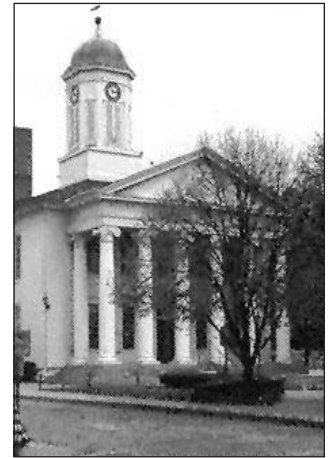




Chesapeake Bay Local Government Participation Action Plan

prepared by
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Cover Photos (l to r):

Arlington, Virginia

Bellefonte, Pennsylvania

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Washington, D.C.

INTRODUCTION

The *Chesapeake 2000* agreement (Agreement) represents the most ambitious plan yet by Bay Agreement signatories to preserve and restore North America's largest and most biologically diverse estuary. Fulfilling the Agreement's goals will require unprecedented resources and coordination. The Chesapeake Bay Executive Council recognizes this fact in the Agreement's preamble, which states "there can be no greater goal in this recommitment than to engage everyone—individuals, businesses, schools and universities, communities and governments—in our effort." Because local governments have statutory authority over land use management, stormwater management, and water and sewer management—all of which directly affect the health of the Bay—a clear commitment for engaging the watershed's 1,650 plus local governments is particularly critical to the success of the Agreement.

The Executive Council and the Chesapeake Bay Program have for many years recognized the critical role of local governments in the protection and restoration of local streams, rivers, and the Chesapeake Bay. In 1995, the Executive Council adopted the Local Government Partnership Initiative. An important outgrowth of the initiative was the development of the 1996 Local Government Participation Action Plan (LGPAP), which established a strategy to broaden the participation of local governments.

The Bay Agreement jurisdictions (Maryland, Virginia, Pennsylvania, and the District of Columbia) are the final arbiters within the Bay Program's open, consensus-building decision-making process; and the Bay Program's most important role is to serve as a resource to jurisdictions as they develop their respective approaches to meeting the Agreement's goals. Likewise, the Bay Agreement jurisdictions have ultimate responsibility for providing the necessary leadership and funding to ensure that Agreement commitments are achieved. Hence, the primary means of local government participation has been, and should be, through the interaction that occurs between individual local governments and their respective state governments.

However, the Agreement recognizes that the Bay Program as a whole has a stake in interacting directly with local governments. This interaction should be in addition to and not in place of the ongoing relationships between states and their local governments. It should be designed to enhance the Bay Program partners' ongoing collaboration on technical affairs, such as developing methods for measuring water quality impacts, monitoring progress, and implementing remedies—without presuming to displace the partners' policy prerogatives.

Signatory Responsibilities to Local Governments

Bay Agreement signatories are the final arbiters within the Bay Program decision making process and have ultimate responsibility for Agreement commitments. Each state and the District of Columbia has a unique structure and history, which requires flexibility in how specific Agreement commitments are achieved. It also means that each state will approach coordination with local governments differently. However, the signatories have an individual and collective responsibility to engage, involve, and support local governments—financially and technically—in Bay watershed restoration efforts.

Local Government Responsibilities to Bay Stewardship

Local governments have statutory authority over land use, stormwater management, and water and sewer management. In this capacity, local governments have a responsibility to be good stewards of the Bay watershed.

Bay Agreement Commitment to Local Governments

The Bay Agreement commits to "Strengthen the Bay Program's ability to incorporate local governments into the policy decision making process. By 2001, complete a reevaluation of the Local Government Participation Action Plan and make necessary changes in Bay Program and jurisdictional functions based upon the reevaluation."

A New Plan for Local Government Participation

In accordance with the Agreement, a Bay Program team, led by the Local Government Advisory Committee (LGAC), was formed in May 2001 to review and revise the 1996 LGPAP. Consensus was reached early in the process that a mechanism was needed in each signatory jurisdiction to generate input into the Participation Action Plan from local governments. How to gather the input was the responsibility of each jurisdiction.

- Virginia held two focus groups of local government elected officials and staff in July, 2001;
- Maryland held a special meeting for local government elected officials as part of its Tributary Teams structure in August 2001;
- The District of Columbia held a focus group consisting of relevant agency heads in July 2001; and
- Pennsylvania utilized the results of 53 Growing Smarter Forums held in 2000 and 16 Watershed Forums held in 2001 by the Governor's Center for Local Government Services.

These outreach efforts, along with extensive input from the review team and others, form the basis of this 2001 Local Government Participation Action Plan.

Status of Local Government Participation

Since the signing of the original Bay Agreement in 1983, the Chesapeake Bay Program has undertaken a wide range of efforts to engage and communicate with local governments. Among the most significant of these efforts was the creation of the Local Government Advisory Committee in 1988, which consists of 21 members appointed by the Governors of Maryland, Pennsylvania, Virginia, and the Mayor of the District of Columbia. LGAC serves in an advisory capacity to the Executive Council and works to strengthen the role local governments play in Bay restoration efforts and to develop strategies to broaden local government participation in the Bay Program. Previously, LGAC has engaged in outreach projects such as the *Bay Currents* newsletter, the Community Environmental Review program, and the Bay Partner Community Awards program. Other efforts have included publications such as

Innovations at the Local Level—A Compilation of Local Government Programs (1991) and *Local Government Pollution Prevention Toolkit* (prepared cooperatively by LGAC and the Toxics Subcommittee in 1998). Similar resource manuals are currently being developed, including the *Community Environmental Assessment Handbook* (Land, Growth, and Stewardship Subcommittee) and the *Guide to Watershed Management Planning in the Chesapeake Bay Watershed* (Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay).

Participation is also achieved through involvement of local governments in the Bay Program's standing subcommittees, work groups, and task forces as well as through processes established by the signatory jurisdictions. At the Bay Program level, many task forces and work groups have succeeded in including local governments and communicating policy options and decisions. However, there is no overall plan for ensuring that this type of outreach occurs on a consistent and representative basis.

With regard to funding, the jurisdictions are appropriately the primary source of direct financial assistance to local governments under a host of cost-share and grant programs. However, financial assistance to local governments also comes from the Bay Program in the form of Chesapeake Bay Small Watersheds Grants and funding aimed at increasing local government capacity to protect and restore the Bay. In 2001, 21% of \$1.65 million from Small Watershed Grants was awarded to local governments.

Participation Action Plan Themes

The purpose of the 2001 LGPAP is to provide specific guidance and to outline implementable actions that will empower local governments to participate in the Bay Program. However, several overarching themes were identified during the review process that help to "set the stage" for these actions. These themes are presented below, both as a means to provide context to specific action strategies and to provide guidance for Bay Program decision makers on future issues affecting local governments.

- **Increased funding is needed at all levels for implementation of Agreement initiatives.**

- **Local governments are already deeply involved in water quality and habitat protection efforts.**
- **The Local Government Advisory Committee's role in the Bay Program must be better focused and defined.**
- **The jurisdictions play the pre-eminent role in keeping local governments involved in the Bay watershed restoration efforts.**
- **Efficient use of existing institutions and organizational structures is preferred over the creation of new structures.**
- **A one-size-fits-all approach to local government coordination and Agreement implementation will not work.**
- **Differences in local government access to technology must be considered during the development of communications strategies.**
- **The Bay Program and the signatory jurisdictions must take responsibility for implementation of the 2001 LGPAP.**

Bay Agreement Commitments Most Requiring Local-Bay Program Coordination

The *Chesapeake 2000* agreement provides the framework for focusing almost all facets of Bay restoration through 2010 and beyond. Given the number of commitments that could or will have an impact on local governments, it is important to focus efforts to engage local governments where enhanced communications and coordination will likely result in stronger policies and a cleaner Bay.

Based on local government outreach efforts during the summer of 2001, the following areas of the Agreement should be targeted for the greatest level of local government participation.

- **Water Quality Protection and Restoration Goals:** The Agreement goal of removing all nutrient and sediment-related water quality impairments by 2010 will have the most significant impact of any of the commitments on local government programs and budgets. As in the case of other Bay Program policy, it is the

jurisdictions that will have the final responsibility for achieving this goal through revised tributary strategies; however, the implementation of those strategies will depend largely on local government actions. Flexibility, funding, and gaining local government input on means and methods will be key to progress.

- **Watershed Management Planning:** Watershed management plans have the potential to serve as an umbrella for many other Agreement goals including those related to wetlands planning and stream buffer protection. The Bay Program and the jurisdictions should consider packaging watershed planning efforts in a way that will help local governments to effectively utilize plans for multiple purposes.
- **Stream Corridor Restoration Goals:** Stream corridor restoration goals have the potential to implement a number of Agreement commitments as well as to address local community interests and priorities.
- **Land Conservation and Preservation:** Permanently preserving from development 20% of the land area in the watershed will have direct positive and negative impacts on local governments. This commitment was consistently ranked as a major concern for local governments and one that many local governments felt there are a lack of tools and financial resources to implement.
- **Reducing the Rate of Harmful Sprawl:** Local governments have statutory responsibility for land use and many transportation decisions and must be directly involved with solving the problems associated with harmful sprawl.
- **Technical Tools:** Many of the Agreement's commitments focus on the development of specific tools that local governments can use to promote sound land use practices and protect aquatic habitats and to carry out other Agreement commitments. These tools are important and should be developed in coordination with local governments to ensure that resources are being spent wisely and that efforts are not being duplicated.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT PARTICIPATION ACTION PLAN

A | **Enhance the Effectiveness of the Local Government Advisory Committee in the Chesapeake Bay Program**

The mission of the Local Government Advisory Committee is to ensure that local governments are engaged in the Bay Program (both in terms of decision-making and communications) and to present local government concerns to the Implementation Committee (IC), the Principals' Staff Committee (PSC), and the Executive Council (EC). It is not the responsibility of LGAC to speak for local governments in all Bay Program work groups and task forces, but to ensure that the infrastructure exists for local governments to have meaningful opportunities for input into important decisions. LGAC's membership should be reflective of the local governments that it serves.

A-1 Each jurisdiction should review its LGAC appointment process and may consider utilization of local government officials and associations as one means of generating nominations for LGAC membership.

- **Purpose:** *To generate a wider range of nominations from which the jurisdictions can make appointments representative of local government interests.*
- **Purpose:** *To establish stronger ties and feedback mechanisms to organizations that have the capacity to disseminate information back to local governments.*

A-2 LGAC's annual report should include an update on the implementation of the Participation Action Plan, an assessment of where local government participation is lacking, and a plan of action for how the Bay Program can address the deficiency. The report should include an analysis of issues relevant to local governments and advice to the EC.

- **Purpose:** *To ensure that those responsible for coordinating and implementing areas of the Agreement outside of LGAC have taken steps to include local governments and to implement relevant sections of this plan.*
- **Purpose:** *To designate a formal mechanism for advising the EC.*

A-3 LGAC should develop mechanisms to "grow roots" into the local government community. LGAC should continue its working relationship with the Metropolitan Areas Workgroup and seek opportunities to work with other local government groups or organizations. LGAC should structure at least one meeting a year to serve as a point of information exchange between the Bay Program and local government association representatives.

- **Purpose:** *To provide LGAC with information on the needs and concerns of local governments beyond the scope of its membership, which can then be relayed to the EC in LGAC's capacity as an advisory committee.*
- **Purpose:** *To provide an opportunity for Bay Program staff to update local government organizations on important activities and upcoming decisions.*

B Enhance Two-Way Communication Between Local Governments and the Chesapeake Bay Program

Two way communication between local governments and the Bay Program (the collective Bay Program and the signatory states) will ensure that local governments are vested in Bay watershed restoration efforts and that the Bay Program is making decisions with the best possible information. Improving two way communication will require additional effort on the part of local governments and local government associations, as well as the Bay Program and its subcommittee, task force, and work group chairs. LGAC, the Communications and Education Subcommittee (CESC), and the Land Growth and Stewardship Subcommittee (LGSS) have very specific responsibilities with regard to local government communication. And, because the signatory jurisdictions play the most important role in intergovernmental communications, it will require each state to periodically assess whether communication on watershed restoration efforts is being achieved.

The Bay Local Government Information Network (Bay LOGIN- www.baylogin.org), launched in September 2001, is anticipated to be an important tool to enhance and foster new communication between local governments and the Bay Program. While there are limitations to internet-based communication applications, Bay LOGIN services such as news flashes, newsletters, queries, surveys, archives, and links, will enhance the ability of local governments to participate in Bay watershed activities and decisions.

B-1 LGAC will promote, develop, and maintain its internet-based Bay LOGIN as a resource system for exchange of information between local governments and the Bay Program, as well as a means for local governments to exchange information among themselves.

- **Purpose:** *As envisioned, Bay LOGIN has the potential to serve as a powerful tool for the Bay Program to distribute and receive information from local government stakeholders.*

B-2 The Bay Program, in cooperation with LGAC and the CESC, should develop and implement a protocol identifying when and by what means subcommittees, work groups, and task forces should present information for dissemination by Bay LOGIN and to key local government associations. The protocol would spell out what sort of policy choices, when in the development process, and by what means the various Bay Program groups should obtain input.

- **Purpose:** *Such a protocol is necessary to ensure the success of the Bay Program's Bay LOGIN effort, which will rely on the distribution of timely and relevant information.*
- **Purpose:** *Local government associations and regional agencies often have a greater capacity for analyzing information than individual localities. This is also one way to ensure that local governments without internet access still have some level of representation in the decision making process.*

B-3 LGAC, in cooperation with other Bay Program committees and subcommittees, will develop a protocol for distributing information gathered from the Bay LOGIN that have relevance to specific Bay Program subcommittees, task forces, and work groups.

- **Purpose:** *To ensure that a timely process is established so that subcommittees, task forces, and work groups can benefit from information provided by local governments on information distributed through Bay LOGIN.*

B-4 The Bay Program should consider funding LGAC's *Bay Currents* quarterly newsletter to provide information on important Bay Program developments, share local models, and to recognize local government accomplishments.

- **Purpose:** *A 2001 LGAC survey of local government needs identified a printed newsletter as a preferred means of obtaining information on Bay Program activities. Funding the Bay Currents will also provide information to local governments that do not have Internet access.*

B-5 LGAC should participate in local government association and regional agency meetings and annual conferences to provide information on important Bay-related initiatives and to inform local governments how local actions contribute to the protection and restoration of streams, rivers, and the Chesapeake Bay.

- **Purpose:** *To help LGAC collect information from a wide range of local governments and to enable LGAC to relay information on important Bay Program developments to local governments.*

B-6 The Bay Program should ensure internal consistency in local government and public outreach—particularly where there are opportunities for individual outreach products to address or connect several Agreement commitments. The Bay Program should periodically evaluate whether it has the organizational capacity and structure established to achieve this consistency. To the extent practicable, the Bay Program, LGAC, and the CESC should coordinate to ensure that all multi-media campaigns are integrated with local government education and public information outreach efforts.

- **Purpose:** *To reduce redundancy and overlap, and to coordinate messages to fit in with existing or proposed local, regional, state, and Bay Program initiatives.*

C | **Open the Door to Local Government Participation in the Decision-Making Process**

Most decisions affecting local governments are best made through state and local government interaction. However, decisions made at the Bay Program level, and particularly those involving the development of tracking and accounting mechanisms for assessing progress, will also benefit from direct local government participation. Participation at all levels needs to be “institutionalized,” with consistent mechanisms developed to ensure that participation occurs. Opening the door to local government participation is reliant on the successful implementation of the strategies outlined in “B” above.

C-1 The CBP, in cooperation with LGAC, will develop for all task forces and work groups a checklist that outlines positive actions that should be undertaken to meet the spirit of intergovernmental cooperation outlined in this 2001 LGPAP.

- **Purpose:** *To ensure that task forces and work group chairs are aware of the goals of the LGPAP and that they have a meaningful way to determine whether they are helping to implement its goals.*

C-2 The IC should have an annual agenda item for the specific purpose of having the states update others in the Bay Program, including LGAC, on the status of efforts to engage local governments at the state level.

- **Purpose:** *To provide an opportunity for the states to perform a self assessment on progress in engaging local governments; and to provide an opportunity for states to learn from other local government engagement models/efforts.*

C-3 When appropriate, signatory jurisdictions should take the lead in appointing local government representatives to standing subcommittees and newly formed work groups and task forces. Whenever appropriate, signatories should consider the use of a broader support team at the jurisdictional level where local governments can have an opportunity for more in-depth involvement at critical junctures without the need for attending meetings at the CBP office. Bay LOGIN should be used as one mechanism for identifying local government interest in specific Bay policy areas.

- **Purpose:** *The jurisdictions are typically requested to make appointments to work groups and task forces and are often in the best position to identify potential local government representatives.*
- **Purpose:** *Use of jurisdiction teams with broad-based membership to review draft documents from work groups and task forces, but who are not actually members, can be an effective way of increasing local government opportunities for involvement. At the same time, it avoids pressure to increase work group and task force membership to unmanageable levels.*

C-4 State signatories should convene on a routine basis meetings in each of the jurisdictions to receive input from local governments on issues that relate to Bay restoration and protection efforts.

- **Purpose:** *To provide local government officials a forum in which they can express their views and ideas on Bay restoration and protection efforts and how federal, state, and local efforts can be most effectively structured to be mutually supportive.*

C-5 LGAC will undertake an annual assessment of local government representation and involvement in work groups and task forces established to meet critical Agreement areas identified in this plan. LGAC will use this information to assess where local government participation is lacking in critical areas.

- **Purpose:** *This assessment is critical to LGAC's role as a watch dog for ensuring that local governments are participating in the Bay Program. If local government participation is weak or non-existent in some areas, it is the role of LGAC to find out why and how participation can be enhanced.*

C-6 The CESC should provide a plan to the IC for how participation by all stakeholders, including local governments, could be increased through use of technology—including but not limited to video conferencing—by March 2003. In its plan, the CESC should consider the development of partnerships between the Bay Program and community colleges, cooperative extensions, and/or other institutions to implement video conferencing.

- **Purpose:** *Focus group participants consistently noted that the major hurdle to participating in Bay Program decision making was not money, but the time required for meeting travel.*

D Provide Financial and Technical Assistance for and to Support Local Governments

The *Chesapeake 2000* agreement has far reaching fiscal and budgetary implications, a fact that the Executive Council and all Bay stakeholders recognize must be addressed for the Agreement's goals to be realized. Local governments in particular are mindful of the potential financial strain of meeting the Agreement's goals because of the number of commitments that will require implementation at the local government level. As a result, state and Bay Program technical and financial assistance for and to local governments will serve as a critical foundation for achieving Bay watershed restoration goals.

D-1 Once new Bay restoration goals are established, the Bay Agreement signatories should clearly identify the costs of meeting these goals. Each jurisdiction should work closely with their respective local governments to identify funding strategies for achieving the Bay Agreement commitments that will require local government implementation.

- **Purpose:** *To clearly outline and identify the potential budgetary impacts of Agreement implementation with respect to local governments and to plan for how those impacts will be addressed.*

D-2 The Chesapeake Bay Program's Budget Steering Committee and technical subcommittees should target some portion of Bay Program funding to assist local government efforts to protect local streams, rivers and the Chesapeake Bay.

- **Purpose:** *It is recognized that most direct financial assistance for Bay-related activities should come from the jurisdictions. However, funding for specific outreach or technical assistance purposes will help local governments to better identify and understand the Bay Program's mission.*

D-3 LGAC should continue to develop and widely distribute a compendium of federal, state, non-profit and private assistance programs that provide local governments with the resources to implement Bay protection activities.

- **Purpose:** *To make it easier for local governments to identify and apply for sources of funding to implement Bay protection related projects and activities.*

D-4 LGAC should utilize the results of its 2001 Local Government Needs Assessment to provide guidance for Bay Program subcommittees, work groups, task forces, and particularly the Budget Steering Committee on the technical assistance priorities of local governments.

- **Purpose:** *To ensure that work programs and budget priorities that involve technical assistance to local governments are in line with the actual needs of local governments.*

D-5 LGSS and LGAC should continue to develop and distribute technical information on watershed management planning, environmentally sensitive land use management measures, stream corridor protection initiatives, and infrastructure improvements.

- **Purpose:** *To provide local governments with a wide context of information to justify the implementation of Bay-friendly projects and programs.*

D-6 Bay LOGIN should be utilized to notify local governments of the availability of Bay-related technical and scientific information.

- **Purpose:** *To increase the distribution of technical and scientific information to local governments.*

E | **Recognize Local Government Efforts**

Local governments should be recognized for achievements towards restoration of the Chesapeake Bay. Recognition highlights local government commitment and highlights success stories for emulation by others. Recognition of local government efforts also benefits the Bay Program by ensuring that existing projects that may support Agreement goals are accounted for and that duplication of efforts is avoided.

E-1 LGAC and relevant Bay Program subcommittees should continue to identify and catalog local government restoration and protection success stories that can serve as models to assist other local governments in their efforts to protect stream corridors, improve infrastructure, and manage land use. These models and success stories should be broadcast and archived through the Bay LOGIN initiative.

- **Purpose:** *To help increase the transferability of useful projects, programs, tools, and ordinances implemented by local governments.*

E-2 Agreement signatories should continue LGAC's Chesapeake Bay Partner Communities (CBPC) program as a mechanism to provide recognition and support to local governments. The CBPC should be expanded to recognize cooperative efforts in addition to individual efforts. The Bay Program's Small Watershed Grants Program should consider modifying its award criteria to give added weight to localities that are pursuing initiatives that can be used to achieve CBPC recognition. The states should use the information from the CBPC program to help target local government technical assistance.

- **Purpose:** *To provide a meaningful and public way of supporting local governments that are engaged in a wide range of activities that support protecting water quality and aquatic habitats.*
- **Purpose:** *To provide a framework for local governments to use as they strive to implement programs that will benefit water quality and aquatic habitats.*
- **Purpose:** *To provide a substantive benefit for either meeting CBPC milestones.*

E-3 The Chesapeake Bay Program should re-initiate support for LGAC's Community Innovation Awards Program.

- **Purpose:** *To provide a meaningful and public way of encouraging local governments to be creative in the protection of water quality and aquatic habitats.*

PLAN IMPLEMENTATION AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Local Government Advisory Committee, in its role as an advisory committee on local government issues and concerns, is the logical entity for monitoring plan implementation and identifying where additional efforts should be directed to meet plan objectives. The Implementation Committee, as the Bay Program's primary implementation oversight body, is the most appropriate entity for ensuring that Bay Program subcommittees, work groups, task forces, are aware of, and actually implement, the plan's objectives. Another key role of the IC will be to foster dialogue among state signatories on the status and effectiveness of efforts to engage and involve local governments in the Agreement's implementation.

Signatory Jurisdiction Responsibilities

- Provide the necessary leadership and funding to ensure that Agreement commitments are achieved.
- Once new Bay restoration goals are established, work closely with their respective local governments to identify state-specific funding strategies for achieving Agreement commitments.
- Review the LGAC appointment process and consider utilization of local government officials and associations as a means of generating nominations.
- When appropriate, appoint local government representatives to standing subcommittees and newly formed work groups and task forces.
- Identify and implement ways to strengthen the involvement of local governments in the implementation of Agreement commitments that are most appropriately dealt with at the jurisdictional level.

Bay Program Responsibilities

- Develop a simple checklist, in cooperation with LGAC, that outlines actions to be undertaken by subcommittees, work groups, and task forces to meet the spirit of the 2001 LGPAP.
- Continue to support Bay LOGIN.
 - Support development of necessary protocols to ensure that subcommittees, task forces, and work groups provide timely information to Bay LOGIN for distribution to local governments.

- Consider funding for the *Bay Currents* quarterly newsletter.
- Continue support for the Chesapeake Bay Partner Communities Program.
 - Modify Small Watershed Grants Program to give priority to localities that are pursuing CBPC milestones/recognition.
- Target some portion of Bay Program funding to assist local government efforts.
- Consider funding for the Community Innovation Awards Program.

Implementation Committee Responsibilities"

- Ensure that Bay Program subcommittees, work groups, task forces, are aware of, and implement, the plan's objectives.
- Include an annual agenda item on the efforts of the states to engage local governments in Bay watershed activities.
- Act upon CESC recommendations for how participation could be increased through use of technology—including but not limited to video conferencing—by March, 2003.

LGAC Responsibilities

- Serve as an advocate for the full implementation of the 2001 LGPAP.
- Include a status report on the implementation of the Participation Action Plan in the LGAC annual report along with an analysis and recommendations to the EC.

- Continue to grow roots into the local government community.
 - Maintain LGAC's current relationship with the Metropolitan Areas Workgroup.
 - Structure at least one meeting a year to serve as an exchange of information between LGAC/Bay Program and local government associations.
 - Participate in local government association meetings.
- Develop and maintain Bay LOGIN.
 - Develop, in cooperation with the Bay Program, a protocol for when and in what form subcommittees, work groups, and task forces should present information for distribution by Bay LOGIN.
 - Develop a protocol in cooperation with the Bay Program for distributing information gathered by Bay LOGIN back to relevant subcommittees, work groups, and task forces.
 - Collect information on those with interest in participating on technical work groups and subcommittees and provide it to the jurisdictions and others as appropriate.
- Undertake an annual assessment of local government representation and involvement in work groups and task forces established to meet critical Agreement areas.
 - Identify work groups and task forces engaged in critical Agreement areas.
 - Identify local government stakeholders involved in these work groups and task forces.
 - Undertake an assessment of whether work groups and task forces are engaging local governments and make suggestions for how engagement could be improved.
- Provide the results of the 2001 Local Government Needs Assessment to relevant Bay Program subcommittees, work groups, and task forces.
 - Review proposals for local government assistance and make recommendations based on the results of the assessment.
- Advocate on behalf of local governments the need for increased funding to implement the 2000 Agreement.
 - Work with the Budget Steering Committee to ensure that local government priorities are addressed.
 - Provide information to local governments on available federal, state, and non-profit sources of financial assistance.