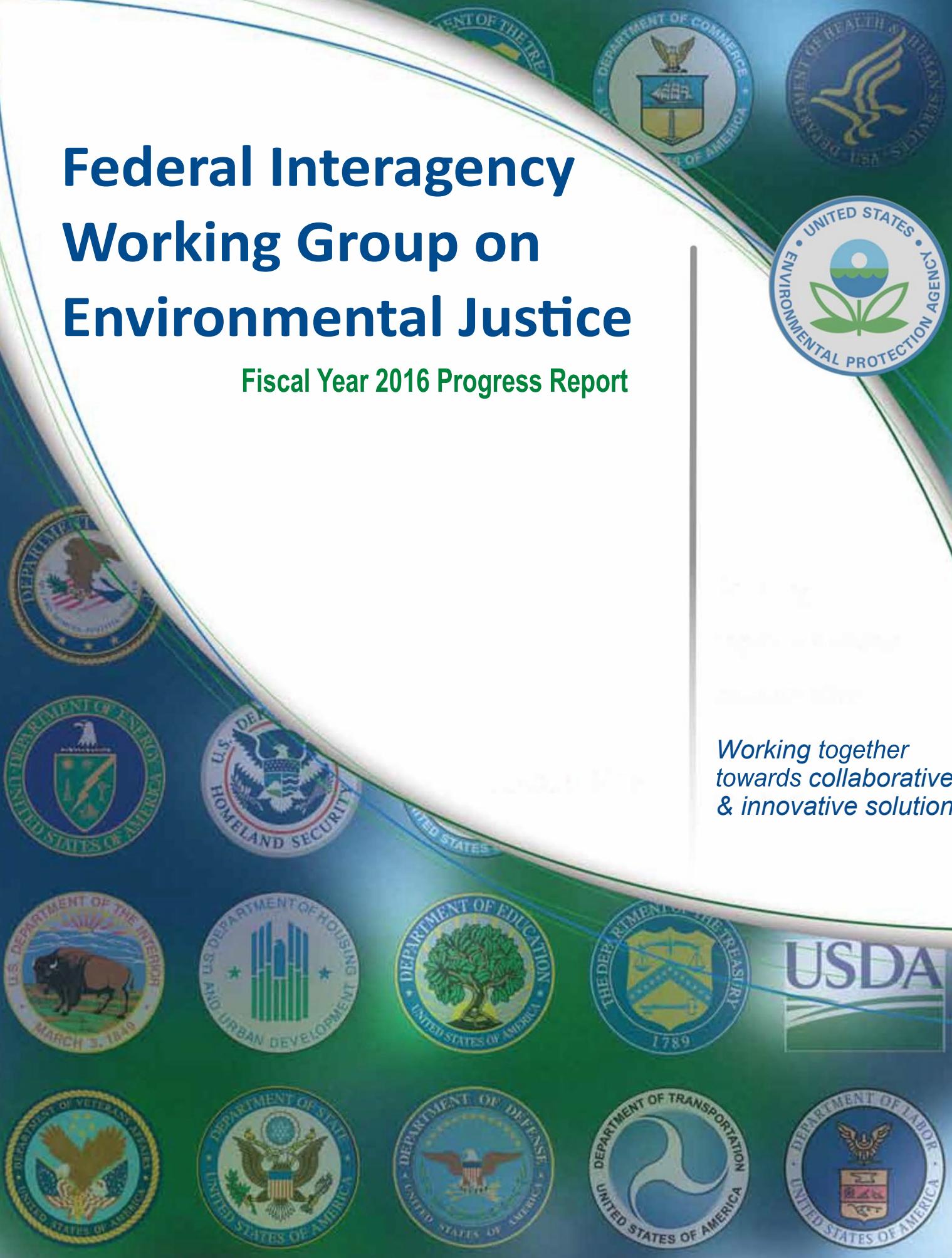


# Federal Interagency Working Group on Environmental Justice

Fiscal Year 2016 Progress Report



*Working together  
towards collaborative  
& innovative solutions.*





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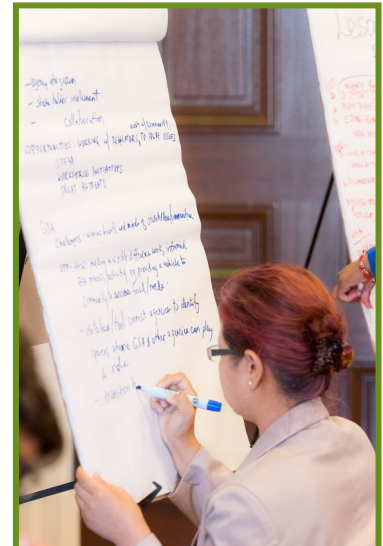
# Executive Summary

The Federal Interagency Working Group on Environmental Justice (EJ IWG), through the collaboration of 17 federal agencies and White House offices, imbues the federal government with the principals of environmental justice and assists overburdened and under-resourced communities implement comprehensive solutions to the environmental and human health challenges that impact them. 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 in order to facilitate coordinated and collaborative federal assistance, and
- **accountable** – able to explain federal efforts to achieve environmental justice.

To further enhance its collaborative efforts, the EJ IWG developed a Framework for Collaboration (Framework) outlining the goals of the working group for fiscal years (FY) 2016 through 2018. Consistent with its desire to be accountable and transparent to environmental justice stakeholders, the EJ IWG will provide annual Framework implementation progress reports. This, the EJ IWG's first report, summarizes its numerous accomplishments during FY 2016, a few of which are highlighted here:

- The EJ IWG successfully launched its Access and Awareness webinar series, bringing together over 700 people with various federal agencies and other subject matter experts to discuss resources and innovative ways to further environmental justice.
- The EJ IWG's National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Committee issued the *Promising Practices for EJ Methodologies in NEPA Reviews* report, which will help federal agencies advance strategies to efficiently identify and address environmental justice concerns. The report is a compilation of practices on how to effectively integrate environmental justice considerations into NEPA processes. The committee collaborated with a team of NEPA experts from ten departments, three agencies, and one White House office to develop this resource. The Committee also released a video featuring three agencies discussing the importance of NEPA and the value of the *Promising Practices* report in advancing environmental justice.
- The EJ IWG connected communities to resources to enhance multi-agency support of community-based solutions to environmental justice concerns. For example, the EJ IWG's Regional Interagency Workgroups (RIWG) brought together federal agencies and other local stakeholders to provide targeted and coordinated technical assistance to communities in the northeast (region 2) and southeast (region 4) regions.
  - ◇ The Region 2 RIWG is working with six communities to create partnerships for building a foundation to respond to local environmental justice issues.
  - ◇ The Region 4 RIWG is moving forward with the North Birmingham Environmental Collaboration Project, a coordinated approach to evaluate the environmental conditions and potential impacts in certain areas in and around Birmingham, Jefferson County, Alabama.
- The EJ IWG is using the Brownfields to Healthfields approach to focus on rural communities by fostering collaborations at the federal, state, and local levels that connect communities to resources that improve access to items such as food, housing and healthcare.
- The EJ IWG continued to support the College/Underserved Community Partnership Program (CUPP) by expanding federal agency participation and technical assistance to communities. The CUPP approach works to catalyze partnerships between local government and academic institutions to work with local communities to identify needs and develop projects to address those needs while federal agency partners provide technical assistance at no cost. The program also facilitates public-private partnerships through engagement with the private sector and nonprofit organizations when appropriate. <sup>1</sup>The CUPP is currently working with 61 academic institutions in 21 US states, including a new partnership with Oxford University in London, England. These partnerships are currently working with approximately 46 communities/cities with 89 ongoing or completed projects. Assistance from academic institutions involved with this program has been valued at almost \$3,000,000 to date; the direct impact of the projects on the communities is believed to be far greater. In total, CUPP projects have benefited communities and cities with a total population of over 700,000 people. For more information on the College/Underserved Community Partnership Program go to: <https://www.epa.gov/communityhealth/collegeunderserved-community-partnership-program-cupp>



Chanya Liv, Public Health Program Specialist at HHS capturing next steps and follow up items for the EJ IWG.

During FY 2017, the EJ IWG will build upon its work to facilitate federal agency collaborations that assist overburdened and under-resourced communities. The EJ IWG’s priorities include efforts to:

- Continue and expand communication and outreach to communities by hosting the Access and Awareness Webinar Series; by providing informational documents such as lessons learned, fact sheets, and resource information; by increasing the EJ IWG’s online presence; and by evaluating additional communication tools.
- Implement additional strategies to eliminate barriers that arise from lack of access to digital communication by prioritizing in-person outreach efforts through community visits and public dialogue with the EJ IWG.
- Convene cross-agency meetings and work sessions at multiple levels of government to foster communication and collaboration on environmental justice program and activity implementation.
- Foster cross-agency coordination and communication regarding outreach, trainings and workshops, projects, technical assistance, and coordinated resources for communities and on a regional scale.
- Support agencies in the development of environmental justice policies, programs, or activities by providing technical support, tools, and information.
- Create additional partnerships with federal agencies and academic institutions, including expanding the College/Underserved Community Partnership Program (CUPP) to include additional colleges and universities and federal agencies.
- Support the Educate, Motivate, Innovate (EMI) Initiative to expand collaborations with minority-serving institutions, including Historically Black Colleges and Universities, Tribal Colleges and Universities, Hispanic serving institutions, and Asian American, Native American, and Pacific Islander serving institutions.

## Creating Change Through Collaboration

The Federal Interagency Working Group on Environmental Justice (EJ IWG) comprises 17 federal agencies and White House offices working together to – advance environmental justice principles across the federal government, engage and support local communities in addressing environmental and human health impacts, and promote and implement comprehensive solutions to address environmental justice. The EJ IWG provides leadership, guidance, and support to federal agencies by:

- Coordinating a focused and collaborative effort across the federal government to address the environmental, social, economic, and public health burdens in minority, low-income, indigenous and tribal communities;
- Identifying and supporting policies that have measurable impacts on environmental justice;
- Focusing federal agency resources and technical assistance to address the challenges facing overburdened communities namely, disproportionately high and adverse health or environmental effects; and
- Developing partnerships with colleges, universities, and other organizations outside of the federal government to facilitate support for, and improvement in, overburdened communities.

**The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) defines Environmental Justice as:**

*The fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin, or income with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies.*

The EJ IWG Framework for Collaboration (“Framework”) outlines the goals of the working group for FY 2016 through 2018, which will advance greater federal agency collaboration to meet the objectives outlined above. The Framework also includes information on the formation and governance structure of the EJ IWG.

FY 2016 was the first implementation year of the Framework for Collaboration. In addition to highlighting some outstanding environmental justice work being delivered through interagency collaboration, this report also features some of the incredible work of the individual partner agencies of the EJ IWG.

# EJ IWG Framework for Collaboration

The EJ IWG developed and published the Framework in 2016 ([https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2016-04/documents/ej\\_iwg\\_framework\\_for\\_collaboration\\_fy2016-2018\\_0.pdf](https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2016-04/documents/ej_iwg_framework_for_collaboration_fy2016-2018_0.pdf)). The strategy builds upon decades of environmental justice work and community engagement to enhance the collective efforts of federal agencies. In addition to cross-agency strategies to better support environmental justice, the Framework articulates priorities that work to increase opportunities for public input and engagement with the EJ IWG. Successful community engagement meets communities “where they are” by employing approaches that provide cross-agency tools and resources, which enable the public to address environmental injustice in their local communities. The following is a snapshot of accomplishments achieved under the Framework’s four key goals. This report also features some of the incredible work of the individual partner agencies of the EJ IWG.

## Goal 1: Enhance Communication and Coordination

*Enhance communication and coordination to improve health, quality-of-life, and economic opportunities in overburdened communities.*

In FY 2016, through web-based and in-person communication, the EJ IWG increased access and awareness about critical environmental justice activities that inform and provide stakeholders with resources and an opportunity to engage directly with the federal agencies that make up the working group. Highlights include:

### Access and Awareness Webinar Series

- In August of 2016, the EJ IWG launched the Access and Awareness Webinar Series. Over 700 individuals registered for webinars that were produced in August and September. These webinars focused on highlighting federal programs that provide targeted resources to communities that are impacted by environmental injustice. The webinar series has provided an opportunity for various agencies and subject matter experts to discuss approaches, provide resources, share guidance, and highlight programs that help address environmental injustice across the country. Webinars included participants from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), U.S. Department of Labor (DOL), U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and U.S. Department of the Interior (DOI).

Below is a description of the initial webinars in the series and a link to access webinar recordings:

- **Federal Agencies Convening for Environmental Justice: Connecting Communities to Green Space, Healthcare and Jobs**  
Introduction to the EJ IWG by highlighting three innovative federal projects from HHS, DOL, and DOI National Parks Service
- **Increasing Awareness of Federal Grants and Resource Opportunities**  
Overview of how to use Grants.gov to apply for federal funding, along with grant opportunities available for communities from EPA and USDA

The Access and Awareness Webinar Series continued into FY 2017 and additional webinar recordings will be posted here <https://www.epa.gov/environmentaljustice/federal-interagency-working-group-environmental-justice-ej-iwg> as they become available.



**The EJ IWG helps ensure the federal government is:**

### Accessible

Easily reached by communities, advocates, and other stakeholders regarding environmental justice concerns

### Aware

Knowledgeable of the environmental justice concerns and issues facing communities in order to facilitate collaboration and coordination

### Accountable

Capable of explaining the actions and decisions related to the implementation of Executive Order 12898

## EJ IWG Fact Sheet Updated

- The EJ IWG updated its fact sheet in FY 2016 to better illustrate its work and the resources available to help overburdened communities improve their environment, health, quality-of-life, and economic opportunities. Community spotlights were incorporated to provide concrete examples of EJ IWG efforts and programs. The revised fact sheet is now available on the EJ IWG's webpage (<https://www.epa.gov/environmentaljustice/federal-interagency-working-group-environmental-justice-ej-iwg>) in English and Spanish. The fact sheet will also be distributed at events attended or hosted by the EJ IWG for stakeholders interested in the working group.

## Goods Movement Federal Resources Compendium

- Emissions from ports disproportionately impact millions of people in nearby communities that are often comprised of low income and minority populations. EPA is working with community groups, non-profits, and ports to facilitate effective communication and engagement with the local port communities in decision-making processes that impact their lives. In conjunction with this activity, the EJ IWG Goods Movement Committee developed the *Goods Movement Federal Resources Compendium*, which is intended to provide community stakeholders with a single document brings together all the publicly available resources from across the federal government (e.g., agency strategies, guidance documents, reports, funding mechanisms, data and assessment tools) for communities that are impacted by the goods movement industry and port activities. The Compendium has been reviewed and approved by EJ IWG agencies and will be published on the EJ IWG webpage in FY 2017.



## Spanish Translation of Citizens Guide to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)

- The EJ IWG NEPA Committee members from the Departments of Energy and Justice and the EPA worked together with the White House Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) to translate CEQ's existing *Citizens Guide to the National Environmental Policy Act* into Spanish for those with limited English proficiency so that they may better understand the NEPA process. The Spanish translation has been posted to CEQ's website ([https://ceq.doe.gov/get-involved/citizens\\_guide\\_to\\_nepa.html](https://ceq.doe.gov/get-involved/citizens_guide_to_nepa.html)).

## Advancing Environmental Justice through NEPA Video

- The NEPA Committee members developed a video to highlight the importance of NEPA as a tool to help advance environmental justice. The video showcases three agency representatives: Suzi Ruhl (EPA), Kedric Payne (DOE), and Chris French (USDA-Forest Service). Each speaker provides a personal perspective on environmental justice and why it is an essential focus area for federal agencies and communities. EPA's Office of Environmental Justice helped produce the video, which was accompanied by an EJ in Action blog (<https://blog.epa.gov/blog/2016/11/ej-nepa-promising-practices/>). The video and blog allow the EJ IWG to educate the public on the many methods the working group is using to integrate environmental justice into agency practices that impact overburdened communities (see Goal 3, Environmental Justice Tools for the National Environmental Policy Act, below for more examples of working to enhance the NEPA process).



## Community Spotlights

- Since September of 2014, the EJ IWG has provided opportunities for stakeholders to attend its monthly meeting and make presentations on an environmental justice issue or program. In FY 2016, the EJ IWG welcomed Robert Garcia of the City Project to discuss Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Title VI) and urban green space equity in Los Angeles, California (see [https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2016-08/documents/the\\_city\\_project\\_iwg.pdf](https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2016-08/documents/the_city_project_iwg.pdf)). In addition, numerous Title VI and EJ advocates participated in an EJ IWG monthly meeting led by the EJ IWG Title VI Committee to discuss strengthening enforcement across the federal government.

## Goal 2: Enhance Multi-Agency Support

Enhance multi-agency support of holistic community-based solutions to provide assistance as needed to address environmental justice issues.

In FY 2016, the EJ IWG promoted awareness and increased collaboration to leverage resources for capacity building, economic investments in minority, low-income, indigenous and tribal communities. Highlights include:

### Building Capacity in Rural Communities

- At the Central Appalachia Regional Brownfields Conference, the Rural Committee of the EJ IWG is using the Brownfields to Healthfields (B2H) approach to foster collaborations that help local organizations access state and federal resources to transform brownfields into end uses that improve access to healthcare, food security, recreation, and renewables, especially in overburdened and underserved communities. The EJ IWG convened a community engagement forum and B2H session with breakout working groups at the Central Appalachia Regional Brownfields Conference in September 2016. In the text box to the right, please find a testimonial from Bonnie Swinton of Sierra Club, Tennessee on the value the community engagement forum brought to her organization.

### Fostering Collaboration to Advance the B2H Model by Aligning Healthy Food with Affordable Housing

- The EJ IWG worked to increase access to healthy food for the low income, minority population in Bridgeport, Connecticut. Relevant USDA and other federal departments coordinated on how to best ensure community access to food and housing.

### Fostering Collaboration to Improve Drinking Water Quality in Rural America

- The EJ IWG explored ways to help rural communities address adverse environmental and public health impacts by reducing exposures in ground water and drinking water from failing and/or non-existing wastewater infrastructure. Discussions brought together experts from across the federal family in the technical, financial, health, and management aspects of water infrastructure.

### Building Capacity Regarding Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964

- The EJ IWG hosted a workshop at National Environmental Justice Conference which discussed the intersection of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act and Environmental Justice. More than 50 people from community organizations and federal agencies attended a training workshop held by the EJ IWG's Title VI Committee on March 11, 2016. The training focused on building capacity with respect to three topics: Title VI 101, Title VI and Environmental Justice and How to File a Complaint with Federal Civil Rights Agencies. Presenters included federal civil rights staff from the Departments of Justice, Homeland Security, and Transportation, as well as the EPA and the General Services Administration.

### Building Capacity by Strengthening Regional Interagency Community Collaboration

- Successful community engagement meets communities "where they are" by employing valuable outreach and communication strategies that are effective in addressing local needs. The EJ IWG is providing targeted and coordinated technical assistance to communities in EPA Region 2 (NY, NJ, Puerto Rico and US Virgin Islands and eight Tribal Nations) and Region 4 (Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, and six Tribal Nations) through Regional Interagency Workgroups (RIWG).

Participating in the Central Appalachia Regional Brownfields Conference was a great experience for Tennessee grassroots organizations. The conference provided important networking opportunities that led to connecting with the EPA Brownfields Assessment Grant process in Campbell County, TN.

After the Conference our organization continued to coordinate and attend the Campbell County Community Development meeting where we were able to add two coal strip mine sites on the Woodland Community Land Trust to the assessment grant. One of these sites is an Abandoned Mine Lands and the other is a coal legacy site. The assessment process, which included a series of meetings to educate additional groups and community leaders, included a grant writing session focused on EPA Brownfield Clean Up Grants.

Community Leaders also met with the Tennessee Department of Environmental Conservation to discuss potential opportunities for the state Abandoned Mine Lands program and discussed further collaboration with the EPA Brownfields Program in Nashville and Knoxville

Bonnie Swinton

Sierra Club, Tennessee



- The RIWG, co-chaired by EPA and HHS, in EPA Region 2 is working with the following six communities to create partnerships and build a foundation to respond to local environmental justice issues: Camden, New Jersey; Newburgh, New York; Caño Martín Peña, Puerto Rico; St. Croix (Hovensa site), US Virgin Islands; St. Regis Mohawk, New York; and Ramapo Nation, New Jersey. The RIWG chaired by EPA in EPA Region 4 is moving forward with a coordinated approach to evaluate the environmental conditions and potential environmental impacts, in North Birmingham, Fairmont, Collegetown, and Harriman Park neighborhoods, as well as portions of Five-Mile Creek and Harriman Park ditch, located in and around Birmingham, Jefferson County, Alabama. This effort, working to address air, water and waste issues, is known as the North Birmingham Environmental Collaboration Project. You can find more information here: <https://www.epa.gov/north-birmingham-project>.

### Goal 3: Advance Interagency Strategies

Advance interagency strategies to identify and address environmental justice concerns in agency programs, policies and activities.

In FY 2016, the EJ IWG fostered federal interagency coordination and increased accountability at regional, state, tribal and local levels. It also identified opportunities to highlight interagency community solutions that would advance the implementation of federal environmental justice policies and guidance. Highlights include:



V. Ann Heard (left) Deputy Regional Administrator for Region 4 of EPA ; and Vernice Miller Travis, (right) Vice Chair, Maryland Commission on Environmental Justice and Sustainable Communities discuss the importance of Regional Interagency Collaboration .

### Strategy and Policy Integration

#### Fostering Collaboration Through Interagency Leadership Meetings

- The EJ IWG coordinated two senior leadership meetings in February and August of FY 2016. The theme of the February meeting was “A Collaborative Conversation on Environmental Justice.” Topics included a discussion on “EJ IWG Advancing Collaboration in Communities,” a “Federal Family Community Collaboration Spotlight” from the West Atlanta Watershed Alliance, and a roundtable discussion on “Strengthening Integration of Environmental Justice Infrastructure in Agencies and Departments.”
- Several EJ advocates attended the August senior leadership meeting which focused on “Passing the Leadership Baton.” Topics included a “Community Voice: Stakeholders Perspectives on the EJ IWG” discussion and a roundtable on “Lessons Learned Through EJ Strategy Implementation and Collaboration.” The EJ IWG has been implementing the next steps suggested during these leadership meetings, such as the expansion of the College Underserved Partnership Program as discussed under Goal 4 below.

#### Gathering Stakeholder Feedback at the National Environmental Justice Advisory Committee (NEJAC) Meeting

- A panel of EJ IWG representatives presented at the March 2016 National Environmental Justice Advisory Committee (NEJAC) meeting in Gulfport, Mississippi. The panel highlighted the accomplishments and potential activities of the EJ IWG Committees. NEJAC members were able to ask questions and provide direction and feedback. For example, NEJAC members suggested that the EJ IWG should be involved in the revitalization the 100 overburdened communities discussed in EPA’s *EJ 2020 Action Agenda - The U.S. EPA’s Environmental Justice Strategic Plan for 2016-2020* (referred to as “EJ 2020”) (available at: <https://www.epa.gov/environmentaljustice/environmental-justice-2020-action-agenda>).
- In *EJ 2020*, EPA notes that it “will work with the Federal Interagency Working Group on Environmental Justice (EJ IWG) and other partnerships, as well as through direct relationships with other federal agencies to develop and implement an interagency strategy for promoting the revitalization of overburdened communities. This strategy will focus on connecting EPA’s community-based work, when and where possible, to other agencies’ statutorily-based programmatic resources and functions, and will be guided by achieving outcomes that answer community needs.” (*EJ 2020* pg. 35).

- The first ever Hazel M. Johnson Federal Agency Achievement Award was presented to the Department of Health and Human Services for Outstanding Agency Achievement in Advancing EJ. In addition, a EJ Champion Award was presented to Arthur Blazer, Former Deputy Under Secretary at United States Department of Agriculture for his outstanding leadership in environmental justice at USDA and with the EJ IWG.



DHS: Teresa Pohlman (left) Director, Sustainability and Environmental Programs, DHS and Lisa Quiveors (right) Sustainability and Environmental Programs, DHS.

#### Facilitating Collaboration to Address Concerns of Native American/Indigenous Peoples

- The EJ IWG Native American/Indigenous Peoples Committee convened a subgroup to discuss potential opportunities for federal agency coordination and collaboration regarding support for the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP). In FY 2016 the UNDRIP subgroup developed a draft set of UNDRIP training materials and scheduled its first interagency training which took place in the first quarter of FY 2017. Thirty-seven federal employees, from ten federal agencies, attended the training which was designed to enhance awareness of the UNDRIP, identify ways it is being applied by federal agencies, and enhance interagency coordination and collaboration in supporting the UNDRIP.

### Environmental Justice Tools for the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)

#### Published *Promising Practices Report*

- The NEPA Committee published the *Promising Practices for EJ Methodologies in NEPA Reviews* (referred to as “*Promising Practices Report*”) in March 2016. The report represents the professional experience, knowledge, and expertise of individuals from ten departments, three agencies, and one White House office. These individuals spent almost 48 months researching, analyzing and discussing the interaction of environmental justice and NEPA.
- The *Promising Practices Report* is a compilation of practices on how to effectively integrate environmental justice considerations into NEPA processes. The report disseminates promising environmental justice practices across the federal government so that we can learn from one another about effective ways to build robust methods for considering environmental justice into our NEPA practice. This document draws from existing environmental justice and NEPA Guidance developed by White House Council on Environmental Quality and federal agencies, but is not and should not be considered formal guidance.
- The *Promising Practices Report* is available at: [https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2016-08/documents/nepa\\_promising\\_practices\\_document\\_2016.pdf](https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2016-08/documents/nepa_promising_practices_document_2016.pdf).

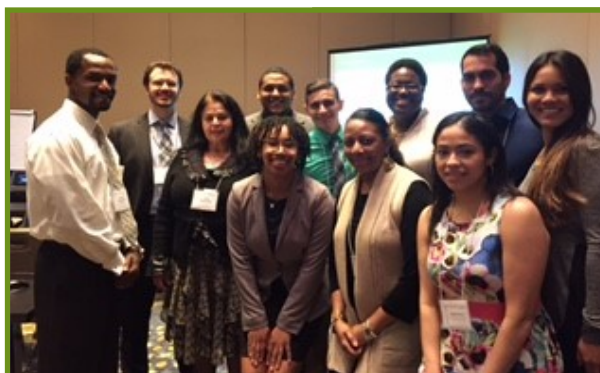
#### Developed NEPA Lexicon

- The NEPA Committee developed a Lexicon of terms from the *Promising Practices Report* to succinctly explain technical terms in a manner that is useable for all stakeholders. It includes preexisting agency definitions and a contextual basis for application. Agencies and communities may then use the Lexicon to more appropriately evaluate environmental justice issues. The final draft of the Lexicon was completed in September 2016 and is undergoing review.

#### Building Federal Capacity Through Training and Tools

- Across the federal government, departments and agencies are acting to advance EJ through NEPA and other environmental assessments, including the implementation of the *Promising Practices Report*. Departmental actions include training opportunities, guidance documents, and working groups to advance the methodologies outlined in the *Promising Practices Report*.
- The EJ IWG’s NEPA Committee has developed standardized training materials which can be used to create training modules as well as shorter, targeted presentations to enable the committee to expand the use of the *Promising Practices Report*. To help promote the use of methods outlined the *Promising Practices Report*, members of the NEPA Committee have also conducted briefings and trainings at various federal agencies. These agencies include: Department of Transportation (DOT) (Title VI, Office of Civil Rights & Environmental Law Practice Group; Federal Transit Agency); Federal Aviation Administration (FAA); Department of the Interior (DOI); Department of Agriculture (USDA); and Department of Energy (DOE).

- The NEPA Committee also created a guide that aggregates tools and resources that NEPA reviewers from across the federal government utilize to address and evaluate environmental justice concerns. These tools were compiled from a variety of federal agencies including the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC), EPA, DOT, Bureau of Land Management (BLM), USDA, and Federal Transit Administration (FTA).



Marsha Minter, (center) Associate Director of the Office of Environmental Justice and EJ IWG Program Manager, EPA; Joanna Stancil (second from left), Senior Advisor for State and Private Forestry, US Forest Service and Joey Baietti (second row center), Program Analyst, HUD; pose with EMI students following successful conference presentations.

#### Goal 4: Develop Partnerships with Academic Institutions

*Develop partnerships with academic institutions to assist in providing long-term technical assistance to overburdened communities*

In FY 2016, the EJ IWG expanded technical assistance opportunities for overburdened communities by developing partnerships with academic institutions. Highlights include:

##### Launched Educate, Motivate, and Innovate (EMI)

- In 2015, the White House launched the Federal Interagency Working Group on Environmental Justice’s Educate, Motivate and Innovate Climate Justice Initiative. This initiative focuses on the next generation of climate-justice leaders and expands collaborations with Minority-Serving Institutions, including Historically Black Colleges and Universities, Tribal Colleges and Universities, Hispanic Serving Institutions, and Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander Serving Institutions. The initiative is guided by the following principles:
  - ◇ **Educate:** Provide a two-way learning experience, access to information, platform to expand and share knowledge and ideas, and bridge the communication and capacity building gap.
  - ◇ **Motivate:** Ignite interest, nurture growth and commitment to addressing the complex issues around climate change and environmental justice in vulnerable communities.
  - ◇ **Innovate:** Embrace the opportunity for creative thought and action.
- In FY 2016, the EMI Initiative put out a call for student climate justice abstracts which led to a successful workshop at the 2016 National Environmental Justice Conference, posted a blog on the EJ IWG website to provide background on the initiative and its mission, and developed an EMI video <https://www.epa.gov/environmentaljustice/federal-interagency-working-group-environmental-justice-ej-iwg> or <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=liHpESiFOqE>.

##### Expanded the College/Underserved Community Partnership Program (CUPP)

- In an effort to expand agency technical support to the CUPP, USDA and the EPA signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on August 22, 2016. The CUPP MOU established a cooperative relationship with universities to develop research and projects that address environmental justice, environmental quality and improve economic opportunities and public health in local underserved communities through the CUPP model. CUPP is based on developing partnerships between small, underserved communities and geographically close colleges/universities to provide a variety of technical support at no cost to those communities. The program will facilitate public-private partnerships among schools, communities, the private sector, and nonprofit organizations. Some examples of past CUPP projects involving students that worked with local communities to provide solutions to their concerns can be found here: <https://www.epa.gov/communityhealth/collegeunderserved-community-partnership-program-cupp#getinvolved>. The EJ IWG is continuing to support the expansion of the CUPP program with the support of federal partners such as the Departments of the Interior, Energy and Health and Human Services.

# Federal Achievements in Advancing Environmental Justice

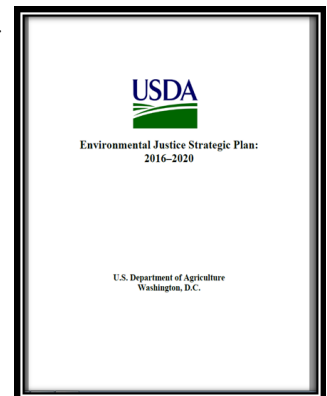
One of the core functions of the EJ IWG is to support the integration of environmental justice throughout federal government policies and programs. The principles of environmental justice help improve the effectiveness of our programs and ensure that the most vulnerable communities in America are taken into consideration when policies are implemented. This section highlights a few examples of how agencies are advancing environmental justice throughout the federal government.

In 2016 the following agencies published updated environmental justice strategies:

- **General Services Administration**  
(<https://www.gsa.gov/portal/getMediaData?mediald=129654>)
- **US Department of Agriculture**  
([https://www.dm.usda.gov/emd/responserestoration/docs/8162572\\_USDA%20EJ%20Strategy%20Final.pdf](https://www.dm.usda.gov/emd/responserestoration/docs/8162572_USDA%20EJ%20Strategy%20Final.pdf))
- **US Environmental Protection Agency**  
([https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2016-05/documents/052216\\_ej\\_2020\\_strategic\\_plan\\_final\\_0.pdf](https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2016-05/documents/052216_ej_2020_strategic_plan_final_0.pdf))
- **US Department of Housing and Urban Development**  
(<https://www.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/HUD-Environmental-Justice-Strategy.pdf>)
- **US Department of the Interior**  
([https://www.doi.gov/sites/doi.gov/files/uploads/doi\\_ej\\_strategic\\_plan\\_final\\_nov2016.pdf](https://www.doi.gov/sites/doi.gov/files/uploads/doi_ej_strategic_plan_final_nov2016.pdf))
- **US Department of Transportation**  
(<https://www.transportation.gov/policy/transportation-policy/environmental-justice-strategy>)

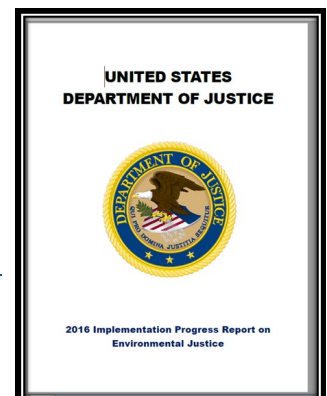
## U.S. Department of Agriculture Achievements in Advancing EJ

- The Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP), sponsored by the USDA National Institute for Food and Agriculture, reached over half a million families and youth from low-income communities in 2016 to help improve access to healthy food. The USDA enhances diets and nutrition practices, stretches food dollars farther, improves food safety, and increase physical activity levels because of the EFNEP program.
- For our nation's children, USDA expanded the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) program so more children from low-income households can eat regularly and well. Established in Section 104 (a) of the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010, the CEP program is a streamlined approach to school meal service that allows schools in high-poverty communities to provide meals to all students, free of charge, for up to four consecutive school years. For FY 2016-17, USDA seeks to focus its expansion effort on those schools that are most in need and where CEP can have the greatest impact.



## U.S. Department of Justice Achievements in Advancing EJ

- In August 2016, the Departments of Justice, Homeland Security, Health and Human Services, Housing and Urban Development, and Transportation issued joint agency technical assistance, Guidance to State and Local Governments and Other Federally Assisted Recipients Engaged in Emergency Preparedness, Response, Mitigation, and Recovery Activities on Compliance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (<https://www.justice.gov/crt/file/885401/download>) to recipients of federal financial assistance.
- Two additional resources to assist recipients of federal financial assistance also accompany the guidance: the Department of Justice's [Tips and Tools for Reaching Limited English Proficient Communities in Emergency Preparedness, Response and Recovery](https://www.justice.gov/crt/file/885391/download) (<https://www.justice.gov/crt/file/885391/download>) and the Department of Health and Human Services' Checklist for Recipients of Federal Financial Assistance (<https://www.justice.gov/crt/file/885396/download>), which facilitates the integration of the whole community into emergency-related activities.



# Looking Forward: FY 2017 Priorities

## A: Communication and Coordination (*Accessible and Aware*)

**Goal:** Enhance communication and coordination to improve health, quality-of-life, and economic opportunities in overburdened Communities

### Priorities:

- Continue the Access and Awareness Webinar Series and, as appropriate, provide resources documents for the webinar topics.
- Share lessons learned from regional interagency collaboration.
- Prioritize in-person outreach efforts through community visits and public dialogue with the EJ IWG. Implement additional strategies to help bridge the “digital divide”.
- Enhance the EJ IWG’s online presence and identify, or develop where necessary, additional communication tools.
- Provide information that helps identify which government entities rural and urban communities can engage with concerning potential goods movement concerns.
- Hold a panel discussion on environmental justice, the federal government, and Indigenous Communities.
- Support efforts to finalize and distribute a Community Guide to the *Promising Practices for EJ Methodologies in NEPA Reviews* report.



Outstanding Achievement Awards Presented during the Principles Meeting.

## B: Support Community-based Solutions (*Accessible and Accountable*)

**Goal:** Enhance multi-agency support of holistic community-based solutions to provide assistance as needed to address environmental justice issues

### Priorities:

- Convene cross-agency meetings at various levels within federal agencies to foster communication and collaboration on implementation of environmental justice efforts.
- Conduct workshop and training activities on interagency activities such as *NEPA Promising Practices*, Title VI of the Civil Rights Act and EJ IWG’s work with Native American and Tribal Communities. Continue outreach to various stakeholder communities and beneficiaries of federal assistance.
- Look for opportunities to support regional interagency collaborations to help communities address EJ concerns and work to expand EPA Region 4’s EJ Academy.
- Seek to leverage federal resources for communities participating in EPA’s Near-Port Community Capacity Building efforts
- Conduct outreach on climate justice and public health efforts.
- Foster cross-agency coordination and communication that assists rural communities, such as collaborations to improve health and wellness through the Brownfields to Healthfields approach, community-focused environmental justice workshops, and facilitated dialogs between communities and other stakeholders focused on addressing place-based needs.

## C: Interagency Strategies (*Accountable*)

**Goal:** Advance interagency strategies to identify and address environmental justice concerns in agency programs, policies and activities.

### Priorities:

- Support federal agencies in the development of environmental justice policies, programs, or activities by providing technical support, tools, and information.
- Coordinate with the federal agencies to gather and share public feedback with the EJ IWG. Determine the EJ IWG’s focus areas based on public comment and other recommendations.
- Continue engagement and training on implementation of the *Promising Practices for EJ Methodologies in NEPA Reviews* report to foster cross agency learning of effective practices.
- Provide training for federal agencies on the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and identify any potential opportunities for coordination and collaboration.

## **D: Partnerships with Academic Institutions (*Accessible and Aware*)**

**Goal:** *Develop partnerships with academic institutions to assist in providing long-term technical assistance to overburdened Communities*

### *Priorities*

- Look for ways to expand the College/Underserved Community Partnership Program (CUPP).
- Collaborate with academic institutions to promote the health, economic and environmental vitality of rural populations and to advance the understanding and application of the *Promising Practices for EJ Methodologies in NEPA Reviews* report.
- Continue supporting the Educate, Motivate, Innovate (EMI) initiative to expand collaborations with minority-serving institutions, including Historically Black Colleges and Universities and other minority-serving institutions.

## **Stay Connected**

Find more resources and information on the EJ IWG Website:

[https://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/program\\_offices/economic\\_resilience/Environmental\\_Justice\\_Strategy](https://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/program_offices/economic_resilience/Environmental_Justice_Strategy)

Sign up for EPA's EJ ListServe: [https://lists.epa.gov/read/all\\_forums/subscribe?name=epa-ej](https://lists.epa.gov/read/all_forums/subscribe?name=epa-ej)



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