

Frequently Asked Questions about the White House Environmental Justice Interagency Council

What is the White House Environmental Justice Interagency Council (IAC) and what is its mission?

As part of President Biden's historic commitment to environmental justice, he created the White House Environmental Justice Interagency Council (IAC) when he signed [Executive Order \(EO\) 14008](#) on *Tackling the Climate Crisis at Home and Abroad* just days after taking office.

[EO 14008](#) charges the IAC with developing “a strategy to address current and historic environmental injustice by consulting with the White House Environmental Justice Advisory Council and with local environmental justice leaders.” It further requires the IAC to “develop clear performance metrics to ensure accountability, and publish an annual public performance scorecard on its implementation.” The IAC was also responsible for recommending updates to Executive Order 12898 on *Federal Actions To Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations*.

Who serves on the IAC?

EO 14008 specifies the following members of the IAC: the Secretary of Defense; the Attorney General; the Secretary of the Interior; the Secretary of Agriculture; the Secretary of Commerce; the Secretary of Labor; the Secretary of Health and Human Services; the Secretary of Housing and Urban Development; the Secretary of Transportation; the Secretary of Energy; the Chair of the Council of Economic Advisers; the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency; the Director of the Office of Management and Budget; the Executive Director of the Federal Permitting Improvement Steering Council; the Director of the Office of Science and Technology Policy; the National Climate Advisor; the Assistant to the President for Domestic Policy; and the Assistant to the President for Economic Policy. In addition, the Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security and the Administrator of the General Services Administration have opted to participate in the IAC.

EO 14008 specifies that each agency serving on the IAC shall assign “a designated official within the agency to be an Environmental Justice Officer” to serve as its representative on the IAC. Alongside designating an Environmental Justice Officer, each agency or office serving on the IAC has also selected a Senior Staff Representative. The Environmental Justice Officer is at the Deputy Assistant Secretary level or higher, or equivalent.

What are the current subcommittees of the IAC?

- Justice40 Subcommittee
- NEPA Committee
- Public Participation Committee
- Rural Communities Committee
- Strategy and Implementation Committee
- Regional IAC
- Native Americans and Indigenous Peoples Committee
- Impacts from Commercial Transportation – Goods Movement – Committee
- Title VI of the Civil Rights Act Committee
- Natural Disasters & EJ Subcommittee

How often does the White House Environmental Justice Interagency Council (IAC) meet?

Chair Mallory convenes the full IAC approximately every 6 weeks. This is subject to change based on schedules.

How does the IAC make decisions?

The IAC has numerous committees that meet on a regular basis (often monthly or biweekly) to discuss relevant issues. The committee meetings are attended by both senior level appointees as well as career staff, all of whom are dedicated to advancing President Biden's environmental justice agenda. Through these committees, issues are discussed and feedback is solicited on key issues. When matters are ready for resolution, they are brought to the attention of the full IAC and voted on during formal IAC meetings.

Who staffs the IAC?

EO 14008 specifies that the IAC be chaired by the Chair of CEQ, who is currently Brenda Mallory. It further states that "[t]he Chair shall designate an Executive Director of the Council, who shall coordinate the work of the Interagency Council and head any staff assigned to the Council." The current executive director of the IAC is the Director for Environmental Justice at CEQ, Corey Solow.

EO 14008 also specifies that "[t]o the extent permitted by law, including the Economy Act (31 U.S.C. 1535), and subject to the availability of appropriations, the Department of Labor, the Department of Transportation, and the Environmental Protection Agency shall provide administrative support as necessary."

What are examples of environmental justice issues that the IAC has addressed?

The IAC and all of its members have an important role in the development and execution of the following:

- **The Justice40 Initiative:** The members of the IAC have played a critical role in the development and implementation of the Justice40 Initiative. During IAC meetings and subcommittee meetings, agencies share best practices, lessons learned, and challenges to the whole-of-government implementation of the Justice40 Initiative. In addition, the IAC was consulted in the development of the Interim Implementation Guidance for the Justice40 Initiative, [M-21-28](#), which was issued on July 20, 2021.
- **Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool:** The IAC provided input to inform CEQ's creation of a beta version of the Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool. During the beta phase, agencies involved with the IAC have also provided ongoing feedback for improving the beta version of the tool.
- **Environmental Justice Scorecard:** In March 2022, the IAC received the White House Environmental Justice Advisory Council's (WHEJAC) phase one recommendations on the Environmental Justice Scorecard, and are actively reviewing these recommendations. At the same time, IAC committee and subcommittee chairs have provided significant input on the types of environmental justice-related strategies, policies, and activities that should be included in the Environmental Justice Scorecard that relate to their committee's work. IAC committee and subcommittee chairs have shared those recommendations during IAC meetings. Moving forward, the IAC will work with CEQ, the White House Office of Management and Budget, and the U.S. Digital Service, as outlined in EO 14008, to determine next steps in developing an Environmental Justice Scorecard, which the Federal government will build on and improve, year after year.

- **Update to Executive Order 12898:** The IAC provided feedback on how EO 12898 should be updated, and also provided comments on the WHEJAC recommendations on the proposed update to EO 12898 that was included in the WHEJAC's May 2021 report.

How many meetings have been conducted to date?

Meeting 1: April 2021

Meeting 5: December 2021

Meeting 2: May 2021

Meeting 6: January 2022

Meeting 3: September 2021

Meeting 7: March 2022

Meeting 4: November 2021

Next meeting: May 2022 with WHEJAC

What has been the focus of IAC meetings to date?

- **White House Updates:** The White House provides timely updates on issues relevant to environmental justice, including the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law.
- **Agency Work and Highlights:** IAC members share the efforts and initiatives that they are working on to advance environmental justice.
- **Key Discussions:** IAC members discuss the all-of-government implementation of environmental justice priorities, including the Justice40 Initiative, the Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool, the Environmental Justice Scorecard, and the update to EO 12898.

What is the relationship between the IWG and IAC?

The IAC replaced the [Interagency Working Group on Environmental Justice](#) (IWG), which was established in 1994 and convened by EPA. In EO 14008, President Biden created the IAC in order to elevate the body and enable the Executive Office of the President to coordinate interagency efforts on environmental justice. All of the former IWG committees and subcommittees have been subsumed into the IAC.