

Management Committee Meeting Notes
Thursday, January 20, 2022
Meeting conducted remotely due to COVID-19



Attendees:

Mark Tedesco, EPA LISO	Gavin Jackson, CT DEEP	Rebecca Shuford, NYSG
Nikki Tachiki, EPA LISO	Katie O'Brien-Clayton, CT DEEP	Elizabeth Hornstein, NYSG
Cayla Sullivan, EPA LISO	Paul Stacey, Footprints in the Water	Lillit Genovesi, NYSG
Esther Nelson, EPA LISO	Evelyn Powers, IEC	Sarah Schaefer-Brown, NYSG
Alex Huddell, EPA LISO	Richard Friesner, NEIWPCC	Sara Powell, NYSG
Mel Coté, EPA R1	Jordan Bishop, NEIWPCC	Jimena Perez-Viscasillas, LISS/NYSG
Leah O'Neill, EPA R1	Susan Sullivan, NEIWPCC	Sylvain De Guise, CTSG
Bessie Wright, EPA R1	Jim Ammerman, LISS/NEIWPCC	Judy Preston, LISS/CTSG
Casey Abel, EPA R1	Robert Burg, LISS/NEIWPCC	Deborah Abibou, CTSG
MaryJo Feuerbach, EPA R1	Cassandra Bauer, NYSDEC Sue	Alicia Tyson, CTSG
Rick Balla, EPA R2	Van Patten, NYSDEC Mary	Penny Vlahos, STAC/UConn
Jim Hagy, EPA ORD	Arnold, NYSDEC Michele	Darcy Lonsdale, STAC/SBU
Nancy Seligson, CAC/NY	Golden, NYSDEC Victoria	Suzanne Paton, USFWS
Holly Drinkuth, CAC/CT	O'Neill, NYSDEC/NEIWPCC	Audrey Mayer, USFWS
Erik Bedan, CT DEEP	Kristin Kraseski, NYSDEC/NEIWPCC	Nancy Ferlow, USDA-NRCS
Brian Thompson, CT DEEP	Kathleen Esposito, NYCDEP	Thomas Morgart, USDA-NRCS
Kathleen Knight, CT DEEP	Gary Wikfors, NOAA	John Morrison, USGS
Harry Yamalis, CT DEEP	Lynn Dwyer, NFWF	Paige Allison Meyer, CCE/CAC
Christopher Bellucci, CT DEEP		Todd Randall, USACE-NAE
Kevin O'Brien, CT DEEP		Susannah King, MASS DEP
Kelly Streich, CT DEEP		

Introduction: Mark Tedesco called the meeting to order at approximately 9:00am in Microsoft Teams. He gave an update on personnel: Esther Nelson transferred into the EPA Region 2 Water Division to join the Long Island Sound Office (LISO) permanently. He outlined the meeting agenda to review the FY22 work plan and budget package and next steps, Environmental Justice (EJ) work group updates, End of Year Report, and the Long Island Sound Futures Fund (LISFF) 2022 RFP development and release. There were no changes to the agenda or October 21 meeting notes.

- Cassie Bauer: Shared that NYSDEC hired a new LISS Coordinator and starts January 24.

Science and Technical Advisory Committee (STAC) Update provided by Jim Ammerman:

- Jim Ammerman: Met online on November 19, and had presentations from the LIS Research Grant Program 2018 recipients, EJ Mapping Tool, and Strategic Communications Plan. The next meeting is February 18 and will focus on the LIS Research Grant Program RFP, CT National Estuarine Research Reserve, LIS Marine Debris Action Plan, and upcoming LIS Research Conference.
- Penny Vlahos: Added that NY co-chair, Darcy Lonsdale, will be stepping down, and will look for nominations in May with decisions made in June.

Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) Update provided by Nancy Seligson and Holly Drinkuth:

- Nancy Seligson: CAC met online on December 19, and introduced new LISS staff. Presentations included Strategic Communications Plan and hypoxia 2021 updates. Highlighted that the CAC will be doing some future outreach including engaging new EPA Region 2 Regional Administrator and NYS Governor, coordinating a LIS Summit for CT and NY legislature, and getting all Congressional representatives within the watershed on the LIS Congressional Caucus. Mentioned that the CAC is trying to hold an in-person meeting either in June or September. Additionally, the CAC is currently drafting a priority letter to MC which will be distributed before the April meeting.

- Holly Drinkuth: Added that Nancy Seligson was re-elected NY co-chair, and Marty Garrell was re-elected as secretary.

FY2022 Work Plan and Budget Process – Mark Tedesco

- Mark Tedesco: Introduced that the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) has been signed, and LISS will receive funding through that Bill for the next few years; however he highlighted that LISS still does not know what the regular appropriations will be (range from \$50-60+ million). Noted that EPA is still awaiting guidance from Office of Management and Budget as to how the BIL funds can be used (i.e., match requirements), and EPA anticipates increased reporting requirements.
- Leah O’Neill: Presented on the FY22 Work Plan and Budget (see presentation for more details), in which she noted that LISO distributed the FY22 Base Budget Package for review. Mentioned that LISS has two appropriations, CWA 119 and 320, and this year LISS will also receive funding from the BIL; but noted that LISO is anticipating on not being able to combine appropriations and BIL funds on a single award. She mentioned that LISS is currently on a continuing resolution until February 18, in which appropriations can either increase or decrease depending on decisions. Highlighted that there is a lot of uncertainty remaining with the BIL funds, but it is known that LISS will receive \$106 million over 5 years (CWA 119) and \$132 million for the 28 NEPs (CWA 320). She highlighted that the current base budget is estimated at \$28 million and noted some changes: funding to support increased staffing needs, changed EJ RFA to support 2 years of funding, and increased LISFF (please see base budget cover sheet). She highlighted that next steps include reviewal of the Base Budget Package to identify gaps, continue discussion at the March 17 Implementation Team meeting, and prepare to make decisions at the April 21 MC meeting. Noted if there is an opportunity to release the EJ RFA before these next steps, then LISO will pursue getting the award processed.
 - Sylvain DeGuise: Highlighted that the LIS Research Grant Program RFP may need to be released before these identified next steps to stay on the 2-year timeline.
 - Bessie Wright: Mentioned that the new BIL guidance may require reporting requirements associated with RFAs and RFPs.
 - Mel Coté: Added that new BIL funds may require Buy-American requirements on materials purchased under grant agreements (e.g., construction).
 - Paul Stacey: Asked about the enhancement project request for this upcoming year.
 - Leah O’Neill: Responded that LISS is not going to proceed with a call for enhancement projects this year as the previous year was too burdensome on work groups and partners to review all of the submitted proposals. She added that to streamline the process LISO will work with partners to implement projects that address the work groups’ FY22 work plans. She added that LISS is proposing to continue the increasing the funding allocations for LISFF, so additional projects could be implemented.
 - Penny Vlahos: Asked how the MC will assess the appropriateness/ROI.
 - Mark Tedesco: Responded that the SharePoint Tracking and Reporting Tool will be able to assess and evaluate the ROI so LISS can adjust emphasis in other areas if need be. He added that more discussion regarding this question will be addressed during the End of Year report presentation.
 - Nancy Seligson: Added that it would be helpful to identify a way to prioritize the current investments’ impact and progress.
- Mark Tedesco: Walked through the FY22 Base Budget Package: the base budget cover sheet includes ongoing projects (i.e., monitoring, modeling, staffing) that have been pre-approved (totaled at \$28 million with \$5.5 million overmatch), followed by the new proposed supplemental projects (totaled at \$21 million). He mentioned that LISO is working with the States to fund large habitat restoration and

land acquisition projects. He also highlighted new projects that would address the BIL, including, CTDEEP's new research vessel, NYSDEC's water quality improvement projects and LIS watershed septic system replacement, and Massachusetts DEP's nitrogen reduction infrastructure upgrades (detailed proposal to be added to the package soon). He emphasized that these supplemental projects are well-thought out and directly follow-up priorities and needs identified by partners and work groups.

- Leah O'Neill: Highlighted that depending on the match requirements of the BIL, the overmatch may be lowered if match is waived.
- Susannah King: Added that the Mass DEP upgrades are proposed for the Chicopee WWTP as it requires the largest nitrogen reduction. She emphasized that the overall project is estimated at \$57 million (not requesting it all from LISS) as the type, age, and location of the WWTP require a massive upgrade. In an EJ community.
 - Mark Tedesco: Added that this could be a demonstration site for upper basin WWTPs, and Chicopee is an underserved community that would greatly benefit from this project.
 - Holly Drinkuth: Supported the project and added that this approach may be better than supporting these upgrades through the LISFF as it really addresses nitrogen reduction.
 - Paul Stacey: Suggested that future WWTPs to consider phosphorus reductions as well.

Stretch Break at 10:30am

Continued FY2022 Work Plan and Budget Process

- Mark Tedesco: Opened the floor for questions.
- Richard Friesner: Asked how the MC will identify gaps from the current base package.
 - Mark Tedesco: Responded that the Science Needs document should be used as a resource to help address gaps (i.e., through the LIS Research Grant Program). Added that next steps will include to reconvene the Federal Partners Coordinating Work Group to address remaining gaps (i.e., shellfish, science integration, coastal resiliency, living shorelines). Encouraged the MC, implementation team, and work groups to review the base budget package and determine if priorities and needs have been adequately addressed, or identify areas that LISS should further invest in. He mentioned that once reviewal is complete, LISO will add to the supplemental list and provide options for the MC. Reiterated that LISO will follow up this meeting with BIL guidance and may propose additional Implementation Team and MC meetings to provide adequate time for discussion/reviewal of the package.
 - Esther Nelson: Mentioned that if anyone wanted to contact the Federal Partners Coordinating work group to contact her and/or relevant work group chairs.
 - Rick Balla: Mentioned that there is other available BIL funding through other entities (i.e., state revolving funds, clean water act) in which could be used to implement additional projects.

Environmental Justice Work Group Updates – Bessie Wright, Nikki Tachiki, and Jimena Perez

- EJ Co-Chairs: Presented on the updates from the EJ Work Group, including, development of a work plan for the next five years (see presentation for more details). The work plan is structured around the main problem, lack of representation and inclusion of underserved communities and their needs in LISS decision-making and implementation, in which there are several tasks planned out to help address objectives. These tasks include engagement of 3-5 areas per state, EJ Needs Assessment, Internal Assessment, DEIJ trainings, LIS Community Impact Fund, exploration of EJ Committee, and conservations with LISS workgroups with emphasis on EJ. Other updates include:
 - LIS Community Impact Fund RFA is still under review by EPA and to be released soon.

- Internal Assessment is in the FY22 base budget to better identify training and knowledge gaps.
- Needs Assessment RFP is being drafted and to be reviewed in February.
- EJ integration through all LISS work groups will begin with the Sustainable and Resilient Communities Work Group on February 8 and plan to reach out to the other work groups.
- Penny Vlahos: Asked if there are other regions or programs undergoing the same process.
 - Bessie Wright and Jimena Perez: Responded that the Internal Assessment is based off of Chesapeake Bay's program; the LIS Community Impact Fund is new but did have discussions with a non-federal program in San Francisco; and Narragansett Bay and Southeast New England Program are also running their own EJ programs.
- Paul Stacey: Suggested to incorporate input from organizations and communities outside of LISS into the development of these projects to better address their needs.
- Richard Friesner: Highlighted to use the network that LISS has to identify communities.
 - Bessie Wright: Emphasized that the top priority for the EJ work group is to engage and incorporate input from communities and organizations.

End of Year Report – Cayla Sullivan

- Cayla Sullivan: Presented on the End of Year Report submitted to the EPA Headquarters – under the NEP Funding Guidance, LISS is required to submit an End of Year report summarizing the status of funded projects, their relation to the CCMP, and the funds spent. The Tracking and Reporting Tool was designed to fulfill multiple reporting requirements, in which LISO has submitted the Tool as the End of Year report as it includes all the fields required by the guidance. Added that the Tool can also be used to analyze LISS's investment year to year, and therefore can inform future decision-making regarding gaps. She encouraged people to reach out to her if interested in a specific area and associated investments (i.e., creating graphics).
- Mark Tedesco: Added that LISO will use the outputs of the Tracking and Reporting Tool for the upcoming Report to Congress.

Futures Fund 2022 Update – Lynn Dwyer

- Lynn Dwyer: Presented on the development of LISFF 2022 RFP, in which RFP is currently in review. The notification of the RFP is to be released in February, with the release of the RFP in March. NFWF has been working with work groups to provide technical assistance to grantees to submit competitive proposals. NFWF has a field liaison that has engage more partnership in the upper basin.

Updates

- Mark Tedesco: Highlighted that due to the recent USGS groundwater delineation project, the LIS boundary is to be technically adjusted to be reflect the groundwater boundaries; and therefore would affect project eligibility.
- Sylvain DeGuise: Mentioned that the LIS Marine Debris Action Plan has been distributed for comments, and encouraged partners to review the plan and volunteer as lead or partners for actions.
- Nancy Ferlow: Mentioned that NRCS received BIL funding, allocated to the watershed program, and released an RFP for project, received 20 submission, and will keep the MC updated as these projects will affect LIS watershed.

Next Meeting & Adjournment – Mark Tedesco

- Meeting was adjourned at 12:00pm.
- Next meeting: April 21, 2022

LISS FY 2022 Work Plan and Budget

Presentation Overview

- FY22 Appropriations
- Estimated base funding
- Budget scenarios
- Anticipated schedule
- Outline next steps



LONG ISLAND SOUND STUDY

A PARTNERSHIP TO RESTORE AND PROTECT THE SOUND

Anticipating that we can combine appropriations on a single award.
We will NOT be able to combine BIL and Non-BIL

FY22 EPA LISS Funding Authorizations

CWA 119

CWA 320

Bipartisan
Infrastructure
Law

Non-BIL

Bipartisan
Infrastructure
Law

Non-BIL

EPA LISS FY22 Non-BIL Funding Sources

- CWA §119 - Long Island Sound Restoration & Stewardship Act
 - ✓ Under Continuing Resolution at \$30.4M until Feb 18
 - ✓ Possibly up to \$40M in appropriations
 - ✓ Match requirements: 5% for education, 40% for all else
- CWA §320 - National Estuary Program (NEP)
 - ✓ Under Continuing Resolution at \$700,000 until Feb 18
 - ✓ Possibly up to \$1.7M in appropriations
 - ✓ Match requirement: Straight 50%

Uncertainty
about final
funding
amount \$\$

EPA LISS FY22 BIL Funding Sources

2022 Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (BIL)

- ✓ *Funding through both CWA 119 and CWA 320*
- ✓ *\$106M over 5 years to Long Island Sound (CWA 119)*
- ✓ *\$132m for National Estuary Program, 28 estuaries (CWA 320)*

Lots of uncertainty remaining:

- Waiting on detailed Funding Guidance
 - Possible Match reduction or waiver
- Expecting an increase in reporting requirements
 - Final funding allocations & distribution
 - New award Terms & Conditions
- Cannot be combined with non-BIL funds

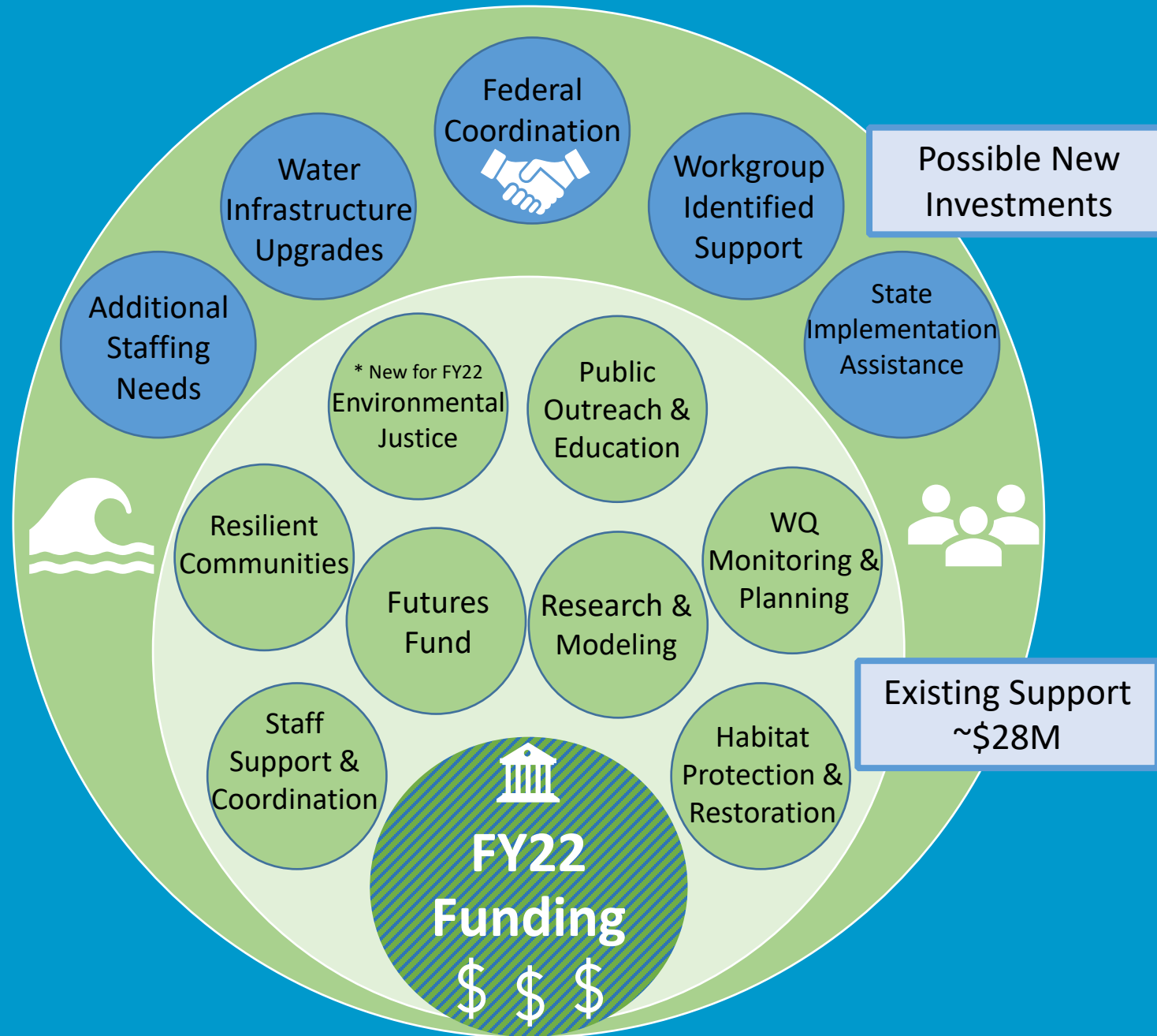
FY 22 Work Plan and Budget Development

Starting Point (roughly \$28M for Base)

- **Ongoing Base Budget (Roughly \$8.5 million)**
- **Future Fund (\$10 million)**
- **Research Program (\$3 million)**
- **Proposed EJ Work (\$3.2 million)**
- **Sustainable & Resilient Communities (\$1.5 million)**

- \$ to support increased staffing needs
- Changed EJ RFA to support 2yrs of funding
- Increased Futures Fund placeholder

Scoping FY22 Budget Scenarios



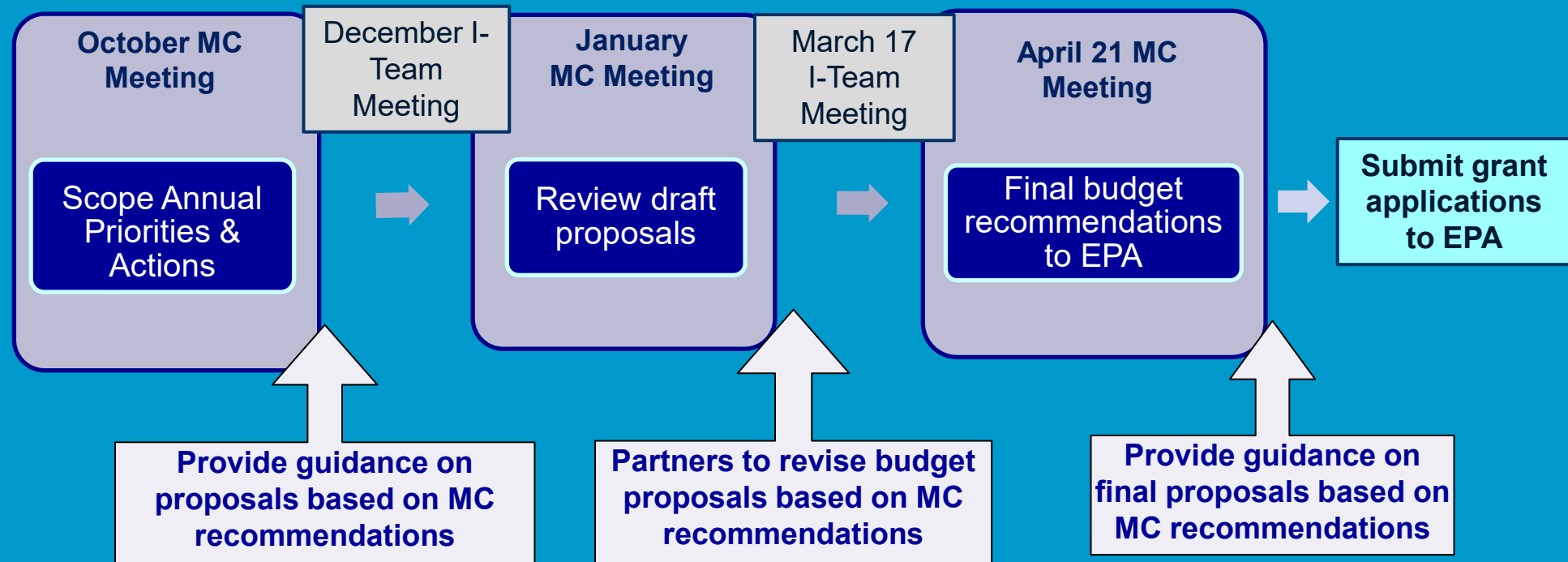
Discuss Base Budget Package

- *Overview package*
- *Address questions*
- *Identify possible gaps*
- *Federal Partner Collaboration*
 - *Match Considerations*
 - *Lots of uncertainty*

Annual Long Island Sound Budget Process

MC – Management Committee

I-Team – Implementation Team



FY22 Work Plan and Budget Development -- Next Steps

- Review LIS Budget Package
 - Identify any remaining gaps
 - Federal Coordinating Group finalize LISS request
- Implementation Team March 17
 - Conduct detailed review of budget package
 - Outline budget scenarios for MC consideration
- Prepare for April 21 MC meeting
 - MC Members to provide final budget recommendations to EPA

Release
Environmental
Justice RFA

Help Streamline Process

- Submit funding applications on time
- Use correct forms
- Assign correct CFDA
- Make sure budget numbers match on SF 424 and budget narrative
- Use correct Budget Object Classes
- Send advance copy to EPA Project Officer
- Notify EPA PO when you submit to Grants.gov
- Check current award for changes or No-Cost Time Extension