

# Plan EJ 2014



## Executive Summary



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





# **Plan EJ 2014**

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



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In January 2010, Administrator Lisa P. Jackson made Expanding the Conversation on Environmentalism and Working for Environmental Justice an Agency priority. This priority was incorporated into the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Strategic Plan for 2011-2015. To implement this priority, EPA developed Plan EJ 2014 as the Agency's roadmap for integrating environmental justice into its programs, policies, and activities. This priority recognizes that Title VI of the Civil Rights Act and EPA's civil rights program is a critical component in advancing environmental justice.

Plan EJ 2014, which is meant to mark the 20th anniversary of the signing of Executive Order 12898 on environmental justice, is EPA's overarching strategy for advancing environmental justice. It seeks to:

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



In July 2010, EPA introduced Plan EJ 2014 as a concept for public comment and initiated the development of implementation plans. This product is the culmination of nearly a year's effort by EPA programs and regions, as well as engagement with stakeholders, to develop nine implementation plans with the goals, strategies, deliverables, and milestones outlined herein. Plan EJ 2014 has three major sections: Cross-Agency Focus Areas, Tools Development Areas, and Program Initiatives. The following summaries outline the implementation plans for Plan EJ 2014's five cross-Agency Focus Areas and four Tools Development Areas.

### Cross-Agency Focus Areas

#### Incorporating Environmental Justice into Rulemaking

##### Goal

To more effectively protect human health and the environment for overburdened populations by developing and implementing guidance on incorporating environmental justice into EPA's rulemaking process.

##### Strategies

1. Finalize the *Interim Guidance on Considering Environmental Justice During the Development of an Action*.
2. Facilitate and monitor implementation of guidance on incorporating environmental justice into rulemaking.
3. Develop technical guidance on how to conduct environmental justice assessments of rulemaking activities.



## Considering Environmental Justice in Permitting

### Goal

To enable overburdened communities to have full and meaningful access to the permitting process and to develop permits that address environmental justice issues to the greatest extent practicable under existing environmental laws.

### Strategies

1. Develop tools that will enhance the ability of overburdened communities to participate fully and meaningfully in the permitting process.
2. Concurrent with Strategy 1, develop tools to assist permitting authorities to meaningfully address environmental justice in permitting decisions.
3. Implement these tools at EPA and work with others to do the same.

## Advancing Environmental Justice through Compliance and Enforcement

### Goal

To fully integrate consideration of environmental justice concerns into the planning and implementation of the Office of Enforcement and Compliance Assurance's (OECA) program strategies, case targeting strategies, and development of remedies in enforcement actions to benefit overburdened communities.

### Strategies

1. Advance environmental justice goals through selection and implementation of National Enforcement Initiatives.
2. Advance environmental justice goals through targeting and development of compliance and enforcement actions.
3. Enhance use of enforcement and compliance tools to advance environmental justice goals in regional geographic initiatives to address the needs of overburdened communities.
4. Seek appropriate remedies in enforcement actions to benefit overburdened communities and address environmental justice concerns.
5. Enhance communication with affected communities and the public regarding environmental justice concerns and the distribution and benefits of enforcement actions, as appropriate.

## Supporting Community-Based Action Programs

### Goal

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

### Strategies

1. Advance environmental justice principles by building strong state and tribal partnerships through the National Environmental Performance





Partnership System (NEPPS) and the National Program Manager (NPM) guidance.

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

## **Fostering Administration-Wide Action on Environmental Justice Goal**

To facilitate the active involvement of all federal agencies in implementing Executive Order 12898 by minimizing and mitigating disproportionate, negative impacts while fostering environmental, public health, and economic benefits for overburdened communities.

### **Strategies**

1. Assist other federal agencies in integrating environmental justice in their programs, policies, and activities.
2. Work with other federal agencies to strengthen use of interagency legal tools, i.e., National Environmental Policy Act and Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.
3. Foster healthy and sustainable communities, with an emphasis on equitable development and place-based initiatives.
4. Strengthen community access to federal agencies.







## Tools Development Areas

### Science

#### Goal

To substantially support and conduct research that employs participatory principles and integrates social and physical sciences aimed at understanding and illuminating solutions to environmental and health inequalities among overburdened populations and communities in the United States. All Agency decisions will make use of the information, data, and analytic tools produced.

#### Strategies

1. Apply integrated transdisciplinary and community-based participatory research approaches with a focus on addressing multi-media, cumulative impacts and equity in environmental health and environmental conditions.
2. Incorporate perspectives from community-based organizations and community leaders into EPA research agendas and engage in collaborative partnerships with them on science and research to address environmental justice.
3. Leverage partnerships with other federal agencies on issues of research, policy, and action to address health disparities.
4. Build and strengthen the technical capacity of Agency scientists on conducting research and related science activities in partnership with impacted communities and translating research results to inform change.
5. Build and strengthen technical capacity of community-based organizations and community environmental justice and health leaders to address environmental health disparities and environmental sustainability issues.

### Law

#### Goal

To provide legal assistance to EPA policy makers and other Agency decision makers to advance their environmental justice objectives.

#### Strategy

Provide legal support to each Plan EJ 2014 cross-Agency Focus Area workgroup.



## Information

### Goal

To develop a more integrated, comprehensive, efficient, and nationally consistent approach for collecting, maintaining, and using geospatial information relevant to potentially overburdened communities.

### Strategies

1. Develop EPA's GeoPlatform.
2. Develop a nationally consistent environmental justice screening tool.
3. Incorporate appropriate elements of the environmental justice screening tool into the GeoPlatform.

## Resources

### Grants and Technical Assistance Goal

To develop an efficient and effective system for delivering financial and technical assistance to communities to empower them to improve their health and environment.

### Strategies

1. Increase transparency and efficiency in providing community-based grant opportunities.
2. Improve delivery of technical assistance to communities.
3. Strengthen grants training for communities.
4. Improve community awareness of grant competition process.
5. Revise grant policies that are unduly restrictive.
6. Encourage legal and program offices to dialog on community-based grant opportunities.
7. Improve timeliness of Brownfields Grant Awards.

### Workforce Diversity Goal

To achieve an inclusive work environment by developing an efficient system for the outreach and recruitment of potential employees.

### Strategies

1. Increase the diverse pool of qualified applicants.
2. Operate under an integrated One EPA approach for recruitment and outreach.





## Program Initiatives

Program Initiatives will focus on specific EPA programs. Many existing EPA programs actively pursue environmental justice goals or produce benefits for overburdened communities. Examples of such initiatives include: Community Engagement Initiative (Office of Solid Waste and Emergency Response), Urban Waters (Office of Water), National Enforcement Initiatives (Office of Enforcement and Compliance Assurance), Air Toxics Rules (Office of Air and Radiation), and the U.S. Mexico Border Program (Office of International and Tribal Affairs). Over the next year, EPA will designate at least one initiative per appropriate program for inclusion in Plan EJ 2014. In this way, many existing EPA initiatives can be tailored to better integrate environmental justice and produce greater benefits for overburdened communities.

## Civil Rights

One effort already under way is implementing Administrator Jackson's priority to improve EPA's civil rights program. Complying with EPA's statutory civil rights obligations is a critical part of our efforts to advance environmental justice. Administrator Jackson has made improving EPA's civil rights program a priority. As part of this effort, EPA is pursuing long overdue, vigorous, robust, and effective implementation of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and other nondiscrimination statutes. EPA is committed to protecting people from discrimination based on race, color, or national origin in programs or activities that receive EPA's financial assistance.

## Conclusion

Through Plan EJ 2014, EPA intends to develop a suite of tools to integrate environmental justice and civil rights into its programs, policies, and activities. It seeks to build stronger relationships with communities overburdened by environmental and health hazards and build partnerships that improve conditions in such communities. In 2014, EPA will make an assessment of its progress in achieving the goals of Plan EJ 2014. Based on this assessment, EPA will produce a report on the accomplishments, lessons learned, challenges, and next steps for continuing the Agency's efforts to make environmental justice an integral part of every decision.

