

2022-23 ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE THRIVING COMMUNITIES TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE CENTERS PROGRAM (EJ TCTAC)

Project Summaries by Geographic Area

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency is announcing the selection of 16 selectees for the Environmental Justice Thriving Communities Technical Assistance Centers Program (EJ TCTACs or Program.) Seventeen organizations and their partners have been selected to receive a total of approximately \$177 million to establish a network of technical assistance centers (Centers) across the nation providing direct technical assistance, training, and capacity-building support to communities and organizations to advance environmental and energy justice priorities. With this critical investment, the Centers will provide training and other assistance to build capacity of local grassroots nonprofit organizations, tribal governments, and other similar community stakeholders in navigating federal, state, and private grant application systems such as Grants.gov and SAM.gov, writing stronger grant proposals, and effectively managing grant funding. In addition, these Centers will provide guidance on community engagement, meeting facilitation, and translation and interpretation services for limited English-speaking participants, thus removing barriers and improving accessibility to resources for communities with environmental justice concerns. Each of the Centers will also create and manage communication channels to ensure all communities have direct access to resources and information. Final awards are subject to administrative and legal reviews to verify compliance with applicable requirements.

EPA and the US Department of Energy (DOE) will cooperatively fund these 16 awards, which will feature 13 Regional Centers and 3 National Centers working collaboratively across the United States supporting communities. These 16 awards will be in the form of incrementally funded cooperative agreements where EPA and DOE staff will have substantial involvement in the oversight and implementation of the Program. The establishment of this Program and Centers is in direct response to feedback from communities and environmental justice leaders who have long called for technical assistance and capacity building support for communities and their partners as they work to access critical federal, state, and private resources and engage in decision-making that impacts them. The 16 Centers will provide comprehensive coverage for the entire United States through a network of over 160 partners including community-based organizations, additional academic institutions, and other stakeholders so more communities can access federal funding opportunities like those made available through President Biden's Inflation Reduction Act and Bipartisan Infrastructure Law as well as funding from states and private foundations.

All centers are currently scheduled to operate from October 2023 to October 2028.

For more information, visit: <https://www.epa.gov/environmentaljustice/environmental-justice-thriving-communities-technical-assistance-centers>.

EPA REGION 2

Recipient: West Harlem Environmental Action, Inc. (WE ACT)

Applicant Type: Not for Profit

Award Amount: \$10,000,000

Title: *WE ACT Technical Assistance Collaborative*

Location: EPA Region 2 (NJ, NY, and 8 federally recognized Indian Nations)

Partners:

New York University School of Law Institute for Policy Integrity (academic) Inter American University of Puerto Rico (in-kind academic partner)
Columbia University Climate School (academic)
Environmental Protection Network (nonprofit, technical assistance) Clean Energy Group (nonprofit, technical assistance)
New Jersey Environmental Justice Alliance (nonprofit, environmental justice) South Ward Environmental Alliance (nonprofit, environmental justice)

Goals and Description:

WE ACT for Environmental Justice will lead and host an Environmental Justice Thriving Communities Technical Assistance Center for EPA Region 2 – the WE ACT Technical Assistance Collaborative – serving underserved, rural and remote communities within the area of service that includes New Jersey, New York, Puerto Rico, US Virgin Islands and eight Indian Nations. WE ACT is uniquely suited to serve as the EJ TCTAC lead because of their long history of engagement with decisionmakers and stakeholders to address local environmental justice issues, and because of their own experience in building organizational capacity, from an unfunded volunteer organization to a nationally leading EJ organization with 30 staff and two offices, in Harlem (NYC) and Washington, DC. The WE ACT Technical Assistance Collaborative brings together academic partners with climate, policy, regulatory, and decisionmaker engagement expertise; outreach partners from across the region, with an emphasis on reaching rural and remote communities; and energy justice technical and funding expertise. Central features of the approach and design of the center include:

- **A Steering Committee**, comprising all the partners listed, along with additional community-based partners and technical assistance providers as deemed appropriate during the development and life of the TCTAC. The Steering Committee will play a key role in program design, on evaluation and the incorporation of feedback, and ensuring that TA services and TA delivery are appropriate for the target constituencies.
- **An outreach network**, with locally based outreach partners, that extends throughout EPA Region 2, reaching underserved and rural/remote communities. including trainings, the call center, and the referral network. The outreach network will also play a key role in incorporating community feedback, including through the initial Needs Assessment and annual evaluations as well as ongoing input to improve services and delivery to meet the needs of target communities.
- **An EJ TCTAC call center**, staffed by WE ACT, that can provide advice on grant writing and fundraising, and connect participants to a rich referral network that includes WE ACT staff specializing in Policy, Civic Engagement, and Environmental Health.
- **A referral network**, to enhance the volume and breadth of services provided by the TCTAC.

EPA REGION 2

Recipient: Inter-American University of Puerto Rico-Metro Campus (IAUPR)

Applicant Type: Institution of Higher Education

Award Amount: \$10,000,000

Title: EAGEL (E= Engage and A=Assist G= Grassroots organizations for E= Environmental/Energy Justice and L= Leadership capacity building)

Location: EPA Region 2, Puerto Rico (PR) and US Virgin Islands (USVI)

Partners:

WE ACT (in-kind partner), Community Engineering Corps, NJ Science and Technology University, Vitrina Solidaria, Energy Justice PR, Environmental Protection Network, Department of Economic Development and Commerce of PR, & SBDC for Region #2; to provide outreach and technical assistance services and support.

Goals and Description:

The EAGEL EJ TCTAC will create HUBS in Puerto Rico and USVI using a highly successful model previously implemented in by IAUPR in Puerto Rico. EAGEL's goal is to "Build Community Capacity, Climate Resilience and Maximizing Benefits to Overburdened and Underserved Communities increasing EPA support for community-led action by providing investments and benefits directly to communities with environmental justice concerns and by integrating equity throughout Agency programs." Objective is to provide training, technical assistance (TA), and support for core areas viz. Collaborative problem-solving, Grants & Fundraising Capacity, and Environmental/Energy Justice Advocacy. Activities: Through a series of meetings, workshops, webinars both face-to-face and virtual the HUBS and partners will engage grassroots organizations in strengthening institutional capacity. The step-by-step unpacking of the identifying organizational, technical needs, creation of guides and manuals that are culturally and linguistically appropriate and a hands-on-approach for providing technical assistance and support to participants primarily in PR and USVI. EAGEL will develop a HUB One Stop Center in Puerto Rico and US Virgin Islands to provide eligible services for EEJ in underserved, rural, and remote communities. To establish the EAGEL Region #2 EJ TCTAC, IAUPR and partners will create educational and training modules on EJ TCTAC EPA core areas for collaborative problem-solving and leadership for civic engagement, grantsmanship & fundraising. Building on the successful IAUPR-Small Business Technology Development Center (SBDC) funded by U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) model with a HUB at each of the nine (9) Campuses they have provided technical assistance and services to more than 15,000 clients, created 180 new businesses, 99 seminars, \$68 million in access to capital, 7,043 one-on-one consulting, 1,922 persons participated in workshops, and 22,276 jobs supported; 98% of whom were Hispanics. Clients expressed high satisfaction 97% to 100% to SBDC services in their evaluation of access to services, waiting time, knowledge of staff, facilities, interest, and understanding of client needs. This model will be utilized to provide EJ TCTAC services to community stakeholders in PR and USVI.

EPA REGION 3

Recipient: National Wildlife Federation

Applicant Type: Not for Profit

Award Amount: \$12,000,000

Title: *Mid-Atlantic Thriving Communities Hub (MATCH)*

Location: EPA Region 3 (DE, DC, MD, PA, VA, WV, and 7 federally recognized tribes)

Partners:

Academic: University of Maryland's (UMD) Center for Community Engagement, Environmental Justice and Health (CEEJH) and Environmental Finance Center (EFC), Morgan State University, West Virginia State University; Local NGO: Centro De Apoyo Familiar, South Baltimore Community Land Trust, Virginia Environmental Justice Collaborative, Overbrook Education Center, Sussex Health & Environmental Network/Sentinels of Eastern Shore Health.

Goals and Description:

The National Wildlife Federation (NWF) will work with core partners (UMD CEEJH and UMD EFC) to design, operate and lead a Mid- Atlantic Thriving Communities Hub (MATCH) to be an Environmental Justice Thriving Communities Technical Assistance Center for EPA Region 3, serving the states of DE, MD, PA, VA, and WV and DC. NWF will work closely with multiple community-based partners as core partners selected due to their experience and expertise in environmental and energy justice work. Using a 'hub' approach, the core partners will act as 'core hubs', and the community-based 'hubs' will allow for service delivery to be more accessible to potential program participants, both geographically as well as culturally, due to their on-the-ground community presence. The community hubs include: (1) Centro De Apoyo Familiar (CAF) (DC Metro Hub); (2) South Baltimore Community Land Trust (SBCLT)(Baltimore area Hub); (3) Virginia Environmental Justice Collaborative (VEJC) (VA Hub); (5) Overbrook Education Center (PA Hub); and (6) Sussex Health & Environmental Network (SHEN)/Sentinels of Eastern Shore Health (SESH)(Eastern Shore Hub). Morgan State University (MSU) will act as the primary Historically Black College and University (HBCU) Hub and West Virginia State University (WVSU) will act as a hybrid community and HBCU Hub. From a bricks and mortar standpoint, this is effective as participants will have more local or regional places to receive services. From a cultural perspective, this is effective in that these organizations can draw upon their existing relationships and networks to be able to reach participants quickly, and they can also use the baseline information and services created and maintained by MATCH to distribute to participants, and further modify or tailor to the specific needs of communities in their service area. NWF and the UMD's EFC and CEEJH will draw upon their unique institutional qualifications and experience to produce content for all the services that will be provided to participants We will also oversee the MATCH operations and oversight. Operationally, NWF will be responsible for the grant management, the overall MATCH management, and act as the central hub for the suite of core and secondary partners. An Executive Committee will be established to lead all management activities. It will consist of the MATCH Co-Directors, and directors of each community and HBCU hub. The committee will monitor the allocation and use of MATCH resources to ensure appropriate and equitable distribution among all partners (see Budget Justification); lead the strategic planning process; and monitor and facilitate MATCH activities.

EPA REGIONS 4 & 6

Recipient: Deep South Center for Environmental Justice (DSCEJ)

Applicant Type: Not for Profit

Award Amount: \$13,000,000

Title: *Community Investment Recovery Center (CIRC)*

Location: EPA Region 4 (AL, FL, GA, KY, MS, NC, SC, TN, and 6 tribes) and EPA Region 6 (AR, LA, NM, OK, TX, and 66 tribal nations)

Partners:

Academic: Alabama A & M Univ., Bethune Cookman Univ., Spelman College, Dillard Univ., Jackson State Univ. North Carolina Central Univ., South Carolina State Univ., Tennessee State Univ. Texas Southern Univ., Xavier Univ. Community-Based: Clean, Healthy, Educated, Safe and Sustainable, Unity in the Family Ministry, Education, Economics, Environmental, Climate, and Health Organization, East New Orleans Neighborhood Advisory Commission, Coalition of Community Organizations. Government: U.S. Representative, 2nd District, City of New Orleans Office of Hazard Mitigation, Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality, New Orleans City Council District E. Research and Policy: Bullard Center for Environmental and Climate Justice, Alliance for Affordable Energy, Environmental Defense Fund, Environmental Protection Network, Health Impacts of Degraded Environments, Healthy Gulf, Land Loss Prevention Project, Ocean Conservancy, Union of Concerned Scientist, West Atlanta Watershed Alliance, Metropolitan Group, Center for Earth Energy and Democracy, People Organized in Defense of Earth and Her Resources. Faith-Based: Louisiana General Missionary Baptist Convention and the Baptist Pastors Conference of New Orleans.

Goals and Description:

The DSCEJ and partners will establish the Community Investment and Recovery Center (CIRC) as a Technical Assistance Center to serve rural, remote, and underserved communities in each of the states located in Regions 4 and 6. The CIRC will build the capacity of 250 community-based organizations (CBOs) to apply for approximately \$50-100 million in grants from the EPA, DOE, and other sources over the 5-year performance period, and to manage those grants. To this end, the DSCEJ has designed the CIRC to provide direct services through six levels of capacity building and training that will: (1) build knowledge of environmental, health, climate, and energy issues of concern; (2) develop research skills to access, analyze, and present community-level data; and teach participants to (3) develop workplans to reach priority goals, build partnerships, and engage decisionmakers; and (4) access grant opportunities, and write, submit, and manage grants. The DSCEJ has a proven track record of helping environmental justice communities create sustainable change that spans more than 30 years, and a track record of successfully writing, winning, and managing federal grant awards spanning 25 years. The DSCEJ has in-place infrastructure for building the capacities of small, grassroots organizations; this work is currently ongoing in five states across the Southern US in Regions 4 and 6. Funding from this grant would support the DSCEJ to expand the breadth of our work to cover all states in Regions 4 and 6, and to offer direct services to at least 250 CBOs from underserved urban and rural/remote communities within these states. Additionally, the grant award would allow us to enhance and replicate DSCEJ's model in new states. In other words, establishing a Technical Assistance Center draws on DSCEJ's strengths as the longest-serving environmental justice resource center. In addition to providing direct technical assistance to communities across the southern United States, DSCEJ will also serve as the lead coordinator on the delivery of technical assistance across

the South in collaboration with Research Triangle Institute (serving EPA Region 4 communities) and New Mexico State University (serving EPA Region 6 communities).

EPA REGION 4

Recipient: Research Triangle Institute (RTI)

Applicant Type: Not for Profit

Award Amount: \$10,000,000

Title: *Resource for Assistance and Community Training – Region 4 (REACT4EJ)*

Location: EPA Region 4 (AL, FL, GA, KY, MS, NC, SC, TN, and 6 tribes)

Partners:

REACT4EJ supports every state of EPA Region 4 and will connect to local community-based organizations with a hub-and-spoke design. With a Coordinating Office at RTI in NC, the project partners include: North Carolina Central University (academic/Minority-serving Institution [MSI]), University of Memphis (academic), University of South Carolina (academic), University of Georgia (academic), Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University (academic/MSI), Alabama Agricultural and Mechanical University (academic/MSI), University of Kentucky (academic), Jackson State University (academic/MSI), and Environmental Protection Network (non-profit).

Goals and Description:

REACT4EJ will establish a center for educating and capacity building in underserved communities that will be sustainable and readily adapted to the needs of participants well beyond the 5-year period of performance. REACT4EJ proposes to use a co-creation approach for the design of activities that centers the needs and inputs of the communities and program participants. Through the collective experience of team members, REACT4EJ will follow a comprehensive process that enables technical assistance to evolve in response to shifting landscapes and community needs, and to the results of an ongoing robust evaluation of outputs and outcomes through the project. The result will be a comprehensive training and technical assistance center that provides program participants access to a combination of locally focused materials on environmental and energy justice topics and programs and trainings with broad applicability. The project partners will provide vital in-person training and resources within their states, with joint efforts and material development managed through the Coordinating Office at RTI. REACT4EJ brings existing connections with community-based organizations and state/local government agencies that will enable the network to provide services broadly across Region 4. The RTI team has a long history of providing TA in federal grants, contracts, and cooperative agreements. RTI will leverage extensive experience in coordinating TA centers, community outreach, and programs. Team members have community engagement and environmental and energy justice expertise, enabling REACT4EJ to provide tailored services to program participants. The primary community engagement strategy will be co-creation, which involves direct collaboration with program participants and partners to share input and insights and center community needs in service development. Essential to the success of the EJ TCTAC is an easy-to-use website that features shared network materials and events and that receives and tracks TA requests from participants. RTI will develop and manage the website using their experience from other coordinating center projects. The REACT4EJ website will be a virtual hub for network operation and stakeholder communication. RTI will collaborate closely with the Deep South Center for EJ, which will serve as the lead coordinator for EJ TCTAC services across the southern United States.

EPA REGION 5

Recipient: Blacks in Green (BIG)

Applicant Type: Not for Profit

Award Amount: \$10,000,000

Title: *EPA REGION V Environmental Justice Thriving Communities Technical Assistance Center (EJ TCTAC) Program Community-Led Alliance by Blacks in Green & Partners*

Location: EPA Region 5 (IL, IN, MI, MN, OH, WI, and 35 tribes)

Partners:

The Midwest Tribal Energy Resources Association (MTERA)

Black Environmental Leaders (BEL)

Environmental Health Watch (EHW)

The School of Public Health, University of Illinois, Chicago

The Smart Energy Design Center, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign (SEDAC)

Goals and Description:

With a skilled network of specialized partners spread across the entire six-state-and-tribal geography of EPA Region V, this Environmental Justice Thriving Communities Technical Assistance Center (EJ TCTAC) is uniquely situated to shape equity by providing assistance, training, and resources to program participants. Each operational partner has evolved through grassroots efforts, comprehensively integrating science, tradition, and culture. The consortium derives its power from the people. Located near the EPA Region 5 headquarters in Chicago, Illinois, BIG serves as the epicenter of the EJ TCTAC. Powerful partners ensure that this targeted, specialized program extends throughout the 35 tribal lands, Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio, and Wisconsin. This dedicated team ensures that each EJ TCTAC focus area outlined by EPA is carried out professionally, thoroughly, and continuously, incorporating real-time advances, arising challenges, and meaningful involvement of the communities. To help achieve equity, in alignment with Executive Order 13985, each involved organization envisions a technical assistance center that empowers communities to remediate social, economic, and health burdens by seeking environmental and energy justice. For maximum impact, services provided engage participants at every level of readiness to design solutions, obtain needed funding and resources, and direct activities and resources toward their identified needs with emphasis on those disproportionately harmed. To best ensure that all eligible services of EJ TCTAC objectives are provided throughout the entire geographic area, including remote and rural areas, 23 documented, supporting partners provide valuable assistance. To create a new chapter of hope, healing, and regeneration, the whole-system solution proposed by BIG and conveyed through this EJ TCTAC empowers individuals and communities to lessen barriers to healthy living and economic freedom. The EJ TCTAC will offer hybrid virtual and on-site services. The widespread network of partners will operate satellite offices to ensure physical and virtual services are accessible to remote and underserved communities. SEDAC will deploy a dedicated 1-800 call-center. BEL and MTERA will develop multilingual resources and continue to leverage existing Tribal networks across the region. Services include production of and instruction on how-to-produce physical, digital, and virtual resources that include storytelling, fact sheets, case studies, infographics, and best-practice tip sheets. To teach capacity building at both regional and local levels, the EJ TCTAC will facilitate stakeholder engagement discussions, listening sessions, and outreach with government and private sectors. BIG will also closely collaborate with the University of Minnesota which is also receiving an EJ TCTAC award to support EPA Region V communities.

EPA REGION 5

Recipient: University of Minnesota

Applicant Type: Institution of Higher Education

Award Amount: \$10,000,000

Title: *Community Development and Technical Assistance to Advance Environment and Energy Justice in the Great Lakes Region*

Location: EPA Region 5 (IL, IN, MI, MN, OH, WI, and 35 tribes)

Partners:

University of Minnesota (academic), University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign (academic), Michigan State University (academic), Purdue University (academic), Ohio State University (academic), Great Plains Institute (non-profit), Environmental Protection Network (non-profit), Community Engineering Corps (non-profit), Midwest Tribal Energy Resources Association (non-profit)

Goals and Description:

University of Minnesota plans to leverage existing University extension networks and technical service providers to reach remote, rural, and underserved communities across EPA Region 5, including the states of Minnesota, Michigan, Wisconsin, Illinois, Indiana, and Ohio and 34 Tribal Nations. The assembled individuals and institutions have long-standing connections within their states and constituencies, are well-versed in the regulations, policies, procedures, and programmatic requirements of federal, state, local, and private foundation grants, and have decades of experience providing technical assistance in the form of outreach, education, training, leadership development, grant support, and access to specialized expertise. The proposed Great Lakes Environmental Justice Technical Assistance Center (TAC) is oriented around three interrelated activities: 1. identify underserved and overburdened communities who could benefit from environmental and energy-related programs, 2. build capacity for communities to engage in environmental decision making and access technical assistance, and 3. provide tailored, accessible, culturally appropriate assistance that allows communities to secure funding and resources that materially improve their social, economic, and environmental outcomes. We will deliver these activities through a coordinated network of university extension offices, nonprofit partners, and technical advisors overseen by a central hub based at the Center for Community Vitality at the University of Minnesota. Our network has experience working collaboratively with rural, remote, and underserved communities through university extension programs and long-term partnerships with community organizations. Extension programs have existing relationships across the states they serve, helping communities navigate federal funding opportunities, providing educational workshops, and delivering site-specific technical assistance in partnership with state agencies. Activating extension staff that represent “boots on the ground” will be especially critical in reaching rural and remote communities throughout Region 5. Network partners Great Plains Institute and the Midwest Tribal Energy Resources Association have track records of providing customized and culturally appropriate technical assistance to underserved communities on a range of programs, from community solar to weatherization and energy efficiency training. Partnerships with the Environmental Protection Network and the Community Engineering Corps bring technical, policy, and engineering expertise, including experience working with a range of communities of all capacities. Collectively, the TAC network represents individuals and programs with expertise in community development, renewable energy, tribal governments, community engagement, environmental justice, air and water pollution, natural resource management, environmental remediation and restoration, and

disaster resilience, among other environmental and energy issues. The University of Minnesota will also closely collaborate with Blacks in Green (BIG) which is also receiving an EJ TCTAC award to support EPA Region V communities.

EPA REGION 6

Recipient: New Mexico State University (NMSU)

Applicant Type: Institution of Higher Education

Award Amount: \$10,000,000

Title: *South Central Environmental Justice Resource Center (SCEJRC)*

Location: EPA Region 6 (AR, LA, NM, OK, TX, and 66 tribal nations)

Partners:

NMSU (Academic-College of Engineering and Cooperative Extension Service), Beloved Community (Non-profit), UT Arlington-based Texas Manufacturing Extension Program (Academic, TMAC), LifeCity (Business/Industry), Santa Fe Green Chamber of Commerce (Non-profit, SFGCC), Inter-Tribal Council of Louisiana (Non-profit), Arkansas Capital Corporation (Business/Industry, ACC), Gulf States Renewable Energy Industry Association (Non-profit, GSREIA), Together Louisiana (Non-profit), and G.A.A.P. Grant Writing Training (Non-profit).

Goals and Description:

NMSU plans to lead an experienced team of community-based partners to create the multi-faceted South-Central Environmental Justice Resource Center (SCEJRC). SCEJRC activities will focus on providing relevant outreach programming and resources within EPA Geographic Region 6 to enhance environmental and energy justice, with a focus on disinvested populations in underserved communities and those in rural and remote areas. Through community-based partnerships, SCEJRC will develop an Equitable Leadership Model designed to guide equitable engagement across two EJ impact sectors: (1) uplifting disinvested communities through leadership, peer learning, and outreach training to ensure relevant and active engagement in future environmental and energy policy development, and (2) empowering business leaders for equitable engagement through awareness of current assets and options, and emerging economic opportunities. SCEJRC will utilize traditional and innovative strategies to develop place-based resources guided by Participatory Action Research, develop a user-friendly regional web-based portal that navigates access to technical assistance resources within EPA Region 6; and develop and deliver EJ outreach services that are geographically, demographically, culturally, and linguistically relevant, relatable, and responsive to community needs (e.g., in-person, web-based, trainings, workshops). SCEJRC will proactively foster a culture of collaboration and trust to forge shared priorities and values at the local, state, and regional levels for strategic place-based impact with distinct intentionality. Outcomes will be assessed annually with programming adjusted as needed to ensure the targeted populations are benefiting from the respective services and resources. NMSU will collaborate closely with the Deep South Center for EJ, which will serve as the lead coordinator for EJ TCTAC services across the southern United States.

EPA REGION 7

Recipient: Wichita State University (WSU)

Applicant Type: Institution of Higher Education

Award Amount: \$10,000,000

Title: *Promoting Environmental Justice in EPA Region 7 through a Thriving Communities Technical Assistance Center at the Environmental Finance Center at Wichita State University*

Location: EPA Region 7 (IA, KS, NE, MO, and 9 tribal nations)

Partners:

Center for Rural Affairs (nonprofit service provider)
Climate and Energy Project (nonprofit service provider) Community Engineering Corps (nonprofit service provider) Environmental Protection Network (nonprofit service provider) Iowa Environment Council (nonprofit service provider)
Kansas Rural Center (nonprofit service provider)
Kansas State University Engineering Extension (academic) Metropolitan Congregations United (faith-based)

Goals and Description:

The Environmental Finance Center (EFC) at Wichita State University (WSU) will establish and operate an Environmental Justice Thriving Communities Technical Assistance Center to build the capacity of individuals, organizations, and institutions who serve underserved and disadvantaged communities in Iowa, Kansas, Missouri, and Nebraska, and adjoining indigenous nations, to make meaningful advances towards environmental and energy equity at the local, state, regional, and federal levels. Through community engagement, trainings, technical assistance, applied research, tool development, community assessments, and more, the Center will build a community's ability to participate in environmental justice and energy justice decision-making at all levels of government, find and apply for grants, and engage with the private sector to be part of energy and infrastructure project design and development. The EFC at WSU is uniquely positioned to seamlessly set-up and conduct the business of an Environmental Justice Thriving Communities Technical Assistance Center. The EFC currently serves large, small, rural, remote, and tribal communities; nonprofits; businesses; local governments; and state and federal agencies across the Heartland. The establishment of the EJ TCTAC as part of the EFC WSU will advance its vision of thriving communities, empowered to take actions that enhance their environmental and financial health to improve the quality of life for everyone in EPA R7. The cornerstone of the EJ TCTAC's role is as a listener to underserved communities who have historically and systematically been disproportionately impacted by environmental, energy, climate, and public health adversities. Through an engagement and community assessment process the Center will learn from communities about their burdens, barriers, priorities, and opportunities, then respond to the unique community needs with training, assistance, support, and resources. The result will be an increase in a community's capacity to identify, apply for, and receive grants, and to lead efforts that improve environmental justice and energy justice outcomes. The EJ TCTAC will serve as a hub for information, training, resources, technical assistance (TA), and connection for addressing environmental justice and energy justice concerns in underserved communities in R7. Activities of the Center will include both 1) general services and 2) targeted community engagement and services. General Services include call-center availability to respond to requests for information or services (phone, email, online forms, direct messaging through social media, etc.), and provision of regular trainings on topics with wide interest. To start, grant trainings and civic engagement trainings will be provided in a variety of

locations and formats. Additional regular/general trainings will be added as capacity building topics are identified as commonly needed by a widespread audience. Call-center, general training, and requested TA will be accessible to all underserved communities who wish to engage. As specific community needs are identified, activities will shift toward coordinating TA through partners best suited to address each identified challenge or need.

EPA REGION 8

Recipient: International City/County Management Association (ICMA)

Applicant Type: Not for Profit

Award Amount: \$10,000,000

Title: *NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE THRIVING COMMUNITIES TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE CENTER (NATIONAL EJ TC TAC)*

Location: EPA Region 8 (CO, MT, ND, SD, UT, WY, and 28 Tribal Nations) and the National Geographic Area

Partners:

Institute for Tribal Environmental Professionals (academic, tribal)
National League of Cities (elected officials, local government)
National Forum for Black Public Administrators (local government)
Urban Sustainability Directors Network (local government, community organizations)

Goals and Description:

International City/Country Management Association is a national EJ TCTAC that will serve Region 8 until a Region 8-focused EJ TCTAC is selected, expected in early 2024. See ICMA description below.

EPA REGION 9

Recipient: University of Arizona

Applicant Type: Institution of Higher Education

Award Amount: \$10,000,000

Title: *Western Environmental Science Technical Assistance Center for Environmental Justice (WEST EJ Center)*

Location: EPA Region 9 (AZ, NV, CA, HI, and 148 tribes)

Partners:

Sonoran Environmental Research Institute (SERI) (AZ non-profit)

Public Health Institute (PHI) (CA non-profit)

University of Southern California (USC) (CA academic)

Larson Institute for Health Impact and Equity (NV academic)

Hawaii Public Health Institute (HIPHI) (HI non-profit)

Goals and Description:

The mission of the Western Environmental Science Technical Assistance Center for Environmental Justice (WEST EJ Center) is to work as authentic partners with communities towards environmental and energy justice (EEJ) by being a one-stop shop for hands-on technical assistance, multi-faceted training, and other eligible forms of assistance, resources, and support to program participants. The WEST EJ Center will serve EPA Region 9 communities and have organized our approach utilizing three initiatives specifically aligned to meet the objectives of this EJ TCTAC program, as follows: Initiative 1: Provide assistance and training to effectively identify, apply for and manage grants and other funding opportunities; Initiative 2: Increase community involvement in environmental and energy decision-making through training in advocacy, environmental science, climate change, public health, energy infrastructure, and through “Community Champion” and student internship programs; Initiative 3: Provide access to environmental and energy expertise that can assist program participants with EJ analysis, study design, protocol development, and project management. The WEST EJ Center utilizes a hub and spoke model and has established a coalition with five partners with deep community-based networks and knowledge about EEJ needs across Region 9. The Central Hub includes several established units within the University of Arizona and will operate through the following teams: leadership, training, capacity building, technical assistance, marketing outreach, and evaluation. Outputs and outcomes are directly aligned with the RFA. The WEST EJ Center will utilize innovative and participatory quantitative and qualitative evaluation techniques to provide a narrative for the project to monitor progress, share success stories, and improve WEST EJ Center activities. The EPA’s promise of clean air, clean water and safe land has not reached many historically marginalized communities, due to a complex interaction of physical, social, and economic factors. In developing the WEST EJ Center, we have brought together a diverse coalition with longstanding relationships and extensive expertise in working with communities to overcome these barriers to work towards EEJ with the aim of assuring self-determination and enabling the meaningful involvement of all people in developing and implementing environmental regulations and policies in their own communities. The University of Arizona will collaborate closely with the San Diego State University Foundation which has also been selected to receive an EJ TCTAC award to communities in EPA Region 9.

EPA REGION 9

Recipient: San Diego State University Foundation (SDSU)

Applicant Type: Not for Profit / Institution of Higher Education

Award Amount: \$10,000,000

Title: *EPA Region 9 TCTAC: SDSU's Center for Community Energy and Environmental Justice*

Location: EPA Region 9 (AZ, CA, HI, NV, AS, GU, and 148 tribes)

Partners:

SDSU Community Climate Action Network (academic), Environmental Protection Network (industry), Center for Creative Land Recycling (non-profit), University of San Diego's Energy Policy Initiatives Center (academic), Institute for Tribal Environmental Professionals (tribal), Desert Research Institute (non-profit), Climate Science Alliance (non-profit education), Pacific RISA (research), University of Guam's Center of Island Sustainability (academic), Public Health Alliance (non-profit), and Arizona State University (academic).

Goals and Description:

The purpose of SDSU's TCTAC for EPA Region 9 - The Center for Community Energy and Environmental Justice - is to empower communities in EPA's Region 9 by providing critical services to qualified community organizations. These services will expand participants' capacity to meet community-defined priorities and participate meaningfully in decision-making processes, focusing specifically on underserved, rural, remote, tribal, and indigenous communities. Building capacity in, providing support for, and collaborating with communities often most vulnerable and affected by environmental challenges is central to advancing environmental and energy justice. SDSU TCTAC's mission is to leverage and strengthen community assets by creating an accessible in-person and virtual community that builds capacity and provides technical assistance in energy and environmental justice centered around four unifying objectives: 1) Outreach and partnership building, 2) Development of resources, 3) Transfer of knowledge and building community capacity, 4) Evaluation, adaptation, and innovation. Using a hub and spoke model, SDSU TCTAC will create a nexus of centralized expertise and coordination for each critical service for Region 9, which connects eligible organizations with established partners in each state/territory to coordinate, deliver, and monitor uptake of key services while tracking the outcomes and outputs from the communities we serve. To provide efficient and coordinated technical assistance, training, and support, this EJ TCTAC will follow a hub and spoke model. The hub of the TCTAC will be based in a physical and virtual center at SDSU called the Center for Community Energy and Environmental Justice. Hub partners will work to coordinate activities in their area(s) of expertise across all of Region 9 and will facilitate co-production, co-development, sharing, transfer, and delivery of both process and content among Spoke partners and community partners. Spoke partners will lead on delivering services (in person and virtually) to community organizations, building and expanding on their existing eligible community organizations in their network and identifying and connecting with new community organizations, supporting community engagement and capacity building. Our activities will focus specifically on underserved, rural, remote, tribal, indigenous, and native communities. The San Diego State University Foundation will collaborate closely with the University of Arizona, which has also been selected to receive an EJ TCTAC award to communities in EPA Region 9.

EPA REGION 10

Recipient: Willamette Partnership

Applicant Type: Not for Profit

Award Amount: \$10,000,000

Title: *Northwestern Environmental and Energy Justice TCTAC*

Location: EPA Region 10 (AK, ID, OR, WA, and 271 native tribes)

Partners:

Portland State University (academic)
Rural Community Assistance Corporation (nonprofit)
Alai Community Consulting (business)
Oregon Public Health Institute (nonprofit),
Verde (nonprofit)
Boise State University (academic)
Kearns and West (private),
Community Engineering Corps (nonprofit)

Goals and Description:

The Northwestern Environmental and Energy Justice Thriving Communities Technical Assistance Center (TCTAC) team believes that centering values of self-determination, equity, intergenerational Indigenous cultural and ceremonial practices, traditional ecological knowledge, natural resource security, stewardship, resilience, education, and community connection¹ provide a platform from which communities can heal, build power, and emerge toward futures in which everyone and mother earth thrives—no exceptions. The TCTAC will focus on underserved communities and where environmental, health, and economic burdens and capacity constraints co-occur—including Tribal and Indigenous communities, Black, Latinx, immigrant, and disabilities communities, especially in remote and rural areas. Willamette Partnership (WP) and Portland State University's (PSU) Institute for Tribal Government (ITG) will co- manage the TCTAC with a broad diversity of partners to serve Alaska, Idaho, Oregon, and Washington. We have built a vision for a community-driven TCTAC from our lived and shared experiences. This vision includes extensive community engagement that uplifts the EJ priorities defined by impacted communities. The Northwestern TCTAC's priorities and services will be shaped by a Community Leadership Assembly composed of TCTAC participants and partners. Through the Assembly's guidance and the TCTAC's services (community engagement, cohort learning and capacity building, technical assistance, and storytelling), we anticipate the following outputs each year: 80 community engagement actions, including community meeting facilitations, translation/interpretation activities, 1:1 conversations, and other actions that over five years reach a significant number of EJ communities (e.g., nearly all of the federally recognized tribes in ID, OR, and WA, at least 50% of the tribes in AK, and immigrant communities from Mesoamerica, East Africa, the Middle East, Eastern Europe, and Asia, and people with disabilities); 60 direct technical assistance projects (55 in year 1) that range from light-touch navigating of existing resources, to medium-touch preparation for receiving federal funds or updating community needs assessments, to more intensive supports for construction projects or policy analysis; Cohort-style learning and leadership development for 80 community leaders and members in data justice, navigating public and private funding, just energy transitions, engaging and influencing policy, environmental justice leadership institute, and five students supporting the TCTAC; and storytelling and accountability including a quarterly newsletter, biannual case study/video shorts of success, data visualization tools of EJ priorities, monthly social media, and an annual

sharing of feedback, stories, lessons, and actions in addition to the EPA/DOE required reporting. Willamette Partnership will collaborate closely with the University of Washington, which has also been selected to receive an EJ TCTAC award to support EPA Region 10 communities.

EPA REGION 10

Recipient: University of Washington (UW)

Applicant Type: Institution of Higher Education

Award Amount: \$12,000,000

Title: *Pacific Northwest Environmental Justice Thriving Communities Center*

Location: EPA Region 10 (AK, ID, OR, WA, and 271 native tribes)

Partners:

Akiak Native Community, Swinomish Tribe- Education Division, Kuskokwim River Intertribal Fish Commission (KRIFC) (Tribe); Northwest Indian College, American Indian Studies Department (academic), Center for American Indian & Indigenous Studies (academic); Aldo Leopold Wilderness Research Institute (Federal agency research institute); Clean Energy Institute, Center for Exposures, Diseases, Genomics, and Environment, Industrial Assessment Center, Northwest Center for Occupational Health and Safety, NW Pediatric Environmental Health Specialty Unit, Pacific Northwest Agricultural Safety and Health Center; (academic), National Network of Public Health Institutes (NNPHI) (practice); El Centro de la Raza, El Proyecto Bienestar, Front and Centered, Sound Defense Alliance (community orgs)

Goals and Description:

The objective of the Pacific Northwest Environmental Justice Thriving Communities (PNW-EJTC) Center is to provide technical assistance services to Region 10 program participants that will strengthen their capacity and effectiveness in applying to and successfully managing environmental and energy justice (EEJ) grants and programs. The center's activities will include online/in-person outreach and engagement with regional participants, establishment of funded partnerships to foster community leadership, hosting of workshops and trainings, and consultations with center-affiliated faculty and students. The center will provide program participants with assistance in (1) conducting environmental justice analyses and needs assessments, (2) identifying, applying for, and managing EEJ grants and programs, (3) facilitating meaningful engagement with other EEJ stakeholders and decision-makers, (4) building capacity to strengthen and focus their work on EEJ issues, and (5) fostering community leadership in EEJ solutions. The center's geographic focus will reach tribal, rural, remote, and other underserved areas by collaborating with other established Region 10 focused UW centers. To ensure services meet evolving regional needs, the center's will be guided by a Performance Measurement Plan and input from two advisory boards (AB): the Tribal Advisory Panel (TAP) and the Community Governing Board (CGB). Main center outputs will be the number of program participants and partnerships, documented outreach efforts, utilization of services, evaluation reports from AB and program participants. Center outcomes will be program participants' increased capacity and effectiveness in applying for environmental/energy justice opportunities, increased participation in defining technical service needs and offerings for the region, and successful development, implementation, and continuation of environmental and energy justice programs led by PNW-EJTC program partners. University of Washington will continue to grow and expand its network of EJ TCTAC partners throughout the 5-year project period and facilitate dedicated travel to and provide substantial support to remote Alaskan communities. University of Washington will collaborate closely with Willamette Partnership, which has also been selected to receive an EJ TCTAC award to support EPA Region 10 communities.

NATIONAL EJ TCTAC AWARD

Recipient: International City/County Management Association (ICMA)

Applicant Type: Not for Profit

Award Amount: \$10,000,000

Title: *NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE THRIVING COMMUNITIES TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE CENTER (NATIONAL EJ TC TAC)*

Location: EPA Region 8 (CO, MT, ND, SD, UT, WY, and 28 Tribal Nations) and the National Geographic Area

Partners:

Institute for Tribal Environmental Professionals (academic, tribal)
National League of Cities (elected officials, local government)
National Forum for Black Public Administrators (local government)
Urban Sustainability Directors Network (local government, community organizations)

Goals and Description:

The role of the National EJ TCTACs in the EJ TCTAC network is two-fold: 1) to provide direct technical assistance and services to communities where there may be gaps in coverage and 2) identifying community-focused resources available nationwide (at the federal, state, local, and private levels) developing tools, databases, and clearinghouses connecting program participants to those resources. As the 2022-23 EJ TCTAC competition was the very first offering of this program, and despite the robust response of 70 applications, there was the expectation that there may be some gaps in coverage across the nation, at least initially. Unfortunately, there was not a robust response of applications proposing to stand up an EJ TCTAC serving EPA Region 8 communities. That being the case, three National EJ TCTACs will collaborate to take on the initial role of serving EPA Region 8 communities with ICMA being the lead on that effort. ICMA has a long, demonstrated history of collaborations with cities and counties across the nation. Because of the higher proportion of local city and county management organizations in EPA Region 8, ICMA is well-positioned to provide direct technical assistance and support to these organizations throughout the Region. The ICMA Team is proposing a vision for a National EJ TCTAC that focuses on local and tribal government stakeholders and the community organizations with which they frequently partner. The proposed approach includes leveraging the substantial training/education, outreach, technical assistance, content, and peer to peer capabilities and capacities in support of those small, rural, and underserved places. The approach includes in-person and virtual technical assistance-based training on environmental and energy justice topics including grant funding, community collaboration, and other related challenges and issues. Our strategy will leverage the power of our membership bases and other professional networks to provide peer to peer technical assistance advisory services, one to one coaching, and on the ground and virtual support. In addition to marshalling our team's existing assets in support of a National EJ TC TAC, a key strategy will be to seek out additional federal, philanthropic, and other resources to amplify EPA's investment and as part of a longer-term sustainability strategy that goes beyond the period of anticipated federal funding. Our objectives are to create meaningful programs, products, and services that will substantially elevate the capacity of small, rural, and traditionally under resourced communities during this transformative period of federal investment to right the wrongs of the past. As with all EJ TCTACs, it is the expectation that ICMA's network of EJ TCTAC partners will grow to provide the assistance needed in the target area(s). EPA Region 8 staff will work closely with ICMA as they tailor and implement their programming for EPA Region 8 communities.

NATIONAL EJ TCTAC AWARD

Recipient: Institute for Sustainable Communities (ISC)

Applicant Type: Not for Profit

Award Amount: \$10,000,000

Title: *Environmental Justice Thriving Communities Technical Assistance Center (EJ TCTAC)*

Location: Nationwide

Partners:

Atma Connect (Atma), a non-profit technology organization

American Society for Adaptation Professionals (ASAP), a non-profit association

Goals and Description:

The ISC team's experience and expertise offer the national EJ TCTAC network a robust national coordination mechanism that will build capacity, reduce duplication, and use complementary services to support all levels of the EJ TCTAC Program. Using our networks, including ISC's National Climate Leaders of Color Network and ASAP's members, we will establish a National EJ TCTAC that will build the capacity of regional TCTACs, local leaders, communities, and TA providers through needs-based, virtual, and in-person support and coordinated activities, tools, and resources. A key component of the National TCTAC will be ensuring the measurable success of the regional centers. When regional needs emerge, our team will provide direct services to program participants and communities. In coordination with the EPA, Department of Energy (DOE), and regional center teams, we will quickly mobilize a national center with flexible, three-pronged services that can adapt to diverse needs through 1) tailored support to regional TCTACs via peer learning, tools, and information sharing; 2) support to underserved communities using ISC's community engagement expertise; and 3) the development of an online National EJ TCTAC Platform for interactive communication, networking, collaboration, and greater funding access. Using the National Platform website, social media, direct contact, and other outreach, we will connect program participants, TA providers, potential partners, the regional TCTACs, and other stakeholders to each other and funding opportunities. The online Platform's multiple functions will include integrated feedback mechanisms, interactive two-way communication, and a means to communicate with our project team. The Platform will be fully customizable to serve the needs of EPA, regional TCTACs, and program participants and will comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act. At a minimum, the Platform will include multiple interfaces, including 1) password-protected logins for program participant profiles; 2) a space for regional TCTAC staff, partners, and TA providers; and 3) space for interactive, two-way conversation and chat options between participants, regional centers, and/or other stakeholders. The profiles will be used to promote volunteer and contracted TA services as well as to strengthen networks of leaders and role model champions. We will complement these with webinars and materials on partnership and coalition building. The Platform will also house an attractive, easy-to-use, and searchable Environmental and Energy Justice Library to share with regional. By the end of Year 1, the ISC team plans to launch the online Platform. By Years 2 and 3, our team will provide iterative TA, partnership facilitation, capacity building, financing facilitation, and other services to the regional TCTACs and program participants. By the project's end, these and other activities will have positioned program participants—particularly underserved and rural and remote communities—to successfully access grant opportunities and to participate and engage in environmental and energy justice decision-making, creating tangible impact for their communities.

NATIONAL EJ TCTAC AWARD

Recipient: National Indian Health Board

Applicant Type: Not for Profit

Award Amount: \$10,000,000

Title: *National Indian Health Board Environmental Justice Thriving Communities Technical Assistance Center*

Location: Tribal Communities Nationwide

Partners:

As the voice for Tribal health at the national level, NIHB expects to continue and deepen its partnerships throughout this project serving the 574 federally recognized Tribes. NIHB works closely with each of the eleven AIHBs across the country, the Tribal Epidemiology Centers (TECs), and Tribal governments. NIHB has partnered with non-profit organizations in this field, such as ecoAmerica, the National Tribal Air Association, and the Institute for Tribal Environmental Professionals, and looks forward to deepening those partnerships as a result of the EJ TCTAC project. This project will allow NIHB to expand its footprint in health and environmental justice career development through partnerships with Tribal Colleges/Universities (TCUs) and other minority-serving educational institutions.

Goals and Description:

Indigenous peoples have known for millennia that the health of a person and the community is tied to the health of the environment. Tribal communities are some of the most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change and some of the most environmentally exploited. In the corrective effort to realize environmental and energy justice and to achieve the goals of the Justice40 Initiative, the federal government must ensure Indian Country has sustained access to tools and resources to tackle these issues in the way that works best for Tribes. In short, Tribes need a Technical Assistance Center devoted to Indian Country. NIHB, as the national voice for Tribal health, is the natural entity to serve as this one-stop shop for Tribes. The EJ TCTAC will allow NIHB to provide services related to environmental and energy justice at the Tribal level. Like all NIHB projects, the EJ TCTAC will cover the national geographic area and serve Tribes throughout the United States. NIHB will leverage the 2018-2019 environmental health discussion sessions and the 2021-2022 Regional Environmental Health Summits hosted by NIHB and supported by CDC to address environmental justice concerns in Indian Country, such as the impacts of climate change; external pollutants in the air, land, and water; Superfund sites; and the transition to clean energy sources. NIHB will stand up the Tribal TCTAC as a one-stop shop for Tribal Nations looking for support in the environmental and energy justice spaces. NIHB will leverage our existing framework of outreach to increase the number of Tribes applying for and receiving funding from federal and non-federal partners on environmental and energy justice projects. NIHB will provide grant writing courses, grant application explainers, targeted application assistance, and project evaluation design trainings throughout Indian Country over the course of this project. NIHB's EJ TC TAC will provide technical assistance on funding opportunities, including applications involving a cohort or partnership with Tribes, municipal partners, and state governments. NIHB will develop a clearinghouse of state-based grants for which Tribes are eligible and provide technical assistance in the application process. With EPA and DOE's coordination, the Tribal TCTAC will also work with regional TCTACs to ensure consistency, cultural competency, and the highest level of service possible to Tribal Nations. Additionally, NIHB will work with Tribal grantees to highlight their success stories widely through social media, look-back reports, and public announcements.