



Humanitarian OpenStreetMap Team (HOT) Indonesia

FEDERAL COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE for Crowdsourcing and Citizen Science

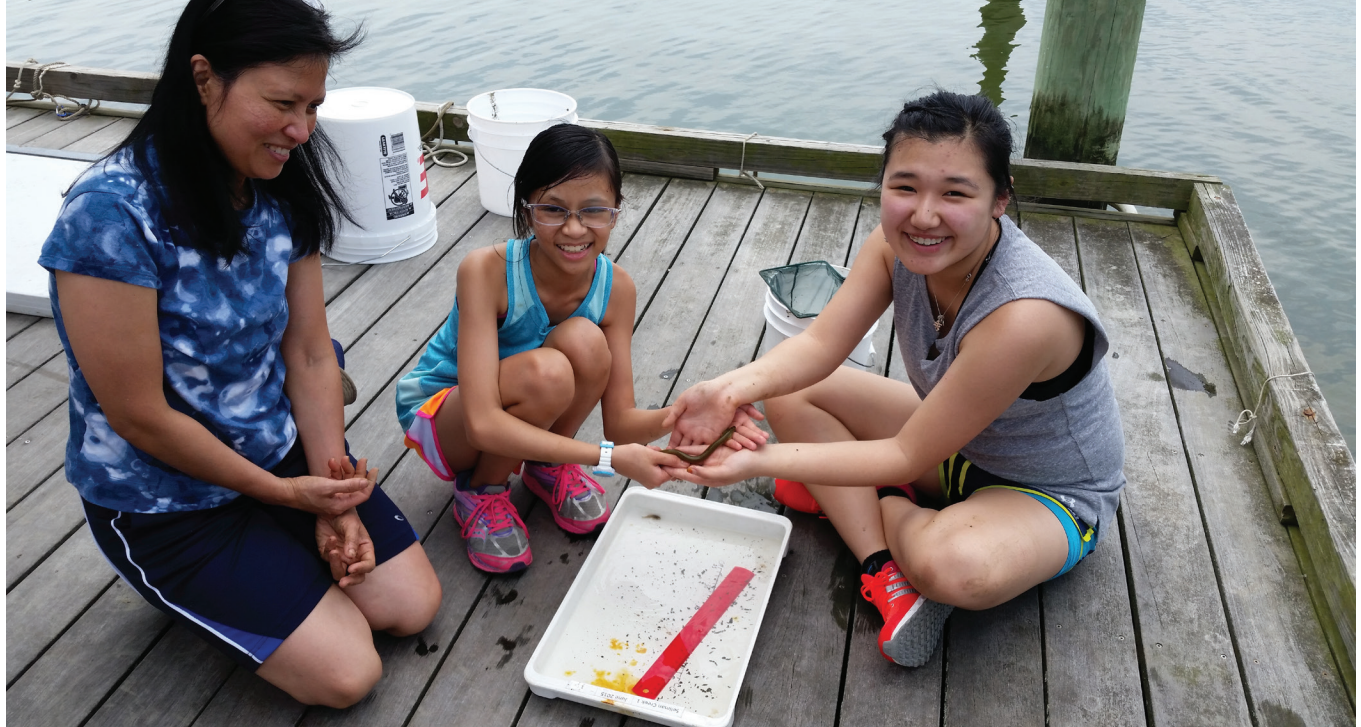
The Federal Community of Practice for Crowdsourcing and Citizen Science (FedCCS) works within and across Federal agencies to address a unique challenge: How do we, as federal practitioners, engage the public directly and creatively as partners to enhance our agencies' diverse missions?

Citizen science encourages members of the public to voluntarily participate in the scientific process. Whether by asking questions, making observations, conducting experiments, collecting data, or developing low-cost technologies and open-source code, members of the public can advance scientific knowledge and benefit society.

Through **crowdsourcing** – an open call for voluntary assistance from a large group of individuals – Americans can tackle complex challenges by conducting research at large geographic scales as well as over long periods of time, in ways that professional scientists working alone cannot easily duplicate.

Why use citizen science and crowdsourcing?

Federal agencies have used citizen science and crowdsourcing for over a century. NOAA's National Weather Service *Cooperative Observer Program* (COOP) was established by Congress in 1890; volunteers across the country now collect and report data used in forecast models. Since 1991, USGS's *Did You Feel It?* project uses volunteer reports to supplement conventional sensor networks and provide comprehensive earthquake coverage across the United States and the globe. The Federal Catalog of Crowdsourcing and Citizen Science lists over 420 federally supported projects in areas ranging from biodiversity to computer science, to health and medicine, and even disaster response. Support for these projects is underpinned by legislation including the Crowdsourcing and Citizen Science Act (2016).



How can I learn more?

Despite the value of these approaches, federal projects often face similar challenges around engaging participants, documenting data quality, and sharing open and accessible data. **The Federal Community of Practice on Crowdsourcing and Citizen Science (FedCCS) works across government agencies to share lessons learned and develop best practices** for designing, implementing, and evaluating crowdsourcing and citizen science initiatives. FedCCS goals include:

- Expanding and improving the U.S. government's use of crowdsourcing, citizen science, and similar public participation techniques.
- Documenting the value of these approaches for accelerating scientific research, increasing cost effectiveness, addressing societal needs, providing hands-on learning in STEM, and increasing public engagement and input in Federal agency missions.
- Helping develop and maintain key resources like a project planning toolkit and government-wide citizen science and crowdsourcing project catalog on citizenscience.gov.
- Supporting practitioners as they address the legal and policy aspects of conducting

crowdsourcing and citizen science in the federal government.

- Connecting federal practitioners with each other, and with outside stakeholders, to share best practices for FedCCS projects.
- Coordinating with partners in academia and the private sector to maximize the impact of federally supported crowdsourcing and citizen science activities.

The FedCCS community is open to all federal practitioners working on, funding, or just interested in learning more about crowdsourcing and citizen science. Over 350 people from 60+ agencies already participate. Anyone affiliated with a federal organization can join by emailing listserv@listserv.gsa.gov.



Compiled and Designed by the Wilson Center and FedCCS Steering Community