



## OFFICE OF EXTERNAL CIVIL RIGHTS COMPLIANCE

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20460

### INFORMAL RESOLUTION AGREEMENT

between the

COLORADO DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENT

and the

UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

EPA COMPLIANCE REVIEW NO. 01CR-22-R8

#### I. PURPOSE AND JURISDICTION

- A. Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, 42 U.S.C. §§ 2000d to 2000d-7 (Title VI), other federal nondiscrimination laws<sup>1</sup>, and United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) implementing regulations at 40 C.F.R. Parts 5 and 7 prohibit discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, disability, sex, age, and retaliation in the programs, services, and activities of applicants for or recipients of federal financial assistance.
- B. The Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE) receives federal financial assistance from the EPA. As a term and condition, CDPHE agreed to comply with federal civil rights laws, including Title VI, and all applicable nondiscrimination regulations.<sup>2</sup> CDPHE also provided assurance that it would “fully comply with all applicable civil rights statutes and EPA regulations.”<sup>3</sup> Therefore, CDPHE must assure nondiscrimination in programs and activities pursuant to the provisions of Title VI, the other federal civil rights laws, and the EPA’s implementing regulations.

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<sup>1</sup> Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, 29 U.S.C. § 794; Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, as amended, 20 U.S.C. §§ 1681 *et seq.*; Age Discrimination Act of 1975, 42 U.S.C. §§ 6101 *et seq.*; Federal Water Pollution Control Act Amendments of 1972, Pub. L. 92-500 § 13, 86 Stat. 903 (codified as amended at 33 U.S.C. § 1251 (1972)); 40 C.F.R. Parts 5 and 7.

<sup>2</sup> See Term and Condition 36, Civil Rights Obligations at [https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2019-09/documents/fy\\_2020\\_epa\\_general\\_terms\\_and\\_conditions\\_effective\\_october\\_1\\_2019.pdf](https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2019-09/documents/fy_2020_epa_general_terms_and_conditions_effective_october_1_2019.pdf).

<sup>3</sup> See Preaward Compliance Review Report for All Applicants and Recipients Requesting EPA Financial Assistance.

- C. The EPA's Office of External Civil Rights Compliance (OECRC)<sup>4</sup> has committed to taking steps to ensure that recipients of EPA federal financial assistance, such as the CDPHE, understand and comply with their obligations under the federal civil rights laws and the EPA's implementing regulations. One of OECRC's responsibilities is to conduct periodic compliance reviews of recipients of EPA financial assistance in accordance with the EPA's non-discrimination regulations at 40 C.F.R. Parts 5 and 7, specifically, 40 C.F.R. Section 7.115(a) (post-award compliance). These reviews allow the EPA the opportunity to provide compliance assistance to States and other recipient agencies.
- D. On January 11, 2022, OECRC discussed its intention to conduct a compliance review of CDPHE as part of OECRC's national responsibilities. On March 18, 2022, OECRC issued a letter notifying CDPHE of its intent to conduct a compliance review to ensure that CDPHE's methods of administering its air program comply with Title VI, and EPA's non-discrimination regulation, specifically, 40 C.F.R. Section 7.115. OECRC further stated its intention to engage with members of the North Denver community and other members of the public to hear their perspectives on environmental, human health and equity issues to inform the scope of the civil rights compliance review.
- E. On December 22, 2022, OECRC sent another letter to CDPHE, which clarified the scope of OECRC's review based on the initial community engagement and other preliminary information-gathering. OECRC informed CDPHE that it would review CDPHE's criteria and methods of administering its Clean Air Act (CAA) Title V operating permit program and Title I minor New Source Review (NSR) program, specifically focusing on whether CDPHE's minor permit modification procedures and CDPHE's use of related approaches to regulating air emissions, comply with Title VI and 40 C.F.R. Part 7. OECRC also informed CDPHE that its review would include whether CDPHE is implementing the procedural safeguards that all recipients of federal assistance must have in place, in accordance with 40 C.F.R. Parts 5 and 7, to comply with their general nondiscrimination obligations. These obligations include specific policies and procedures to ensure meaningful access to CDPHE's services, programs, and activities for individuals with limited English proficiency (LEP) and individuals with disabilities, and a public participation policy and process that is consistent, including as implemented, with the federal civil rights laws.

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<sup>4</sup> On September 24, 2022, EPA announced the establishment of the [Office of Environmental Justice and External Civil Rights](#) (OEJECR). The new Office includes the External Civil Rights Compliance Office, which was renamed the [Office of External Civil Rights Compliance](#) (OECRC). [OECRC](#) continues to enforce and ensure compliance with federal civil rights laws, which prohibit discrimination by applicants for and recipients of EPA financial assistance. OECRC accomplishes these goals in accordance with the procedures described in EPA's nondiscrimination regulations and its [Case Resolution Manual](#).

- F. During the compliance review, on December 11, 2023, CDPHE agreed to engage in the voluntary Informal Resolution Agreement process. This Agreement is the result of that process and does not constitute an admission by CDPHE of a violation of, or a finding of noncompliance with, Title VI or 40 C.F.R. Parts 5 and 7. The commitments included in this Agreement will build on the significant environmental justice and civil rights efforts and processes already undertaken by CDPHE. CDPHE is in no way compelled to enter this Agreement but does so voluntarily.
- G. CDPHE maintains that its program as currently formulated complies with all relevant and applicable provisions of the Clean Air Act and its implementing regulations. CDPHE enters into this Agreement in furtherance of CDPHE's desire to engage with affected communities such as the Commerce City/North Denver area "to build trust and transparency, provide meaningful opportunities to influence public policy, and modify proposed state action in response to received public input to decrease environmental burdens or increase environmental benefits for" such communities. Colorado Revised Statutes § 24-4-109(1).
- H. The commitments included in this Agreement resolve concerns raised as a result of CAA Title V sources' use of Colorado's minor modification procedures in a way that can delay public notice and comment on physical changes to facilities. *See* 40 C.F.R. § 70.7(e); Colo. Code Reg. §§1001-5:B.II.A.6, 1001-5:C.X. The commitments also ensure that the analyses of whether construction activities should be aggregated for permitting purposes are available in the permit record, and available for public notice and comment under defined circumstances.
- I. This Agreement is entered into pursuant to the authority granted to the EPA under the federal civil rights laws, including Title VI, and the EPA's implementing regulations found at 40 C.F.R. Parts 5 and 7.
- J. CDPHE is committed to carrying out its responsibilities in a nondiscriminatory manner, in accordance with the requirements of Title VI, other federal civil rights laws, and 40 C.F.R. Parts 5 and 7. The actions detailed in Section IV of this Agreement are in furtherance of this ongoing commitment. The commitments in the Agreement reflect the parties' agreed resolution of the Compliance Review conducted under the federal civil rights laws, and EPA's implementing regulations at 40 C.F.R. Parts 5 and 7 and do not represent conclusions as to specific requirements of the Clean Air Act.

## **II. BACKGROUND**

- A. Colorado is a leader in advancing environmental justice. CDPHE has provided an overview of its environmental justice accomplishments, attached as Appendix A.
- B. OECRC reviewed CDPHE procedural safeguards and found them to generally comport with the requirements of EPA's nondiscrimination regulations (40 C.F.R. Parts 5 and 7).
- C. OECRC reviewed CDPHE Limited English Proficiency policies and procedures and generally found them to comport with the requirements of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as implemented by EPA's nondiscrimination regulation at 40 C.F.R. Part 7.

## **III. SPECIFIC CDPHE COMMITMENTS**

- A. Within one year from the effective date of this Agreement, CDPHE agrees to propose to the Air Quality Control Commission (AQCC) revisions in the initial request for rulemaking to Regulation 3, Part B, including the State Implementation Plan (SIP), to ensure that sources with valid operating permits cannot use the Regulation 3, Part C, Section X minor permit modification procedure to begin construction of modifications without public notice and comment, for which modification would otherwise require public notice and comment prior to construction if permitted as a Regulation 3, Part B construction permit. EPA understands and recognizes that the AQCC is an independent commission under Colorado law and CDPHE cannot bind AQCC decision-making. If the AQCC does not adopt the proposed revisions to Regulation 3, Part B, described here, EPA will consider this commitment III.A satisfied.
- B. Within 18 months of the AQCC's adoption of any regulatory amendments identified in paragraph III.A that amend Regulation 3, Part B, CDPHE will submit those regulatory amendments to EPA as revisions to the Colorado SIP pursuant to Section 110 of the CAA. EPA agrees that the revisions described in paragraph III.A, so long as consistent with this Agreement and subject to EPA's review of the revisions under CAA Section 110(k) when submitted by the state as a revision to the SIP, meet the requirements of the CAA. EPA further agrees that Title V permits submitted to EPA, until such revised regulations are fully adopted and approved into the SIP, may continue to reflect minor permit modifications processed consistently with the current EPA-approved SIP. If the AQCC does not adopt the proposed revisions to Regulation 3, Part B, described in commitment III.A above, EPA will consider this commitment III.B satisfied.
- C. The CAA and CDPHE's SIP require CDPHE, when processing modifications to sources that result in emissions increases in the ozone nonattainment area, to ensure that such modifications are correctly permitted as minor modifications instead of as major modifications or as a major stationary source. Within 60 days of the effective date of this Agreement, CDPHE will initiate a collaborative process with EPA Region 8 to discuss Region 8's practice for issuing similarly situated permits, and how to best document, in

a transparent and publicly accessible manner, CDPHE's determinations of whether modifications are major or minor. CDPHE and EPA agree this collaborative process will conclude within 6 months of the commencement of collaborative process and EPA will consider this commitment satisfied at that time.

- D. Once the collaborative process described in paragraph III.C concludes, or beginning not later than 10 months from the effective date of this Agreement, for relevant permit records in Title V permits that will be sent to EPA for EPA's 45-day review and in other relevant construction permits issued pursuant to Regulation 3, Part B, CDPHE commits to ensuring that its determinations of whether modifications are major or minor are publicly accessible and transparent in the permit record. At a minimum, the determination will be in writing, clearly labeled and included in the permit record and/or supporting documentation. When there is public notice and comment, the determination will be made available for comment along with the draft permit documents. Given the complex and nuanced nature of performing such analyses, EPA understands that the level of detail necessary may differ depending on the type of permit action being processed.

#### **IV. GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS**

- A. In consideration of CDPHE's implementation of commitments described in Section III of this Agreement, EPA will not issue a decision containing findings on the merits.
- B. EPA will monitor the implementation of the commitments in Section III of this Agreement, as appropriate, to ensure the commitments and terms of this Agreement are satisfied. Once the commitments and terms of this Agreement are satisfied, EPA will issue a letter documenting closure of its monitoring actions in EPA File No. 01CR-22-R8 and closure of the compliance review as of the date of that letter. Specifically, EPA will close the compliance review upon fulfillment of the commitments in Section III.A, Section III.B, if required, and Section III.C.
- C. EPA will review any documentation submitted by CDPHE pertaining to completion of each commitment and will provide an assessment as to whether the documentation satisfies the commitment within 30 days of receipt of each such submission, unless otherwise specified in this agreement.
- D. EPA will, upon request, provide technical assistance to CDPHE regarding any of the civil rights obligations and actions that need to be taken to ensure compliance with the requirements of Title VI, other federal nondiscrimination laws and 40 C.F.R. Parts 5 and 7, as well as building upon CDPHE's strong civil rights program.

## **V. COMPUTATION OF TIME AND NOTICE**

- A. As used in this Agreement, “day” means a calendar day. In computing any period of time under this Agreement, where the last day would fall on a Saturday, Sunday, or federal holiday, the period will run until the close of business of the next working day.
- B. Service of any documents required by this Agreement will be made personally by electronic mail as outlined below. Documents forwarded by email for review are to be sent in native format for draft documents and PDF format for documents intended to be final.
- C. Electronic documents submitted by CDPHE to EPA by email will be sent to OECRC\_IRA@epa.gov.
- D. Documents submitted by EPA will be sent to jill.ryan@state.co.us and michael.ogletree@state.co.us. Documents mailed by EPA will be mailed to: Director, Air Pollution Control Division, 4300 Cherry Creek Drive South, Denver, Colorado 80246.

## **VI. EFFECT OF THE AGREEMENT**

- A. CDPHE understands that EPA may request information necessary for EPA to determine whether CDPHE has fulfilled the commitments and terms of this Agreement.
- B. CDPHE understands that the EPA will not close its monitoring of this Agreement until EPA determines that CDPHE has fully implemented this Agreement in accordance with Section IV.B.
- C. If either Party desires to modify any portion of this Agreement because of changed conditions making performance impractical or impossible, or due to material change to the CDPHE’s program or authorities, or for other good cause, the Party seeking a modification will notify the other in writing, setting forth the facts and circumstances justifying the proposed modification. Any modification(s) to this Agreement will take effect only upon written agreement by the Executive Director of CDPHE and the Director of OECRC.
- D. This Agreement constitutes the entire Agreement between CDPHE and the EPA regarding the matters addressed herein, and no other statement, promise, or agreement made by any other person will be construed to change any commitment or term of this Agreement, except as specifically agreed to by CDPHE and the EPA in accordance with the provisions of Section VI. C. above.
- E. This Agreement does not affect CDPHE’s continuing responsibility to comply with Title VI, other federal nondiscrimination laws and 40 C.F.R. Parts 5 and 7, nor does it affect the

EPA's investigation of any complaints filed under Title VI, other federal nondiscrimination laws, or 40 C.F.R. Parts 5 and 7, or address any other matter not covered by this Agreement.

- F. The effective date of this Agreement is the date by which both Parties have signed the Agreement. This Agreement may be signed in counterparts. The Executive Director, in their capacity as an official of the CDPHE, has the authority to enter into this Agreement for purposes of carrying out the activities listed in these paragraphs. The Acting Director of OECRC has the authority to enter into this Agreement.

On behalf of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency,



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Anhthu Hoang, Acting Director  
Office of External Civil Rights Compliance

January 13, 2025

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(Date)

On behalf of the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment,



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Michael Ogletree, Director  
Air Pollution Control Division

January 15, 2025

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(Date)

## Appendix A: CDPHE Environmental Justice Overview and Accomplishments

### Office of Environmental Justice

The CDPHE Office of Environmental Justice (OEJ) seeks to advance environmental justice in Colorado in partnership with disproportionately impacted communities (“DI communities”), the Environmental Justice Advisory Board (“EJAB”), and Department and Environmental Division leadership and staff. The OEJ’s roles include:

- Serving as a liaison to, building trust with, and increasing meaningful engagement with DI Communities by improving the two-way flow of information and increasing responsiveness to community questions and concerns;
- Developing and managing Department environmental justice goals, metrics, and objectives;
- Administering the EJ Grant Program;
- Facilitating EJ partnerships with DI communities and organizations in the Community Connector Program;
- Working with Environmental Divisions and the EJAB to implement statutory environmental justice mandates, including specific benchmarks and targets established by the Environmental Justice Act (House Bill 21-1266);
- Working with the Water Quality Control Division (WQCD) to implement the Mobile Home Park Water Quality Bill (HB23-1257) by leading community engagement with mobile home park residents;
- Coordinating environmental justice work within the department and with other federal, state, local, and tribal government partners; and
- Identifying disproportionately impacted communities based on continuously updated, best-available data using spatial analysis technology.

Since June 2021, the office has ensured Colorado remains a national leader in advancing environmental justice. The office works to ensure that the air division meets and exceeds requirements and best practices for meaningful public involvement and communications in accordance with:

- Colorado [Environmental Justice Act \(House Bill 1266\)](#).
- [Colorado Environmental Justice Action Task Force](#) recommendations.
- [Cumulative Impacts & Environmental Justice Act](#) (House Bill 24-1338).
- Other relevant laws and regulations.

#### **Accomplishments:**

- [Colorado EnviroScreen](#).
  - Colorado EnviroScreen is an interactive mapping tool, available in English and Spanish, that uses updated and extensive data to provide insights into pollution, health impacts, and environmental factors across Colorado. It highlights areas most affected by various forms of pollution, supporting data-driven decisions that advance fairness and equity in environmental health.
  - CDPHE’s Office of Environmental Justice collaborated with experts from Colorado State University and the Colorado School of Public Health to update methodologies and datasets. Community feedback and scientific input have helped make this tool accurate, actionable, and easy to use.

- Colorado EnviroScreen 1.0 launched in July 2022. [EnviroScreen 2.0](#) launched in November 2024 after a year-long development process.
- In November 2024, CDPHE also launched a new mapping tool, [Disproportionately Impacted Communities Map](#). The new map identifies areas classified as disproportionately impacted under Colorado law. It helps guide resource allocation and policy development decisions to address inequities and foster thriving communities.
- **[Environmental Justice Action Task Force.](#)**
  - The Environmental Justice Action Task Force submitted its final recommendations to the legislature, the Governor’s office, and CDPHE in November 2022. The Task Force solicited community feedback from across the state for nearly a year. It held seven full Task Meetings, including four virtual meetings with the in-person components in Commerce City, Grand Junction, Greeley, and Pueblo. It held 33 subcommittee meetings spanning 77 hours. It received over 300 written public comments and survey responses and also heard from dozens of community members in verbal public comments and during focus groups, coffee chats, and cafecitos. Based on this feedback and extensive deliberation at its meetings, the Task Force developed its [final recommendations](#).
  - Since November 2022, Colorado has implemented 27 recommendations from the task force and is currently working on 16 recommendations.
- **[CDPHE/EPA Memorandum of Understanding \(MOU\) on Advancing Environmental Justice through Enforcement and Compliance Assurance in Disproportionately Impacted Communities](#)**
  - The agencies collaborate to implement a shared work plan that focuses on:
    - Increasing inspections in impacted communities.
    - Promoting supplemental environmental projects in settlements.
    - Providing training on effective community engagement for enforcement staff.
  - The [first annual Progress Report](#) was released in summer 2024.
- **[Environmental Justice Ombudsperson.](#)**
  - In March 2022, CDPHE hired the first Environmental Justice Ombudsperson. This role oversees CDPHE’s [Environmental Justice Ombudsperson Complaint System](#).
- **[Environmental Justice Grant Program.](#)**
  - The Environmental Justice Grant Program projects help measure, prevent, or reduce pollution in disproportionately impacted communities. Disproportionately impacted communities include low-income communities, communities of color, communities disproportionately impacted by pollution and climate change, and some other categories. Funds also can help pay for technical assistance to help community organizations most effectively participate in rulemaking hearings. The public can use Colorado EnviroScreen to check if a community is eligible.
  - The Environmental Justice Act created this grant opportunity to help communities disproportionately impacted by pollution and climate change. The Environmental Justice Advisory Board oversees the program and serves as the grant selection committee.
  - In its first cycle, the [Environmental Justice Advisory Board](#) selected eight impactful projects to receive a total of \$1 million in funding.

- The department launched its second round of funding for the Environmental Justice Grant Program in September 2023. The program received 21 grant applications. Eight projects were selected for funding, totaling \$1.1 million, including non-competitive Tribal Government projects for the Ute Mountain Ute and Southern Ute Indian Tribes.
- In the third grant cycle, \$3 million will be distributed to 10 grantees. This cycle will run for two years, from July 1, 2025 to June 30, 2027.
- The Office of Environmental Justice also released the [first-ever Annual Environmental Justice Grant Report](#), showcasing the impactful work of cycle one grantees through the [Environmental Justice Grant Program](#). This report provides an in-depth look at the program's inaugural funding cycle for fiscal year 2024, highlighting projects driving meaningful change in Colorado communities.
- **[Environmental Justice Advisory Board.](#)**
  - The Environmental Justice Advisory Board was created through the Environmental Justice Act and first convened in January 2022.
  - The Governor and Executive Director of CDPHE appoint its twelve members.
  - The Board serves Colorado by:
    - Coordinating with the Environmental Justice Ombudsperson.
    - Advising CDPHE on best practices for engaging disproportionately impacted communities.
    - Responding to environmental justice policy matters referred by the Governor's Office or CDPHE.
    - Creating and overseeing an Environmental Justice Grant Program.
  - The Environmental Justice Grant Program supported the EJAB's publication of the first Annual Environmental Justice Grant report in December 2024
    - The Environmental Justice Advisory Board's Annual Environmental Justice Grant Report documents the air penalty revenue that funds the grant program and the geographic distribution of grants.
- **[Supplemental Environmental Projects \(SEPs\).](#)**
  - Supplemental Environmental Projects are projects that benefit the environment or public health, funded through environmental enforcement actions. Most Department enforcement settlements include monetary penalties. Regulated entities can elect to offset part of the monetary penalty by funding a SEP. All SEPs must adhere to the Department's SEP policy.
  - In 2024, the OEJ and SEP Coordinator:
    - Conducted over twenty-seven (27) external presentations about SEPs and provided guidance on submitting project ideas to the SEP idea library.
    - Distributed bilingual SEP materials at numerous fairs throughout 2024.
    - Encouraged EJ grant recipients and applicants to consider submitting their ideas to the SEP idea library.
    - Facilitated 20 SEPs - 86% of the 2024 SEPs target disproportionately impacted communities.
- **Community Connector Program.**

- The Community Connector Program collaborates with community organizations serving disproportionately impacted communities across Colorado.
- These organizations help connect community members with the department’s decision-making processes. The program also helps build trust and two-way communication between CDPHE’s environmental health divisions and communities disproportionately impacted by pollution and climate change.
- In FY24, the OEJ’s Community Connector Program contracted with nine different community organizations across Colorado, focusing on environmental justice efforts in disproportionately impacted communities, convening 18 community events, and engaging with 620 community members.
- **Language justice (translation and interpretation).**
  - The office has several in-house Spanish translation and interpretation staff and contracts with external vendors to provide language services in languages identified to enhance community outreach.
  - Since July 2023, the office has supported translating over 320,000 words.
  - Since July 2023, the office has supported over 250 hours of interpretation.
- **Environmental Equity and Cumulative Impact Analyses.**
  - The Environmental Equity and Cumulative Impacts Analyses (EECIA) was a key initiative that emerged from the Environmental Justice Act (EJ Act), the Environmental Justice Action Task Force (EJATF) recommendations, and most recently, House Bill 24-1338.
  - The EECIA aims to address the cumulative environmental and public health impacts experienced by disproportionately impacted communities in Colorado.
  - The first of two EECIAs, funded by House Bill 24-1338, are set to launch in mid-2025.
- **Developing and sharing resources on environmental justice.**
  - CDPHE develops and shares resources for Colorado communities, local public health agencies, industry, and others on how to prioritize and advance environmental justice. For instance, CDPHE launched a [community engagement, outreach, and public participation best practices web page](#).
- **[Mobile Home Park Water Quality Testing Program](#)**
  - The [Mobile Home Park Water Quality Act](#) helps Colorado protect clean and safe water in its mobile home parks. The law created a drinking water testing program for these parks and requires CDPHE to test the water in the parks starting in July 2024. In 2024, the OEJ staff::
    - Conducted 490 resident interviews in both English and Spanish in over 150 parks.
    - Held 11 community outreach events all across Colorado.
    - Facilitated two stakeholder meetings and virtual office hours.
    - Distributed over 500 bilingual testing program one-pagers at numerous community events.

## Air Pollution Control Division

The air division’s **Community and Partnership Program** includes the **Communications Unit** and

**Environmental Justice and Outreach Unit.** The program advances the division's work by meaningfully engaging and informing diverse Coloradans and key audiences about air quality, rulemakings, updates, milestones, and more. The program provides expertise in environmental justice, public participation, policy, meeting facilitation, strategic communication, media relations, digital media, and more. The program was established in fall 2022 and has significantly enhanced the air division's capacity to advance environmental justice in its day-to-day work, including in the domains of community outreach, partnerships, plain language, language justice (translations and interpretations), and data accessibility. The program works to ensure the air division meets and exceeds requirements and best practices in accordance with:

- Colorado [Environmental Justice Act \(House Bill 1266\)](#).
- [Colorado Environmental Justice Action Task Force](#) recommendations.
- [Public Protections from Toxic Air Contaminants \(House Bill 22-1244\)](#).
- [Regulate Air Toxics Act \(House Bill 21-1189\)](#).
- Air Quality Regulation 3/[Disproportionately Impacted Permitting Rule](#).
- Other relevant laws and regulations.

In particular, the Environmental Justice and Outreach Unit plays a mission critical role in implementing numerous legislative and Air Quality Control Commission rule requirements and incorporating environmental justice and outreach mandates and recommendations into the following work: rulemakings; air permitting; compliance and enforcement actions; policy development, implementation, and evaluation; communications and language justice; stakeholder engagement; and, public outreach. The team ensures the air division meets specific, deadline-driven legal requirements. For instance, the unit leads on all public meeting outreach requirements for monthly rulemakings, which entails hosting numerous public meetings for each rulemaking topic. This work includes public meeting outreach planning, implementation, tracking, and evaluation to ensure all programs across the air division meet or exceed those requirements. The unit leads on language justice implementation for the entire division, including translation of written materials (web, emails, social media, fact sheets, fliers) and interpretation for public meetings and other stakeholder and outreach events. The unit also implements [Environmental Justice Action Task Force](#) recommendations, such as providing participation and childcare stipends at air division public meetings

This team also leads on reviewing **Environmental Justice Summaries** as part of the air permitting process, as required by the AQCC's [Disproportionately Impacted Community Permitting Rule](#). This involves reviewing about 1,500 Environmental Justice Summaries annually and regularly coordinating with the division's permitting teams to ensure this information is used to meet air permit requirements in [AQCC Regulation Number 3](#). The team regularly coordinates with air permitting teams to advise on more ways to prioritize environmental justice through the air permitting process and keep communities informed.

This team also supports implementing the CDPHE/EPA [Memorandum of Understanding \(MOU\) on Advancing Environmental Justice through Enforcement and Compliance Assurance in Disproportionately Impacted Communities](#). The unit additionally provides subject matter expertise on incorporating environmental justice into air division policy, and provides guidance and recommendations to air division policy teams, CDPHE leadership, other divisions across CDPHE, and other state agencies.

**Accomplishments:**

- Since December 2022, the Community and Partnership Program has:

- Hired more than a dozen staff to advance work on strategic communications, public engagement, environmental justice, language services (translation/interpretation), media relations, digital accessibility, policy, and more.
- Managed contracts annually with two external language services vendors, as well as email marketing and webinar vendors.
- Significantly enhanced language justice capacity and regularly applied plain language guidelines to make air division communications understandable to non-technical audiences. This work includes:
  - Translating dozens of email listservs, slide presentations, social media posts, fliers, and web pages each year.
  - Providing interpretation services at numerous air division public meetings each month.
  - Prioritizing digital accessibility requirements and best practices for web, email, social media, slide presentations, event fliers, and more.
- Expanded proactive communications about division updates via web, email, and social media.
- Enhanced public participation opportunities, including public meetings (virtual, in-person, and hybrid).
- Expanded coordination with external partners, including community-based organizations, to better connect with disproportionately impacted communities.
- Supported, implemented, and evaluated policy and rule proposals to protect clean air for all Coloradans, including disproportionately impacted communities.
- Enhanced transparency and accessibility of air division work through clear communications and outreach on topics including air permits, compliance and enforcement actions, air quality alerts, air toxics, and climate change.
- Ensured the division met and exceeded communications and outreach requirements of the Colorado Environmental Justice Act and implemented recommendations from the [Environmental Justice Action Task Force](#), such as regularly providing participation and childcare stipends at public meetings.
- Launched a [new online tool](#) so community members can search by zip code and learn about Environmental Justice Summaries in their neighborhood.
  - This tool provides early notice about potential projects before an air permit is even submitted to or reviewed by the air division. The division developed the tool with community input and will host tutorials in 2025.
- Planned, promoted, and/or hosted 40+ public participation opportunities annually, including public input opportunities on rulemaking proposals, reports, and other division policies.
  - The unit also piloted an educational “permitting 101” presentation in December 2024 to empower communities with knowledge about Colorado’s air permitting processes and how to meaningfully engage. The division anticipates hosting similar educational forums in the future.

The air division's **Education and Community Opportunities Unit (ECO)** focuses on community outreach and education. The unit's goals are threefold: to support the development and deployment of community-led air monitoring projects; to liaise among stakeholder groups across the state; and, to create educational and outreach materials about air quality and environmental justice. The unit works directly with community-based organizations, local public health agencies, school districts, and other stakeholders on air topics that impact Colorado communities. The ECO Unit guides community members through air quality data interpretation and resources, develops and disseminates air quality educational materials, assists local community groups with air monitoring projects, conducts air quality presentations and workshops, and oversees statewide community outreach and engagement on air quality topics.

**Accomplishments:**

- Received a three-year [EPA Inflation Reduction Act grant](#) to develop a county-wide air quality monitoring network with a local community-based organization.
- Received a five-year EPA Inflation Reduction Act grant to deploy five new regulatory-grade air monitors in the state and conduct outreach to all new sites.
- Developed a high school-facing project-based learning unit that uses Colorado datasets to motivate students to explore air quality issues in their communities, dig into the effects of air pollution on humans and the environment, and develop solutions to address hyper-local air quality issues in their schools.
- Established partnerships with 24 school districts and charter networks across the state, with 43 unique elementary to high school schools.
- Five schools have adopted the air quality project-based learning curriculum developed by the air division and have taught it to 1,375 students.
- Created the Air Quality Education Working Group, which includes constituents nationwide and 40 active members.
- Formally presented on education and outreach materials at the National Science Teachers Association meeting (March 2024), the Air Sensors International Conference (April 2024), Colorado Department of Education "Colorado Data Treasures" Workshop (August 2024), Denver Public Schools TEAL Day (August 2024), Seal of Climate Literacy Launch Meeting (September 2024), Colorado Association of Environmental Educators annual meeting (September 2024), Western Colorado Association of Environmental Health Organizations (September 2024), and the Jefferson County Annual Love My Air Training (December 2024).
- Co-facilitated Colorado's Regional Air Monitoring and Messaging working group and expanded it to 121 participants.
- Developed new public-facing educational materials and handouts and distributed them to 64 counties and municipalities.
- Piloted a sensor loan air monitoring program and collaborated with school district teachers and students using real-time datasets.
- Attended 14 state-wide community outreach events.
- Conducted outreach to 519 new contacts on the topics of air quality and environmental justice.