Environmental justice at Ecology
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What we’ve been doing

1. Environmental justice analyses in rulemaking, permitting, Environmental Impact Statements
2. Grants and budget development
3. Language access in public involvement
New obligations

Agency-wide strategic plan
HEAL Act
Climate Commitment Act
Environmental Justice Council
Building capacity

The **Office of Equity and Environmental Justice** will provide leadership and guidance for:
- HEAL & Title VI Compliance
- Community engagement
- Budget equity
- EJ analyses

**Enforcement and Compliance Team**
- Integrating equity principles into compliance work

**Program-specific**
- EJ-focused staff
- Workgroups

**EJ Committee**
- Program & workgroup representatives
- Communication pathway in both directions
GOAL 1
Support and engage our communities, customers, and employees

GOAL 2
Reduce and prepare for climate impacts

GOAL 3
Prevent and reduce toxic threats and pollution

GOAL 4
Protect and manage our state’s water

GOAL 5
Protect and restore Puget Sound

STRATEGY: Integrate Title VI & EJ throughout Ecology’s programs

1. Conduct service equity analyses
2. Develop Title VI Checklist
3. Provide training, tools, and resources
4. Include EJ and Title VI requirements in grants and loans
Key elements of the HEAL Act

Improving government accountability to communities

- EJ Council reporting – September, 2022
- Dashboard reporting – September, 2024

Incorporating EJ into government structures

- EJ defined in state law
- Community engagement plan – July, 2022
- EJ principles in agency strategic plans – January, 2023
- EJ assessments for “significant agency actions” – July, 2023
- Tribal consultation framework

Investing equitably

- EJ principles integrated into agency budgets, grant programs – July, 2023
- EJ assessments for “significant agency actions” – July, 2023/July, 2025
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Investing equitably
- EJ principles integrated into agency budgets, grant programs – July, 2023
Community engagement

• New agency-wide plan due July 2022.

• Baseline guidance is being developed by an interagency group, agency-specific details added during adoption.

• Provisional guidance adopted to meet regulatory requirements; EJ Council and public feedback will influence formal guidance and implementation.

• Goal is an adaptive, living document with public and Tribal input.

• Assessment of and alignment with existing guidance:
  • Title VI
  • Plain talk
  • ADA
EJ Assessments

• Required for capital-funded projects over $12 million
• Significant agency actions may be redefined in 2025

Assessments involve:

• Cumulative health impacts analysis
• ID overburdened communities and vulnerable populations
• Tribal consultation
• Solicit community input
• Seek to reduce harms and increase benefits to overburdened communities and vulnerable populations

Current EJ analysis work will support this process, but some measures like cumulative impacts are still being defined.
Budget

• Grants and loans – most already include screening and scoring tools to promote equitable decisions.

• HEAL asks us to focus spending on creating environmental benefits “experienced by overburdened communities and vulnerable populations”

• Alignment with federal Justice40 initiative

Capital budget requests include an EJ screening process
Tribal engagement

• A consultation framework with best practices and protocols for communication with federally recognized tribes

• Tribal consultation on:
  • Agency strategic plan
  • Agency-wide community engagement plan
  • Significant agency actions

Ecology’s Senior Tribal Advisor is one of many in a Tribal workgroup helping define these needs and processes. Draft Model Toxics Control Act updates include clearer standards for Tribal engagement.
Resources

• EJ Committee representatives
• Program-specific workgroups
• Ecology’s Office of Equity and Environmental Justice [SharePoint](#)
• Ecology’s HEAL Act [webpage](#) and explainer
• Ecology’s language access workgroup
• Ecology’s community engagement plan workgroup
Questions?

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