



U.S. EPA Region 7
901 N. 5th St.
Kansas City, KS 66101
MC: RA/ECO/EJ

Environmental Justice

EPA Region 7

2001 A Year in Review

EPA Region 7 EJ Program Contacts

Althea Moses EJ Program Manager	913-551 7649	moses.althea@epa.gov
Debbie Bishop Environmental Protection Specialist	913-551 7529	bishop.debbie@epa.gov
Monica Espinosa EJ Program Specialist	913-551 7058	espinosa.monica@epa.gov
Sherick Andri Jovan EJ Program Specialist	913-551 7397	jovan.sherick@epa.gov

Regional EJ Program web site: www.epa.gov/region07/ej

Content/Layout/Design: Debbie Bishop; Editor: Althea Moses; Peer Reviewers: Joyce Meinhardt, Cecilia Tapia, and LaTonya Sanders

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OUR VISION

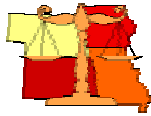
- Meaningful involvement of low-income and minority populations in EPA's decision-making processes;
- Greater understanding of environmental and health-related issues at the community level;
- Ability to identify, address, track, and measure Region 7's progress towards ensuring environmental justice at sites located in low-income and minority communities; and
- Collaboration with federal, state, and local governments, community organizations, academic institutions and other stakeholders to ensure environmental justice.



OUR FOCUS

Environmental Justice is the goal to be achieved for all communities so that all people are treated fairly with respect to the development and enforcement of protective environmental laws, regulations, and policies.

Fair treatment means that no person should bear a greater share of negative environmental impacts that result from environmental programs.



Last year, the EPA Region 7 Environmental Justice (EJ) Program issued the 1997-2000 EJ Program Accomplishments Report. That report documented the EJ Program's success in working towards its stated objectives that included:

- internal implementation,
- program coordination,
- public outreach & education,
- coordination with states and tribal nations,
- coordination with federal partners, and
- liaison to Headquarters and other stakeholders.

Upon the completion of the Accomplishments Report 1997-2000, the EJ Program decided that an annual account of program activities, issues, and events should be maintained.

With that, we bring you the EPA Region 7 EJ Program: 2001 A Year In Review. This document is intended to provide regional stakeholders with a look at the EJ Program's efforts in the continued pursuit of recognizing, understanding, and resolving environmental justice issues for all people regardless of race, color, national origin, or income and educational level.

This review will reiterate the EJ Program's goals and objectives of integrating EJ principles and themes into EPA program areas, and to ensuring fair treatment and meaningful involvement.

Our Commitment

On August 9, 2001, EPA Administrator, Christine Todd Whitman, reaffirmed EPA's commitment to the issue of environmental justice and its integration into all programs, policies, and activities, consistent with existing environmental laws and regulations. Among other things, this requires the following:

- Conducting EPA programs, policies and activities that substantially affect human health and the environment in a manner that ensures the fair treatment of all people, including minority populations and/or low-income populations;
- Ensuring equal enforcement of protective environmental laws for all people;
- Ensuring greater public participation in the EPA's development and implementation of environmental regulations and policies; and
- Improving research and data collection for EPA programs relating to the health and the environment of all people.

“Environmental Justice is a goal to be achieved for all communities and persons across this nation.”

Christine Todd Whitman, EPA Administrator

In order to effectively address environmental justice issues, it is important that consideration of disproportionate risk and health effects be considered in all program areas and within each Regional function which might impact the public.

The EJ Program began work on developing Regional Interim Environmental Justice Policy & Guidance. The purpose of the document is to help regional staff understand, recognize, and address areas of potential environmental justice issues and cases.

The interim policy and guidance will focus on function and usability in order to provide staff an effective and efficient tool in identifying areas where environmental justice can be better incorporated into their daily work.

In addition to hosting three focus group sessions with EPA staff, the EJ Program hosted a community stakeholders meeting on November 7, 2001, to receive public comment on the draft version of the document.

Preparation for the Policy . . .

Several EJ stakeholders attended the meeting and provided valuable external insight as to what the document should look like and how it should be used. This was an effort to really make a significant contribution to the pursuit of understanding, recognizing, and addressing EJ issues and concerns.

The EJ Policy and Guidance provides Region 7 with a firm commitment towards addressing issues of environmental injustice and separate guidance tools for implementing policy principles. The Policy became final in the Spring of 2002. The development of Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) is the next step in integrating EJ principles.

EJ @ Work in the Programs

Omaha Lead Site Citizen Involvement

EPA's Superfund Division worked in collaboration with low-income/minority citizens of Omaha, Nebraska and the EJ Program, to increase the awareness about the effects of childhood lead poisoning and the precautions that can be taken to prevent it.

Early communication with the public increased the awareness of childhood lead poisoning in the Omaha metropolitan area resulting in an increase in the number of children screened for lead poisoning.

Superfund staff are now involved in lead cleanup activities that include the replacement of contaminated soil in Northeast and Southeast Omaha.

Haywood City, MO: Water Compliance Assistance



The EJ Program in collaboration with EPA water program staff, the Missouri Department of Natural Resources, and the City of Haywood City, Missouri, worked to provide water compliance assistance in an effort to provide the community with adequate drinking water.

Lessons Learned

Minority and economically depressed communities require additional and sometimes unique communication efforts;

Fulfilling commitments made to groups and individuals leads to establishing and improving the trust with the public; and

Early and frequent distribution of information helps to minimize the number of persons who may feel surprised or uninformed by new community issues.

Integration of EJ will only occur when staff understand what Environmental Justice is and how the Agency intends to address it.

Environmental Justice Implementation Team (EJIT) *Working Together*

The EJIT played an integral role in 2001 in the initial development stages of the EPA Region 7 EJ Interim Policy and Guidance document. The EJIT researched and reviewed policy and guidance documents in an effort to learn about what others have done to integrate EJ principles into program areas and make recommendations as to how Region 7 could do the same.

The EJIT is made up of over 20 program staff, representing all media programs and special initiatives with common goals, dedicated to the integration and involvement of EJ in specific program areas and functions.

Environmental Justice cannot be addressed in a vacuum. The EJ Program continues to enhance its communication and coordination efforts internally as well as with external stakeholders by partnering with regional technical and media experts.

www.epa.gov/region07/ej

In an effort to reach out to all of our regional stakeholders, the EJ Program launched its new and improved EJ Program web site in June 2001.

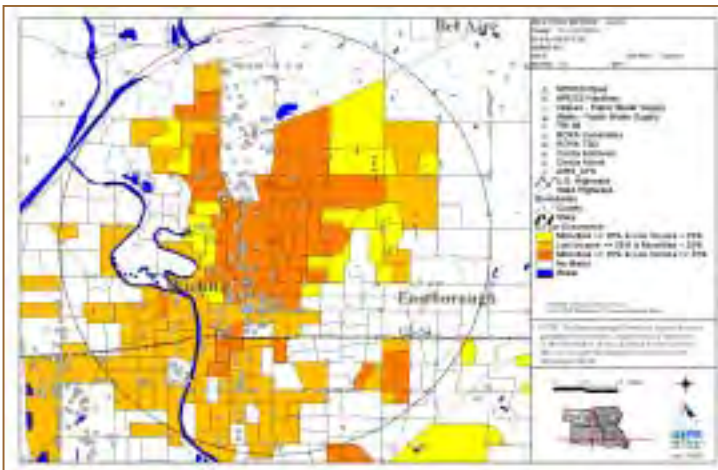
The newly designed web site allows both internal and external EJ stakeholders the opportunity to learn more about Region 7's EJ activities, goals, and objectives.



G Environmental Justice mapping is a tool that the EJ Program has used to help identify areas that have the potential for environmental injustice or disproportionate impact.

E Using Geographic Information Systems (GIS) ArcView, EJ Program staff are able to map by city, county, facility, or by geographic coordinates. Using low-income and minority census data, the maps provide staff the ability to envision a community's character and vulnerability to disproportionate environmental and human health impacts.

T The EJ mapping tool is used in several aspects. It can be used as a planning tool for inspectors in an effort to target potential EJ areas and facilities surrounding a community. EJ mapping also gives staff the opportunity to see a specific site in order to better understand the community and its surrounding areas.



Shown above is an EJ map of Sedgwick County, Wichita, Kansas. It details minority populations at 25% or greater in yellow; 25% or greater low-income populations in orange; the co-occurrence of low-income and minority populations, 25% or greater, in dark orange; and the location of permitted facilities.

Public outreach and education benefits the public. Communities become informed decision-makers and are better able to provide input in public participation processes through public outreach and education efforts.

The EJ Program participated in several community events and activities in 2001.

Involvement in the community is an important aspect of Region 7's EJ Program because it offers program staff the opportunity to interact with regional EJ stakeholders and provide information and education regarding environmental and human health-related issues.

Outreach Events & Activities 2001

- Minority Science Showcase, 1/01
- EJ Small Grants Availability Session, 2/01
- DREAM Center Partners: Lunch & Learn, 3/01
- St. Louis Association of Community Organizations Conference, 4/01
- Mayor's Summit on Race Relations, 4/01
- Latino Civil Rights Summit, 4/01
- Family First, HUD, 5/01
- State Environmental Educators Roundtable, 5/01
- Brownfields All-Pilots Forum, 5/01
- Missouri Waste Control Coalition Meeting, 7/01
- 10th Annual Missouri Black Expo, 8/01
- Central Missouri State University's Community Awareness Week, 9/01
- Fiesta Hispana, 10/01
- Children's Mercy Hospital's Community Meeting, 10/01
- University of Kansas' College and Career Day, 12/01
- 18th & Vine Holiday Extravaganza, 12/01



Top Left Right: EJ Program staff and Region 7's Charlie the Chipmunk participate in the Annual Fiesta Hispana, K.C., MO; Dr. Charles Barnes, Children's Mercy Hospital presentation on asthma and allergy triggers; EJ Grants Expo featuring EPA grant funding programs and EJ Small Grant Projects; Bottom Left-Right: EJ Grants Expo featuring EJ Small Grant Project from Metropolitan Energy Center; EJ Train-the-trainer site visit to The Roxbury, Boston, MA; Fiesta Hispana 2001



Every year since 1994, the EPA Region 7 EJ Program has been able to award grant money to regional organizations to assist them in conducting projects focused on local solutions to local environmental problems. The EPA Region 7 Environmental Justice Program awarded ten EJ Small Grant awards for FY 2001. Solicitation for grant applications began in early 2001 through a mass mailing effort to over 700 regional stakeholders. Over 30 grant proposals were submitted to the EPA, competing for available grant assistance. Although grant resources were limited, the EJ Program was able to award ten grant projects ranging in award amounts from \$15,000 - \$20,000.

For more information on current and past grants awarded by the EPA Region 7 EJ Program, visit our regional web site: www.epa.gov/region07/ej

2001 EJ Small Grant Award Recipients

- Associated Youth Services
KC, KS
- Barton County Health Department
Lamar, MO
- Heart of America Family Services
KC, KS
- Iowa Citizens for Community Improvement
Des Moines, IA
- Junior College District of Mineral Area
Park Hill, MO
- Metropolitan Energy Center
KC, MO
- Operation SafeStreet
St. Louis, MO
- St. Louis Medical Waste Incinerator Group
St. Louis, MO
- Sunflower Community Action
Wichita, KS
- City of Waterloo, IA
Waterloo, IA

Small Grants Workshop and Expo 2001

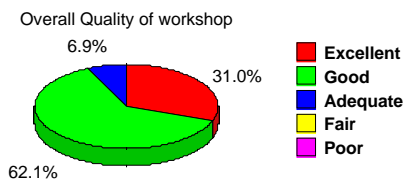
This is the fourth year the EJ program has sponsored the Small Grants Workshop. On Tuesday, January 8, 2002, more than 50 people from various organizational backgrounds participated in the Small Grants Workshop. The day began at 11:00 a.m with the Small Grants Expo and continued throughout the afternoon with two concurrent training tracks that guided participants through various aspects of small grants administration.



Dorothy Oliver (left), Community Liaison for Children's Mercy Hospital's grant to educate people on asthma and allergy triggers.

The Small Grants Expo featured exhibits by past EJ Small Grant award recipients and current EPA grant funding programs. With every state in the region represented, from large and small communities, stakeholders were able to actively engage EPA staff as well as network with other community organizations.

Small Grants Workshop - Jan 8, 2002



*"The exhibits (at the Expo) provided an excellent opportunity to network and learn from other (grant) projects."
-- workshop participant comment*

Actual implementation of many, if not most federal regulations, occurs on a level of government beyond EPA. EJ implementation, to be effective, must include state and tribal coordination.

The Region 7 EJ Program seeks to actively integrate EJ principles and practices of fair treatment and meaningful involvement in state and tribal functions and activities. Coordination and collaboration with state and tribal partners is necessary in order to address issues of environmental injustice before serious problems can arise.

The EJ Program is sensitive to the sovereign rights and responsibilities entitled to state and tribal governments. It is the goal of the Region 7 EJ Program to serve state and tribal government needs as well as the needs of the people.

Haywood City, MO: Water Compliance Assistance

In an effort to assist the small rural agricultural community of Haywood City, located in the Bootheel region of Missouri, the Region 7 EJ Program and Water Division, and the Missouri Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) have been working collaboratively to address drinking water compliance and water system integrity and safety issues.

Region 7 and MDNR are working to assist this low income community in bringing them into compliance and are providing them with assistance needed for water quality sampling to ensure safe drinkable water for residents.



Top Left: Brenda Brandon of Haskell Indian Nations University explains the importance of tribal culture; Top Right: Tribal EJ Tree depicting EJ and tribal values; Bottom: Walter Pearson, Missouri Department of Natural Resources, speaks at the Boston "EJ Train-the-Trainer" Forum

Environmental Justice Training Collaborative

The Environmental Justice Training Collaborative (EJTC) is a voluntary, multi-stakeholder, national network that partners with stakeholders to: develop EJ education training and tools, meet critical information needs, and facilitate dialogue on EJ issues and concerns.

Representatives from EPA Region 7, the Missouri Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) and Haskell Indian Nations University participated in the National Environmental Justice Training Forum to collaboratively work with interested parties to develop effective training materials and "train-the-trainers."

The ultimate goal of the EJTC is to improve the quality of life for all people through effective communication, education, and training. Currently EJ training is being conducted for EPA Region 7 staff, states and tribes, and academic organizations.

The greatest potential impact for environmental justice education and awareness may be made through state programs - therefore, collaborative efforts are critical to our success.



There are several federal agencies and departments with environmental justice responsibilities. Many EJ issues overlap and involve more than one federal agency.

Regional Federal Partners

- U.S. Department of Transportation
Federal Highway Administration
- U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development
- U.S. Department of Justice
- U.S. Department of Agriculture
Natural Resource Conservation Service
- U.S. Department of Health & Human Services
- U.S. Commission on Civil Rights
- U.S. Department of Commerce - Census Bureau
- U.S. Department of Labor

The 2nd Annual Federal Partners' Meeting

was held on October 2, 2001, at the Regional office. This meeting is an opportunity for regional federal agencies with commitments to addressing environmental justice to meet and discuss EJ issues facing each agency.

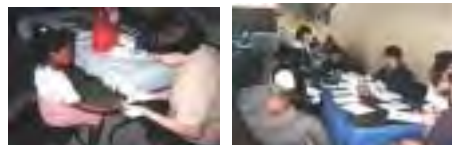
The meeting is a valuable tool for each agency. As we all move forward in understanding and addressing areas of environmental justice, we become better coordinated in our efforts to meet the needs of our regional stakeholders.

The New Madrid Environmental Justice Demonstration

Project was chosen to be highlighted as an interagency collaborative model in 1998 with the launch of the New Madrid County Tri-Community Child Health Champion Campaign to address protecting children's health. Located in the Bootheel region of Missouri, the New Madrid Partnership Project received over \$100,000 in financial assistance to help identify and address children's environmental health hazards and risks.

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- Increased awareness of lead poisoning issues;
- Increased community capacity to address children's health issues through community teamwork; and
- Reduced exposure to water-related contaminants.



In 2001, EPA's Office of Policy, Economics, and Innovation conducted a series of interviews with members of the Partnership to evaluate successes and challenges. The evaluation indicated that a key strength of the project was the focus on community involvement, collaboration, and capacity building. A full report of the project and evaluation will be published in EPA's EJ Collaborative Model Evaluation and Case Studies.

The act of serving as a liaison or connection reinforces EPA's commitment to establishing a more solid interrelationship with the public.

Region 7's EJ Program continues to serve as one of many links between EPA Region 7 and the public. Environmental justice issues and concerns often involve the input and expertise of EPA program staff and, with that, we strive to build relationships as well as partnerships to collaboratively address EJ concerns.

Collaborative approaches allow us to address issues such as:

- Asthma and allergies in the KC metro area;
- Water quality concerns in Southeast Missouri;
- Childhood lead poisoning in Omaha, NE; and
- Access to important human health and environmental information in Des Moines, IA.

Regional & National Stakeholders

- EPA Headquarters, Office of Environmental Justice*
- The National Environmental Justice Advisory Council (NEJAC)*
- The Environmental Justice Training Collaborative Team*
- Regional Environmental Justice Coordinators*
- Regional Federal Agencies*
- State Directors and State Environmental Counterparts*
- Community & Grassroots Organizations*
- Health Departments, Agencies, Doctors, and Nurses*
- Academic Institutions*
- City and County Governments*
- Neighborhood Associations and Youth Programs*
- Environmental Organizations*
- Business, Industry, and Professional Organizations*

Looking Ahead . . .

The EPA Region 7 Environmental Justice Program continues to strive towards achieving the objectives for the program's operation which supports ensuring fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people with respect to their environmental and human health concerns.

The EJ Program also works to build relationships and partnerships with both the community inside and outside EPA. We understand and appreciate our collective similarities and differences and hope to forge bonds based on the challenges we encounter along the way.

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Looking ahead, the EJ Program is currently working on several initiatives to address community concerns, issues of disproportionate environmental burden, and the continued integration of EJ into our policies, programs, and procedures.

- EJ Listening Sessions - Stakeholder forums designed to hear and address EJ issues of EPA Region 7.
- EJ Resource Center at Lincoln University - The establishment of a technical and compliance assistance center to assist rural agricultural community environmental and human health issues.
- Migrant Farmworkers Initiative - Identify, research, and address environmental and human health issues facing migrant and seasonal farmworkers and their families.

Publications

available upon request

EPA Journal: Environmental Protection - Has It Been Fair
(Vol. 18, No. 1; March/April 1992; #175N921001)

Environmental Equity: Reducing Risk for All Communities
(Vol. 1 & 2: Workgroup Report to the Administrator;
#230R92008/A)

Environmental Justice 2000 Biennial Report: Continuing to
Move Towards Collaborative and Constructive Problem
Solving (#300-R-01-005)

Environmental Justice Community Handbook; published by
The Lawyer's Committee for Civil Rights Under Law; 8/97

Environmental Justice Small Grants: Emerging Tools for
Local Problem Solving (#300-R-02-002)

Environmental Justice Strategy: Executive Order 12898

Executive Order 12898: Federal Register; Vol. 59, No. 32

The Model Plan for Public Participation; developed by the
National Environmental Justice Advisory Council
(#300K96003)

A Citizen's Guide to Using Federal Environmental Laws to
Secure Environmental Justice; developed by the
Environmental Law Institute; 2002; www.eli.org

EPA Region 7 Environmental Justice Program
Accomplishments Report: 1997-2000

EPA Region 7 EJ Update: Summer 02

EPA Region 7 Brownfields Program:
www.epa.gov/region07/brownfields

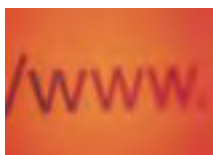
EPA Region 7 Children's Health Protection Program:
<http://yosemite.epa.gov/ochp/ochpweb.nsf/homepage>

EPA Region 7 Community Based Environmental Protection
Program: www.epa.gov/region07/cbep

EPA Region 7 EJ Program web site: www.epa.gov/region07/ej

EPA Region 7 Home Page: www.epa.gov/region07

EPA Region 7 Grants: www.epa.gov/region07/economics



Internet sites

EPA EJ Small Grants:
www.epa.gov/compliance/environmentaljustice/grants/index.html

EPA EJ Strategy:
www.epa.gov/compliance/resources/policies/ej/ej_strategy_1995.pdf

EPA Grants Tutorial: www.epa.gov/seahome/grants.html

EPA Home Page: www.epa.gov

EPA National Environmental Justice Advisory Council (NEJAC):
www.epa.gov/compliance/environmentaljustice/nejac/index.html