

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 EJ goals.
- *What else? How could these principles advance the work of your communities, agencies, or organizations?*

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

- Prioritize health of the land, humans, and animals.
- 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 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 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).

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.

Draft Model Policy Recommendation: Adopt environmental justice principles for policy implementation.