Promising EJ Practices

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Project prepared for the WA Department of Ecology



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- Provide project overview
- Present emerging themes
- Discuss highlighted recommendations
- Share next steps
- Receive feedback

Project Focus

Identify & recommend promising practices for integrating EJ into Ecology's work at two levels:

- 1) Overarching departmental recommendations
- 2) Recommendations specific to select agency functions:
 - Grantmaking
 - Inspections & compliance
 - Permitting
 - Policy review
 - Rulemaking

Environmental justice is the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin, or income, with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies.

Communities with EJ Concerns

May include communities of color, low income, rural, urban, veteran, tribal, indigenous, and unhoused populations.



Our Approach

- Reviewed publicly available EJ & equity work, including frameworks, toolkits, and tools
- Reviewed academic and historical literature
- Conducted over 30 semi-structured interviews with individuals leading EJ work

Key Emerging Themes

2

Sustained, visible, and demonstrated investment in and prioritization of EJ from department leadership paves a path for EJ work.

Measuring progress
on EJ requires
intentionality about
the purpose,
limitations, and
burdens of
evidence collection.

Toolkits are imperfect if used as a sole resource for EJ work, but used in concert with other efforts they can be valuable stepping stones.

Theme 1: Sustained, visible, and demonstrated investment in and prioritization of EJ from department leadership paves a path for EJ work.

Attributes associated with success:

- Agency leadership modeling
- Clear expectations and accountability
- Sustained visibility of EJ as a priority

Theme 2: Measuring progress on EJ requires intentionality about the purpose, limitations, and burdens of evidence collection.

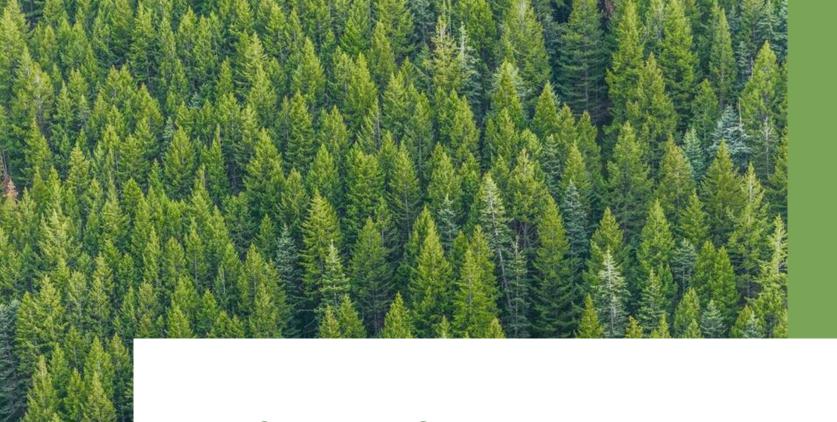
Attributes associated with success:

- Recognizing gaps in data
- Leaning on more than quantitative data
- Addressing barriers to community engagement
- Sharing data and lessons learned across agencies

Theme 3: Toolkits are imperfect if used as a sole resource for EJ work, but when used in concert with other efforts they can be valuable stepping stones.

Attributes associated with success:

- Toolkits and frameworks used together
- Adaptation to agency functions and context
- Tracking usage and measuring impact



Highlighted Recommendations





Build a community of practice around EJ work.

2

Use equity/EJ tools carefully and intentionally; measure their use and impact.

Recommendation 1: Build a community of practice around EJ work.

- Highlight and reinforce importance of EJ work
- Emphasize shared responsibility
- Reflect EJ focus in existing agency infrastructure
- Invest in sustained education about equity and EJ
- Strengthen connections with communities

Recommendation 2: Use equity/EJ tools carefully & intentionally; measure their use and impact.

Frameworks & Toolkits

- Pick a framework and a toolkit
- Tailor tools to specific agency functions
- Evaluate and adapt the process frequently
- Measure how their use affects policy outcomes

Mapping Tools

- Use the EHD Map as a screening tool
- Use as an accountability mechanism for measuring success

Next Steps

