



# National Environmental Youth Advisory Council (NEYAC)

Office of Environmental Justice and External Civil Rights

Charge Presentation

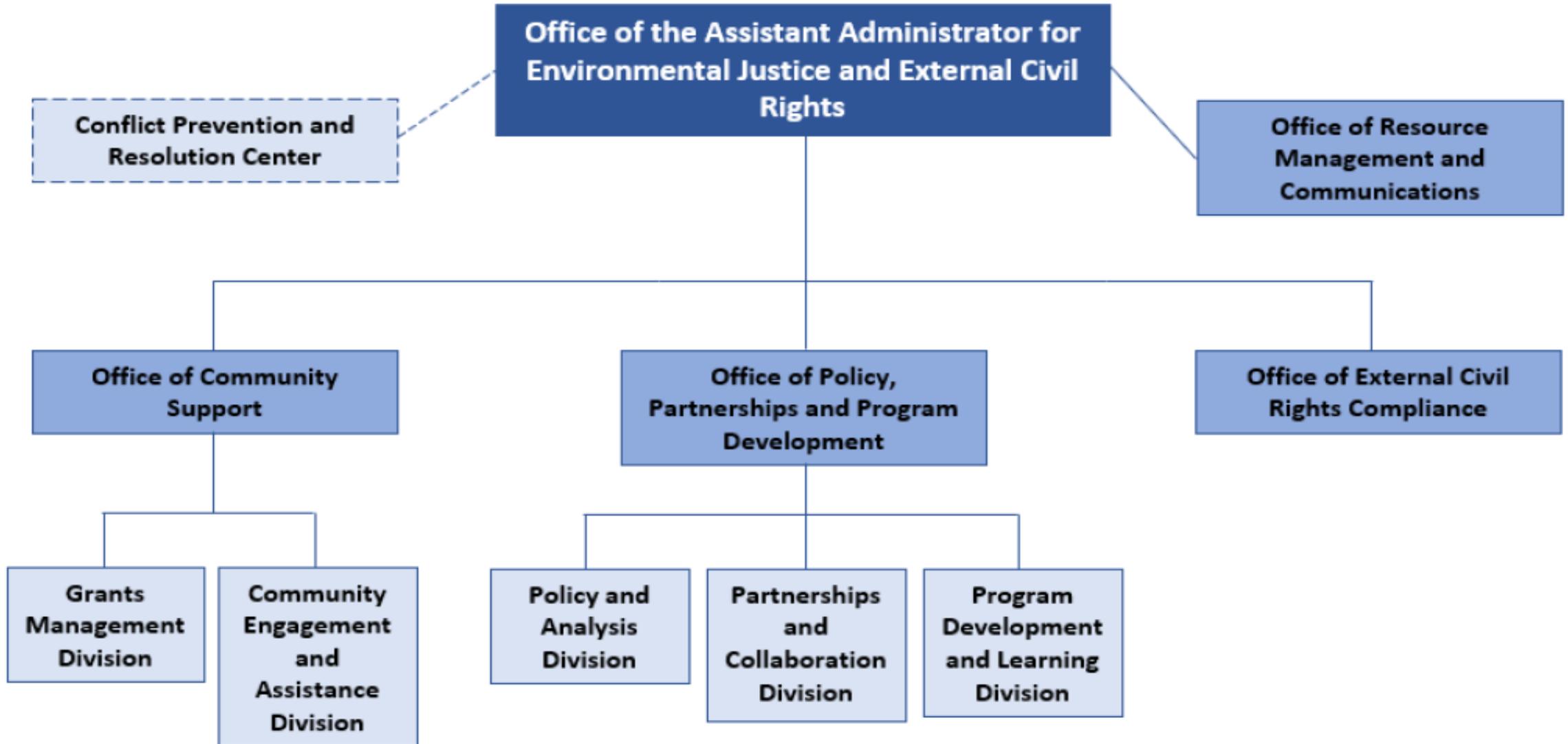
February 28, 2024

# Introductions

## Agenda

- Background on EPA's Office of Environmental Justice and External Civil Rights (OEJECR)
- Background on Charge Topic
- Charge Questions and Discussion

# Office of Environmental Justice and External Civil Rights Organization Chart



# Background on the Office of Environmental Justice and External Civil Rights (OEJECR)

- Coordinates implementation of EJ and ECR priorities across the agency's national programs, regions, the Administrator's Office, and across our partnerships with other federal agencies and coregulators in state, Tribal, and local government, and communities
- Provides resources and other technical assistance on civil rights and environmental justice, engages with communities with environmental justice concerns, and provides support for community-led action

# Office of Environmental Justice and External Civil Rights (OEJECR)

- Enforces federal civil rights laws, including Title VI, that, together, prohibit discrimination on the basis of race, color, or national origin (including on the basis of limited-English proficiency); sex; disability; or age by applicants for and recipients of federal financial assistance from EPA
- Home to the [Conflict Prevention and Resolution Center \(CPRC\)](#), which is EPA's primary resource for services and expertise in alternative dispute resolution, environmental conflict resolution, consensus-building, and collaborative problem solving.

# Background on Charge Topic

- **“Environmental justice”** means the just treatment and meaningful involvement of all people, regardless of income, race, color, national origin, Tribal affiliation, or disability, in agency decision-making and other Federal activities that affect human health and the environment so that people:
  - are fully protected from disproportionate and adverse human health and environmental effects (including risks) and hazards, including those related to climate change, the cumulative impacts of environmental and other burdens, and the legacy of racism or other structural or systemic barriers; and
  - have equitable access to a healthy, sustainable, and resilient environment in which to live, play, work, learn, grow, worship, and engage in cultural and subsistence practices.

# Background on Charge Topic: OEJECR

## Resources Overview

With the formation of the OEJECR, and through the Biden-Harris Administration *Invest in America* programs, OEJECR will provide over \$3 billion in assistance through Environmental Justice Thriving Communities Program which includes:

- Technical Assistance Centers
- Grantmakers Program
- Collaborative Problem-Solving and Government to Government Grants
- Community Change Grant programs

The goals of our assistance programs continue to be helping and supporting affected communities create self-sustaining, community-based partnerships that will improve the environmental health, climate resiliency and overall human health of all the communities in our Nation.

# Charge Topic: OEJECR Resources

- [Environmental and Climate Justice \(ECJ\) Program](#), created by the [Inflation Reduction Act](#), provides funding for financial and technical assistance to carry out environmental and climate justice activities to benefit underserved and overburdened communities. Congress appropriated \$2.8 billion for financial assistance, and \$200 million for technical assistance.

# Charge Topic: OEJECR Resources continued

- 98 [Environmental Justice Collaborative Problem-Solving Cooperative Agreements](#) awarded to community-based nonprofit organizations who will receive up to \$500,000 in grant funding.
- 88 [Environmental Justice Government-to-Government \(G2G\)](#) cooperative agreements awarded to state, local, territorial, and tribal governments to receive up to \$1,00,000 in grant funding.
- EPA's [EJ Small Grants Program](#) supports and empowers communities working on solutions to local environmental and public health issues. The program is designed to help communities understand and address exposure to multiple environmental harms and risks.

# Charge Topic: OEJECR Resources – EJ Thriving Communities

- The new [Environmental Justice Thriving Communities Grantmaking \(EJ TCGM\) Program](#) is a competition to select multiple Grantmakers around the nation to reduce barriers to the application process communities face and increase the efficiency of the awards process for environmental justice grants.
- EPA's new [EJ Thriving Communities Technical Assistance Centers Program](#) will establish technical assistance centers across the nation providing technical assistance, training, and related support to communities with environmental justice concerns and their partners.

# Charge Questions

Under the umbrella of Environmental Justice and equity, we ask the NEYAC to consider these charges from EPA to enhance and improve our engagement with youth, in particular, those in communities with environmental justice concerns.

# #1 Charge Questions

- What barriers to awareness or access exist to empowering and connecting with youth in Communities with EJ Concerns for Agency resources and outreach (such as environmental leadership, careers, internships, etc.)?
- What approaches, processes, or strategies would the NEYAC recommend that would enhance awareness and access?

# #2 Charge Questions

- How can EPA engage youth in environmental sustainability? How can young people actively promote innovation and implement sustainable ideas.
- How would you identify youth's vision for a just and sustainable future?

# #3 Charge Questions

- How should EPA work with corresponding state, local, and/or Tribal governments to ensure desired on-the-ground impacts and efforts to advance environmental justice come to fruition?
- What do youth consider as reliable and impactful engagement and indicators of success?

# #4 Charge Questions

- What best practices, technologies, and/or platforms are best positioned to connect youth to environmental resources EPA has available, including but not limited to, green space access/preservation, cleanup efforts, grant opportunities, and policy-developing opportunities, particularly for communities with EJ Concerns?

# #5 Charge Questions

- What topics relating to Environmental Justice are most urgent to youth?

# Supplemental Information on Charge Topic

- Office of External Civil Rights Compliance (ECRC), moved from its original location within the Office of General Counsel to be incorporated into the newly formed [National Program Office](#) as it works in tandem with the efforts of the Environmental Justice offices. ECRC is the other half of the OEJECR that works to embed EJ, civil rights and equity into the fabric of the Agency.
- ECRC provides policy guidance and technical assistance to EPA program offices on civil rights compliance and equal employment opportunity and the enforcement of federal civil rights laws, such as Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 that prohibits discrimination against members of the public by recipients of EPA funds, is the responsibility of ECRC within OEJECR.