



Supporting Community-Based Action Programs



Plan EJ 2014 is EPA's roadmap for integrating environmental justice into its programs and policies.



SUPPORTING COMMUNITY-BASED ACTION PROGRAMS

Implementation Plan

September 2011

Led by

Office of Solid Waste and Emergency Response,
and Regions 2, 3, and 4

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Washington, D.C. 20460



PLAN EJ 2014 AT A GLANCE

Plan EJ 2014 is the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)'s roadmap to integrating environmental justice into its programs and policies. The year marks the 20th anniversary of the signing of Executive Order 12898 on environmental justice. Plan EJ 2014 seeks to:

- Protect the environment and health in overburdened communities.
- Empower communities to take action to improve their health and environment.
- Establish partnerships with local, state, tribal, and federal governments and organizations to achieve healthy and sustainable communities.

As the EPA's overarching environmental justice strategy, Plan EJ 2014 has three major sections: Cross-Agency Focus Areas, Tools Development Areas, and Program Initiatives.

The Cross-Agency Focus Areas are:

- Incorporating Environmental Justice into Rulemaking.
- Considering Environmental Justice in Permitting.
- Advancing Environmental Justice through Compliance and Enforcement.
- Supporting Community-Based Action Programs.
- Fostering Administration-Wide Action on Environmental Justice.

The Tools Development Areas are:

- Science.
- Law.
- Information.
- Resources.



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Goals At-A-Glance

To strengthen community-based programs to engage overburdened communities and build partnerships that promote healthy, sustainable, and green communities.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

For over forty years, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)'s top priority has been protecting human health and the environment. The Agency has learned that communities must be the driver for local solutions. Consequently, EPA has implemented numerous programs that support community empowerment and provide community benefits at all levels, from basic educational and leadership development to comprehensive approaches to achieving healthy, sustainable, and green communities. These efforts include financial assistance programs such as Environmental Justice, Community Action for a Renewed Environment (CARE), Brownfields Area-Wide Planning, and Tribal grants. They also include other place-based programs such as EPA's Local Climate and Energy, Childhood Asthma, Sustainable Communities and Smart Growth, Urban Waters, Superfund, and Brownfields programs. EPA undertakes these programs in collaboration with other federal agencies, state, tribal, and local governments, and multiple stakeholders. Significantly, EPA's ten regions play a leading role in implementing these programs.

While communities continue to impress EPA with their dedication, their innovative ideas, and most importantly their ability to bring real change to their communities, we realize that far too many communities still lack the capacity to affect environmental conditions. Many minority low-income, tribal, and indigenous¹ communities continue to live in the shadows of the worst pollution and face some of the harshest effects.

The Plan EJ 2014 Supporting Community-Based Action Programs implementation plan builds upon an Agency effort to improve the effectiveness of EPA's place-based community programs through better information access, coordination, and leveraging. Through this process, EPA hopes to make "community" an organizing principle for our work. To implement this principle, EPA is currently doing the difficult foundational work of internally aligning and coordinating its programs. The resulting foundation will enable EPA, particularly its regions, to more effectively expand partnerships, build local capacity, and foster health and economic benefits in overburdened communities², as well as aligning EPA programs and investments with those of other federal agencies, state, local, and tribal governments, and other stakeholders.

¹ When these terms are used in this document, they refer to entities and individuals in the United States only.

² In Plan EJ 2014, EPA uses the term "overburdened" to describe the minority, low-income, tribal, and indigenous populations or communities in the United States that potentially experience disproportionate environmental harms and risks as a result of greater vulnerability to environmental hazards. This increased vulnerability may be attributable to an accumulation of both negative and lack of positive environmental, health, economic, or social conditions within these populations or communities.



1.1 Goals

EPA will strengthen community-based programs to engage overburdened communities and build partnerships that promote healthy, sustainable, and green communities.

To accomplish this goal, EPA will build upon and leverage Agency efforts to promote greater coordination in the use of programs and tools that support community empowerment. EPA will pursue this goal at all levels, from basic educational and leadership development to comprehensive approaches to achieving healthy, sustainable, and green communities. Through these efforts, EPA will make the Agency's resources more accessible to underserved communities, while achieving greater internal efficiency through feedback and better understanding of implementing community-based programs. This approach will result in environmental, health, and economic improvements in such communities.

1.2 Organizational Structure

The Office of Solid Waste and Emergency Response (OSWER) and regions 2, 3, and 4 are responsible for designing and implementing the Plan EJ 2014 Supporting Community-Based Action Programs focus area. They will be supported by the Office of Water (OW), the Office of Air and Radiation (OAR), the Office of Policy (OP), the Office of Enforcement and Compliance Assurance (OECA), the Office of Environmental Justice (OEJ), the Office of the Chief Financial Officer (OCFO), and Regions 1, 6, and 10.

The EPA recognizes that Supporting Community-Based Action Programs is cross-cutting in nature and requires the participation of all EPA programs and regions. This integrated One EPA approach enables the Agency to better engage and empower communities and other stakeholders, particularly those who have been historically under-represented, in order to support and advance environmental protection and foster environmental, health, and economic benefits for all communities.



2.0 IMPLEMENTATION

2.1 Strategies

EPA will employ six strategies in the Supporting Community-Based Action Programs Implementation Plan that are tied to the larger Plan EJ 2014 goals and Agency priorities.

Promoting Area-Wide Strategies for Brownfields Redevelopment and Community Revitalization

EPA is piloting an area-wide planning approach to brownfields in 23 communities nationwide, recognizing that revitalization of the area surrounding a brownfield is just as critical to the successful reuse of the property as site assessment, cleanup, and redevelopment. Each community will receive up to \$175K in grants and technical assistance. The pilot program will help further community-based partnership efforts within underserved or economically disadvantaged neighborhoods by confronting local environmental and public health challenges related to brownfields, while creating a planning framework to advance economic development and job creation.

As one example, the Ironbound Community Corporation in Newark, New Jersey, is building upon existing revitalization and redevelopment efforts to develop an area-wide plan to create sustainable recreational and mixed-use development in an area with 100 brownfields. This community is home to over 50,000 residents and contains the remnants of a once vibrant economy, anchored by a large brewery that closed in the 1970s, leaving behind contaminated sites and deteriorating infrastructure. The area is economically distressed with the poverty rate as high as 55 percent.

1. Advance environmental justice principles by building strong state and tribal partnerships through the National Environmental Performance Partnership System (NEPPS) and National Program Manager (NPM) guidance.
2. Identify scalable and replicable elements of successful Agency community-based programs and align multiple EPA programs to more fully address the needs of overburdened communities.
3. Promote an integrated One EPA presence to better engage communities in the Agency's work to protect human health and the environment.
4. Foster community-based programs modeled on the Community Action for a Renewed Environment (CARE) principles.
5. Explore how EPA funding, policies, and programs can inform or help decision-makers to maximize benefits and minimize adverse impacts from land use decision making, planning, siting, and permitting.
6. Promote equitable development opportunities for all communities.

2.2 Activities

This section describes the ten major activities EPA will undertake to implement these strategies to support community-based programs.

Strategy 1: Advance environmental justice principles by building strong state and tribal partnerships through the National Environmental Performance Partnership System (NEPPS) and National Program Manager (NPM) guidance

This effort will advance the Administrator's priorities on environmental justice and children's health through state, tribal, and grant work plans. EPA regions will work with states and tribes to advance environmental justice by improving environmental conditions and public health in overburdened communities.



EPA has established a workgroup and schedule a series of meetings to hold discussions. The workgroup will make recommendations and develop appropriate language to incorporate environmental justice principles and Title VI to better protect overburdened communities. This effort will demonstrate how the Agency can positively affect overburdened communities through its partnerships, agreements, work plans and grants that are governed by NEPPS and NPM guidance principles.

The workgroup will promote state and tribal engagement with affected communities in their discussions and decision-making processes. The workgroup has identified two key activities to address as part of its effort to advance environmental justice through NEPPS and NPM guidance:

- Activity 1: Provide recommendations that mutually support community involvement; resource and data sharing; and monitoring, tracking, and training within programs implemented through performance partnership agreements, tribal agreements, and work plans guided by NEPPS and NPM documents.
 - Address specific issues and identify barriers within current practices to incorporating environmental justice principles into NEPPS and NPM process.
 - Develop recommendations on how to best integrate environmental justice principles into state and tribal grant work plans.
 - Promote state and tribal involvement in environmental justice discussions, reviews, and decision making to incorporate environmental justice principles into the NEPPS and NPM processes.
 - Coordinate with NEPPS and NPM efforts, exploring current regional practices and lessons learned to develop language for environmental justice guidance on community-based programs for inclusion in the annual NPM and NEPPS guidance.
 - Identify Agency programs to pilot the inclusion of environmental justice principles into negotiated work plans and tribal agreements.
 - Incorporate lessons learned from pilot demonstrations of environmental justice in negotiated work plans and tribal agreements into NPM and NEPPS annual guidance.
- Activity 2: Develop language for environmental justice principles including Title VI guidance (as appropriate with all Agency grants) for inclusion in the FY 2013 NEPPS and FY 2012 NPM guidance through collaboration and discussions with Office of Congressional and Intergovernmental Relations (OCIR), Office of Civil Rights (OCR), regional offices, and states.

- Consult Agency legal resources for guidance in integrating environmental justice considerations and Title VI guidance through NEPPS and NPM guidance documents.
- Review language from Performance Partnership Agreements (PPAs), Performance Partnership Grants (PPGs), and grants of Agency and state programs being implemented under NEPPS and NPM guidance.

Strategy 2: Identify scalable and replicable elements of successful Agency community-based programs and align multiple EPA programs to more fully address the needs of overburdened communities.

EPA has achieved great success with community-based programs that help build capacity to address critical issues affecting overburdened populations. In order to help Agency community-based programs learn from experience, this workgroup will engage both headquarters and regional offices regarding their successes and lessons learned with community-based programs. The workgroup will also review Office of Policy's (OP) list of 26 existing Agency community-based programs and existing evaluations of select Agency EJ programs to identify effective programmatic elements of successful place-based programs that help to support healthy and sustainable communities.

This is part of EPA's efforts to improve the effectiveness of its community-based programs through better information access, coordination, and leveraging. This effort focuses on making "community" an organizing principle of our work, increasing community access to our programs, and improving environmental protection and the quality of life at the community level.

The workgroup has identified two key activities to improve EPA's community-based efforts to produce tangible results in overburdened communities.

- **Activity 3:** Review Agency and key outside community-based programs, and existing evaluations of select Agency programs, to identify scalable and replicable program elements which encourage place-based solutions to environmental justice issues, strengthen and promote partnerships, and support healthy and sustainable communities.
- **Activity 4:** Make recommendations on how EPA can align its community-based programs, particularly in EPA's regions to more fully address the needs of overburdened communities.



Strategy 3: Promote an integrated One EPA presence to better engage communities in the Agency's work to protect human health and the environment.

The organizational structure of EPA presents a challenge for many communities that are addressing multiple environmental issues. The reality is that most Americans see EPA as a single entity. More and more communities are seeking comprehensive environmental solutions that cut across individual media programs. We will find the best solutions when we work consistently in a unified way. What we can achieve as One EPA to assure a clean and healthy environment for all is far greater than the results of multiple uncoordinated efforts. One EPA is a mindset that values alignment – investing our time and energy to define together the outcomes we want and how to get there. It entails our persistent search for more integrated ways of reaching solutions that better protect the environment. This involves headquarters and regions working together to target areas of concerns.

The workgroup has identified the following key activity to address as part of its effort to promote a One EPA presence.

- **Activity 5:** Target three approaches to promote an integrated One EPA presence where EPA will find the best solution by working in a consistent and unified way.

EPA will identify opportunities to present an integrated One EPA presence through:

1. Conferences and listening sessions.
2. Communication and outreach to better engage communities.
3. Capacity building through workforce development and job training.

Strategy 4: Foster community-based programs modeled on Community Action for a Renewed Environment (CARE) principles.

The CARE program was developed from lessons learned from EPA community-based programs (e.g., Brownfields, Environmental Justice, Community-Based Environmental Protection, etc.) and advice from the 2004 NEJAC to “initiate community-based, collaborative, multi-media, risk reduction pilot projects.”³ The CARE principles will be applied to a One EPA approach toward testing regional approaches for joint planning and non-EPA funding of community partnerships. These partnerships will engage private industry, businesses, foundations, universities and community colleges, and other groups.

The workgroup has identified the following three key activities to address as part of its effort to foster community-based programs modeled on CARE principles:

³ National Environmental Justice Advisory Council, *Ensuring Risk Reduction in Communities with Multiple Stressors: Environmental Justice and Cumulative Risks/Impacts*, December 2004. Available at: <http://www.epa.gov/compliance/ej/resources/publications/nejac/nejac-cum-risk-rot-122104.pdf>.

- **Activity 6:** Develop a community-based partners (CBP) initiative for opportunities in underserved and environmentally overburdened neighborhoods to collaborate with federal agencies, private industry, foundations, and other institutions to implement the CARE principles.
 - In developing the CBP program, EPA will assess and implement ways by which the Agency can better act as a conduit to bring together underserved communities with federal agencies, private industry, businesses, foundations, universities, and other institutions.
- **Activity 7:** Develop a CBP program that caters to grassroots or emerging community groups with little to no organizational or technical capacity.
 - This second type of CBP program will address Agency concerns in reaching out to those community groups who have been unsuccessful in competing for government grants.
- **Activity 8:** Identify technical assistance resources, program staff, and regional staff available to aid overburdened communities with issues related to their areas of expertise.

Strategy 5: Explore how EPA funding, policies, and programs can inform or help decision makers to maximize benefits and minimize adverse impacts from land use decision making, planning, siting, and permitting.

EPA is aware of communities concerns about land use planning. To respond to these concerns, EPA will explore how our programs affect land use planning, siting, and decision making in overburdened communities. While land use planning is usually a local government responsibility, EPA can provide interested jurisdictions with information on best practices regarding policies and approaches that can benefit all community stakeholders and minimize adverse impacts.

Building upon its work with the interagency Partnership for Sustainable Communities, EPA can support a broad discussion forum to explore how interested jurisdictions might better address the issues of overburdened communities when making local land use decisions. Due to the cross-cutting nature of land use planning and its effect on communities, EPA will work collaboratively with state agencies that, subsequently, will work with communities and other stakeholders to identify issues and opportunities.

EPA has identified the following activity to implement its effort to examine land use decision making, planning, siting, and permitting in underserved and overburdened communities:

- **Activity 9:** Establish a workgroup and seek stakeholder feedback to explore ways the Agency's work intersects with land use decision making, planning, siting, and permitting.

- This workgroup will produce information discussing environmental concerns that may affect land use planning, siting, and permitting decisions. This workgroup will be comprised of select EPA offices, and state, local, and tribal governments. The workgroup will also develop a complementary training course for stakeholders with the goal of increasing awareness of land-use decision making, and its effect on communities.

Strategy 6: Promote equitable development opportunities for all communities.

EPA has a range of financing and technical assistance vehicles in place that communities might be able to tap if they had basic, understandable information about how to do so. However, ensuring equitable access to them can be a formidable challenge for communities and organizations unfamiliar with EPA's processes for both distributing and leveraging these resources. Therefore, EPA needs to foster a climate in which more equitable development opportunities can be realized, by providing tailored information on financing and related tools and strategies, including outreach to agencies whose complementary tools could be given a greater community focus.

- Activity 10: Promote equitable development opportunities.
 - This workgroup will conduct research on existing financing vehicles; prepare an analysis (that will integrate existing Office of the Chief Financial Officer (OCFO)/Environmental Financial Advisory Board (EFAB) tools, as appropriate); produce an "EPA Agency-wide Financing and Technical Assistance Vehicle: Strategies to Apply Them to Support Equitable Community Development" and post on the web; and prepare an outreach memorandum to other key agencies, to encourage application of their tools in ways that promote equitable development.

2.3 Community Engagement and Stakeholder Outreach

Community engagement and stakeholder partnership activities are integrated into the different strategies and activities of this implementation plan. Many strategies and activities of this plan resulted from community dialogues and the NEJAC advice and recommendations. In addition, we will coordinate our community outreach and stakeholder involvement efforts with OEJ.



3.0 DELIVERABLES

The table below provides a list of activities to be completed with deliverables and associated milestones.

ACTIVITIES	DELIVERABLES	MILESTONES
<p>Activity 1: Recommendations on advancing environmental justice principles in work plans and agreements.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Necessary expertise identified for developing recommendations. ▪ Recommendations on how to best integrate NEPPS principles into state, tribal, and grant work plans. ▪ Agency programs to pilot the inclusion of environmental justice into negotiated work plans and tribal agreements identified. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ June 30, 2011 ▪ September 30, 2011 ▪ September 30, 2012
<p>Activity 2: Development of appropriate language for incorporating environmental justice principles in work plans and agreements.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The Office of General Counsel (OGC) guidance on environmental justice and Title VI language. ▪ Proposed language on environmental justice including Title VI guidance for community-based (CB) programs for FY 2013 NEPPS guidance and FY 2012 NPM guidance developed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ June 30, 2011 ▪ September 30, 2012
<p>Activity 3: List of scalable and replicable elements of CB programs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Workgroup established to coordinate with OP and look at Agency and outside CB programs. ▪ List of scalable and replicable CB program elements developed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ March 31, 2011 ▪ October 28, 2011
<p>Activity 4: Recommendations on aligning Agency CB programs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Recommendations on aligning Agency CB programs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ December 31, 2011
<p>Activity 5: Target three approaches to promote an integrated One EPA presence.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Conferences and listening sessions ▪ Communication and outreach to better engage communities. ▪ Capacity building through workforce development and job training. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ July 1, 2011 ▪ July 29, 2011 ▪ December 31, 2011



<p>Activity 6: Develop and implement CBP program based on the CARE model.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Communities with the established framework in place to implement this program identified by EPA regional offices. ▪ Select communities and engage partnership opportunities. ▪ Preliminary program initiated. ▪ Lessons learned from selected communities developed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ August 2011 ▪ September 2011 ▪ June 2012
<p>Activity 7: Develop and implement CBP program for grassroots or emerging community groups.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Develop a process to select communities. ▪ Preliminary program initiated. ▪ Lessons learned from selected communities developed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ December 2011 ▪ January 2012 ▪ January 2013
<p>Activity 8: Identify resources available to underserved communities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Identify areas of need. ▪ Reach out to offices and regions to identify resources and staff. ▪ Develop a list and a system for updating the list. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ September 2011 ▪ October 2011 ▪ May 2012
<p>Activity 9: Explore how EPA funding, policies, and programs can inform and help decision makers to maximize benefits and minimize adverse effects from land use decision making, planning, siting, and permitting.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Establish a workgroup. ▪ Set up a series of meetings to begin looking at intersection of Agency work and land use planning. ▪ Develop an outreach strategy to get stakeholder feedback. ▪ Develop training course for stakeholders. ▪ Develop a tool to showcase findings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ May 2011 ▪ March 2011 ▪ June 2011 ▪ December 2011 ▪ December 2011
<p>Activity 10: Promote equitable development opportunities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Conduct research on financing vehicles. ▪ Prepare the Analysis (which will integrate existing OCFO and EFAB tools as appropriate). ▪ Produce an “EPA Agency-wide Financing and Technical Assistance Vehicle: Strategies to Apply Them to Support Equitable Community Development” and post on the web. ▪ Prepare an outreach memorandum to other key agencies, to encourage application of their tools in ways that promote equitable development. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ August 1, 2011 ▪ September 30, 2011 ▪ December 31, 2011 ▪ December 31, 2011



4.0 REPORTING

Progress reports on this implementation plan will be generated annually. The planned deliverables and milestones for each of the activities are described in Section 3.0. Each of the offices responsible will further refine and develop the activities during the process of implementation. For information, please contact Pat Carey, 202-566-0199, Carey.Pat@epa.gov.



ACRONYMS

CARE	Community Action for a Renewed Environment
CB	Community-based
CBP	Community-based partners
CSO	Combined Sewer Overflow
EFAB	Environmental Financial Advisory Board
EPA	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
FY	Fiscal Year
NEJAC	National Environmental Justice Advisory Council
NEPPS	National Environmental Performance Partnership System
NPM	National Program Management
OAR	Office of Air and Radiation
OCFO	Office of the Chief Financial Officer
OCIR	Office of Congressional and Intergovernmental Relations
OCR	Office of Civil Rights
OCSP	Office of Chemical Safety and Pollution Prevention
OECA	Office of Enforcement and Compliance Assurance
OEJ	Office of Environmental Justice
OGC	Office of General Counsel
OIA	Office Indian Affairs
OP	Office of Policy
OSWER	Office of Solid Waste and Emergency Response
OW	Office of Water
PPA	Performance Partnership Agreement
PPG	Performance Partnership Grants
SSO	Sanitary Sewer Overflow
TAB	Technical Assistance to Brownfields Communities (grant)
TASC	Technical Assistance Services for Communities (program)



Community-Based Programs, Projects, and Investments (2009-10)

1. Community Action for a Renewed Environment (Leads: OW and OAR)

OAR

2. Community-Based Childhood Asthma Program
3. Local Climate and Energy Program (Climate Showcase Communities)
4. EPA School Monitoring Initiative

OSWER

5. Brownfields – Training, Technical Assistance Grants, including Technical Assistance to Brownfields Communities (TAB) grants
6. Targeted Brownfields Assessment
7. Superfund Job Training Initiative
8. Superfund Redevelopment Initiative
9. Superfund Community Technical Assistance Grants
10. Brownfields Sustainability Pilots
11. Brownfields Assessment, Cleanup, and RLF Grants, including Brownfields Area-Wide Planning Pilots
12. Superfund Technical Assistance Services for Communities (TASC) Program
13. Environmental Workforce Development and Job Training Grants
14. Partnership for Sustainable Communities Brownfields Pilots (2010)
15. RE-Powering Feasibility Studies
16. Brownfields and Land Revitalization Technical Support Centers

OW

17. Five Star Restoration Grants Program
18. Lead in Schools Program
29. Urban Waters Initiative
20. Stormwater/Sanitary Sewer Overflow (SSO)/Combined Sewer Overflow (CSO) permits

Office of Chemical Safety and Pollution Prevention (OCSP)

21. Community-Based Lead Grant Program
22. Tribal Lead Grant Program

OP

23. Smart Growth Program

Office Indian Affairs (OIA)

24. Indian Environmental General Assistance Program

OECA

25. Environmental Justice Showcase Communities
26. Environmental Justice Small Grants Program

For more information on Plan EJ 2014, visit the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Office of Environmental Justice website at: <http://www.epa.gov/environmentaljustice/plan-ej/>