Cherokee; Oneida Nation; Fort McDowell Yavapai Nation; Hopi-Tewa-Dakota; Ioway; Jemez Pueblo/San Felipe Pueblo; Karuk; Kaska (Liard First Nation) and Tahltan; KBIC Anishinaabe; Lake Superior band of Chippewa; Mechoopda; Me-Wuk; Mvskoke; Navajo Nation; Ojibwe; Oneida Nation; Paiute-Shoshone; Pueblo; Quechan Indian Tribe; Quinault; Sac and Fox; Salish and Kootenai; Seminole; Sugipiaq; Swinomish; Tlingit; Unangan; Wenatchi Methow; and Yurok.

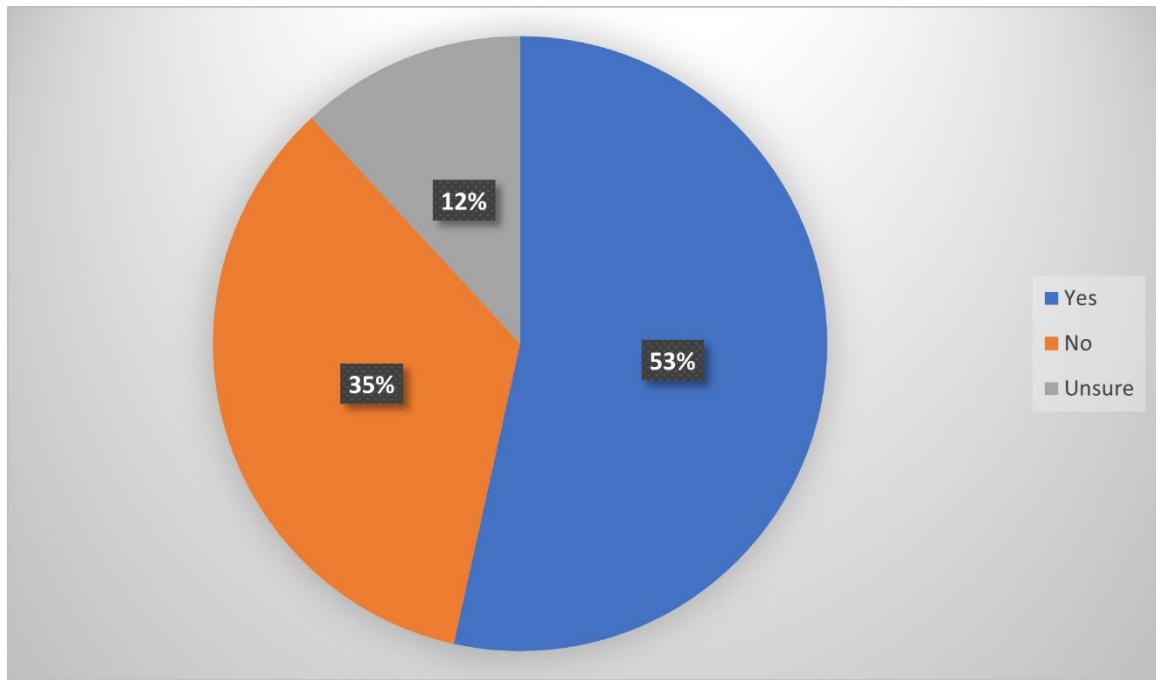
When asked “**What have been some of the biggest climate change concerns of your Tribal citizens/members,**” participants voiced the following concerns:

- Drought
- Wildfire
- Flooding
- Climate Refugees
- Air Quality
- Shifts in Seasons
- Indigenous Workforce
- Loss of Land Mass.
- Impacts to Vegetation
- Coastal Erosion
- Water Quality
- Food Security
- Treaty Rights

When asked “**Do you have a developing or completed climate adaptation plan(s) for your Tribe/Tribal Program,**” a majority of participants answered yes.



Participants were also asked the following question: **“Has your Tribe moved to begin implementing some projects developed from your adaptation planning?”** A majority of participants noted their Tribe not only have an adaptation plan but have moved to implement project development.



The following two questions were asked verbally with a request for participants to start thinking about Tribal climate adaptation and mitigation as the listening session transitioned to discussion.

- **“If any, what type of activities is your Tribe involved in to mitigate greenhouse gases? (e.g., renewable energy development, carbon sequestration, nature-based solutions, etc.)?**
- **“What current or past DOI resources have been useful in adaptation planning or mitigation activities?”**

Barriers

Participants were asked to reflect on barriers to actions that support adaptation and mitigation efforts. They identified a number of key challenges:

- **Lack of resources-** resource needs include capacity to develop plans and the technical infrastructure to implement plans that result in reduced greenhouse gas emissions (GHGs). Participants also raised the importance of regionally-allocated funding.

- **Lack of skilled labor:** there was recognition that both planning and implementation of mitigation and adaptation strategies require skilled labor and technical expertise. For some Tribes, this is a significant barrier and an identified need, particularly for large-scale projects which require more staff, funding and infrastructure support.
- **Emphasis on western science:** participants expressed the importance of incorporating Indigenous knowledge and traditional ways of knowing into adaptation and mitigation efforts through funding and technical assistance support.

Participant Recommendations

Recommendations fall under a number of areas of focus, and while presented in the aggregate, there may be unique needs for specific Tribes. Across the conversations, participants raised:

- Increase access to funding for technical knowledge, infrastructure improvements, training, and career development for environmental science and other fields that can support adaptation planning and mitigation efforts.
- Invest in the formal relationship between Tribes and the federal government as well as relationships with Tribal Colleges and Universities, Non-Tribal landowners within reservations, community based and non-governmental organizations, and other community partners resulting in collaboration around shared climate issues and planning.
- Direct funding for developing Tribal utilities and for training and business operations for renewable energy installation and maintenance.
- Design workshops and support conferences that would support skills for grant-writing and technical training. Survey Tribes around additional curriculum including:
 - Carbon reduction and getting to “net zero” carbon emissions
 - Data governance and utilizing data to inform plans and evaluate implementation actions
 - Indigenous knowledge and environmental science
 - GIS (geographic information system) and cartographic software systems
- Support for engaging and completing thorough Traditional Ecological Knowledge/Indigenous Knowledge (TEK/IK) interviews with Tribal community members and elders
- Increase access to implementation funding for projects to transition from a planning document to on-the-ground actions.

Relocation, Managed Retreat, and Protect-in-Place Issues in the Contiguous U.S./Lower 48 States

Of the 188 registered participants, 6% participated in voluntary polling activities.

Below are the responses for the following question: **“Where are you joining from today?”**

The following answers include cities, states, specific locations etc.

Responses
PDX; Michigan; Utah; Illinois; Alaska; San Francisco, CA; Washington; California; Glasgow; Alaska; Wisconsin; Colville; Browning, MT; Blackfeet Nation; Nevada; New Mexico; Southern California; Nashville TN; Coastal Washington; Dakota territories; North Carolina; Michigan; Wisconsin; Maryland; Santa Fe, NM; Raleigh; Traditional lands of Sac & Fox (Dixon, Illinois); Washington DC; Swinomish Indian Tribal Community, WA State; Blackfeet Nation, Montana Duluth, MN; South Dakota; Minnesota; Central Pomo land; New Mexico; Winterhaven California Ft. Yuma Indian Reservation; Baraga, Michigan; Southern Tiwa Pueblo land, Albuquerque NM; New Mexico; Arizona; Southern and Northern California; Tucson, Arizona Reston; Edmonds, WA; Arizona; Jemez Pueblo; Maryland; Odanah, WI Denver, CO; Odanah, WI on the Bad River Reservation; Ohio; Montana; Jacksonville, FL; From home in Virginia Seattle; Shoalwater Bay Indian Reservation, Tokeland, WA; New Jersey; Fairbanks, Alaska; Denver, Colorado; Wiyot ancestral territory in Eureka CA; Flagstaff AZ; Atlanta, GA; Oregon; Glennallen, AK; Occupied Duwamish Territory; Montana; Minnesota; Arlington, Virginia; La Grande Oregon; Portland, OR; Tuolumne County; Pala, California; Chickasaw Nation; Reserve, KS; Okmulgee, Oklahoma - Mvskoke Nation; Charleston SC

When participants were asked “**What is your Tribal affiliation or citizenship?**” the following responses were received: staff for Jamestown S’Klallam Tribe; Seneca Nation; Navajo; and Lakota. Also, a handful of participants considered themselves allies.

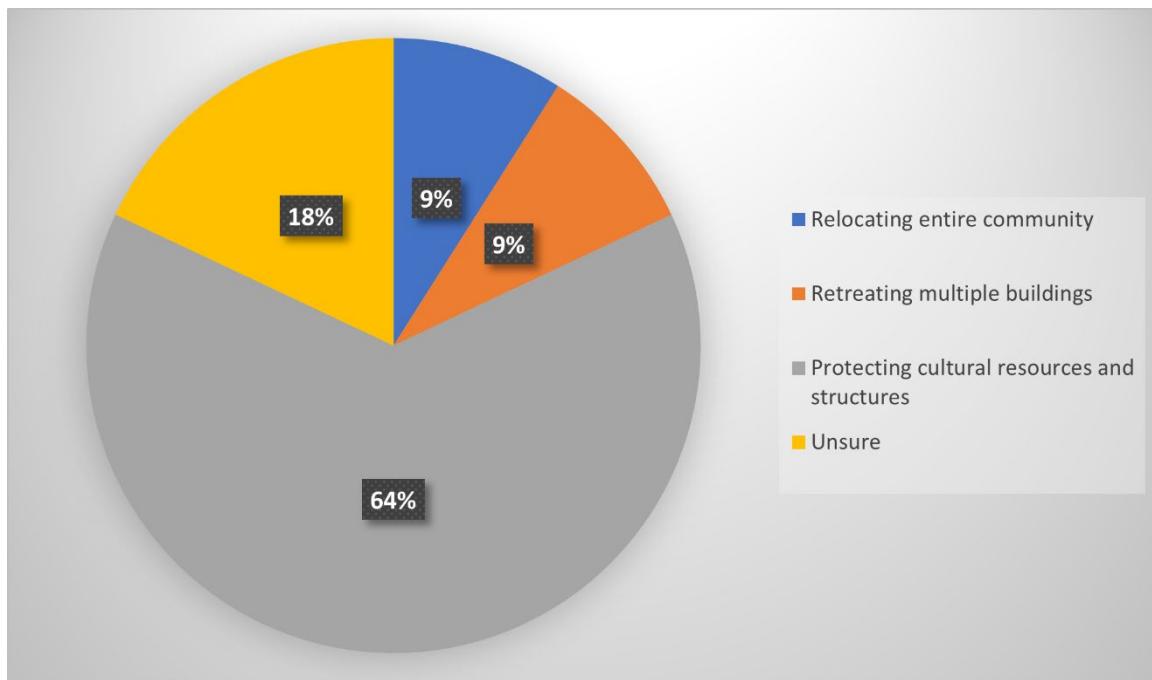
Participants were also asked “**What impacts have you experienced that may lead to relocation, managed retreat, or protect-in-place activities?**” Responses included:

- Toxins leaching from landfills near lands
- Drought
- Wildfire
- No access to water
- Flooding
- Major storm events
- Sea level rise

Participants were also asked “**What type of sites and infrastructure are at risk?**” Below are the collective responses:

- Riparian vegetation sites
- Cultural Sites (i.e., graveyards, ceremonial grounds, protection of traditional subsistence harvesting or other sacred sites)
- Critical facilities (i.e., fuel tanks and other energy-related utilities, water storage, etc.)
- Entire community (i.e., housing, government buildings, cultural sites)

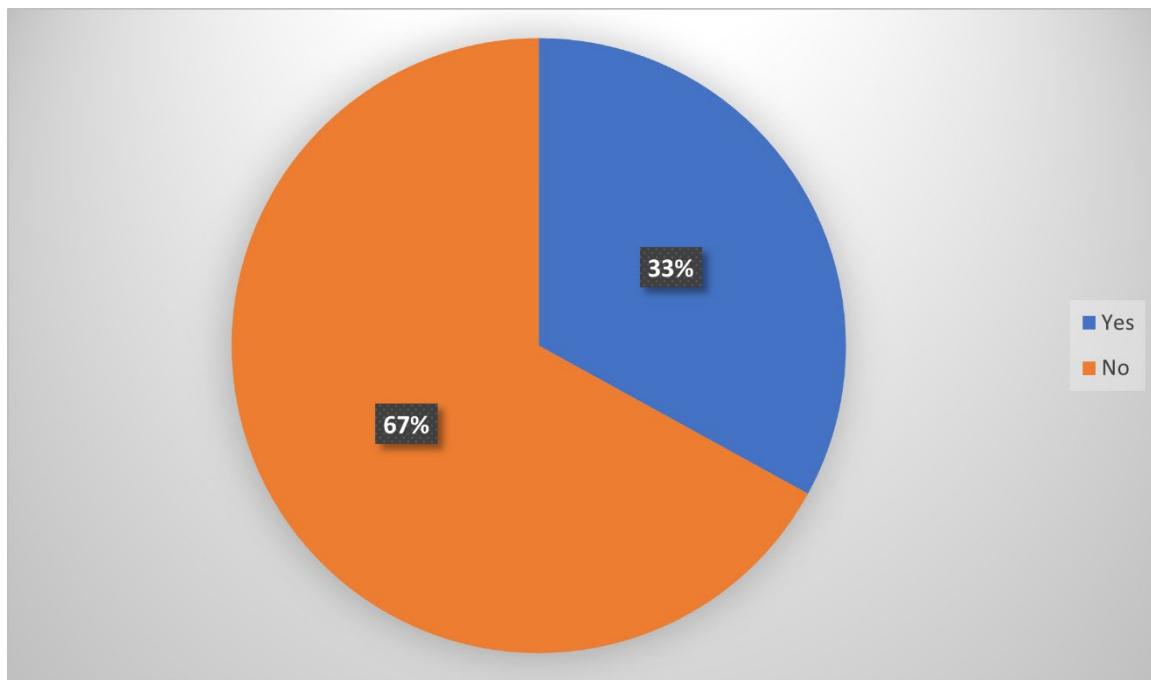
Below is a summary of the following question in a pie chart: "**What is the scale of response that will need to be taken due to these impacts?**" Most participants believe protecting cultural resources and structures is the top priority.



When asked "**What kind of Tribal expertise or training is needed to plan for community relocation, managed retreat, or protect-in-place activities, etc.?**" participants noted the following expertise or trainings: data analysis and management, cultural competence, scientific expertise, legal, grant writing, and floodplain management.

All participants who participated in the poll noted being aware of existing trainings and resources but in a limited capacity when asked "**Are you aware of or have you used existing training and capacity building resources for these purposes?**"

Below is a summary of the following question in a pie chart: **“Have you begun to develop or outline a plan for relocation, managed retreat, or protect-in-place planning?”** A majority of participants had not begun to develop any form of relocation plan.



Impacts

These sessions were structured a bit differently, with participants being asked to first discuss the impacts that they were experiencing before focusing on the resources and needs. The primary impacts reported were:

- **Water Scarcity**- the geographic location of Tribes effects the types of impacts. Tribes in geographies such as the southwestern United States experience drought. These Tribes also raised the current and future challenges around water rights and the distribution and utilization of water.
- **Sea Level Rise**- Tribes along coastal geographies talked about the impacts of sea level rise, and the potential need to relocate.
- **Drought**- no access to water for drinking or crops resulted in Tribal communities being forced to relocate.
- **Wildfire**- particularly in western states, the risk and impacts of wildfires has increased.
- **Cultural impacts**- the loss of land, access to first foods, and other culturally and spiritually important spaces compound the impacts of climate change. This was described as particularly painful given the traumatic historical removal of Tribes from their lands.

Recommendations

Further discussions around these recommendations should occur. Participants raised ideas for actions including:

- **Identifying a process to collect stories**-storytelling— being both a cultural norm and a critical way to share information, understand needs, and develop appropriate supports and resources— could enhance Tribal actions to adapt and mitigate impacts.
- **Increase capacity and funding**- Tribes need support that is sustainable and consistent and addressed the needs of the community. Many Tribes specifically highlighted the need to increase technical assistance and funding for vulnerability assessments (see below).
- **Increase capacity and resources to create a vulnerability assessment**-while resources do exist, Tribes discussed additional need to build capacity through staffing, (and staff to build professional and technical skillsets) to create assessments.
- **Streamlining fee-to-trust processes**- Tribes that are considering relocation have limited choices for deciding where to relocate or retreat infrastructure to due to reservation checkerboard jurisdiction in the Contiguous U.S. One way to amend that is by expanding reservation boundaries to include trust lands.

Frameworks for Racial Equity

As the Department moves towards future actions to advance equity, frameworks from the field of racial equity can inform and strengthen the work. These frameworks can provide direction for equity action planning, and are reflective of best practices in equity work.

Governing Alliance for Racial Equity

The Governing Alliance for Racial Equity (GARE) is a national network of jurisdictions that are committed to *leading with race* built upon “the recognition that the creation and perpetuation of racial inequities has been baked into government, and that racial inequities across all indicators for success are deep and pervasive.”¹⁸

The leading with race framework also acknowledges that the intersectional¹⁹ nature of compounding and cumulative impact of multiple marginalized identities is also critical to understand and to not utilize “one size fits all” strategies to address the unique needs of populations.

This concept is reflected in Professor John Powell’s work on “targeted universalism” which sets universal goals (e.g., every American can access recreation benefits) and acknowledges that it requires targeted strategies towards those goals that include ALL communities to address the ways that different communities experience barriers. Targeted Universalism provides both a

¹⁸ <https://www.racialequityalliance.org/about/our-approach/race/>

¹⁹ Crenshaw, Kimberlé W., "On Intersectionality: Essential Writings" (2017). Books. 255.

<https://scholarship.law.columbia.edu/books/255>

tactical and communication strategy that can improve inequities that are the center of EO 13985's vision.²⁰

The listening sessions incorporated into the Department's implementation of EO 13985 were a starting point for meaningful involvement, and DOI has an opportunity to maintain and sustain the engagement of stakeholders and Tribes as the development of equity action plans and implementation unfolds. Meaningful involvement has long been a core element of Federal Government programs and has been defined by many agencies, including the vision in Goal 2 of the DOI Environmental Justice Strategic Plan to "ensure minority, low-income, and Tribal populations are provided with the opportunity to engage in meaningful involvement in the Department's decision-making processes."²¹

The Facilitation Team's Recommendations

These recommendations reflect cross-cutting strategies that can be implemented across the Department. They are connected to and supplemental to recommendations captured directly from listening session participants specific to focus areas. The Facilitation Team recommends that DOI working groups reflect on the overall set of recommendations and engage Tribes and stakeholders to prioritize and refine actions.

As the Department builds out its Equity Action Plan, these strategies can provide a foundation for future actions, and reflect the Facilitation Team's views based on best practices, concepts and themes from stakeholder and Tribal engagement, and our collective professional expertise.

Across all 15 sessions, there emerged several high-level themes related to the internal workings of the Department and institutional practices and culture change. These cross-cutting themes represent areas that DOI can immediately prioritize. include:

- **Workforce Demographics:** In all the sessions, the importance of shared lived experience and relationships with impacted communities were mentioned. Example statements included, "seeing people that look like me," or the importance of staff who have existing relationships with communities and/or understand the experiences and needs of communities, whether around Tribal, business, or recreation issues.
- **Cultural Competency and Responsiveness:** Participants continually identified the need for training for staff (especially as it related to Tribal relationships and engagement around recreation access for underserved communities) that speaks to the importance of ensuring that all DOI employees are trained to work with many different communities and are responsive to the needs of underserved populations.

²⁰ <https://belonging.berkeley.edu/targeted-universalism>

²¹ https://www.doi.gov/sites/doi.gov/files/uploads/Draft%20EJ%20Strategic%20Plan%202016_2020_Public%20document.pdf

- **Relationships:** The importance of building and sustaining relationships permeated every conversation held during the listening sessions. These comments were not only related to the relationship between the Department and the communities, but also the role the Department can play in connecting communities to each other. Examples from the different focus areas included supporting business to business relationships; holding more forums where Tribes could collaborate and connect on discretionary grant opportunities; and helping organizations working to improve access to nature to build stronger relationships, learn from each other, and leverage community connections to build capacity and improve access.

Internal Workforce

Many studies have shown the benefits of diversity within the workplace, including specific research for public agencies.²² The Department can build equity into the practices and approaches to its own workforce. Building a strategic Workforce Equity Plan that focuses on partnerships and models to increase access to pipeline programs is an important step in ensuring a more diverse workplace. The plan can outline recruitment and hiring practices that specifically result in diverse candidate pools. The retention of employees who have lived experience with underserved communities could begin to address many of the comments heard in listening sessions about the importance of representation and relationship with employees at the Department.

Training and Competencies

Like workforce hiring, recruitment and retention, the Department can invest in training and development and quality improvement around competencies that ensure underserved individuals and families receive courteous, competent, and culturally as well as linguistically appropriate information, outreach, and relationship building. Identifying and building structures that provide avenues for employees to build competencies around diversity, equity, inclusion (including learning around implicit bias, cross-cultural communication etc.) could respond to and support improved relationships and interactions with underserved communities.

Communications, Outreach and Engagement

The listening sessions reflected both successes and opportunities for further actions that can respond to, improve, and enhance relationships with underserved communities. It was clear from the data coming from the listening sessions that generating and maintaining a list of stakeholders and Tribes directly impacted by the focus areas will be of long-term benefit to DOI. As the country collectively moves beyond the pandemic and virtual only spaces, maintaining an up to date, well

²² Moon K-K. Examining the Relationships Between Diversity and Work Behaviors in U.S. Federal Agencies: Does Inclusive Management Make a Difference? *Review of Public Personnel Administration*. 2018;38(2):218-247.
doi:[10.1177/0734371X16660157](https://doi.org/10.1177/0734371X16660157)

organized contact list, conducting outreach in locations where underserved populations spend time (i.e., recreation centers, grocery stores, libraries) and where they work and live will lead to greater trust and deeper relationships. This was especially true for Tribal participants who shared the importance of both direct and formal government to government consultation, and for DOI employees who are going to Tribal communities.

The listening session responses also reflected other best practices for engagement, and while the virtual environment may impact some of this (for example, the Facilitation Team did not find in these sessions increased attendance for evening sessions, and did not hold sessions on weekends), conducting outreach at times and locations convenient to the focus area populations will be important to understand and to design outreach processes around.

DOI should also utilize social media, listservs, and newsletters--targeted and in multiple languages reflective of the diversity of stakeholders- allowing the Department to communicate with wide audiences and reach underserved populations in multiple ways. These mechanisms also encourage virtual “word of mouth” sharing of information that can more directly reach target audiences.

Partnerships

Throughout all the conversations partnerships was a focus. Perspectives ranged from creating more opportunities for communities to come together by hosting spaces for business-to-business relationships and ensuring that organizations working on specific issues are connected and building upon model and promising practice. Partnership with Tribal governments is also important to understand the landscape of discretionary grant opportunities as examples) to partnerships that resulted in joint outreach with community-based organizations, business associations, state and local offices and Tribal governments. Building strong relationships with leaders among underserved populations, utilizing the incredible networks that exist across the focus areas is an investment of time and human capital that can improve outreach, engagement, and ongoing and sustainable relationships. Listening session participants also described what is commonly referred to as “stakeholder fatigue” which can be combatted through intentional partnership between federal agencies to ensure that the Department is respectful of and honoring of the time and wisdom of communities who are often asked to answer the same questions and express the same frustrations with many federal processes, policies, and practice.

Meaningful Engagement

Meaningful outreach, relationship-building and communications strategies require time for planning and execution, particularly when working with communities that have daily stressors and limitations of time to participate fully in these processes. Doing work upfront to be informed by impacted communities to schedule engagements at times and locations and with methods that work best for specific communities can improve participation, enhance trust, and result in more robust information.

1. **Targeted, meaningful discussions:** Outside of Tribal communities, the listening sessions reflected in this report and the barriers and recommendations listed are aggregate data from multiple underserved populations. Aligning with the framework of targeted universalism, and understanding the unique needs of specific populations could help develop policies and practices that will account for needs of communities differently situated in terms of barriers they experience.

As DOI conducts further outreach, hosting community-specific conversations and paying specific attention to religious and spiritual institutions, Tribal leaders, youth, local business networks, community-based organizations and academic partners will ensure DOI is reaching the full diversity of underserved communities.

2. **Partnership potential exists:** DOI should consider co-hosting meetings/events in the future that incorporate local culture, customs, and knowledge. The listening sessions highlighted opportunities to connect more intentionally with business associations, community-based organizations and Tribal organizations and governments to build trust and ensure participation.
3. **Culturally appropriate and accessible meetings:** All these sessions were conducted in English (though resources were available for interpretation upon request). Building relationships and infrastructure to engage communities in their native language could identify additional barriers and recommendations from non-English speaking populations.
4. **Collaborative planning:** DOI has an opportunity to maintain and sustain the relationship with participants who engaged in this process. Specific steps include committing both to sharing the information generated (e.g., the meeting summaries and final report) and seeking feedback for the Equity Action Plan to ensure that the actions taken by the agency reflect what communities have envisioned.

The Department has a solid foundation for moving into its Equity Action Plan work. Building from this project and previous efforts, DOI should feel confident it has the necessary information to respond and to advance equity and improve access for underserved communities across these focus areas, and throughout the entire agency. By developing strategies that account for specific, discipline and issue specific recommendations, while also building an internal infrastructure that supports sustained engagement and cultural competency working with underserved communities, the DOI can accomplish meaningful change.

Acknowledgements

The project team writes this report in a spirit of honoring and acknowledging the sharing with us an often-painful history and contemporaneous experiences that are inequitable across many areas of our society, and specifically called out and named in the context of the work of the Department of the Interior (DOI). This report reflects the expertise, wisdom, and generosity of communities across the country whose voices are and will inform the future direction of equity action planning for DOI and whom we are grateful for sharing their time and energy---and their hope---for what a more equitable future can be.

We offer additional appreciation for Department of the Interior program staff from Office of Diversity, Inclusion and Civil Rights, Office of Policy Analysis, Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization, National Park Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Bureau of Land Management, Bureau of Reclamation, and the Bureau of Indian Affairs who provided subject matter expertise to inform the work.

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