Victoria Robinson: What kind of work EPA is doing for environmental justice.

And as we get started, I'd like to go over a few housekeeping rules or procedures.

We're asking that everybody please join by phone or computer, not both, unless there's no other way you can do this.

All attendees are on mute.

And so we're asking you to go ahead and enter any questions and comments into the Q&A pod,
we want to hear from you.

So if you are on a computer or you're using the app, there is a Q&A pod option, so that you can pose questions and post comments into it.

When we do have an opportunity, in the last hour we'll be focusing on an engagement dialogue, and then if you want to speak during that dialogue,

we're asking you to please limit your comment to one minute,
and we also give you the option of raising your hand,

that's how we will be calling on people in order that they raise their hand.

And if you are on the phone, please, don't worry, you can raise your hand by *9

and #9 I'm sorry, and you'll be able to be on the list

and we can call you out and unmute you so you can speak.

Please, note that a recording and a transcript will be made available online in the near future,
as we have for past recordings--past meetings.

We also offer the interpretation.

In this today for our call, we have Spanish language interpretation available for those who prefer to listen in Spanish.

Now, how you switch to the Spanish language channel you should be able to see a little globe or in your little three dots where it says more
you can scroll down
look for interpretation,

and you'll be able to click on that and
select the language you would want to have.

We're asking everybody to
actually use that interpretation mode

and choose either English
or to choose Spanish.

Those individuals who would like to ask questions
in Spanish, you can do so in the Q&A pod

because we will be having somebody
who can read the question out loud

as well as to provide
an answer to you.

And I'm going to turn it over to
one of our interpreters Jackie Moore,

who will then give these
instructions in Spanish.

Thank you, Jackie.

Jackie Moore: Muy buenos días a todos y gracias
por participar en esta convocatoria participativa

de la Agencia de Protección Ambiental,
comunidad nacional sobre justicia ambiental.

Por favor participen por teléfono o computadora, no por los dos.

El audio estará desactivado durante esta reunión.

Si tienen alguna pregunta que quieren hacer,

por favor pongan su pregunta en el módulo de preguntas y respuestas.

Si son escogidos para hablar, por favor limiten su comentario a un minuto.
Va a ver grabación y transcripción
de esta junta en el futuro cercano.

El día de hoy tenemos
interpretación en español disponible

para aquellos que prefieren
escuchar en español.

En la parte inferior derecha de la
pantalla verán un globo terráqueo,

por favor háganle clic al globo terráqueo
y escojan su idioma, en este caso español.

Las personas pueden agregar preguntas en
español en el módulo de preguntas y respuestas.
Muchas gracias por su participación.

Victoria Robinson: Thank you, Jackie.

I'm gonna move on into the interpreter's mode.

Thank you.

Let me update that, and move on at the same time.

All right, so we're going to--

I'm going to-- I'll turn it over to my colleague Chitra Kumar,
who will then give us a bit of a mindfulness moment, thank you.

Chitra Kumar: Hi, good afternoon or good morning everyone.

Thank you for joining us today at this engagement call.

I think we all join here with some interest in environmental justice.

And usually that means that there's some amount of urgency to our work and sometimes that's because there's real
health consequences to what we're doing

and so that can actually put an additional stressor on us,

in addition to the usual things that like flurry of emails and such.

So we offer this to you all, anyone who's doing this work

and showing up here as a way to give yourself a quick little break in the day.

And in addition because this is awareness month for Asian-Americans
and native Hawaiian
Pacific Islander month,

I want to just share with you a practice that
comes from zen master and Asian Thích Nhật Hạnh,

who comes from the zen tradition,
he was a poet, he was a peace activist

and renowned for his powerful teachings and
best-selling writings on mindfulness and peace.

He was active in Vietnam
while the war was going on

and actually for his
activism was ultimately exiled
and later Martin Luther King Jr. actually nominated him for the Nobel Peace Prize and was a dear friend.

So with that, I'll just take a very short practice that I want to lead you through.

If you want to settle in to a dignified position in a seat or you can stand or lay down, whatever's most comfortable for you. But some way that you can actually breathe deeply, do that settle in
and then I'll ask you-- with your eyes
just either looking down,

so you're not distracted by the
screen or you can even close them,

whatever you feel most
comfortable doing.

I invite you to just breathe in and while
you do that,

think to yourself my in-breath
has become deep.

And breathing out, my
out breath has become slow,
doing that again, my in-breath has become deep,

my out breath has become slow.

Then breathing in again, I feel calm,

breathing out I feel at ease,

again I feel calm breathing in.

I feel at ease breathing out, and breathing in again,
think I smile, and breathing out I
release all my worries and anxieties.

And breathing in again, I dwell
deePLY in the present moment.

Breathing out, I know this is
a wonderful moment, smile.

There are more than
300 muscles in our face

and when we know how to breathe
in and smile, these muscles can relax.

This is mouth yoga.
So check in with your body and mind and see what's changed,

97
00:07:45,223 --> 00:07:51,440

hopefully you're feeling a little more relaxed, a little calmer,

98
00:07:51,440 --> 00:07:56,661

when you're ready you can feel free to join us again on screen.

99
00:07:56,685 --> 00:08:03,000

I'd like to leave you with a quote from Thích Nhất Hạnh:

100
00:08:03,024 --> 00:08:06,710

"Mindfulness is not to escape from society,

101
00:08:06,734 --> 00:08:11,365

but to come back to ourselves and see what's going on."
Once they're seeing, there must be acting and with mindfulness we know what to do and what not to do to help."

Thank you.

Victoria Robinson: Thank you, Chitra, I appreciate that.

Now I'm going to go ahead and turn it over to Matthew Tejada, the Director of EPA's Office of Environmental Justice.

Thank you.
Matthew Tejada: Right, I love that.

Thank you Chitra so much, thank you so much better when somebody else does it.

And not only are they better, but I get to enjoy participating in them instead of leading them which I actually really appreciate.

So hey everyone, thanks for joining us today.

I hope everyone has had a wonderful spring and is getting ready for hopefully some fun
and relaxation and time away or maybe some exciting and safe travel coming up over the summer months,

we at EPA of course are not going to be letting up for a moment even as we work through the summer because we continue to have just an incredible amount of activity,

and a lot of that is going to continue to be focused around our infrastructure programs
or those programs which received infrastructure funding this past fall,

but also-- and one of the things that we're going to focus on today

is we received funding through the FY 22 omnibus budget, the fiscal year even FY22,

fiscal year 2022 omnibus budget,

and as part of that the EJ Program at EPA has the opportunity to stand up

an entirely new form of capacity building technical assistance for communities
and their partners,
as well as a grants program,
a totally new grants program.
So we're going to start
today talking about the former
because that's something that we need to start
getting our arms around in order to get it out
on the street as quickly as possible.
That's the community technical
capacity building approach.
So you're gonna hear a lot more information on that, you're gonna hear from Chitra and other members of our team in the latter part of this meeting, but first, we're going to focus in on one of those programs that received some infrastructure funding.

So our Drinking Water System Resilience & Sustainability Grants, this is one of those programs that has received a bunch of additional resources.
that is primed and ready to go to lift
up the Justice40 mandate contained

in Executive order 14008,

and as we ready that grant
program, as we are everywhere,

we want to engage, receive feedback,

raise awareness for folks out in communities
with EJ concerns those that are most needing

and deserving of exactly this sort
of funding to do everything we can
to make sure that this funding touches down in those communities,

again, that need and deserve it the most.

So these are two elements, two good very clear indications of the sort of things that we are very much focused on at EPA today.

I don't have too terribly many other updates for folks,

we are planning for our National Environmental Justice Advisory Council
to have a public meeting, it looks like it's going to be June 22 and 23rd.

We are working to get the federal register notice pulled together,

but just for folks awareness, we're looking at June 22nd and 23rd,

and even as I say it, I'm going to open my calendar to make sure I didn't say that wrong.

And the big yeah, June 22nd and 23rd that's a Wednesday and Thursday.

We're really going to be focusing on there with the NEJAC bringing
to finalization some of its work,

particularly around its recommendations to EPA on our Infrastructure Programs

and using Justice40 to help as a guiding framework

for how we implement those infrastructure programs,

so it should be a really good meeting,

it's going to be a much more of a working meeting,
but still a lot of good feedback and involvement.

We're also planning for this technical assistance idea that is based in ideas that are not new, ideas that come from EJ communities and EJ leaders.

We will be taking a revised version of this idea to the NEJAC at that meeting, and some of your feedback today is what helps to inform and evolve our approach to this technical assistance and capacity building for communities,
as we get ready for the NEJAC meeting.

So yeah, so it should be a good meeting at the end of June.

So I'm gonna go ahead and get out of the way and ask for a couple of our colleagues to come on--

as I said we're gonna start with our overview of the Drinking Water System Infrastructure Resilience and Sustainability Grants,
and I believe our good
colleague and friend Joe Tiago,

from the Office of Ground and
Drinking Water is going to join us
to take us through this session.

Joe Tiago: Well, thank
you Matt for your remarks
and for mentioning that we are
really ready to hit the ground running
with some of the projects related to Drinking Water Infrastructure,

and this grant is one of them.

Thank you, Chitra for the mindfulness moment.

It was very relaxing to me to go through that and I hope it was for many others on this call.

And again I'm Joe Tiago,

and I work in the Office of Groundwater and Drinking Water here at EPA.
I'm the Justice40 Coordinator for the office and I also support some of the bill implementation work within the office.

And again, a big thank you to my colleagues from the Office of Environmental Justice for providing this forum, which I think is very informational, it helps with sharing information and also get feedback on some of the critical things that the agency is considering.
And I find it extremely useful
and I hope you all do as well.

So thank you and also thank you for
the opportunity to speak with you today,

and to provide again an overview
of one of the grant programs

that will benefit environmental
justice communities directly,

which is the Drinking Water System Infrastructure
Resiliency and Sustainability Grants,

and also referred to
as the resiliency grant.

So the goal in speaking today about this grant program, I'm hoping that you'll be able to gather the necessary information and be ready to hit the ground running when the request for application is published later this summer. Next slide.

So the Safe Drinking Water Act,
as amended through the 2018 America's Water Infrastructure Act, known as (AWIA), authorizes EPA to establish the Drinking Water System Infrastructure Resiliency and Sustainability Program. It is a competitive grant program, and the Office of Water anticipates making 15 million dollars in combined fiscal year funding available this year.
So that's a significant amount of money that we really hope will make impact into environmental justice communities and the purpose of the grant is to increase drinking water resiliency to natural hazards and it's also geared towards small underserved and disadvantaged public water systems. And later in the presentation, we will discuss the type of activities that are covered by the grant,
but those includes like earthquake, tornados, floods, hurricanes, wildfire, drought and freezing or hydrologic changes, and that threatens the functioning of a community water system.

So there's a lot of opportunities out there for this grant.

Next slide, please.

So who is eligible to apply for this grant.
The eligible entities are defined by the statute on the SDWA 1459 (I), as amended through AWIA, and note that you must meet the definition in both one and two on the slide to be considered eligible agency for the grant, which means it must be a public water system, which is a water system located in an area governed by Indian tribe or a state on behalf of an underserved community,
and a combination of one of the next two.

You must serve a community and ensuring critical clean and safe drinking water is provided to this community, and improving in the resiliency of drinking water infrastructure. So those are the criteria, the eligibility criteria, there's nowhere around it, is defined by the statute,
so that's what
we're gonna go by.

Next slide, please.

So what are the activities that
are covered under this grant?

So the entities, again, eligible for funding,
the programs eligible for funding,

includes a program for planning design and
construction of implementation, operation,

or maintenance of a program or project that
increases drinking water system resiliency
to natural hazard and that must occur through either the conservation of the water,

elevation of water use efficiency,

the modification of a relocation of existing drinking water system infrastructure made that is at risk of being significantly impaired by natural hazard,

including a risk of drinking water flow from flooding and the design or construction of the desalination facility to serve existing community.
I'm actually on the next slide, I'm sorry.

And the next slide is the enhancement of water supply--

Next slide.

Enhancement of water supply through the use of waste water management and source water protection,

and the enhancement of energy efficiency or the use and generation of renewable energy
and the convenience of the treatment of drinking water

or the development of implementation measures to increase the resiliency of the eligible entity to natural hazard.

So those are the different type of activities that are covered under the program.

So let's go back a little bit, I think on the previous slide--

I just wanted to make a comment, a clarifying comment on the eligible entity.
Would you please go back there, Victoria?

Two slides back--

Okay, so again, when I mention the eligible entity here, again, you must serve a community that is undeserved or that has under affordability criteria established by the state,
determination by the state to be a disadvantaged community

or with a population of less than ten thousand.

I think there was a glitch there earlier when I was covering that slide,

so just that was the clarification on that.

Let's go back to where we were now, thank you, one more, okay.

So again, just to re-emphasize this grant program is covered under Justice40
and funding priority is for projects that increase drinking water system resilience

So that's the key there and under this grant we are committed to meet and exceed the Justice40 goal of delivering 40% of all the overall benefit of federal funding to support a clean affordable and safe drinking water
and drinking water infrastructure to
disadvantaged communities,

00:22:05,851 --> 00:22:08,102
so we are committed to do so.

00:22:08,126 --> 00:22:12,962
And we are also committed
through this plan to ensuring

00:22:12,986 --> 00:22:18,668
that investments reach the
communities that need them the most

00:22:18,692 --> 00:22:24,461
to ensure in that critical clean and safe
drinking water is provided to this community,

00:22:24,85 --> 00:22:28,669
and also improving in the resiliency of
drinking water infrastructure
so that's our objective and our commitment through this grant.

Next slide, please.

So the grant is current—the RFA is currently on the development.

Again, we anticipate that it will be published soon this summer and the announcement will be made on grants.gov and deadline for submission is anticipated to be fall of 2022.
So I hope you all will have enough time to prepare the materials for submission for this grant.

Next slide, please.

So on this slide, we just wanted to make sure you are aware that EPA has a lot of tools available out there that will develop to enhance drinking water resiliency.

And these slides will be shared with you for you to access these links,
but just briefly the route
to resiliency interactive tool.

It uses brief videos and an easy to navigate
interface to guide users through the process

of building their own unique
roadmap to resiliency reports.

So it's a very useful tool that I
highly encourage you to take a look at.

The next one is the vulnerability
self assessment tool

or the VSAT, it offers a
streamlined assessment of risk
and resilience for drinking water and wastewater utilities,

and it also assists in assessing the potential impacts from both man-made and natural disasters in accordance with the AWIA requirements and provide actions to enhance security and resiliency.

So again, you can use the slides--the links available on the slide to access information on those two and the last one that we have as an example.
is the climate resilience evaluation and awareness tool,

which is also called the CREAT tool risk assessment application for water utilities.

It is also an online tool that assists water sectors utility

in assessing climate related risk to utility assets and operation.

There are five modules for CREAT and the user consider climate impacts

and identify the application option to increase resilience.
So those again tools can be accessed using those links when the materials will be shared with you.

Next slide, please.

This is the last slide, the wrap-up of the presentation,

and I just wanted to thank you all for the time and attention.

We will keep you informed on the formal announcement of the grant
via press release
and grants.gov.

We will also work with the
Office of Environmental Justice
to ensure that there's a listserv that
goes out when the press release is out.

And we also anticipate that there will
be an information session on the grant
shortly after the release and
you'll be notified on that as well.

Victoria Robinson: Thank you, Joe --
Joe Tiago: Contact for the grant is Yvonne Gonzalez.

So if you have any questions feel free to reach out to Yvonne.

Victoria Robinson: All right, thank you very much, Joe.

And before you go, we are going to see if there are any questions—

check with Christina to see if there's any questions posed

about this particular grant program, about your presentation that we can read out loud,
but before we do just wanted to remind everybody that the slide deck that you’re seeing right now has already been posted to our website, and where you were sent to originally link to our registration.

So the slide deck is actually already online and you'll see these-- the link spelled out just like they were in the slides.

So Christina, do we have any
questions that posed in the Q&A pod

338
00:27:13,760 --> 00:27:19,600
that would be directed to
this particular grant program.

339
00:27:19,600 --> 00:27:21,200
Thanks, Victoria.

340
00:27:22,240 --> 00:27:25,228
Christina Motilall: So it's
not necessarily questions,

341
00:27:25,352 --> 00:27:28,166
but we do have two
comments in from Lynn.

342
00:27:28,190 --> 00:27:32,776
And I just wanted to read them aloud and
the team can respond as they see fit,

343
00:27:32,800 --> 00:27:38,000
but I think they're important
comments for everyone to hear.

The first is, "I'm concerned about corporate self-regulation self-monitoring agreements by governmental agencies that often result in negligence or corruption.

Example, few students are allowed to grade themselves for obvious reasons.

And in the same vein government contracting that edges towards privatization promises low-cost services at the expense of quality to the consumer.
and often accelerates in times of economic stress euphemistically called budget constraints."

So there's a lot there, but I wanted to just get those comments out for the team.

Joe Tiago: Yeah, thank you, Christina.

I just wanted to say thanks to Lynn for raising those comments and we will attack them and consider as appropriate.

Christina Motilall: Great thank you so much.
Victoria Robinson: Any other questions or comments Christina, before we then turn it back over to Matthew?

Christina Motilall: I there is one in right now, from Charles, they ask "will the definition of underserved include public school districts, many of which are older buildings?"

Matthew Tejada: So I don't think, and Joe can jump in and correct me.
Typically for a lot of these grant programs, school districts are not the geography being used, but you would look at whatever geography is being used like a census tract or whatever and relate that to the area covered by a school district. So it's just a matter of which geographic scale you're using and then matching that to whatever facility or set of facilities and the service area of those to kind of do that intersection of underserved or not.
That makes sense Joe, did I say something wrong?

I think I said that right.

Joe Tiago: No, I think you are correct, Matt,

and in the case of this grant, the definition is straight out of the statute,

so I don't think there's even any wiggle room to consider there.

Matthew Tejada: And I wanted to speak to that as well,
because we had a few questions or comments come in about those definitions.

or states and how-- what is EPA doing to try to increase the success rate.

I'm trying to put this in ways that don't get any of us in trouble,

increase the success rate of these resources being used for projects in the communities that have the greatest need,

that have the greatest disparity of coverage.
So as Joe said, this is one of the parts of EPA that is most heavily prescribed in statute, our drinking water and clean water programs.

are some of the most minutely directed in actual law.

which really-- that obviously does not give us as much wiggle room.

or flexibility in terms of providing clear direction, but a couple of things that
we have done or are looking at

to try to work within that frame.

So EPA has-- I don't know if it's specific to this program,

but EPA has put out very specific kind of direction and guidance to states in terms of our intent and our goals for how our water infrastructure resources should be spent across the United States.
So we're trying to chart a very clear path for our external partners

and acknowledging that a lot of the actual control of making progress down that path is really in the hands of state and other partners.

But then on the back side of that one of the things that we have committed to at EPA and we're in the process of working through, some incredibly boring, but challenging bureaucratic difficulties
and how to make these things a reality,

but to provide much greater transparency in terms of what are the different definitions of different types of communities, disadvantaged or underserved across the United States,

and greater levels of transparency in terms of where did these grants actually go,

where did the projects actually take place on the ground,

which systems serving, which communities were improved
as a result of these programs or
grants or actual changing out pipes

and other forms of infrastructure.

So we're really looking at--
at least a couple of the different endpoints

trying to provide the very clear
guidance up front

and then also trying to create the transparency
for where do these things happen on the ground

and not to speak to any particular
state or other level of government
in the politics on the whatever-- we're not going to get into that in a big call like this

but I'm very hopeful just personally

and I think one of the things that we've seen time over time is when we can really inject some transparency into these things.

You start to see behavior change.

You start to see a positive evolution across the board federally, state, local,
really providing some enlightenment

00:33:53,350 --> 00:33:58,880
and insight across the board in terms
of how can we make better decisions.

00:33:58,880 --> 00:34:05,368
so that we know where the areas
of greatest public health need are

00:34:05,392 --> 00:34:11,359
and how effective are we at directing
our resources or directing our efforts

to go to those places that need
and deserve us to show up the most.

00:34:15,417 --> 00:34:21,839
And so that is a big part of what we are
working towards around all of our efforts at EPA.
But I think our Drinking Water Infrastructure Programs are kind of one of the biggest

if not the biggest case in point for the need for us to do this.

Christina Motilall: Great thank you, Matt.

We did have two questions in the chat around states, and I know you covered a lot of it, but I do just want to read them both out loud very quickly just to make sure we captured everything.

The first question in is from Naomi
and they asked "What if your state is not interested in addressing the drinking water problems rampant throughout the state, especially, rural areas and environmental justice communities?"

And I'm going to pair that with a question in from the Spring Creek Association and they asked "Has every state designated what is an EJ community? What happens if a state does not have the
desire to pass through funds to meet Justice40?"

Matthew Tejada: Yeah
so to that latter question,

and again Joe, if I say something wrong here, let me know.

I believe by the statute it is the responsibility of each state to identify or to define or designate what are their disadvantaged communities.

So yes that is one of those things that is very clearly put to in law
of who has the right to do that,

and that means, as you would expect, we have at least 51 different flavors,

more or less, of definitions and designations,

and I would agree though one of the things that I think we're all struggling with is again just a lack of some straightforward transparency in terms of what are those different things, right?
And which states have done it different ways,

and what does that actually look like then on a map.

So that is a big part of the transparency that we are talking about and working towards at EPA is to make those things much more transparent,

not only so that states, hopefully have better insight into the results of their actions so that we have better visibility looking across the United States
and seeing the differences,

but also from an equity and justice perspective,

so that there's transparency for the public and for communities

to better be able to see how government is approaching this program

and making decisions and how do those translate to actual actions happening on the ground.

So those are exactly the sort of issues we're wrestling with and wanting
and planning on making progress on in this administration bringing that level of transparency to this.

Christina Motilall: Thank you, Matt, that's much appreciated.

I know we need to continue on with the call.

I have nothing else to read aloud at the moment.

Victoria do we want-- I don't see any hands raised.
Victoria Robinson: No, yeah we’re gonna go ahead.

I think move on to the next topic of the discussion,

and but that does not mean that if we move on to the next topic

that we’re not interested in your questions

you may have about this grant program, resiliency grant program,

so feel free to please post any comments or questions you have in the Q&A pod.
Joe and his team will remain in the call,

and they'll be able to help answer some of the questions directly into the Q&A pod

or when we open up the dialogue in general in a little after three o'clock,

then we'll be able to answer some of the questions you may have,

if you want to ask it out loud.

So please continue on the line and you can hear and pose your questions.
So we’re going to go ahead and move to our next—our colleagues in our Office of Environmental Justice to discuss our Regional Equity and Capacity Hubs Program called REACH.

So that's either going to be—there you are.

Chitra Kumar: Hey, y'all Larissa, are you still there?

Larissa Mark: I am trying to put my video on which is not quite working, but I am here.
Chitra Kumar: Well, while you get your video on,

I'll just say thank you for the opportunity to share this concept,

and I'm here to support Larissa so as soon as she's on and able to take over,

we'll walk through some slides and then hope to get some of your feedback on this concept,

which is not something that's brand new,

it's something that's sort of the culmination of a lot of input
that we've been hearing over many years
about what kind of technical assistance

that communities are seeking from EPA
in order to do all of the great things

including apply for grants that we
have available through the federal government.

so take it away Larissa.

Larissa Mark: Yes, thank you.

Yes, as mentioned, my
name is Larissa Mark,
and I am the BIL Coordinator, which stands for the Bipartisan Infrastructure Bill.

We are really excited to discuss the REACH program.

Next slide, please.

What we are hoping with the next slide-- with this slide, excuse me,

and with the REACH Program is to really launch this technical assistant program that will not only address regional issues but can address local issues as well.
So the technical assistance program, the goal of it, is to really serve underutilized and underserved communities.

And for example, we're talking about communities with environmental justice concerns and what we're hoping to do is to provide multiple hubs within regions that can provide support for a wide range of issues whether it's environmental equity, capacity, funding or training concerns.
We are really looking to start a pilot program, which I'll discuss in a few minutes. But ultimately we're hoping to have multiple hubs throughout the nation, and of course, within the different tribes and territories to really address local and regional issues that may happen, and may be going on currently. Next slide, please. So why REACH?
What we’re hoping for is what we see right now, we have many stakeholders and over the years as Chitra has mentioned, they have talked about and presented to EPA a variety of issues, most importantly there's a need and a gap in federal support, particularly funding support.

And so what we’re hoping through BIL the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law,
and the historic Infrastructure Investment and Job Act is to provide both funding and investments infrastructure. EPA for example, received approximately 60 billion dollars and we will begin the process of establishing and reinventing a lot of grant programs in order to really support, regional and local infrastructure.
programs that we're seeing

and we are currently developing.

What we're hoping is that the administration priority will continue to advance equity and justice across infrastructure spending,

right now, we are working with multiple federal agencies to really pool our efforts to make these hubs, these REACH hubs,

one stop shopping or one stop shop
for technical assistance programs.

Next slide, please.

So we have three main goals of REACH.

The first one is to meaningfully engage and collaborate with different stakeholders, whether it's community driven or regional stakeholders.

We're really hoping to focus on community driven goals and needs.

We're also hoping and we're also working on establishing interagency collaboration
and coordination.

So we're hoping to pool and we're working on pooling interagency resources so that these hubs can be a focal point for a variety of uses within and for these communities and regional areas.

And finally we're hoping to have community-centric collaborations.

We're hoping that we are working on providing technical assistance--
technical assistance opportunities to both local communities and regions.

Next slide, please.

So we have as I mentioned three goals.

So under our first goal meaningfully engaged and being community driven goals and needs.

We're looking to deploy place-based and regional infrastructure resource opportunities.

So these hubs will be able to really proactively once they're established,
proactively reach out to communities to local organizations to the regions, and then really work with these areas to find out the services that are needed and how they can best provide those services to those areas.

We're also looking to provide targeted need-based assistance and we're looking to provide not only advanced technical assistance, but we're also looking to provide ground level
or a very entry-level assistance as well,

so dependent upon the needs of the local communities or the organizations,

we're really looking to balance and provide the appropriate assistance for these communities.

We're also looking to provide a host of online tools and resource technology opportunities to help facilitate the dissemination of information.

And finally we're looking to deploy these community engagement activities
to make sure that the communities
in need are being reached

00:44:18,627 --> 00:44:22,319
and to make sure that they are
provided the resources that they need,

00:44:22,319 --> 00:44:25,548
whether they're training, for
dexample, tools and resources,

00:44:25,572 --> 00:44:27,951
or economics
development for support.

00:44:27,975 --> 00:44:31,040
Excuse me, next slide, please.

00:44:31,040 --> 00:44:33,968
Our second goal: Interagency
collaboration and coordination.

00:44:33,992 --> 00:44:40,759
What we’re looking to do again is to centralize partnerships with other federal agencies,

and what we’re hoping to within those partnerships to establish

is to pool interagency technical assistance funding and resources.

So if you have a hub in your area, you can go to that hub site,

and you’ll be able to find the different opportunities that are available over that will span several agencies, for example.
And we're also looking to provide federal place-based and regional commitments.

So we're really working to make sure that we have

interagency technical assistance opportunities housed in one location

and inter-agency funding opportunities housed in one location.

Next slide, please.

And finally, our final goal with community-centric collaboration.
We're really hoping to make sure and we are working to make sure that we are working hand-in-hand with the communities and the regions.

So we are going to provide and we are hoping to provide one-on-one counseling services with these communities, for example, these services will be free of charge.

We are going to work with developing and providing "how to" assistance on competitive writing grants.
We're also looking to provide financial resource management assistance for these communities and these regions.

Community engagement, making sure that the communities are engaged.

They have the opportunity to provide and let us know, let the region, the hubs know what their needs are so that the federal agencies can partner with them in order to make sure that those needs are established and those needs are addressed.
We're also looking to make sure we track and analyze the results and this will be important because if we're conducting outreach and we are conducting community engagement activities, we want to make sure that the communities, the needs of the communities are being appropriately addressed. So we will ensure that we are tracking and analyzing the results, so that if we need to tweak some of our outreach strategies we can do so in real time.
to better address the community needs.

We're also looking to make sure that we conduct environmental justice analysis for these communities and obviously you guys should be aware of EJSCREEN, hopefully, you're aware of EJSCREEN and CEJST so that you guys can look at and provide in real time an analysis of the communities that you are addressing, and you can find the communities that you need to address using EJSCREEN and using CEJST.
We're also looking to provide coordination and facilitation services for meetings, so that we can connect local stakeholders with federal partners to make sure, again, the needs of the communities are being addressed. And finally we will provide translation and interpretation services for meaningful engagement with our limited English speaking participants.
Next slide, please.

So we have a pilot project that we are working on currently and we'll get ready to launch and it's our short-term outlook.

So we're looking to provide-- this pilot, it will be launched in the fall of 2022 and EPA really plans on providing a variety of funding of a variety of hubs but right now we're going to start with a pilot project.
Each hub would be responsible for providing technical assistance to communities and organizations both in a community level and on a regional basis.

We'll also provide shortly a timeline for the release of the RFA, a request for applications to establish these hubs.

That should come out this summer and we're looking to really look at and to identify eligible entities to serve as hubs.
We're looking at public and private universities, non-price-- excuse me, nonprofits and we are really hoping that these entities can be the hubs and really facilitate these communication and the connection between federal partners and our local communities.

And finally, we are trying to identify who can reach out and who can submit. The final bullet just identifies who
can actually receive services from hub

and all stakeholders and applicants
that are interested in EPA grant programs

including communities, community stakeholders,
nonprofits grassroot organizations,
local government entities
and state government entities

are able to receive
grants from REACH hubs.

Next slide, please.

So the example hub that
we are looking to establish

will address EPA's Region 1 and 2.

The purpose of this will to use and allocate EPA and bill resources
to provide technical assistance to communities, community organizations

and other levels of government located in EPA Regions 1 and 2.

And again as I mentioned before, we will eventually expand this to have multiple hubs

but this is part of our
phase one pilot program.

And the goal of this will really-- is to provide capacity building resources to eligible applicant communities.

We're looking to make sure that these underserved communities and those facing EJ challenges are able to get the funding, are able to connect with the federal partners and establish programs to address the issues.
within their communities.

We're also looking to provide technical and financial assistance opportunities to both federal partners and communities.

And we're looking to provide these, again, ground floor level assistance to ensure that the lower capacity communities, those communities that are really struggling and may not have the opportunities normally made available to them, have an opportunity to get the training, to
get counseling, to get meeting coordination

and these tools and resources so that they are able to effectively address the concerns within their community.

Next slide, please.

So as we develop our hub program and as we begin launching these RFAS, we have six questions that we would like to ask you all.

The first one is, what are your general concerns or your general impressions
of the objectives of the REACH concept?

Do you think that they are encompassing of everything that you all as community organizations, state entities and communities--

do they address the needs within your community?

Second, generally, what types of technical assistance services would you like to see provided by these hubs?
And finally, number three, what do you generally view as the most effective means of communicating with and engaging underserved and environmental justice communities?

Chitra?

I don't know if--

Chitra Kumar: Yeah.

Larissa Mark: Do you have a question, Chitra or comment?

Chitra Kumar: Sorry, when you're wrapped up, there are a number of questions
that have come in that I wanted to sort of globally address live because I think people are already generating some questions.

Well we have one more slide of the sixth of-- we have the final three discussion questions that we would like to just present generally.

You can definitely send any comments that you have,
again, as Victoria mentioned, the slide deck is available, so you can address whichever part of the six questions that you feel you would like to participate in and send them to OEJGrants@EPA.gov.

Number four is generally speaking-- oh sorry, if you can go to the final slide. Generally speaking, what are your thoughts of the greatest barriers and challenges facing applicants, especially those who are new to EPA programs
and those from, excuse me, underserved and or communities with environmental justice concerns?

What are those barriers to obtaining EPA funding?

Number five, what are your ideas on ways EPA can invest and build trust and confidence between underserved communities and those facing EJ concerns or challenges and EPA in addressing environmental and EJ issues?

And finally, what are your ideas on the
actions EPA could take to rectify inequities

and inequalities in access to EPA grants, involvement in EPA program decision making

and engagement in EPA on environmental and environmental justice issues

through things such as targeted outreach, training and technical assistance?

And again, we look forward to your feedback

and if you have any suggestions that you would like to provide us,
please send your comments
to OEJGrants@EPA.gov, thank you.

And it’s just right you wanted to respond to some questions in the chat--

Victoria Robinson: Before Chitra does, I’d like to go ahead

and since we’re going to start to engage in a dialogue,

I want to do a couple of real quick housekeeping things,

so people know how to engage in that and it’ll make it much more seamless.
So first of all, I want to thank everybody, thank you Larissa,

thank you Chitra for your presentation.

During this engagement session and dialogue there are different ways you can provide your comments.

So again, you can write your comments or questions in the Q&A pod and several of you have already done so, so keep it up.
If you want to ask a question out loud and we’ve got several individuals who have already raised their hand to ask a question or to provide input.

So if you’re using a phone, press *9 to virtually raise your hand so that we know you would like to ask a question.

And once--

Matthew Tejada: Star or pound?

Victoria Robinson: It says star and it was my mistake when I corrected myself the first time.
It's a *9 to raise your hand and then to limit your questions or comments to one minute so that we get as many people have an opportunity to ask questions.

So I'm going to go ahead and leave it on this slide here unless Chitra and Larissa you want me to move it back to the six questions let me know and we'll coordinate with after you answer questions, we'll ask Christina to indicate which ones that she would like to read out loud
and then I can then answer-- prompt people those who have raised their hands to speak.

So Chitra?

Chitra Kumar: Sure, thanks.

So I just wanted to emphasize a couple of points with REACH and hopefully they will answer some of the questions that have come up here.

One is this is a draft concept, it's very much in formulation, so for example,
there was a slide that we shared that had the types of technical assistance that we're envisioning, we could provide I think, a lot of emphasis on this is a draft, so we really welcome your input on that.

This is open to anyone.

I think one of the questions was about how we're defining technical assistance, so that's why I'm going into this level of detail.
With EJ communities in mind, how would this be different than for utilities?

or regulators on technical assistance

So we're very much talking about like basic sort of how do you-- how do you even understand

the federal grant process?

How do you write a good federal grant that's going to be able to score well?

What types of data do you need to collect? What type of analysis do you need to do?
A lot of hand-holding which
you may not necessarily get

with some of these other types of technical
assistance that you'll see out there

that are focused on a particular
program or a particular investment priority,

this is much more
general for EJ communities

and we got some new wider authorities
to be able to support that kind of work.

And I just wanted to clarify that while
part of the reason that we're doing it now
is prompted by the fact that we have 60 billion dollars around that amount for Bipartisan Infrastructure Law or IIJA funding, the money that we're putting towards, this is actually from our own base appropriation and that is we're given this extra flexibility to be able to provide this type of technical assistance for EJ communities through that funding. And then the last bit is, this pilot phase is the idea that we're going to have--
we only have a certain amount of funding that we can put towards this right now,

we'd love to have more where we can have many, many more hubs across the country.

And so the example that Larissa shared about Region 1 and Region 2

that's a "for example", not to say that's the first one we're gonna do,

it's just we're gonna-- we only have so much,

so we're gonna have to group EPA regions together
and that's what we're considering right now based on geography.

And so for example, you would have a set-- another one for Regions 3 and 4, another one for 5 and 6, etc. and so on.

So that's another thing we'd love to hear your comments on, there's different ways we could slice and dice it but because EJ issues tend to be very place based,
we were focusing it on geographies at this time.

And I think if more funding became available including through pooling funding from other agencies.

That would be another way that we could consider or consider scaling up and having more and more of these hubs.

One of the questions we had here was around how would we make sure
from Jerome Shabazz about how do we make sure that REACH vendors are being required to locate in or near the community that requires the technical assistance.

We are going to have in the criteria that we will consider a wide variety of vendors and we will encourage people to have teams so that they can be as proximate to the community as possible and we'd love to hear your thoughts about that.

we'd love to hear your thoughts about how to make that happen
and we'll have to work with our lawyers to make it so.

So we appreciate that as a real need and that's a really important aspect of this work, to try to make sure the money and the expertise is sourced from community as much as possible.

So another question we have is does ground floor assistance look like assistance agreements like EPA does with tribal nations?

EPA providing daily or otherwise intensive education oversight and help with programming.
I think there will be a range of assistance types and it could include hands-on--

some hand-holding at the community level,

I'm not sure that I know what an assistance agreement looks like with the tribal program, so I can't say for sure but we can look into that.

And again I would say, if that's something you'd like to see, please share that as a comment.
So I'm just going to pause here and see if there are others that I absolutely--

there's a bunch of ones coming in,

so I wanna acknowledge that there's a lot of questions around this

and we're still in the phase of gathering input and ideas.

I don't need to answer every one of these questions live.

What I will say is there's a lot of agencies that are also looking
to do technical assistance like this.

There's been some references to for example, the rural partners network from USDA,

I'm seeing the Urban Waters Federal Partnership program being referenced,

thank you Abu, Ali for that.

And there's a lot that we could build upon, so this is not a new idea.

We have definitely built on really great ideas from others on this
and that's what we're hoping to do.

Let me--

Victoria Robinson: Chitra, we have four people online who have their hands raised to be able to ask a question and before I do that--

Matthew was there something you wanted to add or Christina was there a question you wanted to read out loud?
Matthew Tejada: Well, let's go back to Christina,

there are a few of these that are kind of following up on some of the things we said

but I don't want to get in the middle of Christina facilitating this section.

So Christina, did you have something you wanted to do?

Christina Motilall: Yeah there are some really wonderful questions that are in here that I wanted to make sure we got to--
There’s a question in from Artie and they asked, “How will the regional hubs ensure that the counseling services are free of charge? Will you be providing resources to engage in these services or will you be going into communities to provide these services at times and spaces convenient for community members?”

Chitra Kumar: Thank you.
The answer I guess we have--
we still have to figure that out.

Those are really great questions
and they're sort of helping us to refine

how we think about this
and what we're able to provide.

I think there's a limit
on probably what--

the lawyers are going to tell us what we can
and can't do in terms of supporting community--

helping pay communities to be able
to engage if that's where that was going
but your point is well taken to trying to do this in ways that are most convenient to communities

is really, really important.

Matt, you want to add on to any of that?

Matthew Tejada: No, that's good.

Christina Motilall: Great, I'm gonna go ahead and read one more quick one out loud and then Victoria I think we should go to the folks
who have patiently
raised their hands

and I'll keep some of these
back pocket for later

that we can
continue to read aloud.

The one I'd like to read now is from
Spring Creek Association and they ask,

"Are these virtual hubs or will they be
in regional federal offices?"

Matthew Tejada: So I think our
idea here is that these are not--
we're not setting up additional infrastructure within our EPA,

whether that's physically or virtually.

And to Chitra's earlier response, we don't know exactly how many options we're going to have once we get this thing crafted and competed

and see who applies for it, but we are looking for service providers that are as proximate within the communities,
I don't know approximately within  
doesn't make sense, right?

But we're looking for service providers that  
are authentic and credible and have history  
and have the ability to provide this technical  
assistance to communities that need it most.

This is the first time  
we're doing it though.

This is part of why-- and frankly, we're probably  
even going to change the name of this sucker,  
we had a meeting yesterday and we're like  
"well, we might not call these REACH"
but we-- this is this
is still very unbaked

but it is building on a lot of what
has been out there for some time,

none of this is a new idea.

Particularly last year, there was
a lot of some of the EJ leaders

and other academics were writing up
this idea for a hub and spoke approach--

we didn't get the funding
through the Build Back Better
because Build Back
Better didn't happen,

we didn't get the funding for us just to
kind of craft this however we wanted.

So we're trying to figure out a way
with the funding we did get

and looking at a lot of other programs
at EPA and at other federal agencies

that have received massive investments
and that part of a lot of those investments

is a call out for providing
technical assistance,

01:05:04,799 --> 01:05:13,423
how to get to this intense basic providing
capacity building technical assistance

01:05:13,447 --> 01:05:15,548
on the ground for the
communities that need it most

01:05:15,572 --> 01:05:19,839
and that goes to another
follow-up question from Sylvia.

01:05:19,839 --> 01:05:24,388
She's raising the--
well, is it just for communities?

01:05:24,412 --> 01:05:28,627
What about the sort of
hand-holding, the basic assistance

01:05:28,651 --> 01:05:36,559
that a lot of community organizations need, small community-based grassroots organizations?

In a lot of ways, the local utility needs the same thing.

In a lot of ways the Brownfields person, if the city is lucky enough to have a person on Brownfields, needs the same thing and that is exactly what we're working through right now is-- "okay, we have EJ dollars that suddenly look like
some of the most flexible
dollars in the federal government",

but they're small compared to what
some of our water colleagues have,

to what some of our
waste colleagues have,

to what folks at Department
of Transportation or at USDA.

So we're trying to figure out how to
bring as many of these strings together,

how we can use our EJ
dollars to the best advantage
focusing on community-based organizations but also recognizing,

in a lot of parts of the country, there is no community-based organization,

there's still a community there but the people that need help the most

and the only people there that can receive help might be a utility,

might be a local small municipality, might be the tribal government.

So we're trying to be as focused as we can while also being flexible to try
to make the assistance we design
match the needs on the ground

and also trying to do that
in a way that coordinates

so that we're not using EJ dollars to
provide the sort of technical assistance

that Joe and his shop might
be able to provide.

We should use our EJ dollars to
connect folks to build the capacity

and connect folks with the sort of
more specific technical assistance

880
01:07:20,932 --> 01:07:23,588
that a program like Joe's can provide.

881
01:07:23,612 --> 01:07:30,721
That's this really kind of complex
web we're trying to build inside of this,

882
01:07:30,745 --> 01:07:33,248
and again, that's one of
the reasons why even though

883
01:07:33,272 --> 01:07:38,000
we're still in the very earliest
stages of trying to figure this out,

884
01:07:38,000 --> 01:07:41,862
and there's a whole--
there's reams of bureaucracy

885
01:07:41,886 --> 01:07:43,868
that we're not going
to share with you all,

it's just our job to figure out the bureaucracy and legal niceties.

We do want to make sure though however we figure that out

and however we pull these things together that they answer

the exact sorts of questions and concerns that many of y'all are putting in these questions

and isn't the only time we're going to do this,
we're going to find other opportunities to engage like I said before,

this is one of the things that we want to bring to the National Environmental Justice
Advisory Council meeting later in June.

So this is going to be something that we are hammering away on for a minute because we need a lot of the feedback and engagement but we also have a real need to get this thing on paper and to get it out there so we can try to start
sending these things up as quickly as possible.

Victoria Robinson: Thank you, Matt.

Go ahead Chitra, go ahead.

Chitra Kumar: Oh I wanted to take on one more question live but you also said there are folks with their hands up.

Victoria Robinson: Yeah, we have four people who have the hands up.
We will go ahead, so this in essence is still answering live and we will go back and forth,

so once we go through these four individuals who raise their hands

then we'll go back to questions that have been posed in the Q&A

that Christina would want to read out loud.

So the first person I'm going to reach out to is Sharise.

If you can go ahead and unmute your line and ask your question.
So Sharise, are you able to unmute your line?

Are you there, Sharise?

Well, I'll tell you what, we're going--well, oh there you are, go ahead Sharise.

Sharise Horn: Hello this is Sharise Horn from Louisville MSD, my apologies,

I hit that button on accident but thank you for this wonderful conversation,

it has been very enlightening thus far and we really appreciate EPA's guidance on this.
Thank you.

Victoria Robinson: Thank you very much, Sharise.

All right next one is going to be Pamela Bingham.

If you can go ahead and unmute yourself, that'd be great.

Pamela Bingham: Hi, can you hear me?

Yes we can, go ahead Pamela.

Pamela Bingham: Okay, so I'm
calling on behalf of my role

at the University of Maryland, Region 3 and
I’m a native of Jackson, Mississippi Region 4.

I have two brief comments.

The first is, in the pandemic I do a
lot of community technical assistance

and I help a lot of community
organizations with grant writing.

In the pandemic, most COVID assistance
required smartphones, computers,
internet availability and internet capability,
although many seniors still cannot zoom.

So if you don't build something that allows for this capability,

communities are still going to be disconnected, libraries, community centers churches, etc.,

and some schools are still closed so you've got to actually think

about some physical infrastructure where will these technical assistance locations be

and I'm also a big fan of mobile.

Let's get some energy efficient
mobile buses out into places

934
01:11:04,084 --> 01:11:06,579
where maybe
we haven't been going.

935
01:11:06,603 --> 01:11:11,417
The second comment was, I used to
be a Brownfields manager in Jackson.

936
01:11:11,441 --> 01:11:14,328
Jackson is having water issues.

937
01:11:14,352 --> 01:11:17,679
I am in Mississippi
about every three months.

938
01:11:17,679 --> 01:11:21,522
In the actual city government,
to Matthew's point,

939
01:11:21,546 --> 01:11:26,588
they only had a public works person
and a solid waste management person

940

01:11:26,612 --> 01:11:32,640

and the solid waste management
person went away and became a contract.

941

01:11:32,640 --> 01:11:37,440

So local government officials don't-- and
some municipalities don't even have

942

01:11:37,440 --> 01:11:40,960

anything like an environmental official.

943

01:11:40,960 --> 01:11:46,640

What you did in Brownfields that I think
would be helpful is the loaned official.

944

01:11:46,640 --> 01:11:50,028

The person I had was from
the US Army Corps of Engineers

945

01:11:50,052 --> 01:11:54,080

and based on the water issues
in Jackson that made sense.

I taught him community engagement and he taught the city about some water issues.

So as you're thinking about that, I think that would be a good concept for some municipalities to actually loan them someone for six months.

Victoria Robinson: Thank you, Pamela.

Any comments?

All right, great, thank you.
The next person we are going to provide an opportunity to speak is Wig Zamore.

and I apologize if I've mispronounced your name.

Wig Zamore: Yes hi, Wig Zamore, it's fine however you want to pronounce it I'm happy.

So I did write a question and I'm a community pro bono activist who started some environmental epidemiology into near highway in near airport ultrafine particle and noise research.
And we've been successful in our research but it's not of a scale that would affect policy and practice. So I have a question that does not have to do with assistance with things that are already decided or that lack agency empathy but fundamentally the question is, how can you help us do study design and fund study design that is sufficient
to prove environmental health impacts of
difficult questions like ultrafine particles

and noise from
highways and airports?

Matthew Tejada: That's a
great question Wig and hey--

we're looking at several things there
everything from in addition

and I think there's been a couple
other questions that kind of got to this

and I haven't
been able to answer it.
So in addition to the money that we have in the EJ program for this technical assistance work,

we have even more money for grants and as always we will prioritize those grant dollars going to small local community-based organizations.

We've had a lot of success in the last several years of really driving those dollars to the lower capacity community based organizations that haven't received grants in the past.
but acknowledge that there is still a huge barrier for many community organizations to receive those grants just because they’re federal grants.

So one of the things that we are committed to figuring out how to do very quickly while we engage and design the future grant program and get a lot of feedback on that.

We know one of the things people want is for us to send out a grant
and have that grantee do the sub
granting so that folks can more directly--

this was part of
Dr. Sunshine's question as well--

to try to reduce or remove to the greatest
extent we can a lot of those inherent
bureaucratic barriers to low-capacity
organizations and partners actually accessing
the resources they have.

One of the things that we're considering
in that is to dedicate some of that funding
to doing things like
health impact assessments

because we have a real interested
EPA in supporting more communities

that want to do impact assessments and want to
actually start making the connections proactively,

what are the health impacts that they
see so it can feed into the air permit

or the road project or the funding decision
by the [UNINTELLIGIBLE] or the state.

Those as being critical to that-- so
we're looking to do that proactively

with our funding streams but also to try
to reduce the barriers as much as we can

for folks to just be
able to access those.

And I also mentioned, previously we're working
closely with a lot of other federal agencies

to try to get these
things lined up.

One of the things that there is an
opportunity to do is if we on the federal side,
if we can get ourselves organized, in exactly
what we're doing and how we're going to do it,

I think that will enable private
philanthropy where there's a lot of--

there's more interest than there's ever
been, I won't say there's a lot of interest,

I'd like to see a lot more but there's
more interest than there's ever been

from private philanthropy
who keeps asking us

"Show us what you're doing so that we can do
the stuff that y'all can't do in government."
And I think what you're pointing at is exactly the place where if we can be more intentional and specific, it will allow private philanthropy to come in around that and start providing.

I think what you're looking for with.

Wig Zamore: Yeah, that's helpful.

Just one clarification from me.

I mean just to be
clear, we’ve been successful

in our ultrafine particle and cardiovascular inflammation research

working at 500 million times the spatial temporal granularity

of the regional PM 2.5 research centers like Harvard.

So compared to PM 2.5 which they tend to focus on or in years past ozone,

our research is literally 500 million times a spatial temporally dense.
Our first doctorate sits on CASAC but we need--

so there's a gap not just in funding but in the science competence we need

relative to what your regional PM 2.5 centers have been able to do.

Matthew Tejada: Yes, yes.

I agree and there's a couple-- there's several things that we're working on from different angles again to try to intersect on exactly that issue you're pointing at,
including commitments by our Office of Research and Development

in EPA's Equity Action Plan which was published a couple of months ago almost now.

There's also some efforts not quite ready for folks to start sharing publicly for EPA

and one of our regions in particular to use some EPA assets to actually start having a more community-centered scientific research,

not just plans but actual resources, assets taking EPA assets
and starting to point them
directly in this direction

because I think to the underlying point if we actually get over ourselves

and bring the scientific endeavor to the ground in the communities

that are doing the work and that are being most impacted,

I think it will be revelatory not just for government and how we regulate

but for our private academic and state academic partners that do so much more of the research
and actually bringing their efforts into contact with the realities on the ground.

Wig Zamore: Thank you.

Matthew Tejada: Thanks, Wig.

Victoria Robinson: Thank you very much.

The last person who has their hand raised and then we'll turn it over to you Christina,

would be Sheila Polk Williams.

And I am now going
to unmute her line.

1042
01:19:29,920 --> 01:19:35,320
Sheila, are you able
to unmute your line?

1043
01:19:37,440 --> 01:19:39,679
And I'm hoping to
pronounce your name correct.

1044
01:19:39,679 --> 01:19:42,800
Sheila Polk Williams.

1045
01:19:46,480 --> 01:19:49,868
Okay if we can't-- we can
always come back to her.

1046
01:19:49,892 --> 01:19:59,644
Christina why don't you go ahead and read one
of the questions you have in the Q&A pod

1047
01:19:59,668 --> 01:20:02,960
and then we'll come back to Sheila.
Christina Motilall: Okay, sounds great.

Thanks, Victoria.

I know this is one that Chitra wanted to answer but unfortunately she did have to jump.

Not sure if Larissa or anyone else on the team can take this one.

but we did get a question in asking,

"so these will be EPA technical assistance working in/alongside the grantees organization"
or over an indefinite time
or over a project period?"

Matthew Tejada: That's a great
question, I think that is a question

that we want to hear from folks on.

And again, we're at the beginning of
this, we're not starting from zero though.

A lot of EJ leaders and organizations
have already been writing about this,
speaking about this.
One of the things that I was very happy to hear from some of the EJ leaders and organizations that have been talking about this technical assistance hub and spoke model is that it can't just be this bottomless well for an organization to continually draw from, even to the extent--and this isn't my idea, this was an idea that an EJ leader shared with me, there should be an expectation that if a community or community organization
receives technical assistance support,

if they're actually successful at building up their community organization,

they should start paying back into that technical assistance hub.

I don't know legally if that's possible but I thought that the idea of that was excellent,

that whatever support we're able to bring to bear--

to help communities and their partners grow,
to help them start to bring resources into their community,

to make change happen on the ground,

that once they reach that level, they should then pay it forward.

Essentially is kind of how I thought about that.

So whether this is on a project base or some period basis,

I think there's going to have to be just pragmatically,
there's going to have to be some sort of a parameter there

but I think that's exactly the sort of thing that we're hoping like this question or other feedback, to get feedback on over the next month or so

and to try to get this thing out there in the best way possible.

Again, this is the first time we're actually trying to make this idea a reality.

There's no way we're going to get it 100% right.
I'm hopeful we'll get at least 80% right.

and we're going to try really, really hard to get it at least 90% and get an A.

but I know there's no way we're going to get it 100% right.

There's a couple other questions-- I see Larissa answering one of them.

I'm just going to answer them very quickly.

Charles asks what is the
definition of a large non-profit.

For our EJ grants, for instance, we're very specific that we only fund with our EJ grants small community-based local organizations.

It can't be chapters, it can't be an organization that operates in multiple states.

So we have criteria we've developed to try to really get to small community-based organizations.

It is a little bit of an art trying to write legal language that allows you to do that
but we do have experience on doing that.

Our hope is that we're able to go out with some sort of a competition this summer

to actually solicit proposals for folks to be these technical assistance providers.

So we are trying to turn this idea around pretty quickly and actually get it on paper and get it out on the street this summer

which would mean that hopefully, by the end of the calendar year,
we could actually award these
and start to have them on the ground.

1102
01:24:03,331 --> 01:24:08,388
I know that means that a full year
after the investment bill was first passed

1103
01:24:08,412 --> 01:24:12,560
we would be out there starting
these technical assistance centers.

1104
01:24:12,560 --> 01:24:20,159
The timing of how these things have
happened are not the most awesome

1105
01:24:20,159 --> 01:24:22,320
but we're trying to make up
ground as quickly as we can

1106
01:24:22,344 --> 01:24:26,006
now that we have some resources to
get those resources out on the ground
in the way that we very much hear from across the board, EJ leaders and organizations and communities asking and demanding that we do.

So I think--

Sheila Polk Williams has actually unmuted herself now

Victoria Robinson: I'm sorry I was muted, I'm sorry Matthew--

Sheila Polk Williams has actually unmuted herself now
so she can go ahead
and ask her question.

1114
01:24:48,091 --> 01:24:51,040
Matthew Tejada: Oh, go ahead, Sheila.

1115
01:24:53,679 --> 01:24:57,800
Victoria Robinson: Sheila,
are you able to speak?

1116
01:25:03,679 --> 01:25:06,960
You are unmuted, Sheila.

1117
01:25:10,239 --> 01:25:12,353
Okay, so Matthew said you saw--

1118
01:25:12,377 --> 01:25:16,960
while she does trying to deal
with her I guess her technical stuff,

1119
01:25:16,960 --> 01:25:20,107
was there another question you want
to answer that you saw in the Q&A pod?
Matthew Tejada: I did I did want-- our good friend John Mueller who comes to all of our engagements has put a few things in regarding fluoridated water and EPA's positions on-- or position, I shouldn't say positions-- we would have one position on the future of fluoridated water. None of us have a good answer for you, John.

I know you're gonna keep bringing
these up and I welcome that especially, when we're talking about water infrastructure funding.

I still don't have a good answer for you from engaging with some of my colleagues in the Water Office

but I don't know one of these days we're to have to have a focused conversation on this.

I'm not sure if this is something that the NEJAC will want to take up.
I know we've got a number of NEJAC members on and I'm sure you will be

at the June 22nd public testimony period of the NEJAC,

so perhaps this is the sort of thing that maybe the NEJAC would look to take up

but that would be a decision of the NEJAC members.

Otherwise, I appreciate you continuing to show up and lift up this issue

and if I ever am able to get some sort of-- how do I even characterize this,
receptivity to the conversation from some of our colleagues in the Water Office,

I'm sure we would probably use this forum or something similar to this forum to do that.

So the NEJAC is the National Environmental Justice Advisory Council,

it is our federal advisory committee that advises the EPA administrator

on environmental justice issues.

And since I'm talking about fluoride, Joe came back on.
Joe did you have anything in addition to that or were you just coming back on for a minute?

Joe Tiago: Oh yeah thanks, Matt.

I just wanted to reassure John that EPA is currently reviewing the national primary drinking water regulations for fluoride under this six year review, so we will be having more conversations on that.
And thanks for raising all those concerns for us.

Matthew Tejada: Thanks, Joe.

Victoria Robinson: Okay.

Christina do we have any other questions that need to be--

that can be answered out loud, read out loud?

Other than Sheila Polk Williams, I don't have anybody else with their hands raised.
Christina Motilall: I also do not have any questions in the Q&A pod at the moment.

Victoria Robinson: Okay, wonderful, thank you.

Matthew anything we have before I move on to the closing remarks slide

Matthew Tejada: I don't think so.

If there are any other-- from folks that are on,
I think we have a little smaller crowd today than we've had for many of the past months.

Victoria Robinson: Right.

Matthew Tejada: But this is--

we're not limited to just talking about the topics we brought up,

we try every month to focus on things that are kind of happening that we think folks
will be interested in,

where some feedback and some engagement or just awareness is really timely

but we’re not constrained to those so we welcome folks if there are other issues

that you’d like us to try to address today, we’re happy to do so.

If there are issues or things happening that you would like for us to focus on

in future monthly engagement calls, again, you can find any of us,
the secret code is just
lastname.firstname@EPA.gov.

Any of us that you've seen speaking, just
take our last name put a dot

then put our first name
and then @EPA.gov

and we very much want
for these to be useful for folks,

so we want to speak to the
issues that folks need us to,

so we want your feedback on that.
Otherwise, if there's nothing else--

1180
01:29:32,800 --> 01:29:35,822
Oh here we go, we're gonna-- Crystal
we're gonna get at the end,

1181
01:29:35,846 --> 01:29:41,600
we're gonna provide the information on
how to sign up for more information from us.

1182
01:29:41,624 --> 01:29:45,667
Yeah, so I think Victoria we're
ready to close out I guess.

1183
01:29:45,691 --> 01:29:49,600
Victoria Robinson: Okay,
wonderful, thank you.

1184
01:29:49,624 --> 01:29:53,868
All right so our next engagement call is
sched for a month now on June,
Tuesday June 21st at
2 p.m our standard time.

Here's a link to get access to
the links to register for the calls

and so this is already-- our website, it has
already been updated to reflect the June 21st call.

If you want to subscribe to
our environmental justice listserv

which is where you'll be able to find
those information about upcoming calls,

about some other funding
opportunities, some events and webinars,
then you send a blank email to join-EPA-EJ@lists.EPA.gov.

Now you don't have to worry about writing it down right now.

Our slide deck has already been posted onto the website, this is the last slide in that slide deck, so these links are already in there.

We also have a Twitter account @EPAEnvJustice,
somebody else has a Twitter handle with that and we also use that Twitter handle to tweet about upcoming calls and other kind of funding opportunities and events and webinars. And if you have any questions about what you heard today or questions or suggestions about how-- topics you may would like to hear about in the future, please send a follow-up question or comment to our EPA email box
which is environmental-justice@EPA.gov and we'll get back with you as quickly as possible.

And I think that pretty well covers it.

Do you--?

Okay.

Stephanie Coats you raise a good question,

is there any way we can create the Eventbrite
so we can register for multiple EJ engagement calls at one time?

I understand and I think that's something we are--

I have been kind of exploring how we can do that

so that-- to each one because--

but the problem is each engagement call has a unique link

and we're trying to figure out how we can make sure we provide you
with the correct link
that changes every month

but I think what we can do is explore

sending out a message from an Eventbrite to
all those who register for the previous month

like for today, those who registered and
the attendees, we can send out a message

to you guys "hey check it out,
here's our next call as a reminder."

So we're still trying to
figure that out because Zoom
and Eventbrite have their own little nuances
but I do take your comment very seriously

and we're trying to see
what we can do, thank you.

Christina Motilall: Also Victoria, I'm
just going to add to that very quickly,

you can follow our office on
Eventbrite and when you follow the office

you will get an email notification
when we add a new event,

so I'm going to drop that into
the chat-- the Q&A pod right now
and if you want to do that, that's also a way that it can help remind you when we add events.

Matthew Tejada: And Crystal Bates is saying that she might have a hack for a way to do this.

So Crystal would you email one of us and share your wisdom?

Victoria Robinson: Yeah, yeah robinson.victoria@EPA.gov,

it's kind of my Eventbrite account [LAUGHS] for that.

So we'd love to hear from you.
We're trying to make it easier for us as ease as well as for you guys,

that was certainly and oh I see that you're driving,

okay we'll see your email.

Matthew Tejada: We'll email you.

Victoria Robinson: Yes, we'll email you and with our information, thank you.

Okay I think that pretty well covers it unless there's something else--
we'll keep people posted.

Matthew Tejada: Thank you to Julie and Jackie as always, thank you all so much.

Victoria Robinson: Right, thank you, yes.

And I think and also for everybody who worked behind the scenes

to help answer questions Christina Motilall, Yvonne Gonzalez Brianna [UNINTELLIGIBLE]

and I'm probably not pronouncing it correctly
who is from the Office of Groundwater Drinking Water and Chitra and Larissa Mark

1246
01:33:55,807 --> 01:34:02,428
for their support on answering questions related to the REACH program proposal,

1247
01:34:02,452 --> 01:34:05,970
thank you all and I hope you all have a nice wonderful day.

1248
01:34:05,994 --> 01:34:11,199
I hope the weather is good for you like it is for us here after intermittent rains

1249
01:34:11,199 --> 01:34:17,538
and see you guys if not before, we'll see you in a month on June 21st.

1250
01:34:17,562 --> 01:34:20,880
Thank you very much.

1251
01:34:21,040 --> 01:34:24,360
Matthew Tejada: Thanks everyone.