



Amendment 1 - Equity Strategy for the EPA Southeast New England Program

2/15/2024

The EPA Region 1 Southeast New England Program (SNEP) 2023 Equity Strategy was approved by EPA Headquarters on April 13, 2023. Under Section V., Action 1 of the Strategy, EPA's SNEP committed to hosting "semi-annual review meetings with our SNEP environmental justice (EJ) workgroup to ensure that our definition of disadvantaged communities continues to meet the needs of our region."

On January 11, 2024, EPA reconvened its EJ workgroup to revisit the SNEP definition for disadvantaged communities. Since the development of this definition, EPA has developed and released its [Inflation Reduction Act Disadvantaged Communities Map](#) (IRA DAC). While similar to the definition that SNEP developed, the IRA DAC map uses the 90th percentile for any of EJScreen's supplemental demographic indices when compared to national or state data whereas the first version of the SNEP DAC definition utilizes the 50th percentile at the national level.

At the conclusion of this meeting, the SNEP EJ workgroup agreed to adapt the SNEP EJ definition to be more consistent with the EPA IRA DAC map. To reflect this change, the updated 2024 SNEP DAC definition is as follows:

For the purposes of defining disadvantaged communities for EPA SNEP funding, a "disadvantaged community" or "SNEP disadvantaged community" as defined by SNEP refers to any community (identified at the block group or census tract-level, where specified) that meets **at least one** of the following criteria:

- Any census block group **greater than or equal to the 90th percentile when compared to national or state data** in current and future iterations of EPA's EJScreen tool with respect to the [National Supplemental Demographic Index](#), which is an average of: percent low-income; percent limited English-speaking; percent less than high school education; percent unemployed; and where data is available, communities with low average life expectancy.
- Any census tract defined as disadvantaged in current and future iterations of the [Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool](#);
- Any current or future federally recognized Tribal Land; and
- Any census block that meets current and future state-level criteria for disadvantaged communities **other than** those included due to explicit consideration of race-based indicators.



These changes are now reflected in Version 2 of the [SNEP Priority Areas web mapping application](#) and will be included in the 2024 SNEP Opportunity to Advance Resilience (SOAR) Fund Request for Proposals.

EPA has also expanded its project metrics to better capture the benefits of improved public access in communities, including those that are disadvantaged or underserved. The following public access metrics may be tracked by recipients and reported to EPA at the close of projects.

Problem to Be Addressed	Project Activity	Metric	Can Metric be Mapped?	Additional Guidance
Public Use/ Access of Blue- and Greenspace				
Increase Access and Availability of public green/blue space	Increase access/use of public lands	# recreational access points created or improved	Yes	Enter # access points that are now opened or have improved accessibility from the street
Increase Access and Availability of public green/blue space	Increase availability and/or quality of public walking trails	# linear feet of walking trails improved or created	Yes	Enter # linear feet of walking trail
Increase Access and Availability of public green/blue space	Increase access/use of public lands	# of people within a 0.5-mile buffer of the new public blue/greenspace	Yes	Calculate, then enter # of people within a half mile of the new or improved public blue/greenspace

Relevant metrics (~3-4 metrics per project) are chosen for each project based on its focus area and outputs and outcomes. These metrics will be used to evaluate benefits of BIL funding for all communities, including DACs.



Equity Strategy for the EPA Southeast New England Program

1/30/2023

1. Governance Overview

The Southeast New England Program (SNEP) region includes three Tribal nations, Rhode Island, and southeastern Massachusetts. Its region also includes the Buzzards Bay National Estuary Program and the Narragansett Bay Estuary Program. SNEP was created in 2012 when the United States Congress included language in the Interior section of the Omnibus Appropriations Bill for Federal Fiscal Year 2012 charging the U.S Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) with convening a broad-based, multi-partner group of state, federal, and local interests in Rhode Island and Massachusetts, and leading a comprehensive regional policy coordination and outreach effort to address the region’s environmental challenges to protect, enhance, and restore the coastal watersheds of southern New England.¹

Since 2014, Congress has appropriated \$47 million for EPA to support the effort. Unlike the National Estuary Program (NEP) and some other geographic programs, SNEP is authorized and funded as a line item in each year’s Congressional Appropriations Bill. With its Congressional charge, EPA has coordinated with multiple agencies, non-profits, and citizens to enhance the region’s overall environmental capabilities – providing funds and convening interagency groups to address complex issues at the ecosystem level, identifying synergies and leveraging opportunities across multiple groups, and working to develop sustainable solutions to environmental problems.

SNEP’s role as a partnership facilitator among multiple organizations is central to its mission to empower collective action. By convening governmental and non-governmental organizations to gather and provide their input on how best to address regional challenges, the Program acts as a collaborative framework for the region to identify strategic restoration priorities, enable testing and adoption of restoration best practices, and build broad regional capacity to adopt and implement innovative approaches, particularly in meshing habitat restoration with reducing

¹ Southern New England Estuaries- The conferees recommend that the Agency convene and lead a comprehensive regional policy coordination and outreach effort to protect, enhance, and restore the coastal watersheds of southern New England. No entity or consortium exists to meet these challenges, and there is an urgent and immediate need for such an effort. For example, in Rhode Island’s Narragansett Bay, there are documented extensive areas of pollution severely degrading fish and wildlife habitat and water quality; problems that are compounded by the effects of warmer water temperatures and milder winters. The conferees recommend that EPA establish goals for the regional effort, emphasizing water quality and habitat restoration as well as the development and implementation of innovative technologies to meet these challenges and create jobs. The effort should provide for streamlined interagency communication and involve an inclusive stakeholder process. Specifically, EPA should collaborate with State agencies as well as other Federal partners such as the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Geological Survey, Natural Resources Conservation Service, and the Small Business Administration. The Agency should also include stakeholders from local governments and agencies, non-governmental organizations, and academic institutions. The conferees also recommend that the Agency, through this regional effort, facilitate the development of strategies to restore and protect the southern New England Estuaries.



excess nutrients and alleviating their impacts, as well as administering grants and contracts for on-the-ground implementation projects and research. SNEP aims to foster innovative solutions and build local capacity in the pursuit of maintaining and improving water quality and habitat conditions in the region.

The result is an overall planning framework and action agenda that builds on and complements the individual capacities of the many organizations engaged in the region and that advances solutions using strategies that are cost-effective, comprehensive and sustainable, and connected to the economic interests of coastal communities.

EPA's Region 1 office directly administers the overall Program, including making final decisions about direction, priorities, and annual funding allocations. EPA's SNEP team regularly shares information about program activities through webinars, newsletters, and our website; and develops strategies and identifies solutions to environmental issues through input gained from forums, workshops, and program committee meetings. The EPA team manages grants, contracts, and interagency agreements to support applied research, technical assistance, and implementation in the SNEP region.

EPA meets regularly with its committee members to inform its program priorities and decisions. Each of SNEP's committees, subcommittees, and funded entities plays a vital and synergistic role in the accomplishment of SNEP's goals:

- The Steering Committee members suggest future program direction;
- The Ecosystem Services and Monitoring subcommittees' members provide technical expertise to improve the program's effectiveness by sharing the latest science, technologies, and approaches; and
- The Federal Partners committee members meet to share information and seeks ways to coordinate and leverage their respective funding opportunities, expertise, and partnerships.

The majority of SNEP annual appropriations are distributed in two multi-year grants: to Restore America's Estuaries to support the SNEP Watershed Implementation Grants (SWIG) program; and the University of Southern Maine's New England Environmental Finance Center to administer the SNEP Network. The SWIG is a competitive grant program that provides subawards to eligible tribal, state, and local government entities, and regional and nonprofit organizations to execute local environmental implementation projects. The SNEP Network includes local and national experts who are available to provide direct technical assistance, trainings, and capacity building activities to municipalities, Tribes, and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) at no cost. The goal of the Network is to help municipalities, Tribes, and NGOs finance, plan and design implementation projects, which may then be supported through implementation funds from the SWIG or other available funding sources. This multi-pronged support from EPA, the SWIG and SNEP Network helps local communities, Tribes, and NGOs develop, carry out, and sustain effective projects and practices, while also improving their success in receiving other grants and resources and producing greater environmental results.

EPA also provides funding to the two National Estuary Programs (NEPs) in its jurisdiction to support their closely aligned efforts. The NEPs dedicate SNEP funding to local planning,



capacity building, and implementation priorities that are consistent with the SNEP Strategic Plan and their own Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plans.

SNEP 2050 Vision and Goals:

Congress, EPA, and SNEP partners recognize that positive, environmental change will not happen overnight in southeast New England, and it certainly will not happen without the efforts of government agencies, and environmentally conscious individuals and organizations in the region. Fortunately, the shared natural and human use of the region has caused not only common environmental challenges, but also recognition of the need for common solutions. These solutions will be used to achieve SNEP’s 2050 vision of a resilient ecosystem of safe and healthy waters, thriving watersheds and natural lands, and sustainable communities. Together with its partners, SNEP has established a strategic plan to guide its priorities and actions in five-year planning increments, with the first span covering the period 2021 through 2025. SNEP has three program goals:

Goal 1: Resilient Ecosystem of Safe and Healthy Waters

- Waters support native seagrasses and aquatic life, plentiful native fish and shellfish, and a variety of water-based recreation opportunities

Goal 2: Thriving Watersheds and Natural Lands

- Watersheds provide essential ecological functions, species diversity, and protection from both human-based and naturally occurring environmental stressors, and health; connected natural lands support a wide variety of native plant and wildlife communities

Goal 3: Sustainable Communities

- Communities share robust water-based economies, protect and provide access to natural lands, open spaces and parks, encourage local food sources, and are adapting for resilience to expected impacts of climate change

SNEP has five key cross-program actions that will be used to meet its vision and goals:

- Increasing Local Capacity to Complete Projects and Adopt New Policies,
- Increasing Available Solutions,
- Ensuring Diverse Representation in Program Decision-making,
- Demonstrating Ways to Address Common Challenges, and
- Increasing Community Leaders’ Understanding of the Benefits of Restoration Projects.

Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and Justice 40:

In 2021, Congress directed SNEP to receive \$15 million over five years to implement the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law. In FY22 EPA Region 1 worked with members of its SNEP Steering Committee to identify infrastructure priorities for the coming five years. EPA plans to issue annual Requests for Applications to support the identified infrastructure priorities.

This strategy outlines how BIL funds will be used to sustain and increase investments and benefits in disadvantaged communities. It describes SNEP’s commitment to strive for equitable and fair access by all communities and organizations working in its jurisdiction to gain the benefits of its vision and environmental programs. The strategy is intended to meet the goals of Executive Orders 14008 and 13985 – Justice40 and EPA’s Equity Action Plan respectively.

2. Definition of Disadvantaged Communities² or Alternative Term(s).

Definition

To define disadvantaged communities (DACs), EPA led a series of meetings with members of the SNEP Steering Committee, and a newly formed environmental justice (EJ) workgroup made up of interested members of its committees, to identify the factors that put communities at a disadvantage for addressing environmental needs in the SNEP region. EPA received feedback from its partners that it is important for our definition to be as consistent as possible with our partner organizations, to minimize confusion arising from differing definitions of DACs used in the region. Having similar definitions will also facilitate leveraging of state and NEP partners funding opportunities and efforts. SNEP's definition of DACs strives to be consistent with the definitions used by the states of Massachusetts and Rhode Island, and those anticipated to be used by our two NEPs, while also incorporating relevant information available through EJScreen and the Climate and Equity Justice Screening Tool (CEJST).

SNEP has defined DACs as:

Any census block group **greater than or equal to the 50th percentile** in current and future iterations of EPA's EJScreen tool with respect to:

- The [National Supplemental Demographic Index](#), which is an average of:
 - Percent low-income;
 - Percent limited English speaking;
 - Percent less than high school education;
 - Percent unemployed; and/or
 - Communities with low average life expectancy.

AND/OR:

- Any census tract defined as disadvantaged in current and future iterations of the [Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool](#);
- Any current or future Federally recognized Tribal Land; and
- Any census block that meets current and future state-level criteria for disadvantaged communities **other than** those included due to explicit consideration of race-based indicators.

SNEP has created a map with regionally available datasets, including the CEJST, EJScreen, Massachusetts Environmental Justice Mapping tool, and the Narragansett Bay Estuary Program EJ tool. This [map](#) will be made public for use by potential applicants to easily reference their proposed project areas. To qualify for EJ-specific funding, a project proponent must demonstrate that their project is either located in or directly benefiting at least one disadvantaged community in the SNEP region. If a community meets the above definition but is not listed on the map provided, then that community will still be eligible to apply for EJ-specific funding if it can document that it meets our definition.

² There are several related terms used to describe communities facing hardship or who have historically benefited unevenly from federal funds, including disadvantaged, overburdened, underserved. Under Justice40 EPA is using the term "disadvantaged" for consistency with E.O. 14008 and other programmatic terminologies. EPA notes that this terminology is distinct from "environmental justice" community, which is defined as a community facing disproportionate environmental, public health, and other burdens that reduce quality of life. These terms should not be used interchangeably. Most environmental justice communities are also likely disadvantaged (depending on the criteria set for the latter's definition), but not all disadvantaged communities are environmental justice communities.

3. Baseline Analysis of Disadvantaged Communities. *Table 1. Breakdown of SNEP non-BIL funding from FY2019-2022. Column A shows the distribution of EPA funding provided by each SNEP affiliate and partner. Column B demonstrates the amount of that funding that went towards projects located within communities in the SNEP Region that meet the ‘disadvantaged communities’ definition included previously in section 2. Column C shows additional sources of funding match, which includes both additional matching funds and in-kind match such as dedicated work hours. Columns D and E are summary columns.*

Function / funding instrument / program		A	B	C	D	E
		\$ Total [2019-2022]	\$ to DACs	\$ Other Benefits to DACs	% to DACs	% Benefits DACs
1	EPA-SNEP Direct Grants	\$5,072,004	\$2,434,780	\$299,584	48.0%	6%
2	SNEP Watershed Implementation Grants (SWIG) Program	\$7,937,828	\$2,246,720	\$1,790,400	28.3%	23%
3	SNEP Network	1,790,000	-	\$1,127,043	-	63%
4	Narragansett Bay Estuary Program	\$750,000	\$132,500	-	17.7%	-
5	Buzzards Bay National Estuary Program	\$750,000	\$39,375	\$8,532	5.3%	1%
6	TOTAL	16,299,832	4,853,375	3,225,559	29.8%	19.8%

NOTE: The SNEP Network provides no-cost technical assistance to municipalities throughout the SNEP Region by providing award recipients free access to a contractor pool that the Network has organized to help build their planning, administrative, and fiscal capacity to design and carry out environmental projects. The Network worked with their contractors to estimate benefits by calculating the cost of the work had each municipality individually hired a contractor instead of working with the SNEP Network.



NOTE: The funds distributed by the SWIG program reflect only those provided via subawards to grantees and does not reflect the overhead included in the total funding amount provided to Restore America’s Estuaries to facilitate the SWIG program.

4. Numeric Targets (Justice40)

- **Equity Goal:** Consistent with Agency and program priorities, SNEP will strive to allocate a minimum of 40% of BIL funding and project benefits to DACs within the SNEP region.
- **Numeric Target** – SNEP will strive to provide at least \$6 million in BIL funding during FY2022-2026 to build local capacity, and support local planning, design and implementation projects located in or directly benefiting DACs.
- **Strengths** – SNEP held meetings with its Steering Committee, EJ working group, and Monitoring and Ecosystem Services subcommittees to discuss the most effective approach to achieving the EJ goal. The plan presented in this report reflects the feedback provided by our SNEP partners. That partner input will continue as the plan is implemented and refined. EPA also expects to gain insight through the addition of new Program staff specifically assigned to focus on interacting with DACs and managing the roll out of the equity plan.
- **Challenges** – The three largest challenges are: 1) developing an effective methodology to track benefits of our funding over time; 2) identifying and highlighting the location and composition of previously unknown DACs; and 3) ensuring that SNEP funding is as accessible as possible to a wide range of potential grant applicants.

5. Key Activities

SNEP’s vision is for the region to have a resilient ecosystem of safe and healthy waters, thriving watersheds and natural lands, and sustainable communities. DACs will benefit from this vision by having access to jobs supporting the region’s water-based economy and to recreational opportunities; increased wellbeing of their residents through access to natural lands, open spaces, parks, and locally accessible food; and lower costs and less damage from severe storms, sea level rise, rising ground water levels and other impacts of climate change.

EPA plans to allocate a minimum of \$6 million (40%) of BIL funding during FY 2022-2026 to DACs through a combination of competitive grant programs and direct support by providing a new EPA BIL staff position to assist DACs. EPA plans to release an annual RFA to support DACs (\$5 million). We expect an additional \$1 million will be provided to support DACs through the inclusion of EJ as an additional criterion for future RFAs, and the use of BIL funding to hire an additional EJ-specific staff position. These actions will enable us to achieve or surpass our goal of allocating at least 40% of SNEP BIL funding to benefit DACs throughout the SNEP region.

EPA plans to accomplish the following key actions to meet its Equity Goal.

Action # 1: Regularly Review and Update Regional Data that Supports SNEP DAC Definition

Description: SNEP’s regional partners are actively updating data that could impact the total number of communities that meet our Program’s DAC definition. The SNEP Team intends to regularly maintain the mapping data that supports the Program’s definition of disadvantaged communities. The Team will additionally ensure all eligible communities have access to SNEP-supported EJ-specific initiatives.

Actions that might support this action include:

- Regular review of disparate datasets that support our Program’s definition of disadvantaged communities.
- Maintenance of our Program’s DAC definition and public-facing map to reflect those updates and changes.
- Semi-annual review meetings with our EJ workgroup to ensure that our definition of disadvantaged communities continues to meet the needs of our region.

Action #2: Develop and Manage an EJ-Focused Grant Program

Description: Funding opportunities will be offered annually to benefit DACs and will have no match requirement. EPA will strive to allocate the entirety of this funding to DACs, which will allow SNEP to meet at least 83% of its Justice40 target. All grantees will be asked to report on a subset of metrics relevant to the financial, social, and environmental benefits of their projects to track project benefits for DACs over time. Critically, SNEP will clearly state and advertise that the grant competition will be conducted in each of the next four years. Eligible projects are ones that benefit DACs and improve their capacity to take actions that implement SNEP’s Strategic Plan through planning, design, and implementation.

Actions that might support this goal include:

- Complete draft grant request for applications (RFA) with simplified application and proposal requirements, e.g., provide reference materials on RFA application process and deadlines, including application examples; pre-deadline informational webinars; sufficient time for applicants to prepare and submit proposals; and outreach with partners to publicize the availability of new funding opportunities to a broad audience.
- Work with potential applicants to access resources to fully complete and submit their funding applications.
- Clarify that this funding opportunity will be offered annually for four years.
- Offer exit interviews to unselected applicants so that they may improve their applications for future rounds of funding (should they choose to reapply).

Action #3: Ensure that Environmental Justice Considerations Are Incorporated into Policy and Technical Assistance Opportunities

Description: All future, non-DAC-specific, SNEP planning, and policy development will consider how best to address environmental issues to benefit disadvantaged communities.

Actions that might support this goal include:

- Implement a SNEP BIL funding mechanism to prioritize projects in land use planning and acquisition, wastewater nutrient reduction, habitat restoration and protection, and stormwater/green infrastructure (**in process**).
- Release RFAs with additional grading criteria that prioritizes projects located in or directly benefiting DACs.
- Develop reference materials for applicants on RFA application process and deadlines.
- Seek to share sample applications or directions on the SNEP website to walk applicants through how to complete and submit required documentation.
- Offer 1-2 informational webinars ahead of the closing deadline of each annual RFA.
- Work with SNEP Network and SWIG to incorporate the use of the SNEP priority map into their subaward programs.
- Invite representatives of DACs to forums, workshops, meetings, and other opportunities to gain their input.

Action #4: Provide Staff to Target Outreach to DACs on SNEP Environmental Issues

Description: Allocate BIL administrative staff funding to support a position to provide technical assistance and outreach to DACs and serve as the Project Officer on EJ grants.

Actions that might support this goal include:

- Provide technical assistance to DACs.
- Develop relationships with key leaders in DACs.
- Identify needs of DACs based on their function.
- Provide training series specifically for DACs to improve competitiveness for federal and state grants.
- Plan and implement local projects in DACs.
- Develop RFAs for implementation support to DACs.

6. Tracking Benefits

All SNEP grantees are required to work with EPA to select and report on a relevant subset (~3-4 metrics per project) of metrics and indicators for their project(s) from the Program's complete list organized by primary categories including:

- **Financial** – Dollars Invested; Leveraged Funding
- **Social** – Education and Outreach; Capacity Development and Training; Local Planning, Policy, Regulation; Ecosystem Services Evaluation
- **Environmental** – Stormwater Runoff; Onsite Septic Systems; WWTF Upgrades; Permeable Reactive Barriers; Fertigation; Trash Reduction; Lawn Practices; Agricultural Conservation Practices; Flood Plain Restoration; Habitat Restoration; Constructed or



Floating Wetlands; Invasive Species Reduction; Harmful Algal Blooms; Aquatic Organism Passage; Land Acquisition and Protection; Applied Research; Water Quality Monitoring; Habitat Monitoring.

The complete list of SNEP metrics is included in **Appendix A**.

For all metrics and indicators, the ability to accurately calculate project benefits will depend on the consistency and quality of the data provided. Any projects that involve monitoring and/or the collection and analysis of samples will require the completion of a Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP) to ensure the quality of data collected and/or their analysis. While we acknowledge that QAPPs can be complex documents, our Program will work diligently, and in partnership with the Region 1 Quality Assurance team, to provide ample guidance and example documentation for our grantees to reference.

Although EPA does not expect to receive data on most metrics for a few years while each project is underway, we will also track the following metrics **annually** for BIL funding:

Financial:

- \$ and % overall funding, reaching or benefiting DACs
- # grants awarded to, or that directly benefit, DACs
- Comparison of annual funding totals to determine funding growth in DACs

Social:

- # government entities participating in projects that impact DACs
- # volunteers participating in projects that impact DACs
- # partner organizations in projects that impact DACs

Capacity Building:

- # of training opportunities made available to DACs
- \$ funding leveraged through projects in DACs (including match, over-match, and non-match eligible leveraged funds)

7. Stakeholder Engagement Plan

Program/Program Office/Point(s) of Contact –SNEP expects to hire a staff person assigned specifically to DAC/EJ issues and outreach. Until that person is on-board, [Adam Reilly](#), SNEP Communications Coordinator, will serve as the primary point of contact for implementing SNEP’s equity plan.

Background - *Summarize any program-specific legal, regulatory, or other requirements relevant to stakeholder and partner engagement.*

While the Program does not have any specific legal, regulatory, or other requirements relevant to stakeholder and partner engagement, SNEP holds quarterly meetings with its Steering

Committee, which provides feedback on programmatic direction, as well as quarterly meetings with its Monitoring and Ecosystem Services subcommittees to inform programmatic scientific direction. The Program has several mechanisms for public outreach including a monthly newsletter, hosting 1-2 yearly workshops, and one public forum or symposium annually. These efforts ensure that SNEP consistently seeks public support and input. Additionally, as we work to partner more closely with DACs throughout our region via our RFAs and additional staff, we will use our existing outreach and engagement pathways to highlight and share our work to more meaningfully engage with and expand our partnerships over time.

Key Issues - *Describe program-specific issues related to J40 implementation with respect to partner/stakeholder input on this covered program.*

- Staffing constraints have prevented SNEP’s greater engagement and connection with on-the-ground organizations both within and outside DACs. The planned hire of an EJ-specific staff person is expected to expand SNEP’s understanding of and outreach to DACs, introduce communities to the Program and available funding opportunities, and provide technical assistance and further support.
- Although current federal guidance prevents the inclusion of race-based indicators in programmatic definitions for “disadvantaged communities,” many of SNEP’s regional partners are not under the same restrictions. This could potentially result in regional discrepancies between federal, state, and local partners in identifying areas as disadvantaged. Despite efforts to limit these discrepancies, it is likely that some areas that were inadvertently excluded from SNEP’s definition will be recognized as disadvantaged at the state or other levels.
- SNEP’s bi-state focus will require attention to provide EJ funding parity across Massachusetts and Rhode Island as well as across our Program’s subregions: Buzzards Bay, Narragansett Bay, Cape Cod, and the Islands (Martha’s Vineyard, Nantucket, Block Island, Cuttyhunk, etc.)
- The significant increase in federal dollars allocated to infrastructure and environmental justice investments nationally and the need to allocate those dollars within the same timeframe means that many funding opportunities will be provided to DACs simultaneously, potentially overwhelming community groups that are already struggling with capacity issues. While we hope to address some of these capacity issues over time by allocating a portion of SNEP BIL funding to support EPA staff, and anticipate that grants will be used to support new local and municipal positions, we recognize that it will take time for the benefits of these efforts to be realized. We intend to alleviate some of these capacity issues initially via increased communication with community organizations and municipalities, and by providing as much time as possible for potential applicants to learn about, create, and submit a competitive grant application package.

Unique Partners/Stakeholders and Timing (Table 2) - *List the program-specific stakeholder groups and partners targeted for engagement. Include if there are specific impacted communities*

who will benefit directly and/or indirectly, as well as grantees/recipients. Also include any expectation regarding timing/regularity of engagements.

Table 2. Table displaying unique partners/stakeholders/ and timing information.

Group / Partner / Community Name	Geographic Locale <i>[Local, State, Tribal, National]</i>	Type of Engagement Anticipated [Info distribution, public meetings, consultations, project design or implementation, etc.]	Rationale for Engagement <i>[key issue(s) addressed, etc.]</i>	Timing/ Regularity of engagement
Buzzards Bay National Estuary Program	Regional – Buzzards Bay Watershed	Consultation and Distribution of Subawards	BBNEP is an important partner in providing regional guidance and support for SNEP initiatives in the Buzzards Bay watershed. Our programs work closely on numerous efforts, and we look forward to engaging with them closely in designing and distributing our EJ-specific funding opportunities.	Quarterly
Narragansett Bay Estuary Program	Regional – Narragansett Bay Watershed	Consultation and Distribution of Subawards	NBEP is an important partner in providing regional guidance and support for SNEP initiatives in Narragansett Bay. Our programs work closely on numerous efforts, and we look forward to engaging with them closely in designing and distributing our EJ-specific funding opportunities.	Quarterly

<p>Narragansett Tribe, Mashpee Wampanoag, Wampanoag Tribe of Gay Head Aquinnah</p>	<p>Tribal</p>	<p>Consultation and Design, Funding, Technical Assistance</p>	<p>Our Program works to engage with each of the federally recognized Tribal Nations located within the SNEP region. SNEP envisions a continuing development of engagement with Tribal Partners through every step of the rollout of our equity strategy.</p>	<p>Quarterly</p>
<p>Restore America's Estuaries (RAE)</p>	<p>Regional</p>	<p>Consultation and Design, Managing Subaward Implementation Program</p>	<p>RAE manages the SNEP Watershed Implementation Grants program, which is the implementation arm of SNEP. While RAE will not be involved in implementing this BIL-focused equity plan, they are key partners in guiding our implementation strategy and in implementing the strategy through their annual RFPs.</p>	<p>Quarterly</p>
<p>University of Southern Maine, New England Environmental Finance Center (NEEFC)</p>	<p>Regional</p>	<p>Consultation and Design</p>	<p>NEEFC manages the SNEP Network, which is the technical assistance provider of our program. While NEEFC will not be involved in implementing this BIL-focused equity plan, they are key partners in guiding our implementation strategy.</p>	<p>Quarterly</p>
<p>Association to Preserve Cape</p>	<p>Regional</p>	<p>Consultation and Design</p>	<p>APCC and the CCC are key programmatic</p>	<p>Quarterly</p>



Cod/Cape Cod Commission			partners and will work to guide our Program's implementation strategy on Cape Cod.	
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8. Other (additional narrative as needed to explain the program's equity strategy, any specific defining features or challenges, and/or its nexus with the program's CCMP)

N/A



Appendix A:

The following table provides metrics that will be tracked by recipients and reported to EPA at the close of projects. Relevant metrics (~3-4 metrics per project) are chosen for each project based on its focus area and outputs and outcomes. These metrics will be used to evaluate benefits of BIL funding for all communities, including DACs.

Problem to Be Addressed	Project Activity	Metric	Can Metric be Mapped?	Additional Guidance
General Project Information- ALL Projects				
Inequitable participation in program resources	Assist Disadvantaged Communities with Environmental Restoration	\$ provided to Disadvantaged Communities (DACs)	No	Enter SNEP \$ allocated to work with DACs through a direct award from EPA, the Network, NEPs or SWIG.
Overburdened Communities: Technical Assistance and Funding	Provide technical assistance and funding to over-burdened and under-served areas	# Of environmental justice communities receiving SNEP assistance.	Yes	Enter # DACs that have received SNEP assistance through a direct award from EPA, NEPs, the Network or SWIG.
Lack of Awareness: Land Use Impacts on Environment and/or Sustainability	Educate and Engage local government entities	# Government entities participating	Yes	Provide # of different government entities participating in project activities. A participating entity could be a county, municipal or tribal board or department. In NOTES section: describe specific government entities participating e.g. Barnstable County Health Department, Falmouth Department of Public Work, etc.
Lack of Awareness: Land Use Impacts on Environment and/or Sustainability	Educate and Engage volunteers	# Volunteers participating	No	Enter # volunteers participating in the project. In NOTES section: provide a short description of the type of volunteer and the type of volunteer engagement

Lack of Awareness: Land Use Impacts on Environment and/or Sustainability	Increase partner collaboration	# Partner organizations on the project	No	Enter # partner organizations engaged in the project
Demonstrate Program Benefit: Fiscal Commitment	Leverage funding	\$ funding leveraged (including match, over-match, and non-match eligible leveraged funds)	No	Enter \$ amount of total project value above that provided by EPA/SNEP
Education and Awareness - Short Webinars and Newsletter				
Lack of Awareness: Land Use Impacts on Environment and/or Sustainability	Provide training to the public or stakeholders	# Webinars	No	Enter # webinars
Training through workshops, courses, webinars focused specific training				
Lack of Knowledge about BMPs	Training on ways to address environmental problems	# Workshops, webinars, courses	No	Enter # workshops, courses and/or training-focused webinars. In NOTES section: provide a short description of the type/content of event
Lack of Knowledge about BMPs	Training on ways to address environmental problems	# Of enhanced training opportunities made available to municipalities, tribes, and NGOs on a range of topics.	No	Enter # enhanced training opportunities and their focus area: stormwater, wastewater, IA septic, saltmarsh, financing

Lack of Knowledge about BMPs	Training on ways to address environmental problems	% People demonstrating a minimum level of knowledge, attitudes or skills after a training/event/workshop/webinar etc.	No	Provide % people targeted that are demonstrating a minimum level of knowledge, attitude, or skill. In NOTES section: describe specific method to document improvement in knowledge, attitudes or skills e.g., signed pledge, increase in knowledge based on pre and post testing after information about topic provided etc. If you are not able to measure and document results do not use this metric.
Lack of Knowledge about BMPs	Increased knowledge and use of holistic stormwater planning	# Of municipalities and tribes that complete Bylaw Review Tool/Low Impact Development Checklist trainings and/or use the Bylaw Review Tool/ Low Impact Development Checklist.	Yes	Enter # municipalities and tribes using these SNEP Network tools.
Technical Assistance: Direct Watershed or Project-level Design and Planning				
Lack of Capacity: Provide Focused Assistance to Address Environmental Problems	Lack of Capacity: Land Use Impacts on Environment and/or Sustainability	# Tribes and communities receiving technical assistance to plan and design site level remediation.	Yes	Enter # communities that receive technical assistance to complete planning and design of site remediation related to the following focus area: stormwater, wastewater, habitat, floodplain areas, etc. In NOTES, identify key task: 1) Project Preliminary Design and Site Assessment; 2) Project Final Design and Site Assessment; 3) Permitting;

Local Planning: Water Pollution, Habitat Restoration, Resilience	Create or enhance plan to reduce water pollution, restore habitat, and/or improve resilience to changing climatic conditions.	# Plans developed	No	Enter # plans developed and whether they are intended to reduce water pollution, restore habitat, and/or improve resilience to changing climate conditions. For all plans, in NOTES section: check off the type of plan being prepared e.g., Community Engagement, Nine Element Watershed Based Plan, Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan (CCMP), Nutrient Reduction Plan, Aquatic Habitat Plan, Land-based Habitat Plan, Habitat Mitigation/Coastal Resilience Plan.
Technical Assistance: Financing				
Increase Direct Technical Assistance: Financing	Increase development of financing plans	# Of municipalities and tribes that, with Network assistance, complete a finance plan including analysis of needs and priorities as well as potential funding mechanisms.	Yes	Enter # municipalities and tribes that received SNEP Network assistance and completed a finance plan.
Stormwater Management: nutrient, sediment, bacteria reduction; habitat, hydrological, habitat benefits through Green Infrastructure				
Degraded Water Quality: Stormwater	Install green infrastructure	# Square feet of green infrastructure installed	Yes	Enter # square feet of green infrastructure installed. In NOTES section: describe the type of green infrastructure installed (e.g., raingardens, bioswales, pervious pavement, bioretention basins, etc.)
Degraded Water Quality: Stormwater	Develop and use nitrogen-reducing stormwater practices	# Stormwater infiltration technologies capable of reducing nitrogen released to	No	Enter # stormwater infiltration practices installed to reduce nitrogen. Note: include type of practice installed.

		ground water or surface water.		
Degraded Water Quality: Stormwater	Reduce impervious surfaces	# Square feet of impervious surface removed, disconnected, or retrofitted	Yes	Enter # square feet of impervious surface removed, disconnected, or retrofitted. In NOTES section: describe the type of impervious surface and if it was removed, disconnected, or retrofitted.
Degraded Water Quality: Stormwater	Install green infrastructure	# Acres of impervious cover area treated with green infrastructure	Yes	Enter # acres of impervious cover treated by green infrastructure practice or approach
Degraded Water Quality: Stormwater	Manage stormwater to reduce runoff	# Gallons (volume) of stormwater prevented or reduced from directly entering waterway annually	No	Enter # gallons (volume) stormwater prevented or reduced from directly entering the waterway annually. In NOTES section: describe the type of practice implemented e.g., riparian restoration, green roof, bioswale, raingarden, rain barrel etc. Use this link to access the UNH BMP Performance Calculator https://www.unh.edu/unhsc/ms4-resources
Degraded Water Quality: Stormwater	Manage stormwater to reduce nitrogen	# Pounds of nitrogen discharge avoided per year	No	Enter estimated # pounds nitrogen per year load reduction resulting from installation or use of a BMP. In NOTES section: describe the method to be used to prevent or reduce nitrogen. Use this link to access the UNH BMP Performance Calculator https://www.unh.edu/unhsc/ms4-resources
Degraded Water Quality: Stormwater	Manage stormwater to reduce phosphorus	# Pounds of phosphorus discharge avoided per year	No	Enter estimated # pounds phosphorus per year load reduction resulting from installation or use of a BMP. In NOTES section: describe the method to be used to prevent or reduce phosphorus. Use this link to access the UNH BMP Performance Calculator

				https://www.unh.edu/unhsc/ms4-resources
Degraded Water Quality: Stormwater	Manage stormwater to reduce sediment	# Pounds of sediment discharge avoided per year	No	Enter estimated # pounds sediment load reduction per year resulting from installation or use of a BMP (pounds sediment captured or retained per year). Use this link to access the UNH BMP Performance Calculator https://www.unh.edu/unhsc/ms4-resources
Degraded Water Quality: Stormwater	Manage stormwater to reduce bacteria	% Bacterial colonies reduced from directly discharging to waterway per year based on pre-BMP loading rates (fecal indicator bacteria: <i>e. coli</i> (fresh water) or <i>Enterococci</i> (saline water))	No	Enter estimated % bacterial colonies reduced or prevented from discharging directly to a waterway through installation or use of a BMP or conservation practice per year. In NOTES section: describe the method to be used to prevent or reduce bacterial pollution. Use this link to access the UNH BMP Performance Calculator https://www.unh.edu/unhsc/ms4-resources
Degraded Water Quality: Stormwater	Manage stormwater to reduce bacteria	# Bacterial colonies (Billion MPN/year) reduced or prevented from directly discharging to waterway annually (fecal indicator bacteria: <i>e. coli</i> (fresh water) or	No	Enter estimated # bacterial colonies (Billion MPN/year) reduced or prevented from discharging directly to a waterway through installation or use of a BMP or conservation practice annually. In NOTES section: describe the method to be used to prevent or reduce bacterial pollution. Use this link to access the UNH BMP Performance Calculator https://www.unh.edu/unhsc/ms4-resources . Please use the tool's estimated input bacterial load (Billion MPN/year) and % reduction to calculate load reduction (Billion MPN/year).

		<i>Enterococci</i> (saline water)		
Wastewater Management: WWTFs				
Degraded Water Quality: Wastewater Treatment Facility (WWTF)	Manage WWTF to reduce phosphorus	# Pounds reduced phosphorus load from wastewater treatment facilities (pounds/year)	No	Enter estimated # pounds phosphorus that is no longer discharged to surface water or groundwater through optimization, an upgraded or relocated WWTF process. Recipient will calculate load based on comparison of starting annual load versus final annual load. Load shall be determine based on average daily effluent concentration and discharge volume.
Degraded Water Quality: Wastewater Treatment Facility (WWTF)	Manage WWTF to reduce nitrogen	# Pounds reduced nitrogen load from wastewater treatment facilities (pounds/year)	No	Enter estimated # pounds nitrogen that is no longer discharged to surface water or groundwater through optimization, an upgraded or relocated WWTF process. Recipient will calculate load based on comparison of starting annual load versus final annual load. Load shall be determine based on average daily effluent concentration and discharge volume.
Wastewater Management: Septic Systems				
Degraded Water Quality: Onsite Wastewater Systems	Manage onsite wastewater systems to reduce nitrogen	# Onsite wastewater treatment systems providing improved nutrient reduction (ex. innovative/alt ernative	Yes	Enter # and type of enhanced onsite wastewater treatment. Examples include innovative/alternative nitrogen reduction septic systems, composting, packaging, incinerating, and urine diverting toilets installed.

		septic systems, composting toilets, etc.)		
Degraded Water Quality: Onsite Wastewater Systems	Manage onsite wastewater systems to reduce nitrogen	# Pounds reduced nitrogen load from improved onsite wastewater systems (pounds/year)	No	Enter estimated # pounds of nitrogen per year that is no longer discharged to surface water or groundwater through use of onsite wastewater system (innovative/alternative nitrogen reduction septic system, composting, packaging, incinerating, and urine diverting toilets installed). In NOTES: state reduction calculation methodology.
Degraded Water Quality: Wastewater	Increase use of IA septic systems	# Towns that include use of nitrogen-reducing IA onsite septic systems as means to reduce their nitrogen impacts.	Yes	Enter # towns that have new enhanced IA nitrogen-reducing septic systems installed.
Lawn Fertilizer				
Degraded Water Quality: Lawn Fertilizer	Reduce lawn fertilizers application to reduce nutrients	# Acres with reduced use of lawn fertilizers that include phosphorus and nitrogen	Yes	Enter # acres where lawn fertilizer is no longer applied or where application is reduced.
Fertigation				
Degraded Water Quality: Fertigation	Use fertigation to reduce nutrients	# Acres of land area fertilized through fertigation well(s).	Yes	Enter # acres of land that is fertilized through fertigation and not through the application of traditional lawn fertilizers.
Permeable Reactive Barriers				

Degraded Water Quality: Ground Water	Increase use of PRBs to reduce nitrogen	# Linear feet of permeable reactive barrier for nitrogen mitigation in ground water	No	Enter # linear feet and location of permeable reactor barrier installed. Note: this metric does not include wastewater technologies that incorporate a permeable reactive barrier.
Habitat Restoration: For Nutrient Reduction, Improved Function and Resiliency				
Degraded Water Quality: Habitat Improvement	Use habitat improvement to reduce phosphorus	# Pounds of phosphorus discharge avoided per year	No	Enter the # pounds of phosphorus load reduction per year resulting from habitat improvement projects annually (Pounds of phosphorus reduction per year). In NOTES section: describe the type of habitat improvement practice implemented e.g., riparian restoration, soil health system, streambank or in-stream restoration, culvert/stream crossing improvement, etc. In NOTES: state reduction calculation methodology.
Degraded water quality: Habitat Improvement	Use habitat improvement to reduce nitrogen	# Pounds of nitrogen discharge avoided per year	No	Enter estimated # pounds of nitrogen load reduction per year resulting from habitat improvement annually (pounds of nitrogen reduction per year). In NOTES section: describe the type of practice implemented e.g., riparian restoration, soil health system, streambank or in-stream restoration, culvert/stream crossing improvement, etc. In NOTES: state reduction calculation methodology.
Degraded Water Quality: Agriculture and Wetlands	Develop new ways to reduce nitrogen from cranberry bogs and wetlands	# Technologies or approaches to reduce nitrogen from cranberry bogs and wetlands	No	Enter # technologies installed in cranberry bogs or wetlands to reduce their discharge of nitrogen to downgradient waterways. In notes, identify technology used (ex. wetland bioreactor).

Degraded Habitat Function: Land Restoration	Restore important coastal habitat of Southeast New England	# Acres of coastal habitat restored	Yes	Enter # acres restored. In NOTES section: describe the specific type of habitat to be restored from this list: Beaches & Dunes; Cliffs & Bluffs, Estuarine Embayments, Coastal Island Forests, Freshwater Wetlands, Coastal Grasslands, Intertidal Flats, Rocky Intertidal Zones, Submerged Aquatic Vegetation (eelgrass, shellfish reefs) Tidal Wetlands, Riparian land, Lake/Pond Habitat, restored cranberry bog.
Degraded Habitat Function: Saltmarsh	Restore saltmarsh	# Acres of restored saltmarsh	Yes	Enter # acres of saltmarsh restored through elimination of invasive species, improved flushing, or other methods. In NOTES: Indicate the restoration method used.
Loss of Habitat and Function: Saltmarsh	Increase resiliency of saltmarshes	# Acres with installed technologies or approaches to protect saltmarshes from sea level rise.	Yes	Enter # acres addressed to improve saltmarsh resilience due to installation of new technologies or use of new approaches. In notes identify type of technology used (ex. runnels, thin layer deposition, land for migration)
Loss of Habitat and Function: Eelgrass	Restore and increase resiliency of eelgrass	# Acres of new eelgrass habitat	Yes	Enter # acres of additional eelgrass habitat. In notes identify method of restoration (seed planting, plant transplant, other mechanism).
Degraded Water Quality and Habitat Function: Harmful Algal Blooms	Increase treatment of HABs	# Waterbodies using in situ (in surface water) treatment technology(ies) to reduce HABs	Yes	Enter # waterbodies or waterways using an in situ technology to reduce HABs. In notes identify technology used (ex. floating wetlands, water circulator, dredging)

Degraded Habitat Function: Pond, Lake and Estuary Shoreline Buffer	Restore degraded waterbody buffer area	# Acres of restored water buffer area (non-riverine)	Yes	Enter # acres of water buffer area restored through removal of structures, roads, or planting of native vegetation. Buffers are defined as vegetated areas along a waterbody through which energy, materials, and water pass to reduce impacts on that waterbody from adjacent land uses. For help identifying buffers, see the Nature's Network Aquatic Core map: https://nalcc.databasin.org/maps/new/#datasets=3eeab562664b421ebc1b830151e8b4db .
Degraded Habitat Function: River Shoreline Restoration	Restore riverine riparian areas	# Linear shoreline of riparian habitat restored	Yes	Enter # linear feet of riparian shoreline (as measured along the buffer edge closest to the stream/river) habitat restored along a river through removal of structures or planting of native vegetation.
Floodplain Function				
Reduce Climate Stress: Floodplain Function	Restore floodplain areas	# Acres of floodplain restored	Yes	Enter # acres of flood plain restored to serve its function to reduce storm impacts through removal of structures or planting of native vegetation.
Aquatic Invasive Species				
Degraded Habitat Function: Spread of non-native species	Eliminate invasive plants	# Acres managed to treat invasive plants	Yes	Enter # acres managed to treat invasive plants. In NOTES section: provide examples of invasive to be addressed and the method(s) of treatment
Land Protection-Habitat, Open space, Recreation (acquisition, easement)				
Loss of Native Land to Support Water-based Economy, Habitat Function, Natural Land Recreation	Protect lands critical to support priority species supporting the region's water-based economy	# Acres of land protected	Yes	Enter # acres of land protected. In NOTES, identify purpose: 1) habitat type or species it is intended to protect; 2) water body buffer; 3) stream buffer; 4) open space; 5) recreation purpose.

Loss of Habitat: Wetlands	Preserve inland wetlands	# Acres of inland wetland permanently protected beyond that afforded by state and federal wetland regulation	Yes	Enter # acres of newly protected wetland because of the project. Protection mechanisms does not include state and federal regulations, and instead includes conservation easement or fee simple ownership.
Loss of Habitat: Saltmarsh	Protect saltmarsh	# Acres of protected saltmarsh	Yes	Enter # acres of saltmarsh permanently protected by conservation easement or fee simple land ownership (including protection through providing migration potential)
Reduced Health and Wellbeing: Land Protection	Protect public open space to provide recreation and wellbeing	# Acres of accessible open space created or conserved	Yes	Enter # acres of public open space (natural areas, parks) that is accessible to the public.
Municipal Planning and Policy				
Increase Direct Assistance and Training: Nature-based Solutions	Adoption of holistic planning regulations	# Of municipalities and tribes that adopt bylaws, ordinances, or regulations.	Yes	Enter # municipalities and tribes that have adopted bylaws, ordinances or regulations. In NOTES: identify focus areas (ex. nutrient reduction, open space, stormwater, habitat, resilience.
Trash and Microplastics				
Degraded Water Quality: Plastic	Prevent or reduce litter, floatables and marine debris	# Pounds of floatable debris reduced or prevented from entering the waterway per year	No	Enter # pounds of floatable debris prevented or removed from entering or removed from waterway per year.
Monitoring and Research to Track Results and Inform Management				

Research new methods or tools: Applied Research Studies	Study new technologies, models, methods, or approaches	# Applied research studies completed with findings reported to management	No	Enter # applied research studies completed with findings reported to SNEP managers and stakeholders. In NOTES section: describe the focus of the study, the SNEP-regional entities who will use the studies, and how the information will be used to inform management of Southeast New England or support the activities of key stakeholders such as citizen scientists
Share Project Benefits: Fiscal Wellbeing	Determine ecosystem services achieved by projects	# Projects that include valuation of project's contribution to ecosystem services	Yes	Enter # projects that include ecosystem service valuation. Note: indicate if the valuation is of environmental, social, and/or economic change in value.
Track Environmental Change: Direct Work and Track Results	Monitor to track change in environmental condition	\$ aquatic or terrestrial monitoring programs	No	Enter \$ supporting monitoring. In NOTES section: indicate if it is for aquatic or terrestrial monitoring