



The Environmental Justice Program

U.S. EPA | ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE AT EPA NEW ENGLAND

EPA NEW ENGLAND'S ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE PROGRAM

works to protect all people, regardless of race, color, national origin or income, from environmental harms and risks, and to involve all citizens in making decisions that affect their environment. The program is designed to achieve environmental and public health improvements for communities disproportionately burdened by the impacts of pollution.



INTRO:

Every program in the EPA touches on issues related to environmental justice. EPA New England's EJ Program has been viewed by the agency as a national model for how to integrate environmental justice into all programs. The EJ Program, led by the New England EJ Council which guides and directs the regional EJ policy, is responsible for collaborating with state and municipal partners, and community organizations on environmental justice issues, providing EJ awareness training and other learning opportunities, and developing tools and guidance to help EPA staff integrate environmental justice into their daily work.

EPA New England first responded to community concerns about environmental justice in 1993 by forming an Environmental Equity Council and issuing the first Environmental Equity Policy in the nation. In October 2001, EPA New England reaffirmed its commitment to this issue with a revised EJ policy that directed the New England office to integrate environmental justice into every program. The policy can be found at: www.epa.gov/region1/ej/ejpolicy.html.

Today, EPA New England's EJ Council, which meets monthly, is charged with putting the policy into practice so that all EPA employees are working towards a cleaner and healthier environment for all people. All regional offices are represented on the EJ Council.

The EJ Council has made it a priority to stay in

communication with state partners on environmental justice. The region works with the states to identify commitments that further environmental justice through state programs and collaborates with them through quarterly EJ conference calls.

Regular contact with local organizations working for a cleaner environment is crucial to educating EPA staff about the environmental problems affecting communities in the region. The EJ Program routinely participates in meetings with community-based organizations to discuss environmental and public health issues important to the community and to identify potential EPA mechanisms (e.g., grants and technical assistance) to address these concerns.

Training ensures that all EPA staff members know the laws and policies behind environmental justice and are familiar with case studies in New England that illustrate real world issues and accomplish-

ments. To supplement the training, the EJ Program has developed internal guidance and tools, including maps of potential EJ areas, to help staff integrate EJ into their daily work.

To ensure continuous learning, EPA New England hosts an environmental justice "Lunch and Learn" series featuring talks by policy-makers, academic professionals, researchers and others who have made major contributions to the field of environmental justice.

For additional information, please access the key contacts below, or: **Heather Ross**, EPA New England EJ Specialist, Office of Civil Rights & Urban Affairs, (617) 918-1073, ross.heather@epa.gov or **Deborah Brown**, EPA New England, Special Assistant to Acting Director and EJ Showcase Community Coordinator, Office of Civil Rights & Urban Affairs, (617) 918-1706, brown.deborah@epa.gov.

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