

Draft Washington Environmental Justice Principles

The following draft EJ Principles were informed by Washington communities with recognition and reflection of the Principles of Environmental Justice adopted at the First National People of Color Environmental Leadership Summit in 1991.

Purpose of environmental justice principles:

- Provide guidance for agencies on how to create & implement EJ goals.
- Assist with keeping agencies accountable to the implementation of the EJ TF recommendations.
- *What else? How could these principles advance the work of your communities, agencies, or organizations?*

Draft Model Policy Recommendation: Agencies adopt environmental justice principles to guide agency implementation of EJ Task Force recommendations such as, but not limited to: incorporating EJ and equity into agency strategic plans, creating EJ and environmental health goals, developing an agency-wide Community Engagement Plan, and having dedicated EJ staff.

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The following draft EJ Principles were informed by Washington communities with recognition and reflection of the Principles of Environmental Justice adopted at the First National People of Color Environmental Leadership Summit in 1991.

I. Achieve the highest attainable environmental quality and health outcomes for all people.

- Prioritize health of the land, humans, and animals, air, water, and marine ecosystems.
- Create sustainable systems for production, consumption, processing, and distribution.
- Recognize the ecological unity and the interdependence of all species.
- Ensure the ethical, balanced, and responsible uses of land and resources in the interest of a sustainable Washington.
- Commit to actions that ensure all children have opportunities to reach their full health and life potential.

II. Adopt a racial justice lens.

- Commit to identifying and disrupting racism embedded in your organization, policies, protocols, practices, and decision-making.
- Dismantle all forms of racism, including environmental racism, by partnering with communities to eliminate environmental and health disparities for Black people, Native and Indigenous people, and people of color.
- Develop public policy based on mutual respect and justice for all peoples, free from any form of discrimination or bias.
- Recognize a special legal and natural relationship of Native Peoples to the U.S. government through treaties, agreements, compacts, and covenants affirming sovereignty and self-determination.

III. Engage community meaningfully.

- Prioritize continuous engagement with communities who face environmental injustices and continue to be underinvested and underserved.
- Focus engagement on building long-term, trust-based relationships.
- Fully fund community engagement, community expertise, and community led research.
- ~~Collaborate with communities as equal partners in~~ Power is shared between government and communities in decision-making, needs assessment, planning, implementation, enforcement, and evaluation to find community driven solutions that are sustainable and amplify community assets.

IV. Be transparent.

- Ensure ~~your~~ participation and decision-making processes are equitable and accessible.
- Make information easily accessible and relevant to the public and ensure communications are culturally and linguistically grounded.
- Engage community in processes early and often (e.g. planning, funding, policy, evaluation).
- Provide clarity on how the community engagement process informs government processes.

V. Be accountable.

- Embed equity and the elimination of environmental and health disparities into mission, planning, goals, and measures of progress.
- Center the community in identifying the problems, solutions, and successes.