

Find out more about what our regional offices are doing for environmental justice in your community!

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Tools and Products for Environmental Justice Action

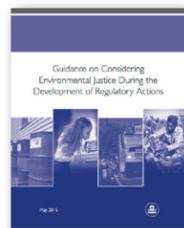
OEJ programs have established the following tools and resources to facilitate and support the incorporation of environmental justice considerations into agency actions. These cross-cutting efforts aim to create consistency and clarity around how EPA identifies and addresses environmental justice concerns.

EJSCREEN

To better meet the Agency's responsibilities related to the protection of public health and the environment, EPA has developed an environmental justice mapping and screening tool. EJSCREEN provides users with a nationally consistent dataset and approach for combining environmental and demographic indicators. EPA made this tool publicly available online to be more transparent about how we consider environmental justice in our work, assist our stakeholders in making informed decisions, and create a common starting point for dialogue with partners and the public. It can be found at: <https://www.epa.gov/ejscreen>.

Policy

EPA released two documents related to the consideration of environmental justice during rulemaking processes. The first of these, *Guidance on Considering Environmental Justice During the Development of an Action*, fosters an understanding and ensures consistency by EPA staff as they consider environmental justice during rulemaking actions. The second document, *Technical Guidance for Assessing Environmental Justice in Regulatory Analysis*, provides the technical underpinnings to fully consider environmental justice during rulemakings. Both documents can be found on <https://www.epa.gov/environmentaljustice>.

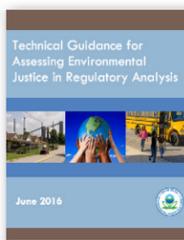


Training and Workshops

OEJ provides training and coordinates workshops for internal and external stakeholders on a broad range of issues relating to environmental justice and equitable development. OEJ ensures that Agency staff are trained on the most current data and resources available for the successful integration of environmental justice principles in their work. OEJ continually engages the public and other governmental partners to enhance the tools, methods, and practices for full integration and consideration of environmental justice concerns.

Science

Science plays an important role in providing a strong basis for action to protect the health and environment of populations that may be especially vulnerable to environmental hazards. EPA's new technical guidance for assessing environmental justice in regulatory actions was developed with participation from the public. OEJ is working with the Office of Research and Development to implement a new Environmental Justice Research Roadmap, which integrates environmental justice-related research across six National Research Programs. To read about these scientific developments, visit: <https://www.epa.gov/environmentaljustice/ej-2020-resources#documents>



Environmental Justice Legal Tools

The Legal Tools Development document, developed by EPA's Office of General Counsel, provides an overview of several discretionary legal authorities that EPA may consider using to more fully ensure that its programs, policies, and activities fully protect human health and the environment in minority and low-income communities. Some of the tools identified are already in use today; others have not yet been applied in an environmental justice setting. EJ Legal Tools is not a document prescribing when and how the Agency should undertake specific actions.



About the Office of Environmental Justice

For over 25 years, OEJ has worked to address the disproportionately adverse human health and environmental impacts in overburdened communities by integrating environmental justice considerations throughout the Agency.

Created in 1992, the Office of Environmental Justice (OEJ) coordinates Agency efforts to address the needs of vulnerable populations by decreasing environmental burdens, increasing environmental benefits, and working collaboratively to build healthy, sustainable communities. OEJ provides financial and technical assistance to communities working constructively and collaboratively to address environmental justice issues. The Office also works with local, state, and federal governments; tribal governments; community organizations; business and industry; and academia, to establish partnerships seeking to achieve protection from environmental and health hazards for all people regardless of race, color, national origin, or income.

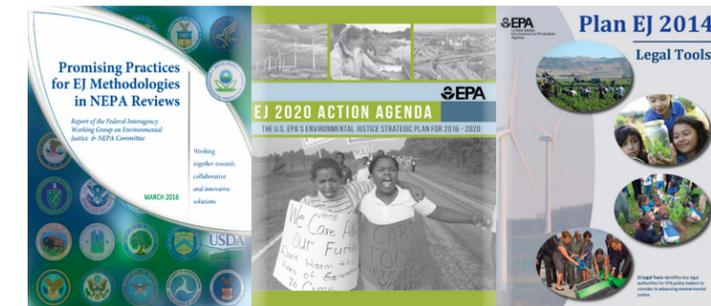
To accomplish this mission, OEJ has created the following programs, policies, and activities to assist communities in building their capacity; to better engage federal agencies to help them understand environmental justice issues; to incorporate the voices of communities into agency decisions; and to provide tools and resources for promoting the principles of environmental justice.

Strategic Opportunities for Advancing Environmental Justice

An integral part of the Agency's mission is to focus our attention on the environmental and public health challenges that face our nation's minority, low-income, tribal, and indigenous populations. Our approach is both collaborative and strategic – working with partners to create holistic solutions that make a difference in communities through better policies, tools, and application of resources. These approaches have been captured through successive EJ strategic plans for the Agency.

The first of these plans largely focused on the creation of better tools, policies, and guidance to fill important gaps. Currently we are focused on three main strategic areas.

- We strive to strengthen and expand our governmental partnerships, particularly focused on the proactive efforts of state, tribal, and local governments to advance environmental justice.
- We are also focused on the implementation and use of the tools and guidance created previously in a way that is measurable and significant.
- We endeavor to demonstrate measurable progress on significant issues, including reducing disparities in childhood blood lead levels and working to ensure that all people served by small community and tribal water systems have drinking water that meets applicable health-based standards.



For More Information

To find out more about the Office of Environmental Justice, please call 202-564-2515, or visit: www.epa.gov/environmentaljustice

Call the EJ Hotline for a direct way to provide feedback and ask questions related to environmental justice. Call the Hotline at 1-800-962-6215 or email ejhotline@epa.gov.

Pub Number
Date

Did You Know?

November 2, 2017 marks the 25th anniversary of the creation of the EPA's Office of Environmental Justice.



OEJ Milestones



Environmental Justice Integration

The EPA actively seeks to incorporate the principles of environmental justice at all levels of the Agency. In addition to developing a strategic plan that directly support the integration of environmental justice considerations internally and with other federal officials, the Agency partners with federal, state, local, and tribal departments, as well as with other stakeholders in communities, business and industry, academia, etc., to assist in the consideration and incorporation of environmental justice into their practices and processes.

The Federal Interagency Working Group on Environmental Justice (EJ IWG)

The EJ IWG works to integrate the principles of environmental justice through the collaboration of 17 federal agencies and White House offices. Through the EJ IWG, the federal government assists overburdened and under-served communities in the implementation of comprehensive solutions to local environmental and human health challenges. The EJ IWG strives to ensure the federal government is: accessible to communities and other stakeholders working to address environmental justice concerns; aware of the environmental justice issues confronting communities to facilitate coordinated and collaborative federal assistance; and accountable to explain federal efforts to achieve environmental justice.

International Human Rights & Rights of Indigenous Peoples

EPA collaborates with the U.S. State Department and other federal agencies to engage other countries in sharing best practices and approaches to provide environmental and public health protection to vulnerable populations. EPA conducts this work to help fulfill the U.S. international human rights treaty obligations.

National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)

NEPA provides a framework to foster effective, efficient, and consistent consideration of environmental justice for decision-making on federal actions that affect the environment and human health. The Promising Practices for Environmental Justice Methodologies in NEPA Reviews, a compilation of approaches gleaned from a 4-year review of agency practices by more than 200 federal NEPA practitioners, consists of nine sections that provide guiding principles and specific steps to consider during the NEPA process. Federal agencies are implementing the Promising Practices through a variety of mechanisms, including cross-department briefings and trainings, publications (e.g. articles, FAQs), and stakeholder engagement.

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964

In accordance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, each federal agency is required to ensure that all programs or activities receiving federal financial assistance do not discriminate against recipients in any way based on race, color, or national origin. OEJ works closely with the EPA's External Civil Rights Compliance Office to share best practices, lessons learned, approaches, and tools to help prevent or resolve potential civil rights complaints.

Direct Support

The EPA provides direct support through financial and technical assistance to vulnerable, low-income, minority, and tribal communities seeking to understand and develop holistic solutions to their environmental and public health challenges. These resources are allocated to improve the quality of the air, land, and water so that communities may live, work, play, pray, and go to school in healthier, more sustainable environments.

Financial Resources for Creating Healthy, Sustainable & Equitable Communities

OEJ works directly with communities to implement solutions that address local environmental and health concerns. The Office provides financial assistance through two opportunities:

- the Environmental Justice Small Grants Program, which supports small projects that assist communities as they develop their visions for revitalization.
- the Collaborative Problem-Solving Cooperative Agreement Program, which supports implementation level projects as communities seek to apply holistic solutions to their most pressing challenges.

These competitive grant opportunities support overburdened and underserved populations and create self-sustaining, community-based partnerships to improve local environments and public health. As of 2016, since its inception, the Office has awarded more than \$36 million in financial assistance to nearly 1500 community-based organizations.

To find out more about either of the financial assistance programs or the impact made by funded projects please visit: <https://www.epa.gov/environmentaljustice/environmental-justice-grants-funding-and-technical-assistance>

Technical Assistance Services for Communities (TASC) Program

Through the EPA's national Technical Assistance Services for Communities (TASC) program, communities enhance their ability to be meaningfully involved in the decision making process by learning how to better understand the science, regulations, and policies of environmental issues and EPA actions. The TASC program benefits communities by explaining technical findings and answering community questions, helping them understand complex environmental issues, and supporting their active roles in protecting healthy communities and advancing environmental protection. The TASC program can also provide opportunities for environmental education, bring diverse groups together, and strengthen community engagement.

TASC services can include: information assistance and expertise, community education, information assistance needs evaluation, and plan development other assistance to help community members work together to participate effectively in environmental decision-making.

Partnerships and Engagement

The EPA recognizes the necessity of meaningfully engaging stakeholders, such as through public participation, in an effort to sustain partnerships and involve those who are affected in the decision-making process so that future decisions may best serve the interests of our most vulnerable communities. The Agency continues to encourage public stakeholder engagement as a critical component of community revitalization.

National Environmental Justice Advisory Council (NEJAC)

The mission of NEJAC is to provide independent advice and recommendations to the EPA Administrator about broad, crosscutting issues related to environmental justice. NEJAC also holds public meetings to receive comments, questions, and recommendations regarding environmental justice issues. Since 1993, NEJAC has developed dozens of recommendation reports and advice letters to help the agency better address the needs of disadvantaged and underserved communities.

To read NEJAC's reports or the twenty-year retrospective of its activities and impact, visit: <https://www.epa.gov/environmentaljustice/nejac>

Tribal Consultation & Indigenous People's Engagement

To engage more effectively with federally-recognized tribes and all other indigenous peoples on their priority environmental and public health concerns, the Agency is working to implement the EPA Policy on Environmental Justice for Working with Federally Recognized Tribes and Indigenous Peoples. Under the leadership of OEJ, EPA is implementing this Policy in coordination and collaboration with tribes, other federal agencies, states, indigenous organizations, and all other interested stakeholders, as well as addressing issues raised within the context of international human rights treaty obligations.

To learn more about OEJ's efforts on addressing tribal and indigenous environmental and public health issues, visit: <https://www.epa.gov/environmentaljustice/environmental-justice-tribes-and-indigenous-peoples>.

