



Office of Solid Waste and Emergency Response Environmental Justice Action Plan Summary

“In an effort to continue and maintain OSWER’s commitment to environmental justice, it is our responsibility to build the capacity of OSWER personnel, foster and grow existing initiatives, ensure coordination between the OSWER headquarters office and the EPA Regions to identify and address issues of environmental justice, and to evaluate programmatic subject matters, as well as our new initiatives, for the possibility of disproportionately high and adverse impacts on minority populations and/or low income populations.”

Marianne Lamont Horinko
Assistant Administrator

ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE IN PRACTICE

Organizational Framework & Management Support

The Office of Solid Waste and Emergency Response (OSWER) considers environmental justice in the development of all of its policies, guidance, and regulations. The foundation upon which OSWER’s environmental policy rest includes OSWER’s environmental justice (EJ) strategy which addresses environmental concerns in all of the program areas. In addition to the many things OSWER does, OSWER’s program offices will also:

- Develop an understanding of EJ and which programmatic activities require its involvement; to consider EJ challenges and needs, to develop a strategy to address those needs, and a resource assessment.
- Ensure that EJ analysis is conducted and documented at all stages of policy, guidance, and regulation development.
- Develop a tracking system to document activities related to environmental justice measures, accomplishments, and ensure full implementation.

OSWER staff are committed to addressing and/or alleviating environmental justice issues raised by the National Environmental Justice Advisory Council (NEJAC), state and local governments, environmental justice communities, and other interested parties. Additionally, OSWER management uses memorandum, training, and specific measures articulated in performance agreements to promote effective integration of environmental justice in its waste programs.



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Program Support and Resources

OSWER has 16 full time people available to work on EJ issues, and more than \$1.2 million in direct resource commitments. The majority of OSWER's program offices have either an individual or a team whose major areas of responsibilities are environmental justice. OSWER staff working on environmental justice issues are involved in research, the development policy recommendations with the National Environmental Justice Advisory Council, report production, internal information exchanges, development of educational documents and policy guidance, and partnerships with external stakeholders.

ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE ACTIVITIES

Internal Organizational Engagement

Since 1994 the Environmental Justice Implementation Steering Committee has served as a conduit and focusing mechanism for integrating EJ into OSWER's waste programs. The group meets monthly via conference calls and includes representatives from all ten regions, OSWER program offices, and other EPA offices. The calls serve as an ongoing mechanism for information exchange, policy development, and internal communication and outreach. Chaired by the OSWER EJ Coordinator, the group reports to the OSWER Deputy Assistant Administrator. OSWER will continue to use the conference calls and e-mail as mechanisms to communicate, receive input from, distribute, and promote information exchange and cross-education.

External Stakeholder Engagement

OSWER encourages input on environmental justice issues from external stakeholders through mechanisms such as workgroups, advisory boards, cooperative agreements, distribution lists, and special initiatives and partnerships. OSWER has on-going dialogues with a variety of stakeholder associations and organizations, including National Environmental Justice Advisory Council, Environmental Council of the States, Association of State and Territorial Solid Waste Management Officials, the National Conference of Black Mayors, and grant and cooperative agreement recipient organizations. The interaction varies from Federal Advisory Committee recommendations and comments to joint work group membership. The feedback developed is routinely shared with OSWER senior management and appropriate staff to ensure comprehensive consideration of environmental justice concerns. This interaction has resulted in the incorporation of environmental justice requirements in all aspects of the Brownfields grant programs, a Superfund Relocation Model, and better citizen involvement and influence in the permitting and location of Waste Transfer Stations throughout the nation. OSWER will



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continue to use these groups as information resources as OSWER develops EJ policies and programs.

Currently, OSWER has a master distribution list which is routinely updated. The list contains names of people, community groups, industries and organizations who are interested and/or have been involved with dealing with EJ issues related to RCRA facilities, and other program areas. OSWER will continue to utilize this and other lists to disseminate information to external stakeholders.

OSWER will also produce some materials in Spanish and will explore the availability of translation services at some public meetings. OSWER will continue to follow the Plain English guidelines in the development and publication of its documents.

Collecting, Managing & Evaluating Data

OSWER collects environmental justice information through the Brownfields Cooperative Agreement data collection system. Information is also gathered through internally sponsored research, or is submitted by outside parties. This information is used in research reports, and in the course of certain decision-making processes in which elements such as demographics, and exposure factors are relevant.

Professional and Organizational Development

The Office of Solid Waste and Emergency Response has begun to offer the “EJ 101: Fundamentals of Environmental Justice” training course throughout OSWER as of April 2003. The goal is to provide training to at least 100 OSWER employees in 2003 and in each successive year.

Environmental Justice Assessment

OSWER relies on a number of information resources to conduct assessments of disproportionately high and adverse impacts on low income and minority communities. These resources include:

- Environmental Justice Mapper - An information system that uses facility and geographic information system data to create facility profiles.
- EPA’s Environmental Justice Toolkit - A document intended to provide a framework for environmental justice assessments.
- Envirofacts - A one stop source for environmental related information.
- Census Data - A database that provides population characteristics.
- Current methods and practices used in the Regions to conduct EJ assessments when necessary.



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Program Evaluation

OSWER is committed to identifying and developing performance measures specifically related to environmental justice. Due to programmatic needs and the types of activities undertaken with a particular program, the performance measures may vary. For some functions, qualitative measures will be used while others will require quantitative measures. Overall, OSWER will consider actual versus proposed outputs, outcomes, and milestones (such as activities completed, resources committed, and products produced) in the evaluations. Program evaluation will also include conducting needs assessments to determine proper resource allocations to reach under-served communities.

Accomplishments and results regarding EJ are usually highlighted in the OSWER Accomplishments Report which is completed every other year. In 2002, OSWER began documenting EJ success stories in ways which focused on identifying partners, benefits associated with EJ-related initiatives, and what was learned from the efforts. This will hasten the transfer of EJ from a concept into a practical aspect of the EPA waste programs. The accomplishments and success story reports are posted on OSWER's website and distributed to the public in hard copy as well. In 2003, OSWER will use the 2002 EJ Action Plan as one of the bases for determining EJ successes, and will develop a summary evaluation of those results.

For Further Information Contact:

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