

Report to the Washington State Governor and Legislature

Environmental Justice Task Force

Recommendations for Prioritizing EJ in Washington State Government

September 2020



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Statement of Acknowledgement (forthcoming)

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Hold for a quote

Note to TF members: Consistent and clear citations are forthcoming.

Executive Summary (forthcoming)

[Note to EJTF: We will discuss the executive summary on 9/25. Please review the list below for possible executive summary content, and come prepared to share your thoughts on what should/should not be included in the ES.]

- Purpose and responsibilities of the EJTF
- EJ definition, and possibly the EJ Principles
- All recommendations (mapping, community engagement, measureable goals, and model policies) – likely formatted into an infographic
- Brief outline of what to expect in the full report (e.g. overview of each chapter)

Acronyms

[Note to EJTF: What acronyms are missing or are unnecessary?]

| List of Common Terms/Titles and their Acronyms | |
|--|--|
| Acronym | Full Term/Title |
| BIPOC | Black, Indigenous, and People of Color |
| CIA | Cumulative Impact Analysis (e.g. the Environmental Health Disparities Map) |
| COVID-19 | Coronavirus Disease 2019, also known as 2019 novel coronavirus |
| EHD Map | Environmental Health Disparities Map |
| EJ | Environmental Justice |
| EJTF | EJ Task Force |
| EPA | Environmental Protection Agency |
| EO | Executive Order (e.g. EO 12898) |
| ESHB 1109 | Engrossed Substitute House Bill 1109 (2019-21 State Operating Budget) |
| F&C | Front and Centered (EJ organization in WA; Co-Chair of EJTF) |
| GARE | Government Alliance on Race and Equity |
| LEP | Limited English Proficiency |
| NAACP | National Association for the Advancement of Colored People |
| PCBs | Polychlorinated biphenyls, which are highly toxic industrial compounds |

| | |
|------------|-------------------------------------|
| WA | Washington (as in Washington State) |
| WTN | Washington Tracking Network |

Glossary

Forthcoming: Statement about the power that words have, and that the TF is committed to an asset-based framing throughout the report -- especially when referring to overburdened communities. This section will also include a high level summary of the discussion during the 9/11 meeting regarding which terms we are using in reference to communities experiencing EJ concerns. A glossary of EJ related terms is included in Appendix A.

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Prioritizing Environmental Justice in Washington

What is Environmental Justice?

Environmental justice (EJ) is rooted in the belief that everyone—regardless of race, ethnicity, language, income, or other demographic factors—has the right to live, learn, work, and play in a clean, safe, and healthy environment. We will know that we successfully achieved EJ when we eradicate health disparities caused by environmental hazards.

Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) communities have been, and continue to be, the primary leaders of the EJ movement in the United States. Civil Rights giants such as Cesar Chavez and Dolores Huerta created the United Farm Workers labor union in 1962 in part to fight for greater protection from toxic chemicals for farm workers. In the final moments of his life, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. marched with Black sanitation workers in Memphis to protest low wages and unsafe working conditions.

The fight for EJ caught traction in 1982 in a low-income, Black community in Warren County, North Carolina where residents and their allies protested against bringing 6,000 truckloads of soil laced with toxic polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) into their community. Six weeks of protests, including the first ever arrests over the siting of a landfill, put more than 500 people in jail in the name of EJ. The people of Warren County ultimately lost the battle in their backyards, but this injustice ignited the fight for EJ across the country. EJ activists organized and educated the nation about environmental racism throughout the 1980s and 1990s (Figure XX) leading up to President Clinton’s EJ Executive Order (EO). This activism led to further study of environmental hazards, which unveiled that pollution producing facilities were disproportionately and intentionally placed in poor communities of color.

Figure XX. Brief History of Early EJ Milestones

1987: Foundational Study

United Church of Christ's Commission for Racial Justice's *"Toxic Wastes and Race in the United States"* found that race was the single most important factor in determining where toxic waste facilities were sited in the US. Furthermore, the report clearly linked this outcome to local, state, and federal land use policies.

1991: First National People of Color Environmental Leadership Summit

Hundreds of EJ leaders from across the globe came together to network and organize. They produced two foundational EJ documents: the *"Principles of Environmental Justice"* and the *"Call to Action."*

1994: Clinton's Executive Order 12898

This EO directs federal agencies to identify and address adverse health or environmental effects of their policies and programs in low-income and BIPOC communities. Additionally, it directs agencies to prevent racial discrimination in any federally funded health or environmental programs.

Disproportionate Environmental Exposures (Forthcoming)

[Note to members: *This section is incomplete. Currently it includes just one draft case study, but it will eventually discuss more examples of EJ issues in WA, who is disproportionately experiencing environmental injustices, and the effects EJ issues have health outcomes.]*

Achieving health equity requires that WA prioritize EJ. Racially and economically segregated neighborhoods across the United States are the resulting legacy of redlining and other racist and discriminatory policies. These policies have led to the continued divestment of BIPOC neighborhoods which has contributed to the racial wealth gap¹ and has made it exceptionally difficult for BIPOC and low-income communities to access safe and healthy homes, schools, jobs, and community spaces.

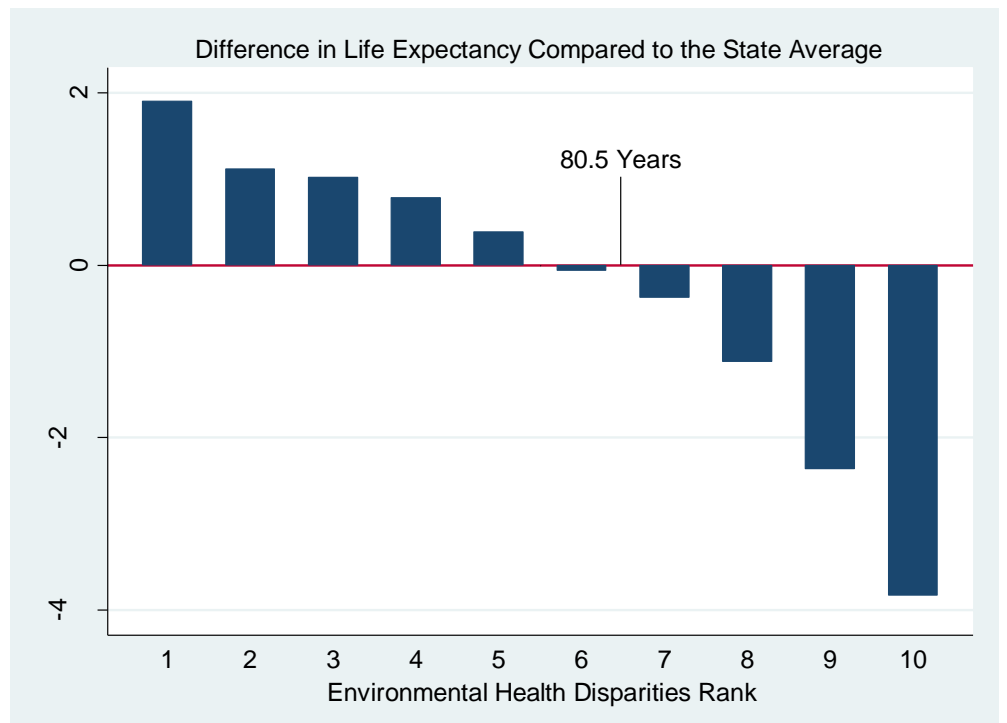
Another consequence of these divestments and underinvestments in BIPOC and low-income communities is that they became “dumping grounds” for pollution. Washington State studies reflect the findings of national EJ research that people of color and low-income people continue to be disproportionately exposed to environmental hazards, such as pollution and chemicals in their communities and homes.² In 2001 the Washington State Board of Health’s EJ report concluded that the disproportionate number of facilities such as contaminated sites, entities that produce regulated hazardous waste, incinerators, and solid waste landfills likely result in higher levels of exposures and potentially higher risk for adverse health outcomes.³ These exposures are compounded on top of other important social factors such as racism, stress, and poverty that, on their own, lead to poor health outcomes and shorter life expectancies.

¹ <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/up-front/2020/02/27/examining-the-black-white-wealth-gap/>

² UCC, 1987 and Bullard, 2007

³ Washington State Board of Health, 2001

Figure XX shows the difference in life expectancy compared to the State average using data from the Environmental Health Disparities map (EHD map). The EHD map is an interactive tool that compares communities, defined by census tracts, across our state. The map overlays environmental exposures and effects across the state on top of social vulnerabilities and sensitivities, then



ranks census tracts on a scale of increasing concern from 1 to 10. Figure XX) show a linear association between EHD rank and life expectancy, meaning that **people who are living in more polluted areas in WA are also expected to live shorter lives.** Namely, there is a 5.7 year difference in life expectancy between census tracts ranked 1 on the EHD map compared to rank 10 census tracts.

This finding is no surprise for frontline community advocates across the state.

Yakima Valley Case Study

Many communities in the Yakima Valley are overburdened by pollution, and have galvanized around EJ issues that are affecting their health and daily lives. During the EJTF’s public meeting in Yakima, a community member shared her family’s experience with contaminated well water due to high nitrate levels from neighboring farms. Several of her family members became seriously ill as a result.

Her family, out of necessity, replaced the well yet they continue to be concerned about unsafe drinking water after a severe blizzard killed over 1,800 cows in February 2019.

While some carcasses were sent to Oregon and local landfills, 950 dead cows were left to rot on two Lower Yakima Valley dairies after exhausting all other composting options, creating significant environmental health hazards. They became worried about the pathogens and endotoxins infiltrating their water supply, as well as other hazards that might cause adverse health outcomes in the region. Community advocates have been vocal about their concerns regarding what they view as insufficient monitoring of the air, water, and soil after they witnessed composting cow carcasses in their communities. Now, Lower Yakima Valley

community members are asking for increased monitoring of domestic wells for bacterial contamination.⁴

Environmental Justice Work in Washington State

[Note to members: You may choose to make a suggestion for EJ work that you'd like to include in the report. If you chose to do this, please provide corresponding language and references.]

Legislative Study

In 1993, the Honorable Senator Rosa Franklin⁵ proposed that Washington conduct an environmental equity study. The Legislature funded the Department of Ecology study in 1994 to assess whether the distribution of facilities and toxic chemical releases were distributed equally. Results for this study showed that low-income communities and communities of color were disproportionately impacted by pollution in Washington state [citation forthcoming].

Washington State Board of Health

The WA State Board of Health identified EJ as a top priority in 2000-2001, promoting the concept of “One Washington” – the goal that all residents experience the benefits of a healthy environment. The Board focused on raising awareness of EJ issues by publishing articles, giving presentations, and attending numerous community forums related to EJ. The Board also encouraged State and local agencies to incorporate EJ principles into agency practices, and in doing so, convened a short-term Interagency Workgroup on EJ that focused on creating a set of guidelines to promote EJ in government decision making for agency staff [citation forthcoming].

Washington State Department of Ecology Activities

In agreement with the WA State Board of Health’s recommendations, the Department of Ecology developed an internal EJ checklist that promotes equity by considering factors such as language and access barriers [citation forthcoming].

Washington State Department of Health Activities

In 2006, the Department of Health convened the Environmental Public Health Community Equity Workgroup to address EJ. In 2010, they committed to the “Agenda for Change”, which focused on providing equal opportunities for all residents to live in healthy environments no matter what background they come from [citations forthcoming].

Local Government Initiatives

City of Tacoma’s EJ Leaders Workgroup

In 2016, the Tacoma City Council published the Environmental Action Plan and pledged to provide guidance and investments to meet the plan’s goals, which include transportation, reducing emissions, air and local food, waste reduction, and buildings and energy [citations forthcoming].

⁴ Letter – Mendoza

⁵ Washington State Senator (D-Tacoma) from 1993 to 2010. She led State efforts addressing EJ and health equity.

City of Seattle's Office of Sustainability and Environment's EJ Committee (EJC)

The EJC is local committee that engages over 1000 residents to develop its agenda. This committee is made up of individuals deeply connected with the historically marginalized communities who disproportionately face EJ issues [citations forthcoming].

King County Equity and Social Justice Initiative and Strategic Climate Action Plan

In 2016, King County published their Equity and Social Justice Strategic Plan, which developed tools to assist in equity impact assessments, community engagement, and translation policies to guide social equity and EJ work. Additionally, King County updates its Strategic Climate Action Plan (SCAP) every 5 years, with the most recent update in 2020. The 2020 SCAP outlines the County's priorities, strategies, and commitments for climate action, with the goal to make King County more resilient, sustainable, and equitable [citations forthcoming].

Community Activism

Washington State Activism

EJ activists in Washington in the 1990s and 2000s galvanized around the fight against uranium mining in Spokane, nuclear waste in Central Washington, dairy farm waste and farm worker protections in Yakima, air pollution in Seattle's International District, and chemical contaminants polluting the Duwamish Waterway, to name a few. In 2007 advocates formed organizations such as Got Green and Puget Sound Sage who focus on civil rights and environmental health, and continue to lead many EJ efforts today. In 2014, numerous racial and economic justice organizations came together in the name of climate justice, environmental justice and stewardship, and collective power and capacity building to create a coalition that is known today as Front & Centered (F&C). F&C is made up 63 member organizations across the state to ensure an intersectional approach for justice in every stage of the decision making process. F&C is also Co-Chairing the EJTF.

NAACP Environmental and Climate Justice (EJC) Program

The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) prioritized EJ through the EJC program began in 2009 and continues to emphasizing the ways climate change, toxic facilities and contaminated water disproportionately affects low-income communities and communities of color today.

2017 Listening Sessions

In 2017, F&C worked with community organizations across Washington state to identify opportunities to listen to and understand community EJ concerns. The goal of these listening sessions were 1) to identify and prioritize community driven solutions and 2) to develop and advocate for equitable strategies. F&C focused on communities across Washington who were likely disproportionately vulnerable to cumulative environmental burdens. Specifically, communities of color, low-income households, immigrants, refugees, and linguistically isolated groups. Community listening sessions took place across the state in 11 different communities with 178 participants from July to November 2017. Communities expressed concerns about the presence of air pollution, water and soil contamination, housing, and healthy food access.

Creation of the Washington Environmental Health Disparity Map

Following the conclusion of the 2017 listening sessions, the Washington EJ Mapping Work Group was initiated by F&C in partnership with the University of Washington Department of Environmental & Occupational Health Sciences. This initial group subsequently brought together partners from the Washington State Department of Health, the Department of Ecology and the Puget Sound Clean Air Agency. This group undertook a two-year process to develop a statewide mapping tool that accurately reflects Washington's environmental health disparities. The EJ Mapping Work Group's primary goal was to develop a way to identify communities most affected by cumulative environmental health impacts, and resulted in the [Environmental Health Disparities map](#) (EHD map). Details and guidance for how to use the EHD mapping tool are provided later in this report.

The Healthy Environment for All (HEAL) Act – SB 5289 & HB 2009

Soon after the EHD Map was finalized, F&C worked with sponsors Senator Rebecca Saldaña and Representative Kristine Reeves to develop The Healthy Environment for All (HEAL) Act. The bill would have created a definition of EJ in Washington State law, required the use of EHD map in a range of agency activities including policy development, enforcement and investments, and would have created a community-agency task force to develop guidance for agencies on implementing this requirement. Furthermore, the HEAL Act would have made recommendations to the Governor, Commissioner of Public Lands, and the Legislature on how to incorporate EJ principles and policies into State law and government processes. While each bill passed their respective houses, the Legislature did not ultimately pass the bill.

However, a budget proviso was included in the 2019-2021 biennial operating budget ([ESHB 1109, section 221, subsection 48](#)) that directed the [Governor's Interagency Council on Health Disparities](#) to convene and staff the Environmental Justice Task Force (EJTF). Details on the membership, responsibilities, and processes are included later in this report.

Paving the Path towards EJ in Washington

Washington State government has steadily addressed EJ since the early 1990s. Each major EJ-focused effort⁶ prior to the EJTF has drawn similar conclusions to the EJTF with respect to the state of EJ in WA, and has developed comparable recommendations for how to achieve EJ. State government has closely studied and planned for how to embed EJ into laws, policies, programs, and processes for nearly three decades.

Now is the time to act.

Building room in government decision-making for the voices of underserved and overburdened communities is one necessary component of correcting current and historical harms that communities of color, low-income communities, and other affected populations in Washington

⁶ [Department of Ecology Study, WA State Board of Health Report, and Governor's Interagency Council on Health Disparities Report \[accurate citations forthcoming\]](#)

have endured. The Government Alliance on Race and Equity (GARE) names the responsibility that government has in reversing these injustices to eliminate environmental health disparities initiated and perpetuated by governmental actions, and to build community trust in government systems and institutions.

“From the inception of our country, government at the local, regional, state, and federal level has played a role in creating and maintaining racial inequity. A wide range of laws and policies were passed, including everything from who could vote, who could be a citizen, who could own property, who was property, where one could live, whose land was whose and more. With the Civil Rights movement, laws and policies were passed that helped to create positive changes, including making acts of discrimination illegal. However, despite progress in addressing explicit discrimination, racial inequities continue to be deep, pervasive, and persistent across the country...Institutions and structures have continued to create and perpetuate inequities, despite the lack of explicit intention. Without intentional intervention, institutions and structures will continue to perpetuate racial inequities.”⁷

Washington State cannot achieve equity without first achieving environmental justice. The Environmental Justice Task Force (EJTF) understands that the pathway to reaching an equitable Washington equity is only possible through ongoing anti-racism, environmental conservation, public health, and community engagement work. Prioritizing EJ means prioritizing the lives and livelihoods of all Washingtonians.

The goals of the EJ movement are clear:

- Equal protection and access
- Undo institutional discrimination
- Dismantle environmental racism
- Eliminate environmental health disparities

Environmental justice work looks like:

- Addressing historical sacrifice zones
- Making changes to regulations
- Enforcing existing laws that protect marginalized communities
- Assuring proper permitting and licensing for industries emitting pollution
- Allowing for overburdened communities to be a part of decision making
- Funding community organizations improve their communities

Washington state will be on the path toward EJ when:

- We **protect** all people—regardless of race, ethnicity, or income—from environmental degradation.
- We **prevent** threats to our health, communities, and environment.

⁷ GARE Racial Equity Toolkit

- We **understand** that all human lives are inextricably linked to one another and the environment in which we all live.
- We **shift the paradigm** from managing, regulating, and distributing risks as we ask, “How much harm is allowable?” to eliminating environmental burdens as we ask, “How little harm is possible?”
- We **focus our actions and resources** to eliminate the harm in overburdened communities, and where environmental health disparities are the greatest.⁸

Addressing EJ Means Addressing Current Crises

The EJTF acknowledges that we are in the midst of four concurrent global crises: COVID-19, police brutality and racial injustices, climate change, and an economic recession. An EJ framework is useful in addressing these crises, and if State government chooses to prioritize its collective resources and expertise, we can make great strides toward a more equitable and resilient Washington.

1. **COVID-19:** Recent scientific publications suggest that air pollutant exposure worsens COVID-19 symptoms and outcomes. A Harvard study concluded that, “...a small increase in long-term exposure to PM2.5 leads to a large increase in COVID-19 death rate.” Furthermore, unsafe work environments and overcrowded housing are contributing to the spread of the virus. Federal data show that there have been racial disparities in coronavirus infections and deaths nationwide. Latinos were 31% of confirmed cases compared being 13% of the total state population.⁹ We know many of our essential workers who do not have the option to stay at home during quarantine are keeping the economy afloat. Many Washingtonians are risking their lives each day to keep a roof over their heads and food on their tables. This potential life-or-death decisions are directly connected to EJ; namely, we know that many of Washington’s residents are not entitled to safe or health working conditions, and this is especially true during a pandemic. If we do not incorporate an EJ lens to the State’s COVID response and relief efforts, we can expect to see people of color and people with low-incomes experience the most adverse health and economic outcomes as a result of this pandemic.
2. **Police Brutality:** Law enforcement are more easily able to target, and over-police people of color due to the legacy of redlining that persists today in the form of racially and economically segregated communities. Police brutality is an EJ issue because entire communities continue to be stripped of their right to safe and healthy environments as long as

“Until we can all breathe in every sense of the word, we cannot achieve environmental equity.” – Kurtis Robinson, President of the Spokane Chapter of the NAACP

⁸ The Quest for Environmental Justice: Human Rights and Politics of Action. (Bullard, 2005)

⁹ <https://www.ofm.wa.gov/washington-data-research/statewide-data/washington-trends/population-changes/population-hispaniclatino-origin>

excessive force by police continues. American policing was borne out of slavery¹⁰⁻¹¹ and was meant to keep BIPOC people, and more specifically Black people, at the bottom rung of society—if they are fortunate enough to survive.¹² While there are individual cops with good intentions, there is major distrust and fear of the institution of policing in communities of color due to the violent and deadly legacy of policing in BIPOC communities that persist today.¹³ Communities of color have long dealt with environmental burdens connected to policing such as: cop cars patrolling their streets, helicopters over their roofs, incarceration in inhumane conditions, and in the most extreme cases, deadly force that have cut too many lives short.

Climate Change: Climate change is not an issue to tackle in the future, it is affecting Washingtonians now. The Quinault, whose ancestors lived and fished on their traditional land since time immemorial, are facing environmental threats due to tsunamis, storm surge, and riverine flooding. This has forced the Quinault Nation to relocate to higher ground.¹⁴ Tragically, these circumstances are not unique to the Quinault as many of Washington’s Tribal Nations are experiencing the harsh, life-changing effects of environmental degradation.¹⁵ Furthermore, climate change has created an even more dangerous wildfire season which will be especially challenging during the COVID-19 pandemic. The Washington State Department of Health (DOH) recognizes the, “...concern about the health impacts of wildfire smoke overlapping with COVID-19 because both impact respiratory and immune systems. COVID-19 restrictions limit how we can reduce our exposure to wildfire smoke.”¹⁶ Furthermore, the air quality levels in Yakima County have reached unhealthy levels this summer due to wildfires. Many farm workers have continued to work during the COVID-19 pandemic and are now breathing in smoke while wearing facemasks during their shifts to feed our state and our nation. There are several shared goals between the climate and environmental justice movements. The cumulative effects of climate change and environmental injustices are most adversely affecting BIPOC and low-income communities. As Washington continues to take climate change seriously, we need to prioritize the communities that are most impacted by pollution.

- 3. Economic Recession:** Washington State government will need to make tough budget decisions due to the steep, and likely long-lasting, economic downturn due to COVID-19. The EJTF has had several conversations about prioritizing overburdened communities through the equitable distribution of resources and investments, which is reflected in our recommendations. We are living during uncertain times where there are so many

¹⁰ <https://plsonline.eku.edu/insidelook/brief-history-slavery-and-origins-american-policing>

¹¹ <https://www.npr.org/2020/06/03/869046127/american-police>

¹² <https://newjimcrow.com/>

¹³ <https://sayevery.name/>

¹⁴ <http://www.quinaultindiannation.com/planning/projectinfo.html>

¹⁵ <https://nwtreatytribes.org/climatechange/>

¹⁶ <https://www.doh.wa.gov/CommunityandEnvironment/AirQuality/SmokeFromFires>

urgent, competing priorities, but one thing remains consistently apparent: our economy is reliant on the health of our people and the health of our environment. We are reckoning with the fact that our economy would collapse without our essential workers, many of whom do not earn livable wages and are a part of BIPOC communities who often also experience environmental injustices. Washington State government has the power to lift up those who have kept us afloat throughout this pandemic by ensuring their right to safe, clean, and healthy environments. The State budget explicitly states the government's commitment to the people, and as Washington wrestles with extreme budget shortfalls, the State government has the opportunity to reaffirm its commitment to social and racial justice in the actions it takes next.

Often we look to State agencies whose work directly touches the environment and public health, but environmental justice is clearly connected to many different facets of our government, from our education system to our police force. In order to make lasting change happen for Washington's overburdened communities, it will take the work of all State agencies to identify how they might shape the environment in which Washingtonians live, work, commune and take an active role in addressing EJ head on.

Questions for Washington State government to consider:

Meaningful engagement and government transparency are central tenets of EJ. The following questions are meant to guide State government as it continues to advance EJ in Washington.

1. How is State government increasing transparency?
2. How is State government institutionalizing and demonstrating intentionality to eliminate disparities?
3. How is State government creating standards for accountability to communities, and adhering to those standards?

The Work that Lies Ahead

It is clear throughout the EJTF work that future study is needed to fully answer these questions, however, the EJTF's recommendations are focused on creating the infrastructure across the State to begin doing the necessary anti-racism, environmental conservation, public health, and community engagement work.

The Environmental Justice Task Force

Authorizing Legislation

The Environmental Justice Task Force was created through a proviso in the State's 2019-2021 operating budget (Engrossed Substitute [House Bill 1109](#)). Section 221, subsection 48 directed the Governor's Interagency Council on Health disparities to convene and staff the EJTF and

outlined the EJTF’s membership and reporting requirements to the Governor and Legislature. In accordance with the budget proviso, this final report includes:

- Guidance for using the [Washington Environmental Health Disparity Map](#) to identify communities that are highly impacted by EJ issues with current demographic data.
- Best practices for increasing meaningful and inclusive community engagement that takes into account barriers to participation that may arise due to race, color, ethnicity, religion, income, or education level.
- Measurable goals for reducing environmental health disparities for each community in Washington state and ways in which state agencies may focus their work towards meeting those goals.
- Model policies that prioritize highly impacted communities and vulnerable populations for the purpose of reducing environmental health disparities and advancing a healthy environment for all residents.

Community Representatives

- **Co-Chair:** The Governor's Interagency Council on Health Disparities, Statewide
- **Co-Chair:** Front & Centered, Statewide
- Community to Community Development, Bellingham
- Tacoma League of Young Professionals
- Asian Pacific Islander Coalition, Spokane Chapter

Washington State Agency Representatives

- Department of Agriculture
- Department of Commerce
- Department of Ecology
- Department of Health
- Department of Natural Resources
- Department of Transportation
- Energy Facility Site Evaluation Council
- Puget Sound Partnership

Business, Labor, and Agricultural Representatives

- UAW, Local 4121 – The Union of Academic Student Employees and Postdocs at the University of Washington
- Association of Washington Businesses
- Washington State Farm Bureau

Membership

The EJTF’s authorizing legislation outlines ~~Task Force~~TF membership. The EJTF has two designated Co-Chairs. The designated Task Force Co-Chairs are the One Co-Chair being from Co-Chair of the Governor’s Interagency Council on Health Disparities, who is responsible for identifying priorities and creating recommendations for the Governor and Legislature to eliminate health disparities by race/ethnicity and gender in WA. The other Co-Chair position was designated for an and an organization representing statewide EJ issues, which was assigned to F&C.

Additionally, the EJTF includes representatives from select State agencies, a business association, an organization representing statewide agricultural interests, a labor organization, and communities across the state. The full EJTF membership list is included in Appendix XX.

Bylaws and Operating Principles

Bylaws describe the operation and management of Task Force business whereas operating principles are the values that guided the Task Force throughout our work. The operating principles were adapted from those of the Governor's Interagency Council on Health Disparities, and Task Force members thoughtfully engaged with each principle to ensure the final product is reflective of our aspirations and commitment. The EJTF's Operating Principles are included below to highlight the TF's commitments and priorities.

Environmental Justice Task Force Operating Principles, Adopted November 2019

EMBRACE EQUITY

We use equity to strive for fairness and justice to ensure that everyone has the opportunity to meet their full potential. This includes the right to live and work in a healthy environment and shape decisions that improve the health of their environments. Equity takes into account disadvantage experienced by groups.¹⁷ Equity is not equality. Equity is achievable, but requires prioritizing resources and support towards communities facing inequities. Our work prioritizes communities of color, workers, and low-income communities in both urban and rural regions of Washington. Embracing equity requires us to identify, name, and dismantle institutional racism, economic injustice, and oppression.

FOCUS ON RACISM

We are committed to promoting equity for all historically marginalized communities. We recognize that different forms of discrimination and oppression are related to each other, and we will take the intersections of various identities such as, but not limited to: the LGBTQIA+ community, women, people who are limited English proficient, people with low incomes and limited wealth, and people with disabilities into account. We also recognize that racism is ingrained in our history and deeply embedded in our institutions today, leading to the inequities we see across all sectors. We will seek to challenge and undo all forms of oppression, and are committed to making anti-racism work a primary focus.

CENTER COMMUNITY

We recognize that we can only achieve equity if the communities suffering from inequities where they live and work are at the center of our work. We acknowledge that each community knows their assets, and needs, and as such, can speak best to the viability and impact of proposed solutions. This is especially true when we build relationships with tribal governments and respect treaty rights. We strive to transparently recognize and share the power we have as representatives of our organizations, and to structure our meetings to foster meaningful, community-oriented engagement. Stakeholder and community engagement will be intentional. We will create opportunities as a Task Force, individual members, and staff to listen, learn, and

¹⁷ Governor's Interagency Council on Health Disparities. Equity Language Guide. December 2018. Accessed November 11, 2019 <
https://healthequity.wa.gov/Portals/9/Doc/Publications/Reports/EquityLanguageGuide_Final_.pdf>

seek input to guide our work. We will strive to incorporate stories of lived experience into our reports and recommendations.

COMMIT TO BOLD ACTION

Inequities exist because of racism, economic injustice, and systemic oppression that hinder opportunities for individuals and communities to thrive. Eliminating racism, economic injustice, and oppression requires bold change. We commit to using our power, privilege, and collective influence to propose changes that interrupt and dismantle historical systems of oppression. We will use our time in Task Force meetings to engage in discussions that lead to actionable recommendations. We will commit as individual Task Force members to be bold and serve as champions for equity in our respective roles.

BE VIGILANT FOR UNINTENDED CONSEQUENCES

Policy, program, and budget decisions can have adverse, unintended consequences if principles of equity are not intentionally and systematically considered. We commit to using an equity lens in the development of recommendations as a Task Force and in our decisions as individual members. We, as a government entity, seek to understand that our decisions have long-term impacts. An example of that is the Seven Generation Principle¹⁸ as standing in the present while looking back three generations to the wisdom and experience of our ancestors, thinking about issues in the current context, and planning forward for three generations for the protection of our children and the generations to come.

¹⁸ We acknowledge the Tribal and Urban Indian Pulling Together for Wellness Leadership Advisory Council and the American Indian Health Commission for Washington State for sharing this articulation of the Seven Generation Principle.

Task Force Meetings

The TF held regular public meetings throughout 2019 and 2020. The EJTF had originally planned to meet in communities across the state, but had to begin meeting virtually due to the COVID-19 statewide physical distancing mandates. In addition to the open public meetings listed in Table XX, the EJTF hosted two community listening sessions; one in Everett at the beginning of the EJTF’s work in September 2019, and another in July 2020 which was held virtually.

| Date | Location |
|--------------------|-----------------|
| September 30, 2019 | Lakewood, WA |
| November 21, 2019 | Yakima, WA |
| January 14, 2020 | Vancouver, WA |
| April 2, 2020 | Virtual |
| May 18, 2020 | Virtual |
| June 22, 2020 | Virtual |
| August 7, 2020 | Virtual |
| September 11, 2020 | Virtual |
| September 25, 2020 | Virtual |

Mapping and Community Engagement Subcommittees

The EJTF work was supported by two Subcommittees. One Subcommittee focused on developing of guidance for the EHD map (Mapping Subcommittee), and the other focused on the development of best practices related to community engagement (Community Engagement Subcommittee). Both Subcommittees were Co-Chaired by at least one Task Force member, and included a mix of Task Force members, State and local government staff, academics, EJ advocates, and community members across Washington.

The Community Engagement and Mapping Subcommittees both held monthly open public meetings from December 2019 through July 2020. Subcommittee work informed the EJTF’s final EHD map and community engagement recommendations. The Task Force and the public provided feedback and guidance to both Subcommittees during EJTF meetings, and after thoughtful and thorough consideration across several Task Force and Subcommittee meetings, the full EJTF approved Subcommittee draft recommendations.

Member Engagement

EJTF Co-Chairs and staff sought TF member feedback throughout the year. This included a variety of mediums:

- Several one-on-one meetings with each member to better understand their agency’s or organization’s perspectives, priorities, feedback, and ideas for consideration.
- Multiple opportunities for members to provide written comment on developing recommendations, report drafts, and general feedback.
- Invitations for members to join monthly Subcommittee meetings and to contribute to Subcommittee work.

Member Voting and Feedback Processes

- Due to the diversity of perspectives, priorities, and opinions represented on the EJTF, all TF decisions were made with a simple majority vote. Members had the option to include a verbal or written non-majority statement in instances where their vote did not align with the majority opinion.
- The EJTF “tentatively approved” each draft recommendation, which meant that members could continue to provide feedback on the recommendations until the formal adoption of the final report.

Community Engagement Strategy

The EJTF was supported by a Community Engagement Coordinator to bring in perspectives and important community nuances to the EJTF’s work. The following outlines the Coordinator’s process for engaging with communities.

1. Broad community engagement (6-8 weeks prior to EJTF public meeting)

Objective: Get the word out as far and wide as possible and garner interest for listening session and EJ meeting via: social media presence, email blasts, website engagement, and meeting invitations to communities.

2. Attend community-cultural-Tribal meetings (3-6 weeks before EJTF public meeting)

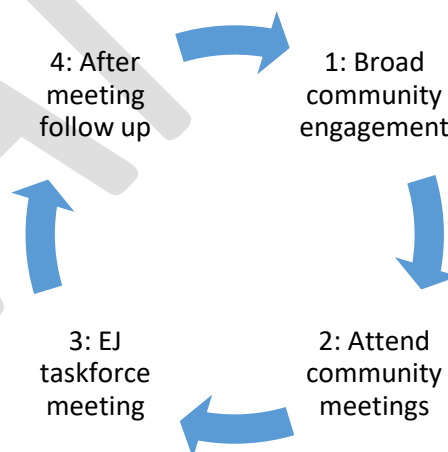
Objective: Get feedback (qualitative data) from grassroots organizations and the communities most impacted via meetings with people-leaders in the community and EJTF public meeting invitations to community representatives so they can share feedback to the EJTF.

1. EJ Task Force Meeting

Objective: Incorporate community feedback into Task Force process by providing intentional spaces throughout the meeting for community to share their stories and feedback with the Task Force, and by providing transparency that allows for communities to be informed about the Task Force process and work-to-date.

2. After meeting follow up

Figure XX. Community Engagement Process for the EJTF



Objectives: Synthesize all notes and feedback; Report back to community via all communications channels key highlights, takeaways, actions; Provide information for next opportunities to engage.

EJ Task Force Limitations (Forthcoming)

[Note to members: This section is incomplete. Below is an outline of the limitations of this process. Feel free to add to this list with corresponding language.]

- Tribes and Indigenous communities were not at the decision-making table, and more generally, the process did not include all the voices of the people we're speaking for
- Timeframe
- COVID – activation, few in-person meetings, and several other urgent priorities that had to take precedent

DRAFT

The EJTF's Environmental Justice Definition

Many EJ definitions exist and no single definition can perfectly capture expectations and goals that communities have been fighting for decades. The EJTF developed and approved a recommended statewide definition that builds upon the EPA definition by adding the outcomes we want to see in Washington state. The EJTF recommends that the definition be adopted by all Washington state agencies to identify and address current environmental injustices and to ensure future decisions and actions promote environmental justice.

EJ Definition

“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. This includes using an intersectional lens to address disproportionate environmental and health impacts by prioritizing highly impacted populations, equitably distributing resources and benefits, and eliminating harm.”

The EJTF's Environmental Justice Principles

The EJTF also developed EJ Principles to serve as an initial blueprint for a shared vision of environmental justice in Washington State. The following EJ Principles were informed by communities across the state and with recognition and reflection of the [Principles of Environmental Justice](#) adopted at the First National People of Color Environmental Leadership Summit in 1991.

Recommended use for EJ Principles: Washington State agencies and decision makers should consider these EJ Principles when creating and implementing agency-specific or enterprise-wide EJ goals. The Principles can also assist agencies in implementing many of the EJTF's recommendations.

Environmental Justice Principles – PENDING APPROVAL

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 meaningfully 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.
- Recognize that people and communities hold intersecting identities that have been subject to systemic oppression including but not limited to gender, ethnicity, and disability status.
- Focus engagement on building long-term, trust-based relationships with cultural humility.
- ~~Fully fund~~ Adequately fund opportunities for meaningful community engagement by supporting and providing opportunities for civic voice and community capacity building that builds on existing community engagement, community priorities, research, and expertise, and community led research.
- ~~Collaborate with communities as equal partners in~~ Value different “ways of knowing”¹⁹ and share power between governments, Tribal nations,²⁰ and Indigenous 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.

¹⁹ The EJTF values epistemological differences.

²⁰ The EJTF recognizes the importance of engaging meaningfully with non-federally recognized Tribes, urban Natives, and the global Indigenous diaspora.

- 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.²¹
- Center the community in identifying the problems, solutions, and successes.
- “Close the loop” with communities by sharing how their involvement shaped and informed decisions, and by gathering feedback on how the government can continue to improve service delivery and engagement.

DRAFT

²¹ Refer to the EJTF’s recommendations for creating measureable goals and embedding EJ into strategic plans for guidance.

Letter from the Community Engagement Coordinator

The EJ Task Force has been working to improve how State agencies improve community engagement. This work was divided into two distinct paths, direct community engagement and the Community Engagement Subcommittee. I led the direct community engagement piece, which meant going out into communities and working directly with members and organizations in select areas across Washington.

An important thing to note is that I led community engagement for two statewide Task Forces, which meant I was often only able to devote 50 percent of my time to the EJTF. I appreciated the beautiful, synergetic way both Task Force managers and respective Co-Chairs allowed me to work collaboratively to spend as much time as possible in select communities. We worked to hold as many consecutive public meetings across the two Task Forces in the same geographic area as possible. I was often able to spend multiple weeks in a community. First building connections and getting the word out to communities about an upcoming Task Force meeting, and then I could stay the following week in the same community for the other Task Force's engagement work.

Why is this important? It takes time to build relationships with community members and to identify marginalized communities to be able to forge strong relationships.

We held regional public and community meetings in Everett, Tacoma, Yakima and Vancouver before the COVID-19 pandemic. We had to transition to online and phone engagement due to COVID-19. This was difficult, but we were still able to hear from communities all across the state. I also participated in almost every community listening session that Front and Centered hosted, which gave me access to even more community members and organizations across the state. In each of the Task Force's public meetings, we heard public comment from a wide variety of people with different concerns. There was also space for community voice throughout EJTF meeting that enriched the Task Force process. Almost every EJTF meeting had a standing agenda item for a community engagement update that allowed me to report what I heard from people leading up to the meeting during one-on-one conversations and from people who might not have been able to attend the public meeting.

Our community engagement process served as a work group for community members and organizations to develop and conceptualize what EJ is, identify community concerns, discuss the value of the EHD map, and improve how State agencies do community engagement. The process of distilling all the information gathered at meetings across the state gave us insight into the most important community engagement goals.

I made a deliberate decision against reporting quantitative data such as, "This many people said x, and this many people said z". Quantitative methodology is business-as-usual and often does not provide transformational information about *why* communities are experiencing hardships or what solutions they have to address these hardships. I do not want to discount

quantitative information gathering, but I know that I am uniquely qualified to bring a different perspective.

My grandparents and parents were farm workers; they all got sick and never made it out of their 60s. I grew up in an agricultural community steeped in institutional racism and lived in a tough neighborhood influenced by gang culture but at the same time a neighborhood filled with cooperation, talent, love, and hope. I know when certain people hear my story; they understand what I mean by the contradiction that is “the struggle”. I share my story to articulate why I chose to use a qualitative methodology approach to this work.

In my experience, it is very difficult for non-BIPOC to understand the nuances, attitudes and pressures facing BIPOC communities. My work as the EJTF’s community engagement coordinator has been to listen, learn, and find ways to support existing work in communities across Washington State. Through conversations, community meetings and existing work groups, I worked with communities to tease out the issues that are most dire.

We learned that, “It’s about building relationships.” This may seem like an oversimplification, and I imagine the initial reaction to this statement may be, “You did all this work to come up with this obvious realization?” To this, I would respond that I could go back to these communities and connect with people today, tomorrow, or next year. I am sure that many people in these communities will be more responsive to State agencies after having a positive experience with how we engaged with communities throughout the EJTF’s work. We cannot erase hundreds of years of colonialism, racism, inequities, and violence committed by the government in a year but we can do things differently. We can make an honest effort to honor people’s pain and be vulnerable in a way that inspires connection and healing. People and agencies working together will lead to a change, one step at a time.

--Esmael Lopez, Community Engagement Coordinator

Environmental Justice Task Force Recommendations

This chapter of the report includes all EJTF recommendations for how embed EJ into State government actions and processes. This chapter has three sections:

- Section I: Environmental Health Disparities Map Recommendations and Guidance
- Section II: Community Engagement Recommendations and Guidance
- Section III: Measureable Goals and Model Policy Recommendations.

Each section in this chapter includes a brief description of the EJTF’s responsibilities with respect to that specific set of recommendations.

Environmental Health Disparities Map Recommendations and Guidance

[Note to Members: Per member feedback, the final draft will likely include an appendix with more of the technical information about the EHD map (e.g. the information that is included in the first half of the EHD map section) so that the recommendations are prioritized in the body of the report. The body of the report will include all the EHD map recommendations, guidance, and high-level information about the map.]

Section Overview

The EJTF is responsible for providing:

“Guidance for using the [Washington Environmental Health Disparities Map](#) to identify communities that are highly impacted by environmental justice issues with current demographic data.”²²

The [Environmental Health Disparities map](#) (EHD map) is a **cumulative impact mapping tool** that compares census tracts across Washington for environmental health disparities. It is part of the Washington Tracking Network (WTN) suite of tools. WTN and specifically the EHD map are useful tools for exploring geographic areas in Washington to better understand communities’ health as well as the social, economic, and environmental impacts influencing them. The EHD map provides new and rigorous insights into where public investments can be prioritized to buffer environmental health impacts on Washington’s communities. Developed jointly through community, academic, and government agency collaboration, the WTN tools and data can be used by state agencies to improve accountability, engagement, and transparency towards EJ goals. The tools may also be used by the public, community leaders, and community organizations to improve awareness of and work towards EJ solutions. The following mapping recommendations and guidance from the EJ Task Force focus on:

²² Engrossed Substitute [House Bill 1109](#), section 221, subsection 48

- How to use the EHD map to better understand who is potentially affected by agency activities
- How to guide agency resources and decisions towards eliminating environmental and health disparities, and
- How to set goals and measure progress for the distributional equity of benefits and burdens across communities.

Washington Tracking Network and the EHD Map

Washington Tracking Network

The [Washington Tracking Network](#) (WTN) is a suite of tools maintained by the Washington State Department of Health focused on making up-to-date public health data more accessible. There are over 300 measures on WTN, and data are available for download and exploration. The following tools are relevant for the proposed mapping uses and recommendations in this report:

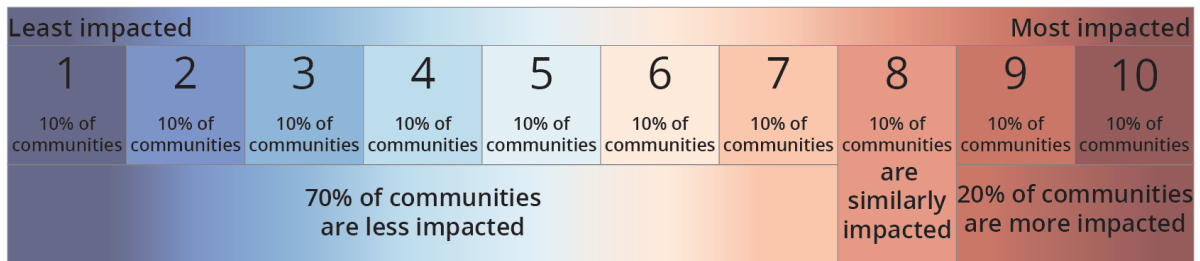
- [Query Portal](#) allows users to select data according to their interest by time period and geography (county, census tract, state). Data are available as tables, charts, or maps, and available for download. The query portal allows you to select and view multiple measures at the same time.
- [Data Dashboards](#) provide an interactive way to explore public health and environmental data. Most dashboards have filters for easily selecting the measure, geography, and timeframe of interest. Data can be viewed as a map or as trends over time and are available for download.
- [Information by Location \(IBL\)](#) is an interactive map that compares census tracts in Washington across a variety of public health and environmental measures. The tool ranks census tracts between 1 (least impacted) and 10 (most impacted). The EHD map is included on the IBL tool.
- **Environmental Health Disparities Map Measures and Rankings**

The EHD map compares census tracts across our state for environmental health disparities. Like all IBL thematic maps, the EHD map uses rankings to create a common scale to compare different issues at the census tract level. Rankings allow us to display health information while protecting confidentiality in census tracts with small populations. The rankings help to compare health and social factors that may contribute to disparities in a community. The rankings should not be interpreted as absolute values or be used to diagnose a community health issue or to label a community.

The rankings show that there is a difference between tracts, but not how great the difference is between tracts. The rankings were created using deciles (1 decile = 10%). Each decile represents about 10% of the values in the data set. Because the final composite scores are ranked by deciles, the resulting rankings shown on the map range from 1 (least impacted) to 10 (most impacted). For example, if a census tract has an EHD rank of 8, it means there are about

10% of other census tracts with a similar level of disparities, 20% have a higher level, and 70% have a lower level (see figure xx below).

Figure XX. Visual of IBL ranking system.



It is possible to explore the data that inform the overall ranking as well. Each IBL thematic map is made up of topic groups and measures. The EHD map includes 19 measures organized into four topic groupings (Table XX):

| Topic Groups | Measures |
|--|---|
| Environmental Exposures Levels of pollutants that populations come into contact with | NOx-diesel Emissions Ozone Concentration PM _{2.5} Concentration Populations near Heavy Traffic Roadways Toxic Release from Facilities |
| Environmental Effects Measures that account for adverse environmental quality generally, even when population contact with an environmental hazard is unknown or uncertain | Lead Risk from Housing Proximity to Hazardous Waste Treatment Storage, and Disposal Facilities Proximity to National Priorities List Sites (Superfund Sites) Proximity to Risk Management Plan Facilities Wastewater Discharge |
| Socioeconomic Factors Measure population characteristics that modify the pollution burden itself | Limited English No High School Diploma Poverty Race - People of Color Transportation Expense Unaffordable Housing Unemployed |
| Sensitive Populations Those who are at greater risk due to intrinsic biological vulnerability to environmental stressors | Death from Cardiovascular Disease Low Birth Weight |

Each census tract has an overall EHD rank, but also a rank for each of the four topic groups and individual data measures. For example, a census tract may have an overall EHD rank of 7, an Environmental Exposures (topic group) rank of 9, and a NOx-Diesel Emissions (measure) rank of

6. A user would then understand that while this area has some of the highest impacts for environmental exposures, NOx is probably only part of the exposures in this tract.

By exploring the EHD ranking for a census tract or group of tracts insights are gained into the factors that contribute to the overall ranking. In addition, a tract can be highly impacted in some topic groups or measures and less impacted in others. In the highlighted tract below, the Environmental Exposures topic group has a rank of 9, while the Sensitive Populations topic group has a rank of 2 (Figure XX). A user would then understand that for this census tract the environmental exposures topic group is an area of greater concern for this census tract compared to the topic group of sensitive populations.

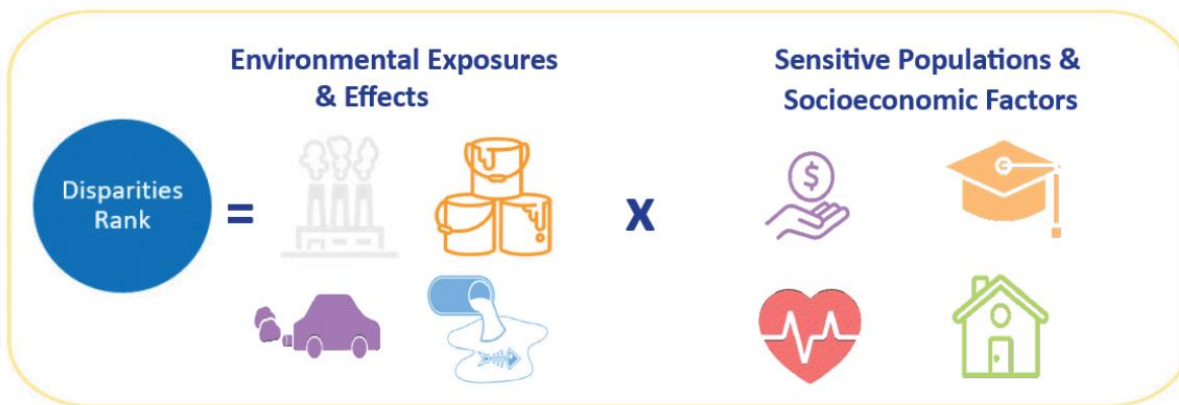
Each tract is uniquely impacted by the measures and exploring the topics and measures will give a more robust picture of how a given census tract is impacted by specific environmental health disparity measures.

Figure XX. Example of how specific measures can change a tract's rank.

EHD Model Development

The model was adapted from CalEnviroScreen—a cumulative environmental impacts assessment mapping tool developed by CalEPA and used in California to inform implementation of various state policies. It estimates a cumulative environmental health impact score for each census tract reflecting pollutant exposures and factors that affect people's vulnerability to environmental pollution. The model is based on a conceptual formula of $Risk = Threat \times Vulnerability$, where threat and vulnerability are based on several indicators (Figure XX).

Figure XX. Visualization of how the disparities rank is calculated.



*Icons shown do not represent all 19 indicators on the map.

Environmental Effects and Environmental Exposures measures comprise the threat portion of the conceptual formula. These two topics account for the pollution burden. Since there are uncertainties in the extent to which proximity to hazardous sites and pollutant sources reflects exposures to individuals in the community Environmental Exposures have a lower contribution (.5) to the overall EHD rank following a similar methodology used by CalEnviroScreen.

Sensitive Populations and Socioeconomic Factors measures comprise the vulnerability portion of the conceptual formula. These measures are proxy metrics for population characteristics. In the model, threat is multiplied by vulnerability in order to reflect the scientific literature that indicates population characteristics often modify and amplify the impact of pollution exposures on certain vulnerable populations.

The EHD map and CalEnviroScreen modelling differs from the US Environmental Protection Agency's EJSCREEN. Both CalEnviroScreen and the EHD map are cumulative environmental risk assessment tools. EJSCREEN is not a cumulative impacts model, but rather shows each environmental and demographic indicator, one at a time, and 11 EJ Indexes that combine a single environmental factor with demographic factors (low-income and minority residents).

Sensitivity Analysis

Two different sensitivity analyses, Spearman's correlation coefficients and principal component analysis, were conducted to assess and reduce bias due to data availability (Cite Min). The only highly correlated measure was linguistic isolation with race/ethnicity (Min). Although highly correlated, these indicators are not duplicative because they describe different vulnerabilities. Both linguistic isolation and race/ethnicity add important new information. The Principal Component Analysis (PCA) was used to understand how the indicators within a topic influenced the theme, or overall, ranking. The PCA revealed that five principal components account for 66.26% of the variance (Min). The components corresponded approximately to (1) pollution related to urbanized areas, (2) socioeconomic factors, (3) traffic-related pollution, (4) hazardous waste, and (5) peri-urban related pollution. PCA results indicate that there may be more focused priorities for different regions (Min). For example, diesel emissions may be the most relevant for urbanized areas, while low socioeconomic status may be most relevant for rural areas (Min).

Considerations for EHD Map Use

The WTN suite of tools and specifically the EHD map are valuable for state agency planning and programming activities. While no model fully captures reality, the EHD map is built using the best available data to Washington state using a specific scientific model where risk is comprised of threat and vulnerability to arrive at environmental health disparity rankings.

The EHD map was developed in a robust partnership of government agencies, academia, and community based organizations. Front and Centered, a statewide coalition that organizes and advocates for environmental justice, held listening sessions and community conversations to seek input into the tools development, but those sessions did not cover all communities in Washington. The EHD map is a dynamic, informative tool, but does not replace the need for thoughtful state agency engagement with impacted communities and the incorporation of additional historic disparities information into decision-making.

As a cumulative impact analysis tool, the EHD map has a number of considerations that will influence how it can and should be used. The Task Force has identified the following information for agencies to be aware of when using the EHD map to inform their decisions.

Interactive

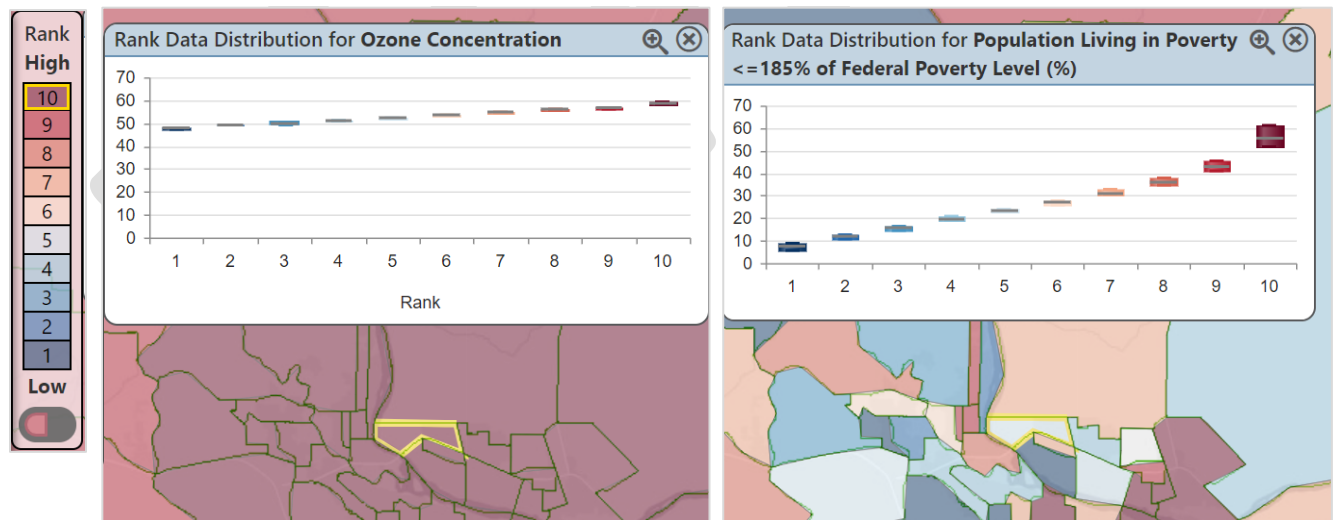
The EHD map is a robust, interactive mapping display that quickly provides a synopsis of cumulative impacts, considering environmental exposures and effects, sensitive populations, and socioeconomic factors. The resulting disparity rank is easy to understand and creates a powerful visual of where environmental health disparities exist in Washington and which measures contribute to each area's rank.

Ranking-based

The use of rankings allows disparate data sets to be displayed together, which would otherwise be difficult to display in a meaningful way. Rankings also protect sensitive health information in situations where a very limited number of individuals in an area are impacted.

The rank for each census tract indicates the order from smallest to largest value, but does not indicate how great the difference in values are for any two ranked items. This means that a user cannot draw conclusions about how large or small the disparity is between any two ranks (such as between 1 and 10, or 9 and 10). In other words, even if there is an overall reduction in environmental health disparities, relative rankings means there will always be census tracts ranked 1 through 10. It is possible to view the data distribution (see Figure XX below) among

Figure XX. EHD Map Rank Data Distribution Examples



the deciles in the EHD map. In this way a user can gain additional insights into the magnitude of the differences between census tracts.

Current, accessible, statewide

The EHD map includes statewide data, which are up-to-date, publicly accessible, and are available for download from the WTN query portal if additional analysis or access to absolute values are needed.

The map relies on a number of national data sources. These data may not reflect localized environmental health disparities and conditions. It also does not map the sum total of impacts. It is a cumulative tool, but not all encompassing. State agencies should ground-truth findings from the EHD map with qualitative data and lived experiences from engaging with communities to create a fuller picture of current conditions and needs.

Relying on available data means that there are gaps in the data and in what information the EHD map reflects. It is not representative of all threats and vulnerabilities. For example, data limitations related to Tribes and indigenous populations, statewide water quality information, rural or urban indicators, and other important considerations are not fully captured by the EHD map. In addition, Tribes were not formally consulted and business interests were not represented during the development of the EHD map.

Flexible

Overlays allow more site specific or project relevant information to be displayed, such as tribal lands boundaries, city limits, school locations, and 100-year flood zones. Since the EHD map is built on the IBL platform, Department of Health can add new data and overlay maps.

Geographic scale

Census tracts are used because they tend to provide a stable geographic unit for presenting data. A user cannot view and analyze environmental health disparities at geographic scales that are smaller than a census tract (such as a neighborhood block) or larger areas (such as multiple tracts or zip codes). The EHD map provides rankings relative to the entire state, and does not allow for comparative rankings within other geographic boundaries (such as a county). Certain agency activities or organizations whose jurisdictions are not statewide may benefit from other tools that operate at finer or more flexible geographic scales.

**Example of a Local Tool:
Port of Seattle's Equity Index Map**

The Port of Seattle developed an [Equity Index map](#) consisting of 25 indicators using the same categories and ranking scale as the EHD map. The [South King County Fund](#) is the first project to use this Index to award \$10 million between 2019 and 2023 to address noise mitigation, environmental health and sustainability in near-airport communities.

Changes over time

Since the EHD map is based on relative rankings, a census tract that increases or decreases in its ranking reflects how that census tract currently compares to others. It does not mean that disparities increased or decreased in terms of the absolute value. This distinction also means that the EHD map is useful for point-in-time comparisons, but not for tracking changes over time.

Changes over time can be tracked by exporting and analyzing the underlying data. Selecting the graph icon next to the measure within the IBL will search WTN data to see the range of data used to create the rankings. The data table can be exported and sorted to see the distribution of data.

Future Direction and Funding Needs

Additional measures identified during the development of the EHD map include asthma, noise pollution, proximity to state-specific cleanup sites, and surface water quality. At the time the map was developed, these measures were not available statewide, but they are currently under development. The EHD map will be updated as statewide data for these measures become available.

Communities have expressed interest in resilience and asset-based approaches to describing their communities. Currently, the EHD map focuses on disparities. However, future map enhancements could include resilience or asset-based indicators of environmental health such as measures of civic participation or local non-profit funding.

Finally, WTN was established, and continues to be partly funded, by a Centers of Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) grant. Funding from the CDC has steadily declined over time, and there is no dedicated funding to maintain the EHD map or expand IBL functionality. Department of Health staff time is critical to updating and enhancing the EHD map, such as recent WTN system updates for American Community Survey (ACS) data (October 2019), low birth weight data (December 2019), and cardiovascular disease data (January 2020). It is anticipated that maintenance and enhancement of the EHD map will need dedicated support and funding.

Recommendations for Agency EHD Map Use

The EHD map is a publically available tool that brings much needed attention to environmental and human health conditions statewide and reveals disparities across Washington's communities. Identifying areas where people may face the most risk and exposure to environmental pollution is a critical step towards EJ and provides a way for state agencies to transparently and consistently integrate cumulative impact considerations into activities and decisions.

[The Washington Tracking Network and the Environmental Health Disparities map have data and analyses that could support a number of agency activities. While individual agencies will determine how best to integrate these tools, agencies should consider prioritize integrating the EHD map into activities that have direct impacts on communities.](#)

The EJ Task Force suggests the following agency activity areas as important starting points:

- Community Engagement
- Grants Programs
- Capital Investment
- Policy Development
- Rulemaking

RECOMMENDATION 1: The EJTF recommends that state agencies consider four initial ways of using the WTN and EHD data and mapping tools in agency activities. These [suggestions](#) are based on using the map as it currently exists, either in its online form or as an exported map EHD layer for integration with agency data.

I. Build demographic and environmental context to guide and inform place-based activities.

Purpose: Use the WTN, including the EHD map, to learn about the intended audience and community potentially affected by an agency activity or service.

When to implement: As policies, program changes, practice improvements, and facility management decisions are being considered.

Example: In the initial planning stages of community engagement, review the EHD map and its individual measures to learn about a population's education background, availability of affordable housing, and proximity to sources of pollution. These data can help ensure outreach is accessible and reflects community concerns.

Example: A review of WTN data will also support more comprehensive and inclusive community engagement planning. Specifically, WTN data on preferred languages for non-English speaking populations will help ensure critical information reaches diverse audiences, and that federal compliance obligations for language access are met.

II. Conduct environmental justice review and analysis as routine practice for programs and projects

Purpose: Use the EHD rankings to identify highly impacted communities to assess how these areas may be positively and negatively affected by a proposed policy, program, project, or activity. If highly impacted communities will be negatively affected by a decision or activity, agency should elevate efforts to mitigate or minimize impacts, enhance public engagement, or seek alternatives to avoid potential impacts.

When to implement: As activities, policies, program changes, practice improvements, and facility management decisions are being considered.

Example: When evaluating the potential impacts of a project on communities, the agency finds that highly impacted communities will be negatively affected by a decision or activity. Agency staff elevate efforts to consider alternatives to avoid potential impacts.

III. Center environmental justice as the priority intended outcome in resource allocation decision processes

Purpose: Direct beneficial environmental activities and investments towards areas with environmental health disparities and where the environmental health benefits will be greatest.

When to implement: When allocating resources and funding across an agency's service area.

Example: An agency includes “benefits to overburdened communities” as one element in evaluating grant proposals. Grant proposals that benefit areas with EJ or cumulative impacts considerations (such as tracts ranked 9 and 10 in the EHD map) are allocated additional points in application scoring.

Example: An agency implements a ‘targeted universalism’ approach to allocating resources. Using a determination method that factors heavily for environmental health disparities, operational and capital dollars are prioritize to facilities or service area geographies that will most benefit (as identified by areas with high EHD rankings).

IV. Evaluate and account for reductions in disparities through service equity improvements

Purpose: Evaluate the distributional equity characteristics of historic, current, and projected agency activities across the agencies service area.

When to implement: Program and activity strategic planning.

Example: An agency evaluates where past and current grants have been allocated across the state relative to EHD map ranking and geographic representation (e.g., urban/rural). The service equity analysis identifies a pattern of higher investments in urban areas with low EHD rankings. The agency addresses potential barriers to grant access, by expanding notification about the grant, adjusting the application and scoring process to support first time applicants and those with limited resources, and adjusting funding-match requirements.

RECOMMENDATION 2: Use the overall EHD Map rank 9 and 10 as a starting point to identify highly impacted communities.

The EHD map is designed to identify communities who are potentially hardest hit by environmental injustices and cumulative impacts. Drawing from both federal and state experience with similar mapping tools, the EJ Task Force recommends initially identifying highly impacted populations as census tracts ranked 9 and 10 in the overall EHD map rank (not the topic group or individual data measure ranks). By using rank 9 and 10 as a starting point, agencies will have a transparent and consistent approach to identifying and prioritizing areas with environmental health disparities. As we advance this work and refine our use of the EHD map, agencies and departments will likely tailor how they identify and prioritize highly impacted communities depending on program and project needs. This recommendation should not be construed as a definitive characterization of a place or community, or as a way to label an area as an “EJ community.”

RECOMMENDATION 3: Develop technical guidance for practitioners.

The Task Force acknowledges that in order to increase the use of a cumulative impact analysis to inform agency decision-making and potentially influence environmental health disparities,

agency staff will need in-depth training and guidance on how to best use the EHD map and the supporting data. The Task Force recognizes that funding to maintain the EHD map and support training may be needed meet this recommendation.

The Department of Health (DOH) has developed a [tutorial](#) for beginner EHD map users interested in exploring the EHD map. The Task Force recommends that DOH develop an in-depth training for practitioners that would include:

- In-depth training materials for practitioners
- Opportunities for consultation by Washington Tracking Network staff with expertise in the Information by Location tool
- Detailed descriptions of how to utilize EHD map features and access the source data
- Guidance on EHD map limitations

RECOMMENDATION 4: Adopt equity tools and analyses in agency practices.

The Task Force recommends using the EHD map in conjunction with other equity-focused tools and analyses. The development and application of equity tools and analyses are rapidly expanding both in Washington and nationally. These tools, when supported with open spatial data, help inform, guide and account for progress toward environmental health disparity reduction and elimination. These equity tools and practices take many forms, such as checklists, toolkits, impact assessments, and participatory project planning. Like the EHD map, these tools have a range benefits and limitations, and their application will depend on factors such as the type of activity, potential to affect communities, and data availability. Examples of equity tools and analyses that have been adopted by other government agencies include, the GARE Racial Equity Toolkit, City of Seattle Racial Equity Toolkit, California Governor’s Office Resiliency Guidebook Equity Checklist, and City of San Antonio Budget Equity Tool.

RECOMMENDATION 5: Set environmental health disparity reduction goals and track progress towards those goals.

Achieving EJ and eliminating disparities must be part of an overall state effort to collaboratively and systematically promote and track progress towards these goals. The EJ Task Force recommends that state government entities work in partnership to set goals, integrate accountability into current tracking systems, and regularly report progress. Possible approaches to this work include:

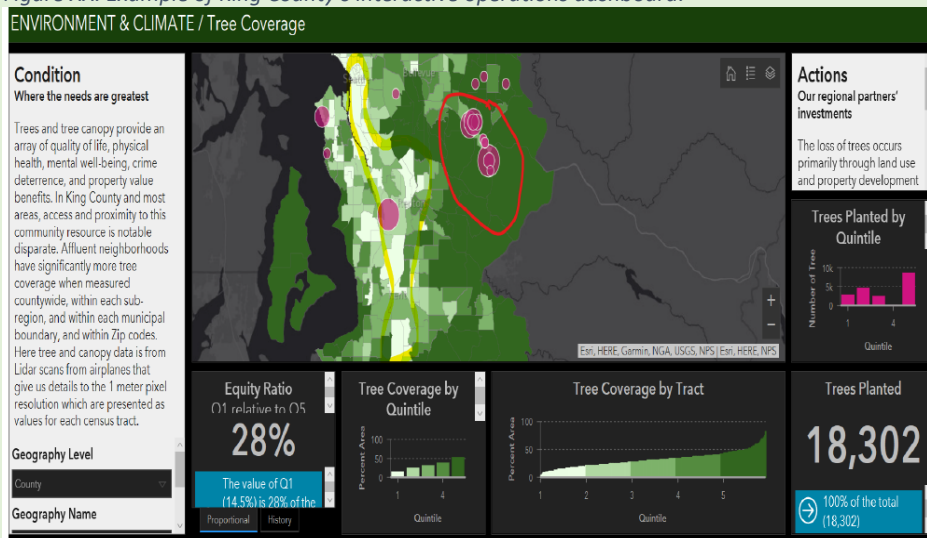
- Partner with the Governor’s Office, Commissioner of Public Lands, Office of Equity, Office of Financial Management, and others to strengthen and expand EHD map use and capacity.

- Include EHD map environmental and health disparities indicators in State performance management goals and tracking. Track and report on the degree that each state agency is using the EHD map to inform strategic planning and pro-equity decision-making.

King County Uses Mapping to Track Progress toward Equity

King County tracks and measures progress toward equity as agencies implement the [King County Equity and Social Justice Strategic Plan](#). Mapping has been a key component in this work, including an interactive operations dashboard (Figure XX) that layers program information onto community conditions over space and time. Using mapping tools to visualize historic and current service delivery has improved program and resource planning by revealing the degree of potential effect of the county’s efforts toward health disparity reduction. As a result of this work, King County is better suited to make pro-equity decisions by bringing equity actions and desired equity outcomes together in a shared measurement construct to inform learning and the ability to adaptively manage.

Figure XX. Example of King County's interactive operations dashboard.



Lessons Learned for the State to Consider

King County’s experience offers a several insights for other governments. Key ingredients include: action measurement standards, functioning data governance processes, and defined alignment between the agency actions and outcomes. Gaining leadership support is challenging because these tools expand transparency and accountability which may can be threatening. Champions are those willing to co-convene, co-design, and co-develop the work so that there is a high degree of trust and understanding. Setting data standards and establishing governance are key to sustainability and help guide the process of matching activities to intended outcomes over time and place. Building from pilot approaches and taking an iterative or scalable approach can help ensure efforts are effective. In addition, requiring equity analysis in budget requests and creating accountability forums can improve sustainability.

Opportunities for Community Use of the EHD Map

The Washington Tracking Network and the Environmental Health Disparities map are free publically available resources. While State agencies are the focus for this report’s recommendations, WTN and the EHD map are a valuable resource for communities and

organizations across Washington State. Below are examples of how the public might use the EHD map; many of which were identified during community meetings as part of the EJTF process.

Community Information and Assessment

The public can use the EHD map to learn more about the current environmental and social conditions in their communities and workplaces. Washington is making progress toward EJ when communities and workers have access to information about the possible environmental risks they face, especially considering many dire EJ issues are not easily detectable.

Community Projects and Activism

Community organizations and the public can use the EHD map, and its underlying data to inform and leverage their advocacy work. For example: The EHD map could help build community visioning projects to inform local planning processes; EHD disparity ranks and data can enhance communication with decision makers about community EJ concerns and support requests for increased enforcement, monitoring, and environmental cleanup; and community based organizations can use the EHD map to identify areas of need.

Education

Educators can use the EHD tool to inform their EJ, environmental, anti-racism, health, or any community-based curricula. The EHD map is appropriate for students of all ages to foster their own curiosity about the environment around them, and to inform their education and research in a school setting.

Community Engagement Recommendations and Guidance

Section Overview

The EJTF is responsible for providing:

“Best practices for increasing meaningful and inclusive community engagement that takes into account barriers to participation that may arise due to race, color, ethnicity, religion, income, or education level.”²³

This section of the report has ten recommendations for increasing meaningful and inclusive community engagement, and includes supporting guidance for how to implement these recommendations.

²³ Engrossed Substitute House Bill 1109, section 221, subsection 48

Community Engagement and Environmental Justice

All agencies can embed EJ into their missions by prioritizing and investing in meaningful community engagement, especially in [areas of critical concern across Washington](#).²⁴ One of the defining documents of the EJ movement is the *17 Principles of Environmental Justice*, which were drafted and adopted by the delegates to the First National People of Color Environmental Leadership Summit in 1991. Principle #7 explicitly states the need for community engagement to achieve environmental justice.

EJ Principle #7: “Environmental justice demands the right to participate as equal partners at every level of decision-making, including needs assessment, planning, implementation, enforcement and evaluation.”²⁵

The foundation of meaningful community engagement must be an evaluation of who is negatively impacted and who is benefitted by any agency decisions meant to benefit the public as a whole. This foundation would help surpass the common practice of starting with requirements outlined in law or policy. This guidance outlines and helps agencies identify common agency activities that do not typically involve, but can significantly impact, the public.

Why Community Engagement is Crucial

The governing structures of the United States were designed to elevate the rights and access to its resources of some people at the expense of the rights and access of others. These weighted structures led to the systemic inequity that the EJ movement responds to. They have been reaffirmed across history, often in response to efforts to move toward more equitable laws and practices, and are widely maintained today.

The *Community Engagement Plan Guidance* developed by the Task Force’s Community Engagement Subcommittee in Appendix XX is grounded in the position that these systems cannot change without the direct involvement of the communities who have borne the weight of systemic disparities, and that such involvement is rarely supported by Washington State’s government. The EJTF and the Community Engagement Subcommittee recognize the critical value of repairing relationships and building trust with communities.

Repairing relationships and building trust between government and those members of the public harmed by environmental injustice is central to this guidance. A focus on trust-building in this context sends skills like cultural humility and emotionally intelligent communication to the forefront, and we see more ties to community organizing than to conventional communications-oriented information sharing.

²⁴ As an initial step, agencies can consider prioritizing investing in community engagement in Census tracts ranked nine and ten on the Environmental Health Disparities Map.

²⁵ <https://www.nrdc.org/sites/default/files/ej-principles.pdf>

Truly meaningful community engagement builds more sustainable agency programs and decisions, and it increases community understanding of agency decisions and transparency and trust in government actions. State agencies have a responsibility to create community engagement opportunities that allow all of Washington’s diverse communities “equal access to the decision-making process to have a healthy environment in which people live, learn, and work.”²⁶ Without it, as history demonstrates,²⁷ entire populations are systematically left out, curbing their ability to effectively advocate for their own health and safety. Furthermore, many agencies are directed by policy and federal, state, and local laws to implement meaningful community engagement and participation.

Key Recommendations for Addressing Structural Barriers to Community Engagement

These recommendations address common barriers to meaningful community engagement, based on a list developed by the Task Force’s Community Engagement Subcommittee, with input from members of the public. See Appendix C of the *Community Engagement Plan Guidance*.

1. Each agency develops a community engagement plan, which must include the elements outlined in our *Community Engagement Plan Guidance (Appendix XX)*.
2. Agencies evaluate new and existing services and programs for community engagement using a systematic process to determine outreach goals. These evaluations weigh the goals of the service or program, potential for its impact on the public, its importance to the community/ies being impacted, and the makeup of the impacted community. These evaluations determine:
 - The agency’s level of engagement for the project.
 - The potential for outcomes the public can see from their engagement in the process.

Agencies then communicate both determinations in their outreach process. Example evaluation tools are attached in Appendix A and B of the *Community Engagement Plan Guidance*.

Further guidance: Section 2.01 in Community Engagement Plan Guidance (Appendix XX)

3. When planning outreach activities, agencies use screening tools that integrate spatial, demographic, and health disparities data to understand the nature and needs of the audience—people who may be impacted by agency decisions. such as the Task Force’s

²⁶ <https://www.epa.gov/environmentaljustice>

²⁷ <https://archive.epa.gov/ncer/ej/web/pdf/breender.pdf>

recommended use of the Environmental Health Disparities Map to build the demographic and environmental context to guide and inform place-based activities is a key example. This initial screening is followed by further research with local people ~~or~~ and organizations as needed.

Further guidance: Section 2.07 in Community Engagement Plan Guidance (Appendix XX)

4. When agency decisions have potential to significantly impact a specific community (as determined by the evaluation described above in item 2), agencies should work with representatives of that community to identify appropriate outreach and communication methods. Significant impact includes potential changes to critical determinants of health such as legal rights, finances, housing, and safety. It is particularly valuable to include community members in oversight, advisory, program planning, and other processes. Washington's Department of Health community health worker program serves as one model.

Further guidance: Sections 2.03, 2.04, and 2.09 in Community Engagement Plan Guidance (Appendix XX)

5. When agencies ask for representation from a specific geographic or cultural community, the agencies actively support such representation in recognition of the costs of engagement borne by community members where allowable by State law and agency policy possible and allowable. Doing so would reduce barriers to engagement presented by trading time and/or money to learn about and engage in the agency's process, such as taking time from work, finding child care, and arranging for transportation.

Further guidance: Sections 2.02, 2.04, and 2.12 in Community Engagement Plan Guidance (Appendix XX)

6. Agencies-In alignment with the Office of Financial Management's Model Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Policy, agencies should use equity-focused hiring practices and inclusion-focused professional development to build and support an internal staff that represents the cultural and racial makeup of the population they serve.

Further guidance: Sections 1.07, 2.05 in Community Engagement Plan Guidance (Appendix XX)

7. When an agency's program or service has potential to impact Tribal and/or Indigenous people or their resources, the agency includes those groups in their community engagement work, using tailored approaches based on the needs of the tribe. Note that community engagement is distinct from and not a substitute for formal government-to-government or cultural resource consultation.

Further guidance: Section 2.03 in Community Engagement Plan Guidance (Appendix XX)

8. Agencies conduct compliance reviews of ~~integrate compliance with~~ existing laws and policies that guide community engagement, and where gaps exist, ensure compliance for the following laws ~~into the budgets of~~ agency services and programs budgets:
- Title VI of the Civil Rights Act, prohibiting discrimination based on race, color, or national origin and requiring meaningful access to people with limited English proficiency
 - Executive Order 05-03 requiring Plain Talk when communicating with the public
 - Executive Order 13166, requiring meaningful access to agency programs and services for people with limited English proficiency

Further guidance: Section 1.05 in Community Engagement Plan Guidance (Appendix XX)

9. **[Note to Members]**: this recommendation was moved from the model policy recommendations because it focuses on community engagement.]

Change State laws that restrict agencies from purchasing goods and services, such as child care and food, which support broad community participation. ~~certain goods and services that often become barriers to meaningful engagement with diverse communities.~~

Further guidance: Barriers to Community Engagement Appendix C within Community Engagement Plan Guidance (Appendix XX) for a more detailed list of barriers to meaningful community engagement.

More information supporting this recommendation:

Common barriers to meaningful community engagement include lack of: compensation for community time and expertise, food during community meetings, transportation to meeting spaces, childcare, language access services, and internet access for virtual meetings. Additionally, the State Legislature should consider ~~compensation for time, providing food,~~ providing assistance to increase access to accessing virtual meetings, especially for rural communities that have limited broadband services. There should be as much cross-agency coordination as possible to create common “best practices” for how and when to offer these services. Forums for this coordination could be the proposed permanent EJ workgroup or the Office of Equity. Changes considered and developed should be done in compliance with State guidelines on ethical community engagement by the Department of Enterprise Services and the state Executive Ethics Board.

Significant additional work is needed to comprehensively identify the legal restrictions and develop best practices to remove these barriers. Some initial RCWs to consider amending for more effective community engagement include:

- **RCW 43.03.050:** Subsistence, compensation, lodging and refreshment, and per diem allowance for officials, employees, and members of boards, commissions, councils or committees.
 - Suggested amendments: Compensation or reimbursement for participation on boards, commissions, councils, and committees should be allowed for those with low incomes. Providing food and services, such as daycare, to attendees of public meetings should also be allowed when adequate funds are available and deemed appropriate based on the type of engagement required.
- **RCW 39.26.040:** Prohibition on payments to board, commission, council, or committee members.
 - Suggested amendment: Using agency discretion, Allow payment for service on boards, commissions, councils, and committees for those with low incomes. Reducing barriers for community participation will allow a broader cross-section of people to share their expertise and lived experiences in shaping policies and other government processes to better reflect the needs and desires of communities that may not otherwise get a seat at the decision making table.

Further guidance: Sections 1.07, 2.05 in Community Engagement Plan Guidance (Appendix XX)

10. **[Note to TF Members:** this recommendation was moved from the model policy recommendations because it focuses on community engagement. Furthermore, this recommendation was revised after meeting with OMWBE leadership].

~~The Task Force recommends that agencies, i~~n cooperation with the Governor's Subcabinet on Business Diversity and the led by the Office of Minority and Women's Business Enterprises (OMWBE), agencies should increase contracting diversity by proactively engaging and contracting with local organizations that are community-based, community-rooted, and community-led to improve community health outcomes and eliminate environmental injustices across Washington state.

More information supporting this recommendation:

- The EJTF recognizes that, "Those closest to the problem are closest to the solutions but furthest from resources and power."²⁸ Implement this recommendation in specific instances in which community expertise and understanding of community experiences is needed, such as: development of strategic plans, policy development, community

²⁸ <https://theappeal.org/those-closest-to-the-problem-are-closest-to-the-solution-555e04317b79/>

engagement, or any other process that would benefit from the expertise held by local organizations and the communities they work with. Agencies can consider contracting with non-profit organizations, small for-profit businesses, [OMWBE-certified businesses](#), Tribal governments or entities located in Washington state. Government actions and processes, having benefited from direct input by representatives from impacted communities, would be designed and targeted to more positively address community concerns. Agencies have tended to contract with ~~professional~~, highly paid consultants who, in turn, reach out to community organizations who are asked to provide their time and expertise without compensation. This proposal is intended to offer a more direct path for agencies to hear directly from the relevant stakeholders.

- Agencies and the Legislature should work with the [OMWBE](#) and the Department of Enterprise Services ~~and the Office of Financial Management~~ to remove barriers to the contracting and procurement processes for community organizations, especially smaller or understaffed organizations, with the goal of including more trusted community organizations listed on the State's Qualified Master Contract List. Furthermore, contracting processes should be re-evaluated to ensure that small entities and organizations are seriously considered.
- Agencies should work to eliminate their contracting disparities outlined in this [2019 Washington State Disparities Study](#) for the State of WA and in their [annual diversity fiscal reports](#) by implementing the [recommended](#) policies, procedures, training, and implementation plans for individual agencies outlined by the [Governor's Subcabinet on Business Diversity](#). Furthermore, agencies can prioritize the action steps outlined in their individual [Inclusion Plans](#) for increased supplier diversity.
- [Recommendations from the 2019 WA State Disparity Study are forthcoming,²⁹ and include policy recommendations such as: increasing access to State contracting information, lengthening solicitation times, raising the direct buy limits, and reviewing contract sizes and scopes.³⁰](#)
- The Department of Health's Emergency Language and Outreach Services Contracts serves as a contracting model moving forward in this work.
- In determining the appropriate organization to contract with, considerations must be made in understanding both how the organization being considered for a contract is representative or able to engage in outreach to a specific aspect of a diverse community, and also their ability to engage a full range of community stakeholders.
- Services contracted for should take into consideration the need for a variety of knowledge and expertise types. Input is needed not just from those with government, business, or academic expertise but all community expertise and expertise from lived and intersectional experiences.
- Agencies can use the *Community Engagement Plan Guidance* to help identify community-based organizations and scale up or down agency approaches to working with communities based on the task at hand.

²⁹ [Expected publication date of November 2020](#)

³⁰ [Meeting with OMWBE leadership.](#)

- The restrictions imposed by Initiative-200 (I-200), now in place as RCW 49.60.400, may will serve as a barrier to meeting the goals of this recommendation. As such, repeal of these restrictions should be considered by the Legislature in order to update our State’s policies and ensuring diversity, equity, and inclusion in government contracts, employment, and schools. In narrow circumstances, an agency may be able to tailor preferences based on race or sex.³¹

DRAFT

³¹ <https://www.atg.wa.gov/ago-opinions/use-race-or-sex-conscious-measures-or-preferences-remedy-discrimination-state>

Measureable Goals and Model Policy Recommendations

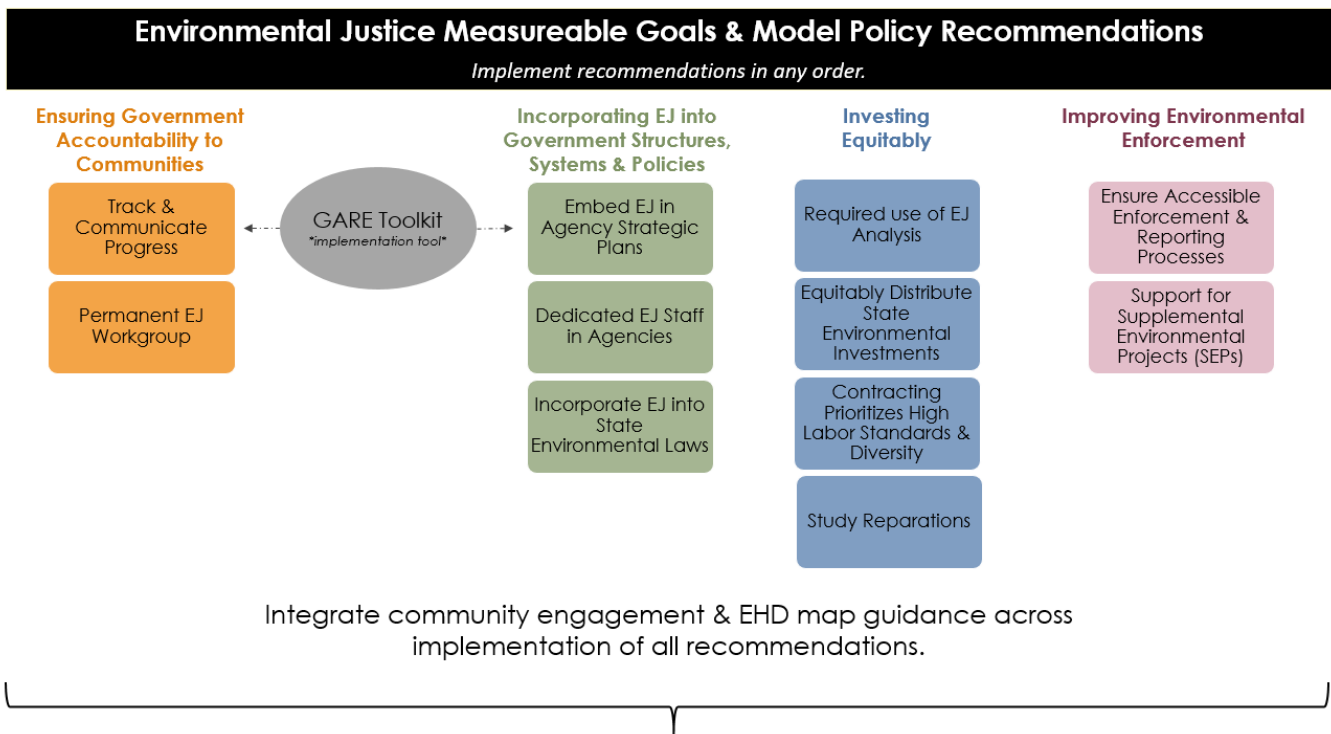
Section Overview

The Task Force is responsible for providing:

- **Measureable goals recommendations:** *“Measurable goals for reducing environmental health disparities for each community in Washington state and ways in which state agencies may focus their work towards meeting those goals.”*
- **Model policy recommendations:** *“Model policies that prioritize highly impacted communities and vulnerable populations for the purpose of reducing environmental health disparities and advancing a healthy environment for all residents.”³²*

This chapter of the EJTF report includes one measureable goal recommendation and ten model policy recommendations. These recommendations are further organized into four categories that name the intended outcomes the EJTF would like to see enhanced in State government:

- Ensuring Government Accountability to Communities
- Incorporating EJ into Government Structures, Systems, and Policies
- Investing Equitably
- Improving Environmental Enforcement



³² [Engrossed Substitute House Bill 1109, section 221, subsection 48](#)

The EJTF recognizes the need to improve coordination among State agencies to build a strong, well-maintained, and adequately funded infrastructure that will achieve EJ in Washington by addressing the needs of overburdened communities across the state. These measureable goal and model policy recommendations are focused on building this infrastructure so agencies can efficiently and effectively address EJ issues across Washington. Additionally, the EJTF recommends integrating the EHD map and community engagement guidance and recommendations across implementation of all measureable goals and model policy recommendations. The EHD map serves as an initial EJ analysis to assist with agency decision making, and community voice is essential to all EJ work.

Each of the following recommendations includes “Strategies and Considerations for Implementation” that reflect the EJTF’s conversations about the complexities and nuances that accompany each recommendation. These strategies and considerations were also informed by communities, stakeholders, and agencies not represented on the EJTF. Further study is needed to implement any of these recommendations, as the strategies and considerations are not meant to be comprehensive. Rather, they call attention to many of the most urgent and crucial elements of a recommendation, provide context about the purpose and rationale of a recommendation, and in some cases, provide resources and existing examples of related work.

Overarching Considerations:

The following considerations apply to all measureable goal and model policy recommendations, and are listed here to avoid repetition:

- In many instances, agencies will need additional funding, staff support, and leadership buy-in to adequately and effectively implement a recommendation.
- Select recommendations may require legislative action to support implementation. Further study is needed to determine if these same recommendations can be implemented through administrative action, legislation, or a combination of both.
- The EJTF recognizes that agency compliance with legal requirements and federal and State guidelines take precedent during recommendation implementation.
- Recommendations can be implemented in any order, although certain recommendations (e.g. “Permanent EJ workgroup” and “Embedding EJ in Agency Strategic Plans”) are meant to build a strong foundation for continued EJ work, and may bolster the implementation efforts of other recommendations.

Operationalizing EJ Task Force Measurable Goals and Model Policy Recommendations: A Primer on the GARE Toolkit

Overview and Purpose

The EJTF recommendations guide state agencies on how to incorporate EJ into the core of how they do business by embedding EJ into agency strategic plans, developing systems to track, evaluate, and communicate progress in advancing equity and EJ through agency operations and programs.

Washington State agencies can learn directly from the work of the Governmental Alliance for Racial Equity (GARE). GARE is an organization that works with governments across the U.S. to incorporate racial equity analyses and goals into government operations. GARE has published multiple tools and resources to support governments, including the Racial Equity Toolkit, which can be applied at the programmatic level and can be scaled up to meet agency-wide priorities.

[The task force recommendations that agencies utilize the GARE Racial Equity Toolkit Appendix XX provides a user overview of the GARE Racial Equity Toolkit, with specific guidance and tips for state agency staff seeking to apply this toolkit as a first step towards implementing the aforementioned Task Force recommendations. \(See Appendix XX\).](#) Figure XX also illuminates connections between the GARE toolkit and Task Force recommendations pertaining to community engagement best practices and use of the Environmental Health Disparities (EHD) map.

Figure XX. GARE Racial Equity Toolkit is adapted to help with the implementation of these two EJ Task Force recommendations.

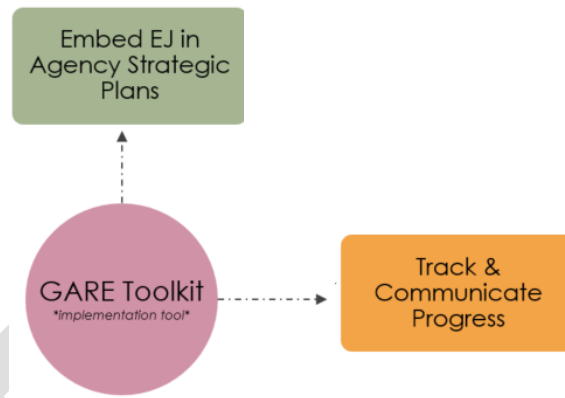
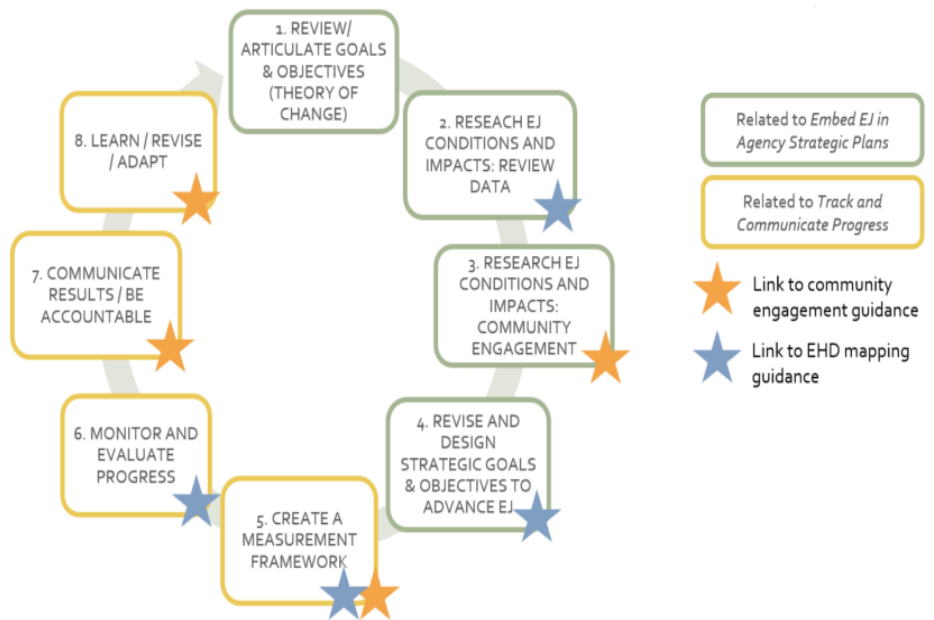


Figure XX. Embedding EJ: 8-Step Process (adapted from GARE racial equity)



Recommendations for Government Accountability to Communities

Track and Communicate Progress – Measureable Goals Recommendation

Recommendation 1: In partnership with communities, agencies should create a standard method to develop, track, evaluate, and publish environmental justice and health goals focused on pollution reduction, eliminating environmental health disparities, and improving community engagement.

Strategies and Considerations for Implementation:

- **Engage with communities throughout the goal development, tracking, and development processes:** Agencies should work with communities experiencing EJ issues, including Tribes and Indigenous communities, to identify appropriate measures and baseline indicators for tracking disparate impacts and progress towards reducing disparities. Refer to the *Community Engagement Key Recommendations* and *Community Engagement Plan Guidance* included in this report. Consider contracting with community-led organizations and partnering with academic institutions to support goal development, tracking, and evaluation.
- **Use existing equity toolkits for goal development:** Use *GARE Framework Guidance* included in Appendix XX to help with creating agency-specific and program-specific, theories of change, metrics, and indicators.
- **Create enterprise-wide and agency-specific goals:** While goals should be enterprise-wide to encourage the interagency coordination necessary to address EJ and environmental health disparities, agencies should also use statewide EJ and environmental health goals to inform agency-specific EJ and environmental health goals.
- **Create outcome and process measures:** Eliminating environmental health disparities and reducing pollution are outcome measures, whereas community engagement goals will need a set of process metrics that hold State agencies accountable for increasing meaningful engagement with communities.
- **Strive for absolute numbers:** The EHD map's relative rankings across census tracts allows the user to visualize which areas of the state are most overburdened by specific EJ issues. Relative rankings also add a layer of complexity for the user to track changes over time. In order to clearly assess progress over time, State government should strive to develop environmental justice and health goals that use absolute numbers.
- **Leverage Permanent EJ Workgroup to track and evaluate goals:** If stood up, the permanent EJ workgroup can assist with creating, tracking, and evaluating these goals with support from Results Washington, the Office of Financial Management, the Office of Equity, and other entities that specialize in and maintain public data dashboards. Alternatively, a third-party reviewer or agencies could review reports and track and evaluate progress toward EJ goals. Examples of existing related work in State government:

- Results Washington can serve as a useful partner in tracking EJ outcome measures.
- Refer to [Puget Sound Partnership's Vital Signs](#) for possible EJ measures.
- [Office of Financial Management's data dashboard](#) could be used to track agencies-specific EJ activity (e.g. [Workforce Performance Measures Dashboard](#)).
- WSDOT has accountability measures in its [Gray Notebook](#).
- **Publishing progress toward goals:** Agencies should regularly report their progress and contribution toward enterprise-wide EJ and environmental health goals. If stood up, the permanent EJ workgroup can be responsible for ensuring that the public is regularly updated on progress toward achieving EJ and environmental health goals.
- **Addressing data gaps:** Quantitative metrics that are standardized across regions will be limited to what is available, what can be measured, and where it is being measured. To address data gaps, collect additional local data and engage with communities for local knowledge to learn more about current and past conditions and better understand community-based solutions to EJ and environmental issues.
- **Increase access to environmental data: Increase government transparency and accountability through improving access to environmental data by providing technical assistance and tools, such as the work supported by Environmental Data and Governance Initiative (EDGI), an organization that promotes environmental data justice.**
- **Community partnerships:** Developing measureable goals in partnership with communities will ensure that government is tracking the metrics communities care about.

Permanent Environmental Justice Workgroup – Model Policy Recommendation

Recommendation 2: Convene a permanent environmental justice interagency workgroup of relevant agency staff that includes members representing overburdened communities.

Strategies and Considerations for Implementation:

- **Granting authority:** The Washington State Legislature should consider convening a workgroup that can serve as a forum for collaboration and creation of accountability structures. Possible workgroup responsibility examples include: review agency-specific community engagement and strategic plans, track and publish progress toward achieving EJ goals, and advise State staff on integrating the EJTF's EJ Principles into state agency actions.
- **Shared leadership and resources:** Communities and agencies share workgroup leadership responsibilities and resources. Agencies defer to community leadership as appropriate.
- **Build on previous and ongoing work:** Build on existing EJ, equity, and community engagement work in Washington state such as partnering with State Boards and Commissions, the Office of Equity, and the Governor's Interagency Council on Health Disparities to achieve EJ in Washington.

- **State EJ staff to serve:** Dedicated State agency EJ staff to serve on workgroup, or staff deemed appropriate by the agency leadership (see: “Dedicated EJ staff in State agencies” recommendation).
- **Coordinate to address existing EJ concerns:** Currently, there is no interagency mechanism in State government to address EJ-specific community concerns. EJ issues are often left unheard and inadequately addressed such as, but not limited to: environmental clean-ups across Washington, farm workers’ rights (especially in light of COVID-19), wildfire hazards, workplace hazards and exposures, addressing concerns related to existing or possible new sources of pollution in communities, and supporting community capacity building related to EJ issues.
- **Proactively advance EJ and implement existing recommendations:** Currently, there is no other interagency body working to proactively advance EJ. A permanent EJ workgroup would lead to increased interagency coordination and alignment with respect to EJ-focused investments. While there has been interagency EJ work in the past, all such groups have been temporary and have not had the authority or opportunity to implement existing EJ recommendations.
- **Create an EJ community of practice:** A permanent workgroup would lend itself to a community of practice for all agency EJ staff, and has the potential to bring in innovative ideas and solutions from Commissions, Boards, communities, and academic institutions.
- **Demonstrate commitment to overburdened communities:** This workgroup would prioritize communities with cumulative environmental & health burdens, and sensitive populations in its community engagement and service delivery approach.
- **Select appropriate agencies and entities to serve:** State leadership to determine which agencies or entities should serve in the permanent workgroup, for example the Governor’s [Executive Cabinet](#), the Department of Natural Resources, the Energy Facility Site Evaluation Council, the Interagency Council on Health Disparities, Ethnic Commissions and any other agency or entity deemed appropriate by the Governor.

Recommendations for Government Structures, Systems, and Policies Incorporating Environmental Justice

Embed Environmental Justice in Strategic Plans – Model Policy Recommendation

Recommendation 3: Agencies shall make achieving EJ part of its strategic plan ~~(in alignment with Federal EO 12898)~~ in order to integrate EJ into agency protocols and processes.

Strategies and Considerations for Implementation:

- **EJ Staff to implement:** Dedicated EJ staff to assist with implementing EJ and equity components of the agency’s strategic plan (see: “Dedicated EJ staff in State agencies” recommendation).
- **Adapted GARE Toolkit:** Agencies to use the GARE Toolkit adapted specifically for this recommendation to aid with strategic plan development and programmatic theories of change (see: “GARE Toolkit” in Appendix XX).
- **Align with Federal EJ Executive Order:** Federal EO 12898 should be considered the baseline standard for how agencies can approach their EJ work.

Dedicated Environmental Justice Staff in State Agencies – Model Policy Recommendation

Recommendation 4: Agencies will have at least one staff position dedicated to integrating environmental justice principles specifically, and equity more broadly, into agency actions.

Strategies and Considerations for Implementation:

- **Suggested EJ Staff qualifications and principle responsibilities:** Qualified EJ staff will have demonstrated experience working with communities facing EJ concerns and a deep understanding of the EJ discipline, including how to connect EJ to equity.
 - **Tribal Liaison position can serve as a model:** This position could be structured similarly to the Tribal Liaison positions within a State agency, for example: (1) Assisting the state agency in developing and implementing EJ into agency actions, processes, and protocols; and (2) Serving as a contact person with overburdened communities and maintaining communication between the State agency and overburdened communities; and (3) Coordinating training of State agency employees in EJ.
 - **A potential approach to develop qualifications:** The Office of Financial Management could develop competency language for certain job classifications, with a focus on senior management. Guidelines about how to apply these competencies for both new and existing staff, and timelines for implementation by agencies, should also be developed.
- **Leadership support and training:** Agencies ensure EJ staff are closely connected to agency executive leadership. Agency leadership will be best suited support EJ staff by participating in ongoing EJ and diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) trainings and professional development opportunities. Furthermore, agency staff that regularly interface with the public (e.g. community engagement coordinators) should closely collaborate with dedicated EJ staff, and also participate in EJ and DEI trainings. Existing training resources are included in the corresponding table below.
- **Expand staffing over time:** Over time, the agency will support and resource lead EJ staff with other staffing support. Support staff would ideally come from different areas of the agency with the goal of infusing EJ and equity across the agency.

- **Create EJ-Focused Community of Practice:** EJ staff could co-construct an informal³³ community of practice within their agency and among other agency staff to support agency accountability to communities, facilitate equity and EJ learning opportunities at agencies, and apply equity and EJ lens to agency work.
- **Examples of other possible EJ staff responsibilities:**
 - Lead EJ staff to serve on the permanent EJ workgroup, if stood up.
 - Participate in informal interagency EJ community of practice.
 - Track and communicate agency progress toward EJ, perhaps in partnership with an external entity.
 - Oversee EJ-specific community engagement, including reviewing, updating, and implementing the agency’s community engagement plan (see [Community Engagement Subcommittee’s first recommendation](#)).
 - Ensure EJ and equity is included in the agency’s strategic plan, and that the agency is actively working toward EJ and equity.
- State leadership should determine which agencies this recommendation should apply to, for example the Governor’s Executive Cabinet, the Department of Natural Resources, the Energy Facility Site Evaluation Council, the Interagency Council on Health Disparities, and any other agency or entity deemed appropriate by the Governor.

Incorporate Environmental Justice into State Environmental Laws – Model Policy Recommendation

Recommendation 5: Environmental justice considerations should be incorporated into a range of state environmental laws. Further, environmental and natural resource State agencies should consider environmental justice in developing agency request legislation, analyzing bills during legislative session, and conducting rule reviews.

Strategies and Considerations for Implementation:

- **Prioritizing efforts to reduce inequities:** Agencies should prioritize agency request legislation and rule updates that will reduce inequity or have a positive impact on overburdened communities.
- **EJ impact review:** In analyzing bills during legislative session, the legislators, legislative staff and agencies should consider what communities will be affected and whether the bill will reduce, increase, or have no impact on environmental justice. [Health Impact Reviews developed by the State Board of Health](#) could serve as a model for this work.
- **Engage with stakeholders and communities to identify the best path forward:** [Significant additional work is needed to identify how to best incorporate EJ into state laws.](#)
- **Illustrative examples on how to implement this recommendation include:**

³³ Non-mandatory, and not necessarily a public meeting

- [Modernizing the Evergreen Communities Act \(SB 6529/HB 2413\)](#):
 - This update of the Evergreen Communities Act to help communities develop urban forestry plans aligning with other high priority goals, such as salmon and orca recovery, reducing environmental health disparities, and local air and water quality improvements. The bill includes a focus on environmental justice, and ensures at least 50 percent of all program activities benefit overburdened communities.
- [Growth Management Act](#):
 - [CA Senate Bill 1000](#) provides an example of incorporating EJ into Washington’s Growth Management Act. For example, EJ could be incorporated as a new mandatory goal. This goal could require identification of disadvantaged communities, prioritization of improvements and programs that address the needs of disadvantaged communities—including addressing reduction of greenhouse gasses (GHG) that put communities at risk due to climate change, and affordable housing to combat gentrification and displacement.
- [State Environmental Protection Act \(SEPA\)](#):
 - [Pennsylvania Enhanced Public Participation Policy](#): This policy was created to ensure that EJ communities have the opportunity to participate and be involved in a meaningful manner throughout the permitting process when companies propose permitted facilities in their neighborhood, or when existing facilities expand their operations. Only those [activities that may lead to significant public concern](#) due to potential impacts on human health and the environment trigger this process. Such activities include new major sources of hazardous air pollutants, commercial incinerators, coal preparation facilities or expansion of large concentrated animal feeding operations.
 - **New Jersey** [Senate Bill S232](#): This bill requires consideration of the potential for disproportionate cumulative health impacts on the local community when certain types of new facilities, or expanded facilities, are proposed in an overburdened neighborhood. The bill also includes explicit guidelines for meaningful public participation during public hearings in overburdened communities.

Recommendations for Equitable Investments

Required use of EJ Analysis – Model Policy Recommendation

Recommendation 6: Agencies should adopt, and the Legislature should consider, requiring environmental justice analyses, including but not limited to the use of the Environmental

Health Disparity Map, that combine the ~~impact of multiple~~ cumulative impact of environmental health indicators such as environmental exposures, environmental effects, impact on sensitive populations, and other socioeconomic factors.

Strategies and Considerations for Implementation:

- **Reference EHD map Recommendations:** Refer to the EHD map recommendations when requiring, developing, or using EJ analyses in implementing applicable environmental, natural resource, and public health programs in order to ensure appropriate use of these types of analyses. Some areas in which environmental analyses are appropriate include:
 - Community Engagement
 - Capital Investment
 - Fees and Costs of Service
 - Policy Development
 - Program Planning, Monitoring, and Evaluation
 - Grants and Loans
 - Contracting
 - Enforcement
 - Rulemaking
- **Strive for a consistent methodology through agency collaboration:** To ensure consistency of an EJ analysis application, there should be ongoing collaboration of agencies using these types of analyses. The proposed permanent EJ workgroup would be a valuable resource in this effort.
- **Illustrative examples of how aspects of this recommendation have been implemented:**
 - **The Clean Energy Transformation Act (SB 5116)** requires utilities to use a cumulative impacts analysis of the communities highly impacted by fossil fuel pollution and climate change in Washington for incorporating into clean energy action plans and clean energy transformation plans. Rulemaking by Commerce and the Utilities and Transportation Commission (UTC) is in process on how to implement this requirement.
 - **The CalEnviroScreen** mapping tool is being used by CalEPA to aid in administering EJ grants, promote compliance with environmental laws, prioritize site-cleanup activities and identify opportunities for sustainable development.
 - **EHD Map:** A number of State agencies have utilized the EHD map in different aspects of their work, including by not limited to the Departments of Ecology, Commerce, and Transportation.
- **Train staff to conduct EJ analyses:** Training in both the development and use of the map for state staff may be needed. In addition, funding would be needed to maintain and update current analyses, like the EHD map and should also be provided to allow State agencies to work with local jurisdictions for important granular data that either could be incorporated into State tools or be considered in addition to what the State can access (see: “EHD map recommendations”).

- **Engage and consult with Tribes:** Formal Tribal consultation should be offered in both the development of and proposed uses of environmental justice analyses.
- **Operationalize EJ analyses:** The California Department of Public Health (CDPH) and the Public Health Institute developed the Five Key Elements of Health in All Policies as a guide and filter for identifying opportunities for operationalizing this work: Promote health, equity, and sustainability; Support intersectoral collaboration; Benefit multiple partners; Engage stakeholders; Create structural or procedural change
- **Resource:** The [Social Vulnerability Index](#) may be a resource to help measure impacts resulting from greater investments in communities:

Equitably Distribute State Environmental Investments – Model Policy Recommendation

~~**Recommendation 7: For new and existing revenue and expenditures with an environmental nexus, the State Legislature and agencies should equitably distribute investments ensuring that more resources are allocated to the highest impacted communities. These communities should be identified through tailored environmental justice analyses, such as prioritizing census tracts that are ranked 9 and 10 on the EHD map. The State should dedicate environmental investments into overburdened communities by a proportion that is commensurate with the health disparities.**~~

For new and existing revenue and expenditures with an environmental nexus, the State Legislature and agencies should equitably distribute investments ensuring that resources are allocated to the highest impacted communities.

Strategies and Considerations for Implementation:

- **Identifying overburdened communities:** Overburdened communities should be identified through existing or new project or program specific EJ analyses.
- **Conduct an EJ analysis:** The EHD map is an example of an environmental justice analysis that can assist with equitable distribution of environmental investments. Environmental investments and programs direct toward overburdened communities should be made proportional to the health disparities that a specific community experiences. Refer to the EHD map recommendation that defines overburdened communities as ranked 9 and 10 on the EHD map for more guidance.
- **Consideration of multiple factors:** The An EJ analysis should serve either as the primary, or one of multiple factors, for the prioritization process.
- **Possible investment opportunities:** The result of this dedicated revenue is that agencies will be directed to invest resources and programs under their control in the areas that are most disadvantaged. In addition, funds can go toward grants, hiring, and contracting opportunities.
- **Promote transparency:** Goals and assessment metrics need to be in place so people know clearly what the dedicated funds are going to. There is a need for tracking

investments and measurable goals to maintain accountability. In addition, ~~must ensure that efforts must be made to~~ we balance investments ~~throughout across~~ the state, not just in urban areas in the Puget Sound region.

- **Illustrative examples of how aspects of this recommendation have been implemented:**
 - Model Toxics Control Act (MTCA): The Department of Ecology oversees MTCA implementation has used both the EHD map and other criteria in order to identify areas for environmental cleanup, public participation grants, remediation, and pollution prevention programs statewide.
 - New York Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act: This law sets a target for disadvantaged communities to receive 40 percent of the overall benefits from the State’s climate programs, and at a minimum, disadvantaged communities must receive no less than 35% of those benefits.
 - California’s SB 535: California State law created a program that has been periodically updated to ensure that 25% mandates that 25% of the proceeds from the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund ~~go to benefit~~ projects that provide a benefit to “disadvantaged communities” as identified by the CalEnviroScreen map, which the EHD map was modeled after.
- Legal considerations: Equitably distribute State environmental investments as practicable, and in accordance with existing State and federal law.
- Possible investment priorities: Investments should focus on eliminating health burdens and raising the standard of living such as economic benefits (e.g. job creation – see: “prioritize high labor standards and contracting diversity” recommendation)
- **Illustrative examples of ways to utilize and target funds in line with this recommendation:**
 - Community grants to monitor pollution that would be focused on building capacity and training for community scientists.
 - Adequate staff capacity would be needed to support and provide technical assistance to communities that may be new to receiving agency grant funding. This includes assisting them in applying for the grants and then managing the grants. This will help build the communities’ capacity over time instead of relying on the same organizations that continue to apply and receive funding on behalf the community
 - Investments directed toward Infrastructure Curriculum and work-readiness youth programs to get these community members into infrastructure or utility related internships, careers, and eventually leadership.

Contracting Prioritizes High Labor Standards and Diversity – Model Policy Recommendation

[Note to Members: This recommendation was revised after meeting with OMWBE leadership].

DRAFT Recommendation 8: Work funded by State environmental investments should increase inclusion in ~~prioritize~~ contracting with minority, women, and veteran-owned enterprises in alignment with the [Governor’s Subcabinet on Business Diversity led by OMWBE](#), and have high labor standard requirements that value workers’ health and safety, regardless of whether a public or private entity is the beneficiary of the new spending, except where legally prohibited from doing so.

Strategies and Considerations for Implementation:

- Examples of high labor standards include, but are not limited to: pay equity, local hire and project labor agreements, livable wages, safe work environments, paid family and sick leave, [protecting the rights of workers to organize, offer flexible work schedules and telework options, retirement benefits](#), and comprehensive health insurance.
- Agencies should include the strategies and recommendations put forward by OMWBE from the 2019 WA State Disparity Study in their inclusion plans. These recommendations include: [increasing access to State contracting information, lengthening solicitation times, raising the direct buy limits, and reviewing contract sizes and scopes.](#)³⁴
- Possible exceptions to this recommendation include any statutory limitations, such as the Department of [Natural Resources’ Trust Mandate](#).

Study Opportunities for Reparations in Washington – Model Policy Recommendation

Recommendation 9: As one strategy for achieving environmental justice, Washington State government should study reparations as a means of redressing the unpaid debts from slavery and colonization, in addition to the accumulated environmental harms in the present day. ~~as a mechanism to address health disparities and historical harms affecting overburdened communities.~~ as mechanism to address health disparities and historical harms affecting overburdened communities. The State should focus on the legacy of redlining, treaty violations, forced exclusion, and neighborhood segregation in WA, as well as the impact that systemic racism has had on Black, Native, Indigenous, Latinx, Asian communities and others.

Strategies and Considerations for Implementation:

- **Identify where to house this work:** As an option, the Office of Equity could develop a plan for studying reparations with the continued input and guidance from the public the State’s Ethnic Commissions. One additional strategy could be the creation of a community Task Force to guide and inform this work.
- **Further explanation on reparations:** Reparations can take many forms, such as: direct payments to communities and individuals, environmental cleanups, increased

³⁴ [Meeting with OMWBE leadership.](#)

investments in overburdened communities in the form of grants, programs, and projects (see: the “equitably distribute state environmental investments” recommendation). The process, budget, and outcomes must be community-led and co-created with government agencies.

- **Other possible areas for study:** slavery, colonization, internment, employment discrimination, labor and land theft, and financial services discrimination.

Recommendations to Improve Environmental Enforcement

Ensure Accessible Enforcement and Reporting Processes – Model Policy Recommendation

Recommendation 10: The EJ Task Force recommends ensuring that enforcement and reporting processes are accessible to overburdened communities by elevating awareness and addressing barriers to access (such as technology, literacy, and language).

Strategies and Considerations for Implementation:

- **Increase awareness of reporting systems:** Increase public education and awareness of environmental reporting tools such as the Environmental Reporting and Tracking System (ERTS), the Environmental Crime Report Form, Clean Air Agencies’ complaint forms, and other environmental reporting mechanisms.
- **Ensure accessibility:** Ensure reporting options are accessible to a diverse audience, including: multilingual formats, phone reporting, and systems navigators who can provide online, in-person, and phone support.
- **Ensure compliance with existing laws and policies:** Assessment of existing environmental reporting systems to evaluate access to services and compliance with Title VI, ADA, and non-discrimination obligations.

Support for Supplemental Environmental Projects (SEPs) – Model Policy Recommendation

Recommendation 11: Agencies with enforcement responsibilities should, to the extent practicable and appropriate, support the inclusion of “Supplemental Environmental Projects” (SEPs) in settlement agreements.

Strategies and Considerations for Implementation:

- **Further explanation of SEPs:** As part of a voluntary settlement, the responsible party may propose to undertake a project to provide tangible environmental or public health benefits to the affected community or environment. The responsible party can voluntarily choose to fund a SEP to offset part of the penalty they would otherwise be required to pay for the violation.

- Engage affected communities: When possible, SEPs should be developed through a partnership between the responsible party and the affected community, and provide tangible environmental or public health benefits.

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Areas for Further Study

[Note to members: The following may be listed in the report for further study, but will not be included as formal recommendations.]

Forthcoming: Statement about the purpose of this section.

Study: Concept of “Concurrent Jurisdiction” for state agencies, which would allow for State agencies to seek compliance or enforcement actions that are now the sole responsibility of City, County & Regional agencies.

Considerations

- Constitutional and current State law restrictions creating exclusive authority for local jurisdictions.
- May create confusion on how best to report violations.

Study: The expansion of “Private Rights of Action” (PRA) to allow for resident lawsuits to be filed against alleged violators of environmental laws.

Considerations

- We want to be cautious if this idea moves forward to not encourage lawsuits based on private interests. Rather, PRAs should focus on ameliorating environmental law regulations that negatively affect the public’s health.

Non-Majority Opinion Statements (Placeholder)

[Note for Members: Opportunity for Task Force members to write non-majority opinion statements. Staff will work with members who choose to write these statements to ensure they are placed in relevant sections of the report.]

Task Force Member Statements

[Note for Members: Opportunity for members to include statements of support, or additional context/considerations. Staff will work with members who choose to write these statements to ensure they are placed in relevant sections of the report.]

Conclusion (Forthcoming)

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Sources

[Note to Members: these sources are just for the mapping recommendations. We will be working on sources/citations in future drafts.]

University of Washington DEOHS. *Washington Environmental Health Disparities Map: Technical Report*; DEOHS: Seattle, WA, USA, 2019.

Min, E., Gruen, D., Banerjee, D., Echeverria, T., Frelander, L., Schmeltz, M., Saganić, E., Piazza, M., Galaviz, V.E., Yost, M., Seto, E.Y.W. (2019) The Washington State Environmental Health Disparities Map: Development of a Community-Responsive Cumulative Impacts Assessment Tool. *Int. J. Environ. Res. Public Health*, 16(22), 4470. doi:10.3390/ijerph16224470

Census Tract definition: https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/geography/about/glossary.html#par_textimage_13

Port Equity Mapping:

<https://www.arcgis.com/apps/MapSeries/index.html?appid=56dedeb0e7ef4237877058460ad31b19>

Policy Applications of the Washington Environmental Health Disparities Map, Front and Centered, <https://frontandcentered.org/ej-map-policy/>

Appendices

Forthcoming: Organization and formatting of appendices.

- Appendix A: Glossary of EJ Related Terms
- Appendix B: Operationalizing EJ Task Force Measurable Goals and Model Policy Recommendations: A Primer on the GARE Toolkit
- Appendix C: Community Engagement Subcommittee Guidance document
 - Sub-Appendix A: Public Participation Tool
 - Sub-Appendix B: Public Participation Spectrum
 - Sub-Appendix C: Barriers to Meaningful Engagement
- *Forthcoming: Roster of Task Force and Subcommittee members*
- *Forthcoming: EJ and Reparations Memo*
- *Forthcoming: EJTF meeting agendas and high level summaries of what was covered in each meeting*
- *All bar charts from EHD map*

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Appendix A: Glossary of EJ Related Terms

Forthcoming: Statement about the power that words have, and that the TF is committed to an asset-based framing throughout the report -- especially when referring to overburdened communities.

[TF members: What terms are missing or are unnecessary?]

The following definitions are pulled from multiple source that are specific to Washington state and/or environmental justice.^{35, 36, 37, 38,39}

| | |
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| Access | Creating and advancing barrier-free design, standards, systems, processes, and environments to provide all individuals, regardless of ability, background, identity or situation, an effective opportunity to take part in, use and enjoy the benefits of: employment, programs, services, activities, communication, facilities, electronic/information technology, and business opportunities. |
| Burden | The magnitude of poor health that exists within a community that is attributable to the risk factors that are present. |
| Community Engagement | Forthcoming |
| Community of Practice | A group of people who share a concern or a passion for something they do and learn how to do it better as they interact regularly. |
| Community Resilience | The ability of communities to withstand, recover, and learn from past disasters and to learn from past disasters to strengthen future response and recovery efforts. |
| Cultural Competence | An ability to interact effectively with people of all cultures and understand many cultural frameworks, values, and norms. Cultural competence comprises four components: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awareness of one’s own cultural worldview, • Attitude towards cultural differences, • Knowledge of different cultural practices and worldviews, and |

³⁵ University of Washington Department of Environmental & Occupational Health Sciences. Washington Environmental Health Disparities Map: technical report. Seattle; 2019.

³⁶ Washington State Office of Financial Management Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Council. Diversity, Equity and Inclusion: Glossary of Equity Related Terms. 2019.

³⁷ Asian Pacific Environmental Network. Mapping Resilience: A Blueprint for Thriving in the Face of Climate Disasters. Oakland; 2019.

³⁸ Ajmera, C., Dubytz, K., Lih, E., Rahman, S., & Six, J. University of Washington Daniel J. Evans School of Public Policy and Governance. Embedding Environmental Justice into the Washington State Department of Ecology: Promising Practices for Advancing Equity and Environmental Justice: Report. Seattle; 2020.

³⁹ <https://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/rfa-files/RFA-ES-14-010.html#:~:text=For%20the%20purpose%20of%20this,social%2C%20natural%20and%20built%20environments.>

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cross-cultural skills. <p>A key component of cultural competence is respectfully engaging others with cultural dimensions and perceptions different from our own and recognizing that none is superior to another. Cultural competence is a developmental process that evolves over an extended period.</p> |
| Cultural Humility | <p>Approach to respectfully engaging others with cultural identities different from your own and recognizing that no cultural perspective is superior to another. The practice of cultural humility for white people is to: acknowledge systems of oppression and involves critical self-reflection, lifelong learning and growth, a commitment to recognizing and sharing power, and a desire to work toward institutional accountability. The practice of cultural humility for people of color is to accept that the dominant culture does exist, that institutional racism is in place, to recognize one’s own response to the oppression within it, to work toward dismantling it through the balanced process of calling it out and taking care of one’s self.</p> |
| Cumulative Impact | <p>The combined impact of multiple environmental health indicators on a population.</p> |
| Disproportionate Impacts | <p>In the context of EJ, this refers to when one group or population bears an environmental or health impact that is substantially higher than the average distribution. This impact is usually compounded by existing inequities due to historic discrimination against certain groups.</p> |
| Distributive Justice | <p>The equitable distribution of resources. In the context of EJ, this means reducing environmental harm in communities with disproportionately high environmental pollution, as well as increasing access to environmental benefits.</p> |
| Diversity | <p>Describes the presence of differences within a given setting, collective, or group. An individual is not diverse – a person is unique. Diversity is about a collective or a group and exists in relationship to others. A team, an organization, a family, a neighborhood, and a community can be diverse. A person can bring diversity of thought, experience, and trait, (seen and unseen) to a team — and the person is still an individual.</p> |
| Environmental Effect | <p>Adverse environmental quality generally, even when population contact with an environmental hazard is unknown or uncertain.</p> |
| Environmental Equity | <p>Environmental equity will be achieved when no single group or community faces disadvantages in dealing with the effects of the climate crisis, pollution, environmental hazards, or environmental disasters.</p> |
| Environmental Exposure | <p>Refers to how a person comes into contact with an environmental hazard. Examples of exposure include breathing air, eating food, drinking water or living near to where environmental hazards are released or are concentrated.</p> |
| Environmental Hazard or Risk Factor | <p>Refers to a specific source or concentration of pollution in the environment. Polluted air, water and soil are examples of environmental hazards.</p> |
| Environmental Health Disparities | <p>Inequities in illnesses that are mediated by disproportionate exposures associated with the physical, chemical, biological, social, natural and built environments.</p> |

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| Environmental Health Indicator | Refers to either a specific environmental risk factor or a specific measure of population susceptibility or vulnerability. |
| Environmental Justice | The fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin or income with respect to development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations and policies. This includes using an intersectional lens to address disproportionate environmental and health impacts by prioritizing highly impacted populations, equitably distributing resources and benefits, and eliminating harm. |
| Environmental Racism | Any policy, practice, or directive that differentially affects or disadvantages individuals, groups, or communities based on race or ethnicity (whether intended or unintended). |
| Equality | Treating everyone the same, regardless of their circumstances. |
| Equity | The act of developing, strengthening, and supporting procedural and outcome fairness in systems, procedures, and resource distribution mechanisms to create equitable (not equal) opportunity for all people. Equity is distinct from equality which refers to everyone having the same treatment without accounting for differing needs or circumstances. Equity has a focus on eliminating barriers that have prevented the full participation of historically and currently oppressed groups. |
| Ethnicity | A social construct that divides people into smaller social groups based on characteristics such as values, behavioral patterns, language, political and economic interests, history, and ancestral geographical base. |
| Framework | An overarching strategy or organizational structure. |
| Health Disparities | Refers to a higher burden of illness, injury, disability, or death experienced by one group or population relative to another. |
| Health Equity | Refers to everyone having the opportunity to attain their highest level of health. |
| Indicator | A proxy variable that aims to capture a specific trend. |
| Indigenous Populations | Refers to federally recognized Tribes, state recognized Tribes, and Tribes and Bands who have not been formally recognized by the federal or state governments. This includes Indigenous persons living in Tribal and U.S. territories. |
| Intersectionality | Intersectionality is a framework for understanding the interaction of cultures and identities held by an individual. Intersectionality explains how an individual with multiple identities that may have been marginalized can experience compounded oppression (such as racism, sexism, ageism , ableism , and classism) or how an individual can experience privilege in some areas and disadvantage in other areas. It takes into account people’s overlapping identities to understand the complexity of their life outcomes and experiences. |
| Low-Income | Individuals and families who make less than 80 percent of the median family income for the area. |
| Overburdened Communities | Populations, who experience disproportionate environmental harms and risks due to exposures or cumulative impacts or greater vulnerability to environmental hazards. |

| | |
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| Race | A social construct that divides people into smaller social groups based on characteristics most typically skin color. Racial categories were socially constructed, and artificially created whiteness as one of the elements of the dominant culture. Race was created to concentrate power and advantage people who are defined as white and justify dominance over non-white people. The idea of race has become embedded in our identities, institutions, and culture, and influences life opportunities, outcomes, and experiences. Racial categories change based on the political convenience of the dominant society at a given period of time. |
| Racism | A way of representing or describing race that creates or reproduces structures of domination based on racial categories. In other words, racism is racial prejudice plus power. In the United States, it is grounded in the creation of a white dominant culture that reinforces the use of power to create privilege for white people while marginalizing people of color, whether intentional or not. |
| Risk | How likely exposure to environmental hazards will result in poor health for a population. |
| Sensitive Populations | Those who are at greater risk due to biological/intrinsic vulnerability. |
| Social Justice | A practice within a society based on principles of equality and solidarity that understands and values human rights and recognizes the dignity of every human being. Such a practice would strive to provide basic human needs and comforts to all members of the society regardless of class, race, religion or any other characteristic. |
| Toolkit | A specific, prescriptive, action-oriented set of steps to integrate equity or EJ into the policy process. |
| Vulnerability | A person's (or population's) non-biological situation that affects their ability to cope with risk factors. Examples of vulnerability include low income, language barriers or poor access to health care. |
| Workforce diversity | A collection of individual attributes that together help agencies pursue organizational objectives efficiently and effectively. These include, but are not limited to, characteristics such as national origin, language, race, color, disability, ethnicity, gender, age, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, socioeconomic status, veteran status, political beliefs, communication styles], and family structures. The concept also encompasses differences among people about where they are from, where they have lived and their differences of thought and life experiences. |

Appendix B: Operationalizing EJ Task Force Measurable Goals and Model Policy Recommendations; A Primer on the GARE Toolkit

Overview and Purpose

The EJ Task Force recommendations guide state agencies to incorporate EJ into the core of how they do business, by embedding EJ into agency strategic plans, developing systems to track, evaluate, and communicate progress in advancing equity and EJ through agency operations and programs.

Washington state agencies can learn directly from the work of Governmental Alliance for Racial Equity (GARE), an organization that works with governments across the U.S. to incorporate racial equity analyses and goals into government operations. GARE has published multiple tools and resources to support governments, including the Racial Equity Toolkit, which can be applied at the programmatic level and can be scaled up to meet agency-wide priorities.

The purpose of this appendix is to provide a user overview of the GARE Racial Equity Toolkit, with specific guidance and tips for state agency staff seeking to apply this toolkit as a first step to implementing the aforementioned Task Force recommendations. Figure XX also illuminates connections between the GARE toolkit and Task Force recommendations pertaining to community engagement best practices and use of the Environmental Health Disparities (EHD) map.

Figure XX. GARE Racial Equity Toolkit is adapted to help with the implementation of these two EJ Task Force recommendations.

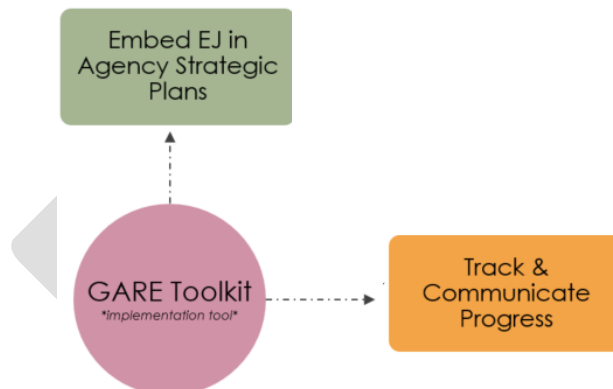
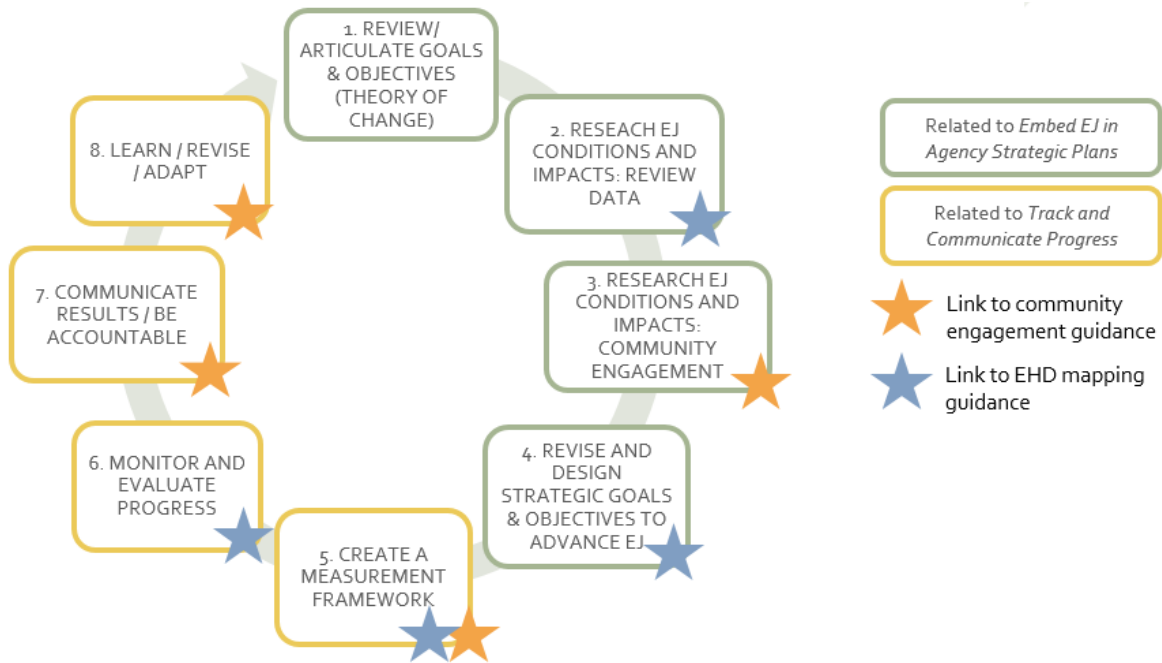


Figure XX. Embedding EJ and Equity: 8-Step Process (adapted from GARE racial equity toolkit)



STEPS 1-4: Embed EJ into your agency’s strategic plan



The following steps, adapted from the GARE Racial Equity Toolkit, can be used by agency leadership and staff to begin the process of reviewing an agency-wide or program-level strategic plan, defining the EJ and equity context within which the agency or program operates (problem identification), and ultimately identifying opportunities to adjust or reform agency priorities and programmatic design to align agency goals with EJ and equity outcomes. These steps can be applied to an existing agency-wide strategic plan, an existing program-level plan, or in cases where no strategic plan currently exists, be used to develop an EJ and equity plan.

Terms and Definitions

Results – end conditions we are aiming to impact (at the community level)

Outcomes – desired effects at the jurisdiction, agency, department, or program level

Outputs – numerical counts of a program’s actions or products that were created or delivered, the number of people served, and the activities or services provided.

Output and outcome measures – the means by which to monitor successful implementation and effects of actions that have a reasonable chance of influenced desired results. They measure:

- Quantity – how much did we do?
- Quality – how well did we do it?
- Effects – Is anyone better off?

1. REVIEW/ARTICULATE GOALS AND OBJECTIVES (THEORY OF CHANGE)

In order to identify strategic opportunities for advancing EJ through planned agency work, a logical place to start is to articulate why your agency or program does what it does, in what social, economic, or environmental realms does it make a difference, and how (i.e. your theory of change). Clarifying your realm of influence and your assumptions and beliefs about how your agency or program is effecting change within that realm, is an essential step in discovering the ways in which your agency's approach, investments, and activities may be missing an opportunity to, or in some cases unintentionally exacerbating, environmental inequities.

A complete theory of change is comprised of the ultimate results (end conditions) you are seeking to effect in the world, the key activities your agency or program performs to deliver those results, and the near and long-term outcomes of those activities that are assumed to influence those ultimate results. A very simple theory-of-change template, adapted from [forthcoming], is as follows:



Guiding questions for crafting your theory of change:

1. **Results:** What change does your agency or program strive to bring about? What results (changes in community conditions) are you seeking to deliver?
2. **Agency activities:** What are the key areas of work, groups of activities, or investments that your agency or program delivers?
3. **Near and intermediate-term outcomes:** What are the immediate outcomes generated by your agency or program activities? How do these outcomes lead to changes in the community?
4. **Realms of influence:** In addition to the primary intended results of your agency/program, what additional social, economic, or environmental realms does your agency/program have the potential to influence?

2. RESEARCH EJ CONDITIONS AND IMPACTS: REVIEW DATA

This step involves reviewing available data (both community-level data on socioeconomic or environmental conditions, and/or program-level performance data) and considering how your agency operations or program, as designed, might contribute to eliminating or exacerbating inequities.

★ *Consider using the EHD Map to support this step (Area Assessment and Equity Impact Analysis)*

Guiding questions for assessing environmental injustice conditions and impacts:

Build demographic and environment context to guide and inform place-based activities:

- Identify potential impacts in geographic areas & communities
- Learn about the racial, ethnic, economic demographics
- What are the existing racial, ethnic, and economic inequities in your program or agency's service area?

Conduct EJ review and analysis as routine practice from programs and projects:

Use performance level data to learn about:

- Where program activities have primarily occurred
- Who program activities have primarily served to date & how that compares with area characteristics

3. RESEARCH EJ
CONDITIONS AND
IMPACTS: COMMUNITY
ENGAGEMENT

The next step is to consider information collected through community engagement efforts. If your agency has not yet directly engaged communities disproportionately impacted by environmental health inequities or has not yet done so adequately, consider immediate opportunities to begin or

expand engagement. Look at information collected through community engagement efforts to consider how your program, as designed, might contribute to eliminating or exacerbating inequity.

★ *Refer to community engagement guidance during this step.*

Guiding questions to answer through community engagement:

1. Who are the most affected community members who are concerned with or have experience related to this program? How have you involved these community members in the development of this program?
2. What has your engagement process told you about the burdens or benefits for different groups?
3. What has your engagement process told you about the factors that produce or perpetuate racial inequity related to this program?

4. REVISE AND DESIGN
STRATEGIC GOALS &
OBJECTIVES TO ADVANCE
EJ

Based on information collected in Steps 2 and 3, revise your theory of change to include equity-explicit results, and determine adjustments to your agency activities (e.g. adjust existing activities, create new activities, eliminate harmful activities) to achieve those results.

★ *Consider using the EHD Map to support this step (Project Prioritization).*

Guiding questions to support the revision process:

1. Based on your review of data and community engagement results, how does your program alleviate or exacerbate inequity?
2. Who benefits from or is burdened by your program or agency operations, as currently designed and executed?
3. What are the potential unintended consequences of not adjust your agency or program approach?
4. How do you presume your proposed adjustments to result in pro-equity outcomes and results?

STEPS 5-8: Track and Communicate Progress



The following steps expand on the GARE Toolkit and provide guidance to agencies seeking to implement the EJTF’s recommendation to: track and communicate progress of measurable goals. Establishing a system to monitor and evaluate progress, through use of performance measures and community indicators, can only be completed once a revised, pro-equity theory of change (near-term and intermediate-term outcomes and end results) is articulated. A measurement framework is also the basis for accountability and transparency in communicating progress in advancing equity and EJ goals. Finally, the results of a measurement framework should be fed directly into the process of revisiting your theory-of-change and program or agency effectiveness, on a periodic basis.

5. CREATE A MEASUREMENT FRAMEWORK Create a draft measurement framework, including performance measures (that directly measure implementation of actions) and community indicators (that measure changes in community conditions that your actions aim to influence). It is an important to include both, as performance measures are directly responsive to your agency’s work and provide timely feedback about whether you are on track to generate meaningful change in community conditions. Community indicators are slower to respond but provide essential feedback about whether your agency or program is making a positive impact in advancing equity and environmental justice.

★ *Consider using the EHD Map as a potential source of ideas for outcome measures.*

★ *Refer to community engagement guidance during this step. A measurement framework should be developed with direct input from the communities you are seeking to benefit.*

Guidance on establishing output and outcome measures to track implementation of pro-equity activities:

- Consider existing output measures (e.g. number of workshops per quarter, number of people served, number of contracts, miles of utility lines installed) and outcome measures (e.g. graduation rate, increase in jobs, change in air and water quality, change in recidivism rate) at your agency. Can existing agency-wide or program-level measures be disaggregated by race, income, geography, etc., to tell a story about the distribution of your agency activities and associated benefits/effects?
- Consider new performance measures that generate feedback about whether your new/revised activities are achieving near-term outcomes in your theory-of-change. What new program or activity level data can be collected to determine that those new/revised activities are being implemented as intended? What existing community-level datasets can be leveraged to track changes in community conditions (and distribution of positive changes across communities) over time?
- Determine the directionality or desired target for your output and outcomes measures, to use as a guidepost during your monitoring and evaluation efforts.

6. MONITOR AND EVALUATE PROGRESS

Monitor output and outcomes measures and establish a regular frequency for conducting periodic evaluations of progress. Monitoring allows for ongoing tracking and course correction and provides agency leaders and staff a ‘signal’ when something is not making the progress you expect. Evaluation

allows for more in-depth analysis of measure data to understand how and why progress is or isn’t being made. Communities should be continuously engaged throughout the monitoring and evaluation process, to groundtruth the measures data and provide insight into why and how changes are or are not occurring, and what should be done about it.

Guiding evaluation questions:

- How much did we do?
- How well did we do it?
- Is anyone better off?

7. COMMUNICATE RESULTS / BE ACCOUNTABLE

Use a communications tool, such as the Center for Social Inclusion’s Talking About Race Right Toolkit to develop messages and a communications strategy and share out the results of your efforts to monitor and evaluate your progress in advancing equity and environmental justice.

★ Refer to community engagement guidance during this step. Determine approach outreach and communication strategies to reach communities in a meaningful way and stay accountable.

Guiding questions:

1. How will impacts be documented and evaluated? Are you achieving the anticipated outcomes? Are you having impact in the community?
2. What are your messages and communication strategies that are will help advance racial equity?
3. How will you continue to partner and deepen relationships with communities to make sure your work to advance equity is working and sustainable for the long haul?

8. LEARN / REVISE /
ADAPT

Finally, agencies should adaptive manage agency or program-level strategic plans, by learning from results of monitoring and evaluation processes and establishing a culture of evidence-based decision-making. Evidence should include not only findings generated from monitoring and evaluation efforts, but from *ongoing community engagement*.

★ *Refer to community engagement guidance during this step. Communities should be directly engaged to groundtruth insights and lessons you have derived from monitoring and evaluation efforts.*

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Appendix C: Community Engagement Plan Guidance with Corresponding Sub-Appendices



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PLAN GUIDANCE

ABSTRACT

The Community Engagement Subcommittee recommends that each agency develop a Community Engagement Plan to fit agency-specific work. We have outlined elements of a plan in this document to support meaningful engagement. Our approach guides an agency to develop its own best practices, informed by successful examples, and comprising elements designed to overcome barriers to engagement that are typical of agency work.

Community Engagement Subcommittee

Washington Environmental Justice
Task Force

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1. Introduction

1.01 Why Community Engagement is Crucial

The governing structures of the United States were designed to elevate the rights and access to its resources of some people at the expense of the rights and access of others. These weighted structures led to the systemic inequity that the EJ movement responds to. They have been reaffirmed across history, often in response to efforts to move toward more equitable laws and practices, and are widely maintained today.

The guidance that follows is grounded in the position that these systems cannot change without the direct involvement of the communities who have borne the weight of systemic disparities, and that such involvement is rarely supported by Washington State's government. We recognize the critical value of repairing relationships and building trust with communities who have.

Repairing relationships and building trust between government and those members of the public harmed by environmental injustice is central to this guidance. A focus on trust-building in this context sends skills like cultural humility and emotionally intelligent communication to the forefront, and we see more ties to community organizing than to conventional communications-oriented information sharing.

Truly meaningful community engagement builds more sustainable agency programs and decisions, and it increases community understanding of agency decisions and transparency and trust in government actions. State agencies have a responsibility to create community engagement opportunities that allow all of Washington's diverse communities "equal access to the decision-making process to have a healthy environment in which people live, learn, and work."⁴⁰ Without it, as history demonstrates,⁴¹ entire populations are systematically left out, curbing their ability to effectively advocate for their own health and safety. Furthermore, many agencies are directed by policy and federal, state, and local laws to implement meaningful community engagement and participation.

The Community Engagement Subcommittee recommends that **each agency develop a Community Engagement Plan to fit agency-specific work**. We have outlined elements of a plan in this document to support meaningful engagement. Our approach guides an agency to develop its own best practices, informed by successful examples, and comprising elements designed to overcome [barriers to engagement](#) that are typical of agency work.

Here, we describe pathways to a type of community engagement that empowers members of the public to collaborate with state agencies in making decisions that will have direct impacts on them. However, while agencies remain responsible for communicating what decisions are

⁴⁰ <https://www.epa.gov/environmentaljustice>

⁴¹ <https://archive.epa.gov/ncer/ej/web/pdf/brender.pdf>

made on behalf of the public, we recognize that engaging the public as partners in 100% of agency decision-making is not ideal for even the most motivated community. As a foundation of this guidance, we recommend an [evaluation process](#) to determine when that level of engagement, on one end of a spectrum, is valuable and when engagement that requires fewer resources is appropriate.

1.02 Community Engagement and Environmental Justice

All agencies can embed EJ into their missions by prioritizing and investing in meaningful community engagement, especially in [areas of critical concern across Washington](#).⁴² One of the defining documents of the EJ movement is the *17 Principles of Environmental Justice*, which were drafted and adopted by the delegates to the First National People of Color Environmental Leadership Summit in 1991. Principle #7 explicitly states the need for community engagement to achieve environmental justice.

EJ Principle #7: “Environmental justice demands the right to participate as equal partners at every level of decision-making, including needs assessment, planning, implementation, enforcement and evaluation.”⁴³

The foundation of meaningful community engagement must be an evaluation of who is negatively impacted and who is benefitted by any agency decisions meant to benefit the public as a whole. This foundation stands in contrast to the common practice of starting with requirements outlined in law or policy. This guidance outlines and helps agencies identify common agency activities that do not typically involve, but can significantly impact, the public.

1.03 Acknowledging Current and Historical Harms

Building room in government decision-making for the voices of underserved and overburdened communities is one necessary component of correcting current and historical harms that communities of color, low-income communities, and other affected populations in Washington have endured. The Government Alliance on Race and Equity (GARE) names the responsibility that government has in reversing these injustices to eliminate environmental health disparities initiated and perpetuated by governmental actions, and to build community trust in government systems and institutions.

“From the inception of our country, government at the local, regional, state, and federal level has played a role in creating and maintaining racial inequity. A wide range of laws and policies were passed, including everything from who could vote, who could be a citizen, who could own property, who was property, where one could live, whose land was whose and more. With the Civil Rights movement, laws and policies were passed that helped to create positive changes, including making acts of discrimination illegal.

⁴² As an initial step, agencies can consider prioritizing investing in community engagement in Census tracts ranked nine and ten on the Environmental Health Disparities Map.

⁴³ <https://www.nrdc.org/sites/default/files/ej-principles.pdf>

However, despite progress in addressing explicit discrimination, racial inequities continue to be deep, pervasive, and persistent across the country...Institutions and structures have continued to create and perpetuate inequities, despite the lack of explicit intention. Without intentional intervention, institutions and structures will continue to perpetuate racial inequities.”⁴⁴

1.04 Scoping Considerations

The Community Engagement Subcommittee built this guidance without the benefit of the tools and resources recommended in it. While we made every effort toward inclusion and representation, our work is inherently limited to the perspectives of those who were able to participate most. Namely, the perspectives most represented in this document are from people whose time was supported financially by their jobs and whose workload allowed time to participate. In this document, there are many instances when the Community Engagement Subcommittee speaks for people whose needs and experiences we do not fully understand, and we recognize that as a limitation to this work.

1.05 Authority

Washington State agencies are bound by several federal and state regulations that influence or rely on community engagement. Central here are:

- Title VI of the Civil Rights Act, which prohibits discrimination based on race, color, and national origin.
- Executive Order 13175, which recognizes Tribal sovereignty and requires consultation and coordination with Indian Tribal Governments.
- Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act, which requires agencies to conduct business in a way that provides access to people with disabilities.
- Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act, which prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability by agencies receiving federal funding.
- Executive Order 13166, requiring recipients of federal funding to accommodate people with limited English proficiency in their services and programs.

These regulations have broadly influenced state- and agency-specific policies as well. Phrases such as “meaningful engagement” proliferate. We imagine that state-level compliance with these laws and policies would amount to an equitable governmental landscape, free of the objectively disproportionate impacts of state decision-making that have led to the EJ Task Force. Agencies that may have grown accustomed to nominal compliance with laws such as these are encouraged to re-evaluate their practices through the lens presented in this document.

Relevant Tools & Resources

- [Title VI of the Civil Rights Act](#)

⁴⁴ [GARE Racial Equity Toolkit](#)

- [Executive Order 13166](#)
- Results Washington’s outcome measures:
 - [Efficient, Effective, and Accountable Government](#)
 - [Healthy and Safe Communities](#)

1.06 Who Washington State Agencies Serve

[Note that this will be updated to reflect the EJ Task Force’s decision on their model policy recommendations]

The central function of a public agency is to serve the public. We know that demographic data is inherently limited as it does not represent major swaths of the population, such as people who are undocumented, Indigenous peoples, and the LGBTQ community. We also know that agency leadership and staff are often not representative of the population they serve, which means decision-makers often do not have the same life experiences as the people affected by their decisions. Community engagement is, therefore, a crucial process that allows agencies to better serve the public through a greater understanding of the diversity of lived experiences and perspectives across Washington’s communities.

We recommend that agency staff prepare to create a community engagement plan by asking: *Who might be affected by the agency work?* We recommend agencies name who and which communities might benefit from or be negatively impacted by agency processes, projects, or programs.

We recommend agencies create a “Who We Serve” section within the introduction of the agency community engagement plan to clearly name the communities that may be impacted in some way by internal or external agency work. In developing that section, demographic data will be a useful starting place, but direct communication with people in the impacted populations themselves will remain key to a meaningful understanding of the audience.

Agencies can ask themselves the following questions as part of developing the “Who We Serve” section of their plan:

- Who or which communities benefit or are impacted by the outcomes of an agency process, project, or program?
- Who or which communities might be impacted in some way at stages throughout an agency process?
- Are there communities or groups of people that are especially vulnerable to impacts, disproportionately affected, and underserved in some way by the process, project, or program?
- Which communities might engage and which might not in an agency process, project, or program? And why?
- Which environmental justice-related existing assets, resources, and knowledge exist within communities?

Relevant Tools & Resources

- Community Engagement Self-Assessments:
 - [Office of Financial Management Diversity, Equity, Inclusion Council Resources](#)
 - [City of Seattle Inclusive Outreach and Public Engagement Guide](#)
- [The DOH Community Engagement Guide](#)
- To Identify Stakeholders: [Community Engagement: Guidelines for Excellence \(pp. 126-128\)](#)

1.07 Equitable Approaches to Community Engagement

Community engagement covers a range of approaches, from outreach and consultations, to long-term collaborations, shared leadership, and supporting resident-led efforts. However, meaningful community engagement goes beyond a set of activities – it is a way of fostering trust, strengthening relationships, and honoring community knowledge. This leads to more effective and equitable solutions.

While the specific methods of engagement will differ depending on the context and the community, State agencies can find ways to center the voices of the highly impacted communities in planning and decision making.

As you work to advance EJ and equity across the state, embrace community engagement as an agency-wide plan that goes beyond the short-term needs of projects or programs. This plan should recognize communities' expertise and power to help shape solutions, as well as create planning and decision-making structures that are inclusive, accessible, flexible, and culturally appropriate.

To foster trust building, center community voices, and create equitable outcomes, use an equity lens to identify your community engagement approaches:

- Examine the power dynamics and structures within your agency that maintain inequities. These dynamics determine who you choose to engage and how, who is included and not included in decision-making, and how community members' power is valued and accounted for in your agency's work. Taking this first important step to understand and address these dynamics is critical to meaningful community engagement.
- Ensure communications and engagement efforts are carried out in a way that honors community assets and strengthens efforts to rebuild trust. Partner with community liaisons, hire staff that represent the communities you serve, and train staff on cultural competency skills.
- Align engagement efforts with clear opportunities for community to influence agency decisions – in a process that prioritize the knowledge, concerns, and ideas of the most impacted communities. Ensure these opportunities are supported by the community's capacity to engage meaningfully. If needed, invest in building their capacity.

Relevant Tools & Resources

- [Racial Equity Tools – Power Analysis](#)
- [Policy Link’s Community Engagement Guide for Sustainable Communities](#)

1.08 Community Engagement Planning Process and Considerations

Equitable community engagement begins before the project starts. Staff need time to plan for determining how community engagement fits into efforts as a whole using the considerations below. These considerations allow time for staff to identify and engage the appropriate stakeholders and community members in meaningful ways. Engagement planning steps, timing, and considerations are often concurrent, and multiple engagement activities may be required within a project. To ensure communities are engaged in a way that produces optimal outcomes for all parties involved, we recommend that State agencies require that all project plans include community engagement and outreach scope, goals, and estimated funding needs.

Key timeline and planning considerations for developing a community engagement plan:

1. **Build relationships:** Key contacts or community champions provide critical access to hard-to-reach populations. Plan to take the time to solicit local and regional viewpoints, regardless of knowledge or existing connection in the community. Recognize that positive encounters with community contacts are valuable, especially outside of project-focused transactions.
2. **Project scope:** Within the project scope, a community engagement plan should identify what regulatory, systemic, and environmental impacts and outcomes the program, project or policy will have—intended and unintended—on underserved, under-supported, historically marginalized, and overlooked communities or populations.
3. **Community impacts:** Identify how communities and populations may be disproportionately impacted and what guidance is needed and what input could be gathered?
4. **Types of community engagement:** Use a comprehensive approach to implement the types of engagement that are meaningful to the specific audience(s).
5. **Equitable engagement:** Outline an approach to determine who should be engaged and how. Use the [Environmental Health Disparities Map](#) and/or [EPA’s EJSCREEN](#) tool to identify additional areas of need. Include considerations for community groups and jurisdictions that are already active on this topic.
6. **Budget for engagement activity:** Consider partnering with other agencies or entities to maximize time and funding. This may take time, so provide for this in the timeline.
7. **Media and promotion:** Plan time to research what media platforms are most used and most available to best reach your audiences. Consider a variety.
8. **Include timeline for application or request for funding (RFA/RFQ):** There are established timelines within procurement guidelines as outlined in [RCW 39.26](#). You can make access to funds more equitable with flexibility for expanded timelines or by providing technical assistance to support communities with less capacity to be competitive.

9. **Evaluate existing programs and projects:** Evaluate existing engagement to assess where community engagement is inadequate or is missing altogether and begin to plan and incorporate it into ongoing efforts. For example, programs like the [Department of Ecology’s Model Toxics Control Act](#) are currently going through rule revision and evaluating places where public engagement should be incorporated since it is an opportune time to incorporate community engagement into regular requirements of program action.

Relevant Tools & Resources

- [Strategic Prevention Framework](#)

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2. Elements of Your Agency-Specific Community Engagement Plan

2.01 Determining Obligation

In the early stages of developing or revising any agency service or program, we recommend that each agency determines the level of community engagement needed, based on the program's impact on the public. This accommodates both the reality that it is not appropriate for all agency work to be moderated by a public voice, and the fact that the voice of those significantly impacted by agency decisions is a critical component of equitable, effective, and sustainable programs.

Because the intent of this guidance is to integrate systemically underrepresented voices more wholly into government decision-making, this process applies to all agency activities. The steps outlined below are as relevant to an agency's grant-making program as to a proposal to make changes to a neighborhood's infrastructure. They guide agencies to a more rigorous level of community engagement when the impact of their decision is greater and a more streamlined approach for low-impact decisions.

Using demographic data is a key element of the screening process when determining who lives in an area that could be affected by agency decisions. We support the EJ Task Force's recommendation of conducting area assessments using [Washington's Environmental Health Disparities Map](#) as an initial screening process to find information about population, race, language, and income. This screening can inform follow up outreach with local organizations, schools, public health agents, and community leaders to learn information that demographic data cannot provide, such as preferred communication pathways, presence of languages of lesser diffusion, or the presence of underrepresented communities not defined in census data.

These evaluations can be conducted with a structured tool (see the Racial Equity Toolkit, linked below, and examples provided in Appendix A and B), and can be simple screenings or complex processes, depending on the nature of the program being evaluated.

Core Elements of Determining Obligation

These include a series of steps to understand the relevance of the program to the public:

- Understanding the intentional and unintentional burdens and benefits of the program
- Identifying who and how many people are burdened/benefit (see Demographics below)
- Identifying social relevance of the program
- Outlining the potential for the program to impact someone's legal, financial, physical, or social health
- Confirming legal notification and outreach requirements.

These steps are followed using a systematic tool such as the International Association for Public Participation P2 Spectrum to align the level of public relevance with the suitable level of community engagement.

Relevant Tools & Resources

- Community Engagement Evaluation Tool (Appendix A)
- International Association for Public Participation P2 Spectrum (Appendix B)
- [Racial Equity Toolkit](#), Government Alliance on Race and Equity
- If agencies receive EPA funding, consider the following resources that describe EJ and community engagement expectations associated with that funding (note that other federal funding agencies may have similar guidance):
 - [EJ Interagency Working Group Framework for Collaboration](#)
 - [EPA's procedural safeguards checklist for funding recipients](#)

2.02 Funding

[Note that this will be updated to reflect the EJ Task Force's decision on their model policy recommendations]

Providing adequate funds and resources for community engagement is the backbone to implementing best practices for meaningfully reaching diverse communities across Washington. We argue that poorly-funded community engagement delivers poor results, which feeds into the perception that community engagement is not a valuable process. [Case studies across the country](#) illustrate cost-savings over time when investments are made in the decision-making process. Well-resourced community engagement lowers the risk of an agency being out of compliance with federal and state requirements and leads to greater agency efficiency. Investing in community engagement is necessary to provide effective customer service for Washington's residents. Therefore, think critically about how to prioritize funds and resources for community engagement, which includes incorporating a funding element to an agency-specific community engagement plan.

Key elements of your agency's community engagement plan identify available funds and resources to systemically and intentionally:

- Hire or contract expert⁴⁵ community engagement coordinators, possibly through community organizations, to provide agency leadership on engagement planning and staff training.
- Communicate with communities in a culturally and linguistically relevant way, including following your agency's federally-mandated language access plan, translating documents, and providing interpretation for all interactions and verbal presentations.
- Compensate community members and organizations for their time and expertise and streamline the reimbursement process for community engagement-related expenses.
- Provide funding for multiple community engagement formats (e.g. public meetings, focus groups, surveys, community festivals, community beautification projects or artwork, etc.).

⁴⁵ See section 2.09 for a discussion of expertise.

- Make transportation, culturally appropriate food, and childcare available for all events that include members of the public.
- Support staff travel to different parts of the state to engage with diverse communities.

Relevant Tools & Resources

- The [Valuing Engagement Toolkit](#) can help agencies identify and articulate the costs and benefits of engagement, and assist with making the business case for community engagement.
- The [Independent Sector](#) values volunteer time at \$25.43 per hour, on average, across the U.S.
- Government example: The National Park Service & U.S. Forest Service valued its volunteers' time at [\\$179 million](#) in 2018.
- The International Association for Public Participation's [Core Values Awards](#), showcasing exceptional community engagement work.

2.03 Engagement and Consultation with Tribal and Indigenous Peoples

Tribal and Indigenous peoples have existed and prospered in what is now Washington state since time immemorial. Tribal and Indigenous peoples in Washington state are not homogenous – there are 29 federally-recognized tribes, many non-recognized tribes, Tribal and Indigenous peoples that come from other parts of what is now the U.S., Alaskan Natives, Native Hawaiians, and Indigenous peoples from all across the world. Therefore, using a tailored approach to engage with Tribal and Indigenous communities is not only necessary, but also acknowledges the diversity of Tribal and Indigenous peoples in Washington. Tribal and Indigenous engagement is a part of any project or policy that might affect these communities (which is almost all the time) and applies to governmental and non-governmental entities. Tribal and Indigenous engagement is *not* a substitute for Tribal consultation, which is a specific process of early, often, and meaningful communication and coordination between Tribal governments and State or federal governments. Many agencies have developed plans for formal Tribal consultation to facilitate compliance with Chapter 43.376 RCW and the Washington State Centennial Accord of 1989, such as [Washington's Department of Health](#).

Key considerations when engaging with Tribal and Indigenous peoples:

- **European colonization has disrupted virtually all aspects of Tribal and Indigenous cultures.** This has led to a variety of disparate and disproportionate environmental, social, and economic outcomes for Indigenous peoples in Washington state.
- **Acknowledge and cede space to local Tribal and Indigenous leaders and sovereignty.** Tribal sovereignty should always be centered, and space should be ceded to the Tribal leaders and elders. Each Tribe and Indigenous community have their own leaders, cultural norms, and values. Tribal leadership, both in communities and in government, can take forms that are less common in white culture. These leadership structures, like the role elders can play, are important to recognize. Consistency between an agency's

engagement intentions and agency policies are an integral part of honoring and respecting sovereignty.

- **Building trust and relationships is integral to have positive outcomes.** Many Tribal and Indigenous communities and peoples are protective of who is allowed to hold influence and community platforms – even with external engagement events. It is necessary to build trust and relationships with these communities, which means showing up and listening without pre-intended outcomes of what you want from them. This might mean giving something without expectation of reciprocity. One-off engagement events often do not build the trust and relationships needed for successful outcomes and is likely to lead to more long-lasting harm.
- **Pay for time and space.** If you want to do real engagement, you need to support the local community. That could mean renting local venues, hiring Native caterers and families, and compensating people for their time. In many communities, it is customary to bring gifts for key individuals to express gratitude for their presence and contributions.
- **Respect local norms and protocols.** There are often many formal and informal cultural and local norms and protocols. Oftentimes, relationships must be built before these norms and protocols become evident. Some general norms include, but are not limited to, respecting when elders and leaders speak, scheduling meetings around fishing and hunting seasons, and scheduling meetings around key community events (e.g., high school football games, Tribal holidays, etc.).
- **Engagement outcomes are dependent on the investments into engagement with Tribal and Indigenous communities.** People within and between Tribal communities are part of a wide and communal network. Conducting poor engagement within a community is likely to result in poor communication and dissemination of information within the social networks of a community. Additionally, conducting poor or no engagement is likely to create a bad reputation across the Tribal and Indigenous networks in the state, which may lead to additional barriers in the future when trying to engage those communities.
- **Tribal and Indigenous engagement does NOT substitute for Tribal consultation.** Each Tribe is likely to have their own consultation procedures, which supersede agency policies. Consultation needs to happen early, often, and meaningfully. [Chapter 43.376 RCW](#) and the [Washington State Centennial Accord of 1989](#) provide background on formal government to government consultation.

2.10 Choosing Services and Service Providers

Trust is critical to effective community engagement and a currency that many agencies lack in public perception. In our analysis of barriers to community engagement, some of the key factors impacting trust included:

- Geographic, racial, and cultural representation in agency staff.
- Linguistic or cultural relevance of communication materials.
- History and established relationships with community.

- Two-way information sharing when community information is incorporated into agency priorities.

When engaging the community, the ability to listen and understand issues through their perspective is important. A community engagement practitioner is responsible for providing a safe space and conducive environment, where community members can freely express their experiences, stories, and frustrations with government entities without fear of negative consequences. While professional training can be very beneficial, traits like emotional intelligence, humility, curiosity, adaptability, planning skills, and leadership outrank formal academic credentials or certifications when assessing the aptitude of community engagement practitioners.

While there is obvious overlap in skill sets, the skills and knowledge of successful communications staff and successful community engagement staff can differ in important ways. The primary goal of community outreach is to build trust with varying groups and elicit honest, engaged feedback to inform agency decisions and promote a two-way flow of information during decision-making. This differs from communications, which typically prioritizes providing a one-way flow of information through traditional media channels.

Key issues on this topic to include in an agency-specific community engagement plan:

- Develop community engagement services that are not static but rather determined in response to several factors, which are further developed in Determining Obligation, above:
 - Relevance of the issue to the impacted population(s).
 - Specific linguistic and cultural needs of the impacted population(s).
- Design services to impact the primary outcomes of the program or efforts.
- Establish standards of skills, experience, and knowledge for community engagement practitioners that value anti-racism and equity training, community outreach or organizing experience, cultural humility, and understanding of the specific cultures and communities at hand. Note that none of these skills are strictly tied to formal academic accomplishments or certifications.
- Develop engagement approaches that integrate community leaders and community members as partners in engagement.
- Consider whether your agency supports community engagement staff who represent the ethnic and cultural makeup of the population you serve. If not, work with your agency's recruitment and retention specialists on a plan to include such staff.

2.04 Identifying a Responsible Coordinator and Alliance with Agency Leadership

Identify an agency-wide contact person or coordinator in your agency-specific community engagement plan. To be effective, this coordinator will have the authority, or a clear path to it, to make agency-wide decisions about community engagement standards and strategies. They will be able to strategize the agency's diverse engagement needs, introduce and disseminate

best practices across the agency, and ensure that the standards identified by the agency are being met.

More specifically, responsible coordinators are especially important during EJ emergencies. To be most effective, coordinators will be on the frontlines with highly impacted communities and sensitive populations to plan for and respond to emergencies such as hazardous substance releases and oil spills in order to assess the impact, monitor the situation, provide technical assistance, and evaluate the effectiveness of the response efforts.

Relevant Tools & Resources

- [EPA's On-Scene Coordinators](#)

2.05 Representation and Access

One of the most critical components of conducting meaningful community engagement is valuing the representation from community members who are most impacted by agency decisions. This takes hard work, and often means “swimming upstream” to question agency norms or the status quo of how an agency conducts community engagement.

At the core of representation and access is:

- A deep understanding of an agency’s audience, which cannot be achieved without valuing cultural humility, and building relationships and community trust.
- Culturally and linguistically appropriate communication, such as plain talk, translation and interpretation, informational animations and graphics, and various formats and opportunities for communities to engage with an agency.
- Acknowledging and addressing internal biases and hiring and other staffing practices that may unintentionally “screen out” individuals from highly impacted communities.

2.06 Effective Communication

Much of the information agencies need to engage community members about is highly technical and contextual. Agency-specific community engagement plans address the [common barriers](#) each agency encounters when they deliver highly technical, discipline-specific information to the public and how to share information and ask questions in ways that facilitate understanding among the public, especially individuals with little or no technical background.

Key issues on this topic to include in an agency-specific community engagement plan:

- Plain talk, including defining what it means for the agency and when and how to use it. This will include writing for people with varying levels of literacy, writing for translation, and speaking for interpretation.
- The use of visuals to support written copy.
- The value of education when an agency is going to engage communities with little technical or policy understanding, including educational tools. This will include ideas for

partnering with community based organizations who already educate community members on similar topics.

- Culturally appropriate communication, including how and when to assess for [cultural appropriateness](#) and what to do when you misstep.
- Opportunities to partner with agency communications departments.

2.07 Ethical Data Collection

Given our increasingly diverse population, it is crucial that agencies think critically about the way data are gathered and why certain populations routinely are not counted or accurately represented. To get a more holistic understanding of the communities an agency serves, the agency must collect both quantitative and qualitative data. An agency's community engagement plan guides how the agency intends to address data gaps and prioritize ethical data collection policies and practices. We recommend that agencies especially prioritize data collection to evaluate the effectiveness of community engagement work to determine whether or not the community is actually being served by the agency's efforts.

Quantitative Data

A common way to gather quantitative data is through surveys, like the Census. Disaggregating demographic data allows State agencies to begin to identify how various segments of the population may be impacted by different policies, programs, or projects. We must also acknowledge that the way we currently collect demographic information has limitations and cannot capture the full identify of an individual.

When collecting quantitative data, ask:

- What will these data be used for?
- Who is left out? How are they left out?
- How can we frame our approaches and questions in a culturally relevant manner?
- When surveying people who speak languages other than English, does the survey reflect the logic and nuance of each language?
- How will we protect the privacy and security of community members? And how will we convey this protection to community members? How will we honestly communicate risks?
- How will we share data with the broader community in a culturally humble manner that leverages community assets to address existing community concerns (e.g. the process to provide feedback on data interpretations, how data are represented in a recommendation or final report, etc.)?

Qualitative Data

Community engagement is one important way to gather qualitative data. Agencies need to understand the nuances of a community's lived experiences to contextualize quantitative data and make holistically informed decisions. Building relationships and conversing with community members and trusted community leaders provides insight beyond demographic data. When engaging communities, it is important to recognize and value the community as a partner in the

process, including sharing findings with communities for their feedback before finalizing a decision that may affect their lives.

Questions to consider when collecting qualitative data include:

- How do we get informed consent? What does this mean for online spaces?
- How do we maintain anonymity if that is requested/desired? How does this happen when State agencies given the required protocols for certain public meetings?
- How do we collect and share data from marginalized or sensitive populations without further creating trauma or jeopardizing their safety?

2.08 Language Access

All State agencies that receive federal funding are bound by a 2004 executive order and pursuant guidance from federal agencies to ensure their services and programs are equally accessible to people with limited English proficiency. Extensive guidance has been developed to support those legal requirements, see *Relevant Tools and Resources* below for details.

In addition to agency-wide systems that help staff decide when and how provide multi-lingual communication, cultural appropriateness of the communication and delivery method are critical considerations.

Translation and interpretation needs are often determined using a threshold described in federal language access plan [guidance](#): if 5% or 1,000 individuals in a population prefer a specific non-English language, translation or interpretation is likely appropriate. However, when agency decisions can have meaningful, direct impacts on the public, it is important to pay attention to smaller linguistic groups even if a language does not meet that threshold. Special attention must be paid to providing accurate services in languages that are often overlooked. For example, Indigenous Mexican languages, languages that have no or short histories of being written, and dramatically distinct “dialects.”

Lastly, American Sign Language, while a key element of each agency’s ADA accommodations, is a language and belongs in language access planning.

Relevant Tools and Resources

- National standards for [culturally and linguistically appropriate services](#)
- [Federal guidance](#) for developing language access plans and providing language services

- Detailed guidance from the Environmental Protection Agency on developing and fulfilling language access plans

COVID Case Study

In early 2020, as Washington State was in the early stages of responding to the COVID-19 pandemic, the State established a Community Engagement Task Force's (CETF) through its Department of Health. This task force focused on making vital public health information related to COVID-19 accessible to communities with limited English proficiency, in accordance with Governor Inslee's [Language Access Plan During COVID-19 Memo](#). This type of language access, a task that has challenged agencies across the state, was organized and delivered in a surprisingly short time, modeling how State resources and power can be leveraged quickly to implement meaningful, pro-equity work alongside communities.

The task force includes health educators, policy experts, and language access specialists who have dedicated their careers to health equity. The group's key guidance is a [Language Access Plan](#). The CETF also [contracted directly](#) with over 20 "community-rooted, community-led, and community-based" organizations across Washington to provide critical health and safety information to communities disproportionately impacted by COVID-19, especially among culturally and linguistically diverse groups.

2.09 Online Engagement and Internet access

When Washington State joined the rest of the country in responding to the novel coronavirus, formerly in-person group activities like schooling and public meetings suddenly moved online. That transition made the impact of long-standing gaps in internet access across the state bracingly clear. Census data from 2018 show that over 1,235,000 people in Washington lack internet connections aside from cellphone data, with about 735,000 of those people lacking a data connection completely. Most of this gap is due to lacking financial resources, but many Washingtonians live in areas where broadband simply hasn't been built.

We can look to community organizers and outreach practitioners who have historically worked with populations who have limited internet access for tools to bridge these gaps. Three potential approaches are:

- Text message campaigns that introduce the issue and connect people with next steps.
- Replacing or supplementing public meetings with websites and [online tools](#) designed for interactive learning and engagement.
- Recording and sharing videos of online public meetings.
- Community leader-directed outreach. Building relationships with representatives of the relevant community and following their guidance on best outreach methods.

2.11 Training

Developing an agency-wide community engagement plan sets policy for your agency and communicates to staff and customers about engagement expectations and opportunities. A training program can assist with implementation by promoting awareness of the plan and

teaching staff strategies and best practices for engagement. In addition to training agency staff about how to communicate the key functions of an agency with community, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI), environmental justice, and cultural humility trainings are important core competencies for community engagement.

When deciding who will provide the training, it is appropriate to look for opportunities to hire individuals or smaller firms local to the communities the agency works with. These groups know the needs and nuances of their communities, and working with such groups can be a tool for relationship building.

The training topics listed above require skill, experience, and sensitivity to present effectively. Particularly for topics with structural oppression at their roots, poorly-run trainings can cause deep and lasting organizational and personal harm. To avoid this, look for training providers with demonstrated track records.

Relevant Tools & Resources

Reach out to peer agencies. They are often happy to share their plans, practices, experiences, and training practices. They may even have a program you can use as-is. Do online research into community engagement plans and training programs.

2.12 Policy and Legislative Development

This section focuses on building internal policy and working with the legislature in a manner that considers the experience of and integrates input from members of the public who may be impacted by these decisions.

All agency policies impact communities and populations differently, and can have unintended consequences unless impacted communities have an opportunity to contribute to policy development. It is important to apply the elements of your agency's community engagement plan when developing new or amending existing agency policies. This can lead to better policies as well as more positive public receptivity to proposals. In particular, developing agency request legislation and navigating input and amendments during legislative session can require specific planning to support community engagement.

Key issues on this topic that should be in an agency-specific community engagement plan:

- **Clarification of objectives regarding environmental justice.** To support work that prioritizes equitable outcomes and recognizes the need for community engagement, the agency should review primary objectives for proposed policies, and referring to and applying the agency's EJ strategy if one is in place. These objectives should be clearly articulated.
- **A clear consultation and communication process in advance of legislative session:**
 - *Roles and responsibilities.* Clarify who are the primary contacts and how to communicate with them.

- *Content.* Agency staff should have clear guidelines about what aspects of a draft policy should be shared and with whom.
- *Timeline.* Ensure a clear timeline is provided that allows sufficient time for policies to be communicated about, understood, and for feedback to be provided (especially for smaller organizations with more limited resources and capacity).
- *Review and responsiveness.* Agencies should have systems in place to record input, clarifying that main points have been understood. Suggestions should be thoroughly reviewed and considered. Agencies should plan to implement suggested changes where possible (this may at times require new ways of thinking or flexibility on the part of the agency), or propose alternatives when needed. Either way, follow up with stakeholders and articulate how the agency will respond to their input.
- **Consider offering compensation** for the time community partners put into policy review.
- **A clear plan for engagement during legislative session**
 - *Key policy details.* It should be clear what parts of a proposed policy would need further engagement and review if amendments are proposed.
 - *Agreed points of contact during session.* Agencies should agree with community partners who is willing and able to review proposed amendments and respond in a timeline manner during legislative session.
 - **Refer back to objectives for quick turnaround decisions.** If agencies need to make immediate decisions during legislative session, they can refer back to the articulated objectives to ensure final policy details further these goals.

2.13 Agency Accountability and Responsibility

[Note that this will be updated to reflect the EJ Task Force’s decision on their model policy recommendations]

It is the responsibility of agencies to meet the needs of the public they serve, not to selectively choose whose needs are recognized. Secondly, agencies are responsible for complying with, evaluating, and holding themselves accountable to these community engagement recommendations. Presently, there are two statewide entities that may help hold agencies accountable to community engagement, Results Washington and the future Office of Equity. The agency may also be accountable to ensure community engagement in achieving federal expectations, through funding or other relationships between state and federal entities. To build trust and ensure accountability with communities, agencies will maintain transparency and communication. For this part of the community engagement plan, we recommend the agency identifies mechanisms for evaluating community engagement work and reporting back to communities.

To center accountability as agencies write a community engagement plan, we recommend agencies evaluate its community engagement work and consider the following:

- How are highly subjective words like “meaningful” and “effective” used in the context of community engagement? Will it provide clarity for the agency to define these words within the community engagement plan?
- How will the agency know when the agency achieved “meaningful” or “effective” community engagement?
- Where are there pre-existing opportunities within an agency’s purview to expand community engagement to support the agency’s current work and obligations?
- Where is agency funding is coming from, and are there specific requirements for community engagement associated with that funding?
- How are agencies demonstrating the process by which they are incorporating and engaging communities in their decision-making processes?

Relevant Tools & Resources

- [Racial Equity Toolkit](#) (pp. 9-10)
- [Existing toolkits and example evaluations of government community engagement work](#) (p. 4)
- [WA Office of the Attorney General: Government Accountability](#)
- [Results Washington](#)
- [The Community Engagement Continuum: Outreach, Mobilization, Organizing and Accountability to Address Violence against Women in Asian and Pacific Islander Communities](#)

Community Engagement Plan Guidance Appendix A, Public Participation Evaluation Tool

Site Information

Date:

Cleanup Process Stage:

Site Name:

Site Manager:

Public Involvement Lead:

Stakeholders:

Note:

This is a slightly modified example of a community engagement evaluation tool that is in use. This example is specific to one discipline (environmental cleanup) but could be developed into something more broad or tailored to fit agency-specific projects.

Best Practices and Assumptions

- We assess at a higher level of public participation in the absence of technical information and experience in the community.
- If it goes “bad,” what will we wish we had done at first?
- We will reassess at key decision points.
- This evaluation tool includes the defined cleanup site and the affected community (perceived or actual).
- We are assuming that all of our sites are difficult to communicate and may be complicated to cleanup.

Scoring System - Adapted from IAP2 Evaluating Public Participation

1-2 Very Low to Low – recommendation: at least inform.


2-3 Low to Moderate – recommendation: at least consult (public comment periods are consult).

3-4 Moderate to High – recommendation: probably involve.

4-5 High to Very High – recommendation: minimum Involve, consider opportunities for Collaborate or Empower if feasible

| Assessment Question | Very Low | Low | Med | High | Very High |
|--|----------|-----|-----|------|-----------|
| 1. How much do major stakeholders (i.e. tribes, local government, local organizations, general public) care about the cleanup and the decision to be made? | | | | | |
| 2. Proximity to other big or controversial projects. | | | | | |
| 3. What degree of participation does the public appear to want? | | | | | |
| 4. Impact of cleanup or investigation to people's daily life? | | | | | |
| 5. What is the value of the site or the associated resources for the community? (Aesthetics, economic, etc.) | | | | | |
| 6. What degree is the risk or perceived risk of exposure off site? | | | | | |
| 7. What is the level of EJ concerns? (Linguistically isolated communities, EJ Index, demographics, workers?) | | | | | |
| 8. What is the potential for public outrage? | | | | | |
| 9. What is the legally optimal (MTCA, RCRA, DW Regs) level of public participation? | | | | | |
| 10. Level of complexity that requires agency-wide policy or regulatory analysis (i.e. vapor intrusion, water quality standards, other regulations). | | | | | |
| 11. To what extent do internal staff believe that the public could help improve the outcome? | | | | | |
| 12. What is the potential for the public to influence the decision-making process? | | | | | |
| 13. What level of media interest do you anticipate? | | | | | |
| 14. What is the anticipated potential for political controversy? | | | | | |
| 15. What is the capacity and level of resources that the community or organizations currently have to address this site? | | | | | |
| Count number of checks in each column. | | | | | |
| Multiply number of checks by the weight. | X1 | X2 | X3 | X4 | X5 |
| Enter column score. | | | | | |
| Add total of all five column scores. | | | | | |
| Divide total score by the number of questions. | | | | | |
| Average score | | | | | |

Community Engagement Plan Guidance Appendix B, Public Participation Spectrum



| | INFORM | CONSULT | INVOLVE | COLLABORATE | EMPOWER |
|----------------------------------|--|--|---|--|--|
| PUBLIC PARTICIPATION GOAL | To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives, opportunities and/or solutions. | To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions. | To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered. | To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution. | To place final decision making in the hands of the public. |
| PROMISE TO THE PUBLIC | We will keep you informed. | We will keep you informed, listen to and acknowledge concerns and aspirations, and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision. We will seek your feedback on drafts and proposals. | We will work with you to ensure that your concerns and aspirations are directly reflected in the alternatives developed and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision. | We will work together with you to formulate solutions and incorporate your advice and recommendations into the decisions to the maximum extent possible. | We will implement what you decide. |

Community Engagement Plan Guidance Appendix C, Barriers to Meaningful Engagement

Community Engagement Subcommittee, EJ Task Force

2019/2020

This list was developed with input from members of the Community Engagement Subcommittee, members of the EJ Task Force during its 1/14/2020 meeting, and members of the public attending the same Task Force meeting. This list is not intended to be static or definitive. Categories help organize a large list, and we recognize that many/most items in the list are connected and related to each other in complex ways. These points are largely unedited transcriptions from contributors.

Systems of oppression

Agency culture and structures inherently reference, rely on, and reflect systems of oppression such as:

- White supremacy
- Settler colonialism
- Capitalist hegemony
- Patriarchy
- Christian hegemony

Access to information

When printed materials are the central mode of communication, many people are excluded.

- Print materials that are unreadable
- Print materials unreadable for people who are older or sight-impaired
- The lack of large print, braille, interpreters
- Text-heavy documents/materials (not in plain English)
- Use visuals as much as possible to convey the message (instead of relying on heavy text, even if the text gets translated into other languages).
- Translated print materials (while important) does not guarantee information access because some folks may not be literate in their native tongue or the translation vendor does literal translation (that does not accurately express the true meaning) or uses formal or complicated terms (versus colloquial word choices).
- Best practice in terms of translating text materials into other languages is to use “transcreation” instead of direct translation services. Transcreation is the process of adapting a message from one language to another, while maintaining its intent, style, tone, and context.
- Printed information sometimes becomes obsolete or outdated – hard to get up to date information.

Focus on English excludes people who speak other languages.

- Limited proficiencies (with English for example)
- Low quality translation/interpretation and English-only speaking staff who can't assist
- When preparing translations or hiring interpreters, agencies can overlook indigenous languages like Purépecha or Mixtec languages, assuming Latinx people all speak Spanish. This extends into language variants, indigenous languages, and other linguistic nuances worldwide.
- Some populations (e.g., farmworkers injured on the job) need both translation/interpretation and ADA access to information.

Access to meetings

Arrangements to get to the meeting can cost more than the meeting is worth.

- Traveling to meetings that are geographically distant from the people impacted by the topic of the meeting
- Cost of travel
- Meetings not accessible for those living in rural areas
- Meetings not accessible for those without reliable cell service or internet connection
- Temporally and spatially accessible meeting spaces
- [Lack of] Childcare
- Inaccessible meetings: no food, no childcare, lacking transportation, lacking language interpretation
- Business/industry members and expertise in the room can be intimidating
- Legal status and fear of retaliation from a person in power (e.g., an employer). Meeting attendees/public comment respondents may not be safe speaking up.

The environment at the meeting can be unwelcoming or exclusive.

- People aren't sure if they are invited or welcome to the meeting
- Shame for not knowing what is going on
- For ethnically diverse communities, a conventional mainstream public meeting format may not be culturally sensitive or appropriate.
- English-speaking presenters at meetings with LEP communities may not have the training or knowledge on how to present while accounting for interpretation (they speak too fast, with jargon, etc.).
- There may not be upfront work to help build knowledge capacity of the community around a specific technical topic before bringing them into a meeting (particularly an advisory committee type meeting where they will provide recommendations/inputs). Thus community members may not feel comfortable sharing ideas if they do not have the foundational background info first.
- The physical room arrangement can have some participants in more powerful seats than others. "Galleries" in meetings might discourage participation.

Apathy/burden

Note that apathy can be claimed as a reason not to provide meaningful public engagement, when often the appearance of apathy is a result of systemic issues like distrust, choosing to use limited resources in systems that are more effective based on previous experience with community engagement processes, etc.

- People don't feel responsible for what's happening in their neighborhoods.
- Participation burnout – community members have already commented on an issue multiple times and do not see any improvements/response/actions
- [People] Feel like their voices don't matter or that the government doesn't care about them
- Difficulties prioritizing what to care about and invest time in
- People have more pressing issues in their lives
- Multiple agencies are trying to work in the same communities but are not coordinating among themselves to provide a more integrated engagement approach (Where it makes sense) that reduces redundancy.
- Energy needed to engage is overwhelming compared to other needs in individual's lives – need to make it easier to understand the issues and participate

Communication

Effectively communicating the issue and supporting information in a way that's understandable to a broad variety of people isn't prioritized.

- Difficulties prioritizing what to care about and invest time in: How can people find out what is meaningful for them?
- Effectively communicating why this work matters and how it affects Washington residents' daily lives, while keeping in mind that everyone is busy and has competing priorities
- The bureaucratization of communicating the message
- Technical language and jargon isn't understandable to the layperson
- Defined limitations of what is possible for the government to do are not clear so it is difficult to know how to make recommendations that are possible (e.g., what is the role of the government, what can they do within their legal limits?)

The engagement process and opportunities aren't effectively communicated.

- Can't figure out how or where to give comment(s)
- Be transparent early and throughout the program planning process the boundaries for the program that is set

- Meeting content requires better introduction for community member(s) to feel informed enough to participate (better educational materials in multiple languages and relevant to community perspective are needed as is an allotment of time needed for community engagement)

Potential for influence

While agency process may include community engagement, it does not support external influence on the decision making process.

- Inflexibility, unwillingness to change
- Government fear of losing power or control can shut down the public process
- State government norms – keeping up with the status quo
- Lack of follow up from the government
- Communities questioning whether or not they actually have power and if engaging with the government is a good use of their time as a result
- Waiting to work with communities until decisions have been made – informing communities about decisions, rather than involving communities early and often.
- Legislature provides predetermined decisions but expects community engagement to inform outcomes
- Norm that the technical experts know best, and community comments aren't "informed by science"
- Devaluing indigenous knowledge and traditional ecological knowledge (TEK) that may come in the form of public comment compared to western science to inform processes and decisions; not creating space and time for incorporating TEK and indigenous knowledge early in the process
- For Tribes – the misconstrued notion that participating in a government's public engagement process can serve as a replacement for government-to-government consultation and Tribal engagement.
- Pressure/power of conflicting interests from business/industry can be intimidating and seem aligned with government.
- Funds and time not set aside by government for community engagement on an issue puts the burden on communities to know the issue and when/how to engage and puts out message that it is community's problem and input is not desired.

Representation

- Government agencies working with a small group of communities, so their work is not actually representative of the community
- Agency staff don't represent community members, limiting trust and cultural/communication skills

- Nonprofit staff may not truly represent the communities they serve (are they actually from the community?) or community leaders may not represent all diverse voices within a community.
- Same folks who have easy access to participating in government's community engagement activities may show up multiple times in different events – so the same voice is continually being heard. Such folks have a voice to hear, but the government is not doing extensive outreach to engage a more diverse set of community members.
- Who can represent certain groups.
 - For example, some Tribal Nations may have specific procedures on who is able to represent them publicly (e.g. elected Tribal leader, departmental staff, etc...). Having a Tribal member present may not sufficiently meet the definition of engagement or representation for some or many Tribes.
- We [agencies] hear from a small group of very vocal people who may not be representative.

Process

- The fundamental goal is often to comply with the law or regulation, not to effectively engage communities.
- Evaluation of effectiveness isn't often prioritized. Agencies can perceive success as long as they aren't being sued or issued a formal complaint.
- The goal of the engagement isn't defined clearly to establish appropriate expectations for the community.
- The goal of the engagement isn't defined clearly to establish appropriate goals and tasks for agency staff.
- The decision-making process – how do we decolonize the decision-making process? How do we support power-sharing and community self-empowerment?
- Government staff with less authority not having the power to listen and make significant changes even if they would like to.
- Lack of working early and often with folks impacted the most
- [Lack of] Investing in black and brown communities
- Government not recognizing intersectionality [intersectionality of agency programs, how different agencies influence each other]
- Jurisdictional and sector/department silos
- Process of mutual learning and dialogue that builds relationship versus one-time listening session - Create or participate in opportunities for mutual learning between community and agency staff
- Determining funding and staff time needed for community engagement is not part of decision-making process

- The solution to the problem isn't the solution for everyone and may put some people at risk. For example, high nitrates in the drinking water well in a home for people who may risk getting evicted if they report it back.

Novel processes/results of engagement aren't accommodated in agency plans

- Lack of creativity or thinking outside of the box in terms of community engagement
- Identify creative avenues to help address key community recommendations that may fall out of your agency's program scope or authority.
- "Do meetings the black way" [Agencies expect all cultures to adapt to their culture, rather than meeting people where they are]
- How do we do more of something we're not used to?

Agency timelines do not accommodate change or the amount of time meaningful engagement and relationship building takes.

- Artificial deadlines – lack of understanding within government processes that deadlines are often more adjustable than they seem.
- Lack of empowerment of government employees to ask "what is actually driving this deadline? Where and how can we create more space to be responsive to/engaging of communities?"
- The government rushing the decision-making process, perception that the timeline is immovable.
- Sometimes the timeline is immovable – for legislative deadlines, budgeting, etc.
- Conducting an engagement as an afterthought or later in the process vs building it into the process from the very beginning and have it evolve throughout the process
- Ensure that there is a continuous loopback mechanism in sharing back with the communities how their input informed decisions, plans and tools.
- Agencies don't value the expertise of skilled community engagement staff (e.g., include them in scoping, budgeting, defining process needs).

Resources

Accurate amounts of time and money for meaningful engagement are not allocated when budgeting projects.

- Lack of budget or resources for community engagement efforts. For example, if people are being asked to travel or contribute significantly, there is often no compensation for their time, cost burden, or expertise.
- Government resources not allocated properly.
- Hire staff that reflect diverse lived experiences from communities that the agency/organization wants to serve
- Provide technical assistance to community grantees (especially small CBOs) to build their capacity in managing your agency's grant funding and reporting (but also identify

areas of improvement in the contracting process within your agency to ensure that it is not overburdening the CBOs).

- Staff time not allocated for community engagement.
- The legislature doesn't respond well to asks for increased engagement funding.
- Resources means not just hiring a community engagement coordinator but investing in community leadership and civic engagement (e.g., community leadership boards)
- Barriers in state law can prevent funded/compensated participation in decision-making processes that cost money.
- The process and budget for projects that require/use community engagement is rarely developed with someone who has expertise in community engagement.

Sovereignty

- Sovereign Tribes may see government processes at a different level than what their sovereign status warrants. For example, most state-Tribal relations happen at a formal government-to-government process or through formal consultation processes. If these processes are not elevated to the status of a Tribe's sovereignty, many Tribes will choose not to engage for fear of engaging being used against them.

Trust

- Community context – the historical relationship of the public with government agencies and how that leads to the current level of trust
- Lack of listening skills among agency representatives
- Be present in the community and support their community-led work, not just come into the community when you need something
- As a government staff not from the community, learn about and be sensitive the historical and current trauma that communities of color have faced
- Agencies are only responsible for bringing offenders to compliance rather than preventing injury.
- The public participation process often doesn't result in a different outcome.
- Agency staff from outside of a particular community can become pedantic in that community, describing "what it's really like" when they don't have direct experience and don't appear to listen to those who do, especially when agency staff come from a bigger city to regulate a smaller town.
- Agency decision-makers often don't have direct experience with the system they're working in (e.g., bus systems and public transportation). "Rules without relation lead to rebellion."

Types of knowledge

- Many agencies don't believe the public can provide meaningful input, and have the colonial mindset that only academically-oriented individuals can be the experts
- a balance needs to be established to provide the relevant technical information so that relevant input can be received – defining the goals, limitations, etc. is important
- Don't value community engagement to invest resources to do it the right way or do it at all
- Real or perceived sense of what you need to be “competent” enough to participate
- Prioritizing quantitative or science-based data over qualitative data
- Evaluate the weight of public comments
- Which comments hold more weight?
- Are public comments actually valued?
- Perception that “we have the right people at the table” already and the lack of ability to see the gaps in participation/involvement
- Recognize and honor the expertise that each person brings to the table – either from the government or community – and that we are here to learn from each other.
- Indigenous knowledge systems are often multi-generational and are constructed and validated by different norms than Western Science.
 - Also considerations over the ethics of sharing culturally sensitive Indigenous knowledge, how it is being recorded publicly, and how it is being used.