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**The Environmental Justice Scorecard has been updated.** Phase Two of the Environmental Justice Scorecard was released on July 24, 2024.

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# Department of Health and Human Services

**20 office(s), 10 location(s), and Over 80,000 employees** in Fiscal Year 2023

The mission of the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS or the Department) is to enhance the health and well-being of all Americans, by providing for effective health and human services and by fostering sound, sustained advances in the sciences underlying medicine, public health, and social services. The agency's motto is: "Improving the health, safety, and well-being of America."

To learn more about the HHS mission, visit [www.hhs.gov](#)

## Get Involved

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## Get Funding &

TO ACHIEVE ITS MISSION, HHS STRIVES FOR health equity, which is inextricably linked to environmental justice. The HHS vision for environmental justice is a nation that equitably promotes healthy, sustainable, and resilient environments, and protects the health, wellbeing, and dignity of all people and communities in which they live.

**Support**  
[Find NOFOs, grants, and technical assistance](#) 

To learn more about environmental justice at HHS, please visit HHS' [environmental justice website](#) .

Some examples of well-known HHS offices, bureaus, or agencies are:

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)
- Food and Drug Administration (FDA)
- National Institutes of Health (NIH)

## Progress on Advancing Environmental Justice

This section demonstrates key progress on advancing environmental justice at the Department of Health and Human Services in Fiscal Year (FY) 2023, which is from October 2022 to September 2023.

**Key Highlights** ([show less](#) ^ )

**First HHS**

## HHS Environmental Justice Community Innovator Challenge

In FY 2023, HHS launched a nationwide HHS Environmental Justice Community Innovator Challenge to support disadvantaged communities and Tribes facing the brunt of environmental injustices, including health harms due to climate change. This Challenge aims to uplift community-level solutions to address health inequities. The Challenge is co-led by the HHS Office of Environmental Justice and the Office of Minority Health.

[Learn more](#) 

## and DOJ Environmental Justice Civil Rights Agreement

HHS and the Department of Justice (DOJ) reached an interim resolution agreement in their investigation into whether the Alabama Department of Public Health's conduct violates Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and Section 1557 of the Affordable Care Act.

## Community Partnerships to Advance Science for Society (ComPASS) Program

The National Institutes of Health's (NIH) ComPASS Program launched several new community-led awards with an environmental justice focus, including projects focused on structural interventions addressing housing quality, city infrastructure, access to green spaces, and other factors. NIH directly funded these research projects led by community organizations.

[Learn more](#) 

The agreement sets a path forward towards ensuring the development of equitable and safe wastewater disposal and management systems in Lowndes County, Alabama.

[Learn more](#) 

## Report to Increase Language Access for Persons with Limited English Proficiency

In May 2023, HHS released a report summarizing the progress the Department has made on improving the provision of meaningful access to language assistance services to persons with limited English proficiency (LEP). One example resource is the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's Disaster Distress Helpline (1-800-985-5990), which is the first national hotline dedicated to providing year-round disaster crisis counseling. This toll-free, multilingual, crisis support service is available 24/7 through call, text, and American Sign Language (ASL) videophone to all residents in the United States and U.S. territories who are experiencing emotional distress related to natural or human-caused disasters.

[Learn more](#) 

## Supporting Communities to Reduce Lead Poisoning

In May 2023, CDC's National Center for Environmental Health's Lead Poisoning Prevention and Surveillance Branch announced a new funding opportunity to support communities in reducing lead poisoning. Eleven organizations were funded for three years to help families avoid the dangers of lead in their homes through community engagement, prevention education, and family support. The Notice of Funding Opportunity required that organizations demonstrate a record of successful work in disadvantaged communities and communities overburdened by lead exposure, including promoting environmental justice, building coalitions to advance health equity, and conducting grassroots community education.

[Learn more](#) 


## Justice40 Initiative

This section demonstrates progress on the implementation of the Justice40 Initiative at the Department of Health and Human Services in Fiscal Year (FY) 2023, which is from October 2022 to September 2023.

## Overview

Implementing the Justice40 Initiative at HHS provides opportunities to enhance the health and well-being of all Americans and advance health equity for all, including to address longstanding environmental injustices by deepening the Department's engagement and ensuring that programs are working to help disadvantaged communities meet the vital conditions for health and well-being.

Each HHS Justice40 covered program is tracking its policy priorities and benefits. For more information about the Department's Justice40 covered programs and direct links to their websites, please visit [the Justice40 Initiative](#) at HHS.

For more information on HHS' Justice40 covered programs, please contact [OEJ@HHS.GOV](mailto:OEJ@HHS.GOV) 

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## Justice40 Covered Programs ([show less](#) ^)

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The Department of Health and Human

## What is the Justice40 Initiative?

The Justice40 Initiative set the goal that 40 percent of the overall benefits of certain federal investments flow to disadvantaged communities that are marginalized by underinvestment and overburdened by pollution.

[Learn more](#) 

Services has:

- **13** Justice40 covered program(s), including **2** Justice40 covered program(s) that is/are funded by the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, the Inflation Reduction Act, or both

## Progress on the Justice40 Initiative

Through President Biden's [Investing in America](#) agenda and other sources, **HHS** has:

approximately

**\$6.4 billion**

in funds available to obligate (i.e., to spend) in Fiscal Years (FY) 2022 - 2027 through its Justice40 covered programs.<sup>1</sup>

Through President Biden's [Justice40 Initiative](#), **HHS** is working to deliver benefits to disadvantaged communities. Each program that is part of the Justice40 Initiative delivers benefits in at least one of [seven investment categories](#), and many programs are delivering benefits to communities across multiple categories of investment. The **13** covered program(s) at **HHS**



working to deliver benefits for communities include:

- **3** program(s) protecting communities from the impacts of climate change
- **1** program(s) advancing clean and affordable energy for communities
- **2** program(s) advancing affordable and sustainable housing
- **2** program(s) delivering training and workforce development benefits
- **4** program(s) addressing the remediation and reduction of legacy pollution
- **3** program(s) delivering critical clean water and wastewater infrastructure benefits

Overall, agencies are making concrete, tangible improvements to benefit disadvantaged communities across America through the Justice40 Initiative. These investments are resulting in cleaner air and water, more affordable clean energy, good-paying jobs, and other results that people are seeing and feeling today and into the future.

<sup>1</sup>In the Phase Two Scorecard, the Justice40

*Initiative section contains information about federal investments that Congress has funded through both discretionary and mandatory appropriations, as well as supplemental appropriations, such as those that Congress made in the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (Pub. L. 117-58) and the Inflation Reduction Act (Pub. L. 117-169). The Phase Two Scorecard includes information on each agency's budget authority (that is, the total amount of funds that Congress has appropriated to the agency to spend on Justice40 covered programs) and the period of availability (that is, the period of time over which Congress has authorized the agency to spend the funds).*

*In some cases, agencies may not yet have the authority to spend the full amount indicated, such as when Congress has appropriated funds that will only become available in future Fiscal Years. Agencies provided the data presented here in spring 2024, and therefore the data does not reflect the annual appropriations for Fiscal Year 2024 that Congress made in March 2024.*

*Thus, the information that the Phase Two Scorecard presents in this section includes what the agency has available to spend in its Justice40 covered programs (i.e., its budget authority). These figures represent the total funding amount for all Justice40 covered programs, not only the portion that benefits disadvantaged communities.*

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## **Justice40 Covered Program Highlights ([show less](#) ^)**

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The Department of Health and Human Services is delivering benefits, or is projected to deliver benefits, for disadvantaged communities through grants or awards made through its Justice40 covered programs, such as:

## Low-Income Household Water Assistance Program Serves Over One Million Households

By August 2023, the Low-Income Household Water Assistance Program (LIHWAP), funded by the American Rescue Plan, served more than one million households, including reconnecting water and wastewater services 84,514 times, paying 565,273 past due bills for families and individuals with low incomes, preventing water shutoff, and helping low-income households that have struggled with water affordability by paying 486,628 current water bills.

[Learn more](#) 

## **Flint Registry: Get Connected. Get Supported. Get Counted**

The Flint Registry connects people affected by the Flint Water Crisis to services and programs to promote health and wellness. It also helps the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and others understand how this water crisis has affected the Flint community. As of July 2023, there were 21,492 Flint Registry members. Each member completes a detailed health survey when they enroll.

## Justice40 and the Los Angeles Black Worker Center

The National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences Environmental Career Worker Training Program's grantee, Western Region Universities Consortium provided increased support for a larger Los Angeles Black Worker Center cohort, including an added Mentorship/Guidance component where previous participants provide support to current participants.

Learn more 

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## Funding Announcements ([show less](#) ^ )

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The Department of Health and Human Services has:

- **6** funding announcement(s) covered under the Justice40 Initiative
- **\$7,791,929,305** available through Justice40 covered program(s) funding announcements<sup>2</sup>

## New Community Economic Development Planning Grants

The Administration for Children and Families' Office of Community Services announced a new \$1.5 million Community Economic Development Planning Grant to stimulate new projects in disadvantaged communities. The Justice40 Initiative was listed as a priority area in the funding opportunity.

[Learn more](#) 

## Partnership to Promote Local Efforts to Reduce Environmental Exposure (APPLETREE) Cooperative Agreement

In April 2023, the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry's (ATSDR) APPLETREE program awarded \$13.95 million in FY 2023, for a total of \$70 million from FY 2023 to FY 2028, to build the environmental public health capacity of 30 states. Recipients will use data, indices, and geospatial tools, including the Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool to better understand community characteristics.

[Learn more](#) 

*<sup>2</sup>Further, this section also includes funding that was made available through an agency's Justice40 covered programs in FY 2023. The funding was made available through various mechanisms, like grants, loans, agreements, contracts, notices of funding opportunity, and other funding announcements. These funding announcements were from Justice40 covered*

*programs that were funded through discretionary and mandatory appropriations, as well as supplemental appropriations, such as those enacted under the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (Pub. L. 117-58) and the Inflation Reduction Act (Pub. L. 117-169).*

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## Covered Program Design or Modification ([show less ^](#))

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The Department of Health and Human Services made program or design modifications to maximize benefits and/or remove barriers or constraints for disadvantaged communities, such as:

### **LIHEAP Issued Guidance on Community Solar for the First Time**

The Low-Income Household Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) issued guidance for the first time to (1) confirm that funds can be used for solar energy use through new and existing electric payment mechanisms, such as community solar subscription fees, and (2) provide LIHEAP grant recipients with recommendations to consider when utilizing funds for community solar subscriptions.



## **LIHEAP Funding Now Eligible for Consolidation by Tribes Under 477**

For the first time in FY 2023, LIHEAP was included as part of the Indian Employment, Training and Related Services Administration Act – Public Law 102-477 (25 U.S.C. § 3401), also referred to as “477.” Under this law, Tribes have the ability to integrate the federal employment, training, and related services that they provide from diverse federal sources in order to improve the effectiveness of those services. To date, six LIHEAP-eligible Tribes and Tribal organizations have consolidated LIHEAP funding under the law.

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## **Justice40 In Action ([show less](#) ^ )**

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The Department of Health and Human Services is delivering benefits, or is projected to deliver benefits, for disadvantaged communities through the Justice40 Initiative, including:

**Indian Health Service Launches New Sanitation Facilities Construction Projects**

## NIEHS Environmental Career Worker Training Program

In St. Louis, Missouri, two non-profits – Opportunity, Advancement, Innovation (OAI) Training Consortium and Motivating Purpose with Education and Readiness (MPWER) – are working together with local government to overcome environmental injustices and employment challenges. The Assistant Secretary for Health held a roundtable discussion with participants in this program in June 2023 as part of the White House Campaign for Environmental Justice.

[Learn more](#) 

## Website

A new interactive website was launched in April 2023 to demonstrate the Indian Health Service's commitment to transparency and reporting on progress to complete projects that support improved public health for American Indian and Alaska Native homes and communities. These projects build the infrastructure necessary to ensure a safe supply of drinking

## San Francisco's Largest Permanent Supportive Housing Development Opens

The HHS Federal Real Property Assistance Program, in coordination with the General Services Administration, facilitated the transfer of federally owned real estate for the 2023 opening of San Francisco's largest permanent supportive housing development. The development includes open green space that is accessible to the public. Supportive services include on-site nursing and primary care medical services and in-home supportive services for formerly homeless older adults and people with disabilities.

[Learn more](#) 

water, reliable sewage systems, and solid waste disposal facilities. The website includes project funding amount, Tribes and number of homes served, as well as project status.

[Learn more](#) 

## Office of Community Services Community Impact Spotlight Videos

The Administration for Children and Families released a series of videos on how its Justice40 covered programs address the many facets of environmental justice, from expanding clean energy to providing disaster relief in low-income communities. Some of these spotlights include highlighting Washington's LIHEAP cooling program, and areas once dependent on coal mining in West Virginia, and successful efforts to install rooftop solar panels for households with low income in Wisconsin.

[Learn more](#) 

## Environmental and Civil Rights Protection

Federal agencies are advancing environmental justice by carrying out their responsibilities under the law to identify and address disproportionate and adverse public health and environmental, climate-related, and cumulative impacts on communities with environmental justice concerns. Agencies are working to ensure that all communities experience the protection of our country's bedrock environmental laws. The following information reflects some of the environmental and civil rights work at the Department of Health and Human Services has done in Fiscal Year (FY) 2023, which is from October 2022 to September 2023.

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### **National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and Environmental Justice** ([show less](#) ^)

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This section demonstrates progress on environmental protections, such as the National Environmental Policy Act, at the Department of Health and Human Services in Fiscal Year (FY) 2023, which is from October 2022 to September 2023.

The Federal Real Property Assistance Program is implementing its environmental information documentation checklist to include aspects of greenhouse gas accounting and mitigation and addressing climate change hazards that pose a risk to surplus federal real property used for public health or homelessness.

## What is NEPA?

The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requires federal agencies to consider and disclose the environmental health and community impacts of certain decisions or actions before taking them.

[Learn more](#) 

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## Environmental or Health Protection ([show less](#) ^)

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This section demonstrates progress by the Department of Health and Human Services

on environmental or health protection that also advances environmental justice in Fiscal Year (FY) 2023, which is from October 2022 to September 2023.

HHS proposed multiple rules to protect people from discrimination in health and human services programs. Agencies released and promoted policies on flexibilities during disaster and extreme heat events, describing how funds can be used to respond to disasters and climate change. The ongoing work of HHS environmental health agencies continues to identify and address the cumulative impacts of environmental and health burdens.

### **Proposed Rule: Discrimination on the Basis of Disability in Health and Human Service Programs or Activities**

In September 2023, HHS [issued](#) a proposed rule, Discrimination on the

basis of disability in Health and Human Service Programs or Activities, that the agency has [since finalized](#) to advance equity and bolster protections for people with disabilities under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. The final rule clarifies and strengthens civil rights protections for people with disabilities in federally-funded health and human services programs.

### **Proposed Rule: Health and Human Services Grants Regulation**

In July 2023, HHS [issued](#) a proposed rule, Health and Human Services Grants Regulation, that the



agency has [since finalized](#) , to repromulgate and revise certain regulatory provisions of the HHS, Uniform Administrative Rule Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for HHS Awards. This rule would protect LGBTQI+ people from discrimination in certain health and human services programs.

### **Addressing Floodplain Management in American Indian and Alaska Native Communities**

The Indian Health Service (IHS) implemented an Interim Guidance to

address new floodplain management standards issued as part of the Federal Emergency Management Agency's Federal Flood Risk Management Standard. The floodplain guidance will help IHS to better implement floodplain mitigation planning to address ongoing hazards associated with climate change. These hazards have a disproportionate effect on the American Indian and Alaska Native communities IHS serves.

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## Civil Rights and Environmental Justice ([show less](#) ^)

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This section demonstrates progress on civil rights related to environmental justice, for example, the Americans with Disabilities Act, the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 or relevant laws other than Title VI of the Civil Rights Act at the Department of Health and Human Services in Fiscal Year (FY) 2023, which is from October 2022 to September 2023.

HHS and the Department of Justice reached an interim resolution agreement in their investigation into whether the Alabama Department of Public Health's conduct violates Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and Section 1557 of the Affordable Care Act. The agreement sets a path forward towards

ensuring the development of equitable and safe wastewater disposal and management systems in Lowndes County, Alabama.

In May 2023, HHS released a [report](#) summarizing the progress the Department has made on improving the provision of meaningful access to language assistance services to persons with limited English proficiency. The HHS Office for Civil Rights issued several proposed rules that would protect LGBTQI+ people from discrimination in certain health and human services programs and provide robust civil rights protections for people with disabilities in federally funded health and human services programs. These civil rights actions are critical to removing barriers that affect communities with environmental justice concerns.

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## Title VI and Environmental Justice ([show less](#) ^)

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This section demonstrates progress on civil rights related to environmental justice, such as under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, at the Department of Health and Human Services in Fiscal Year (FY) 2023, which is from October 2022 to September 2023.

The HHS Office for Civil Rights (OCR) enforces federal civil rights laws that prohibit discrimination based on race, color, national origin, disability, age,

### What is Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964?

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 requires that no person be

color, national origin, disability, age, religion, and sex (including pregnancy, sexual orientation, and gender identity) in health and human services, including, but not limited to, Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and Section 1557 of the Affordable Care Act - both of which advance equity. OCR's Title VI and Section 1557 Affordable Care Act enforcement program engages in activities that align with advancing the goal of environmental justice and the HHS Climate Action Plan and is an essential component of HHS' efforts in achieving equitable health outcomes for all. OCR is charged with Title VI and Section 1557 enforcement and ensuring that HHS federal financial assistance is not used to support programs or activities that discriminate on the basis of race, color, or national origin.

- **1** open Title VI investigation(s) or compliance review(s) related to environmental justice
- **1** closed Title VI investigation(s) or resolution agreement(s) related to environmental justice

## Training

- **1** agency training(s) on Title VI of the Civil Rights Act and environmental justice
- **100** employee(s) trained on Title VI of the Civil Rights Act and

person be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance on account of race, color, or national origin.

## environmental justice

### **Centering Environmental Justice in Decision-Making**

This section demonstrates progress on community engagement (e.g., partnerships with non-federal organizations, technical assistance, and public processes) and partnership and consultation with Tribal Nations at the Department of Health and Human Services in Fiscal Year (FY) 2023, which is from October 2022 to September 2023.

HHS agencies pursue many types of partnerships to advance environmental justice and health equity. One example is the National Institutes of Health's (NIH) Community Partnerships to Advance Science for Society (ComPASS) Program. This program studies ways to reduce health disparities by addressing underlying structural factors within communities and is developing a new research model for NIH where the projects are led by community organizations in collaboration with research partners. ComPASS launched several new community-led awards with an environmental justice focus, including projects focused on structural interventions addressing housing quality, city infrastructure, access to green spaces, and other factors.

In 2023, HHS joined the federal interagency Thriving Communities Network to better

coordinate strategy, collaborate across initiatives, and target deployment of a full range of federal place-based technical assistance and capacity-building resources to disadvantaged communities. HHS also continues to engage on environmental justice and civil rights issues nationally through leadership visits and providing follow-up technical assistance to disadvantaged communities. For example, the Assistant Secretary for Health traveled to multiple cities in 15 states, convening roundtable conversations and site visits related to environmental justice, including in Alaska, Florida, Louisiana, Connecticut, and Arizona.

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### Technical Assistance ([show less](#) ^ )

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- **41** technical assistance outreach event(s) to improve access and information about federal programs related to environmental justice

For more information on the Department of Health and Human Services's technical assistance events, please visit

<https://www.hhs.gov/ash/oej/index.html>

## Highlighting Environmental Justice Index Data on Specific Actions

The Office of Environmental Justice (OEJ) worked with the Assistant Secretary for Health to develop project-specific correspondence on proposed actions in communities with environmental justice concerns. In one example, OEJ encouraged New York City planners to include health protection efforts before finalizing a transportation plan that would increase air pollution in an overburdened neighborhood in the Bronx.

[Learn more](#) 

## **Environmental Justice Action Forum Addresses Impacts of Army Missile Plant Through Cross-Sector Collaboration**

Held in January 2024, the one-day Environmental Justice Action Forum was aimed at identifying, framing, and addressing environmental justice issues regarding the Western Electric/Tarheel Army Missile Plant in Burlington, North Carolina. This forum was an outgrowth of a two-year collaboration with community-based organizations. Planning for the event occurred in FY 2023.

**Learn more** 



## Engaging in Civil Rights and Environmental Justice Nationally

The HHS Office for Civil Rights Director and staff visited multiple communities and engaged on local civil rights and environmental justice issues, including in Louisiana, California, Arizona, and Alabama. Additionally, a joint visit and roundtable on environmental justice in Illinois was co-hosted with the Assistant Secretary for Health and Civil Rights Director.

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### Public Processes ([show less ^](#))

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- **17** public process(es) related to environmental justice, e.g., requests for information or listening sessions, including:

## **Request for Information: Environmental Justice Research Gaps, Opportunities, and Capacity Building**

In FY 2023, three institutes at the National Institutes of Health – National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, National Institute on Minority Health and Health Disparities, and the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences – collaborated on a

[Request for Information](#) :

Environmental Justice Research Gaps, Opportunities and Capacity Building, released in October 2023, which received over 40 responses.

Responses will inform NIH's three signature environmental justice initiatives: (1) a renewal of the Environmental Justice Centers of Excellence; (2) a new program for Environmental Justice scholars to visit and inform NIH Institutes, Centers, and Offices on community engagement; and (3) new training and development activities for researchers in fields related to environmental justice.

## **Alliance for Community Engagement – Climate and Health**

The National Institutes of Health’s Alliance for Community Engagement – Climate and Health (ACE-CH) – was launched in 2023 with four flagship teams. ACE-CH Teams, in collaboration with partners, are performing community-engaged research, capacity building, and outreach to assess factors associated with social determinants of health that impact communities with environmental justice concerns that are disproportionately affected by the health impacts of climate change. In September 2023, NIH released a [Request for Information](#) on Advancing Nursing Research in Climate and Health.

## Climate Change and Health Equity Request for Information Summary

In August 2023, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration completed a summary of responses to its 2022 [Request for Information](#). Key ideas identified included: climate change is a social determinant of mental health; behavioral health systems must become “climate-informed;” and intergenerational trauma will be one of the layered effects of climate-related environmental change.

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## Partnership and Consultation with Tribal Nations ([show less ^](#))

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This section demonstrates progress on Tribal partnerships and consultations at the Department of Health and Human Services, including steps that that agencies take to respect Tribal sovereignty and ensure government-to-government consultation on federal policies in Fiscal Year (FY) 2023, which is from October 2022 to September 2023.

The [HHS Tribal Consultation Policy](#) is coordinated by the HHS Office of Intergovernmental and External Affairs and

serves as the focal point in the Office of the Secretary for the Department's consultation with Tribal governments on policy, regulatory, and legislative issues that have a significant direct impact on Tribal governments and Tribal organizations. The complexity of the Federal-Tribal intergovernmental relationships results from treaties, statutes, executive orders, and court decisions. The goal of the policy includes, but is not limited to, eliminating health and human service disparities of American Indians and Alaska Natives, ensuring that access to critical health and human services is maximized, and advancing or enhancing the social, physical, economic, and health status of Native Americans.

- **2** Tribal Consultation(s) related to environmental justice

### **Consultation on Environmental Regulatory Enhancement Grants from the Administration for Native Americans**

In June 2023, the Administration for Native Americans (part of the Administration for Children and Families) held a Tribal Consultation in conjunction with the National Congress of American Indians on grant processes.

## Annual HHS Budget Tribal Consultation

In March 2023, HHS held its 25th Annual Budget Tribal Consultation, followed by Annual Regional Tribal Consultations in April. For the first time in history, the FY 2023 budget provided the Indian Health Service with advanced appropriations to provide budget certainty.

- **16** Tribal listening sessions and other engagements related to environmental justice

For example, many HHS agencies hosted and participated in environmental justice-related listening sessions. One example is the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) partnership with the National Indian Health Board to host a series of four Regional Tribal Environmental Health summits. The summits were designed to exchange knowledge, share best practices, identify solutions to address environmental health and environmental justice/health equity issues affecting Tribal communities, and expand regional partnerships in the environmental health field. Each summit ended with a listening session allowing Tribal-affiliated participants to provide any thoughts and comments. A Tribal listening session was also hosted on

the Environmental Justice Index.

## Training

- **1** agency training(s) on Tribal Consultation or working with Tribes and Indigenous Peoples to advance environmental justice
- **22** employees trained on Tribal Consultation or working with Tribes and Indigenous Peoples to advance environmental justice

## Institutionalizing Environmental Justice

This section demonstrates progress to institutionalize environmental justice at the Department of Health and Human Services including to implement [Executive Order 14008](#) and [Executive Order 14096](#), in Fiscal Year (FY) 2023, which is from October 2022 to September 2023.

### Overview

HHS aims to incorporate equity by design in all of its programs and services, which helps advance environmental justice and health equity. The newly established Office of Environmental Justice has a leadership role in coordinating HHS-wide strategies and helping communities address the

**Women's  
Health  
Awareness  
Annual  
Conference**

health disparities they face at a local level by connecting to tools and resources.

Working with HHS' 17 staff and 13 operating divisions, the office leads the development of coherent federal strategies to address health threats that disproportionately affect disadvantaged communities and vulnerable populations on the frontlines of the climate crisis and the fence lines of harmful environmental exposures.

- **59** staff who work on environmental justice, either in a full- or part-time capacity
- **3** new or strengthened office(s) or program(s) on environmental justice

## Training

- **81** agency training(s) for staff on environmental justice
- **1,721** employee(s) trained on environmental justice

For example, the seven Environmental Justice Index workshops brought together over 700 state, Tribal, local, and territorial and federal partners, non-governmental organizations, community-based organizations, and industry representatives to learn about the Environmental Justice Index and provide feedback on the tool. Attendees expressed that these workshops “exceeded their

## ce

The Women's Health Awareness program conducts community-engaged research, educates, and advocates on the intersecting issues of environmental health disparities, environmental and social justice, health and well-being, and gender and racial inequities to build community-based health resiliency. This includes



expectations” and “can serve as a model for trainings that they are providing in their state.”

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### Advancing Environmental Justice Policy ([show less ^](#))

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- **Has** issued or updated policy, guidance, or directives related to environmental justice (internal or external)

utilizing community partnerships to support the development of research, evidence-based interventions, and health education and environmental literacy aimed at empowering women to take responsibility for their health, understand the critical intersections of health and the environment, and to work on environmental justice issues directly

## Policy Guidance on People with Lived Experience in Behavioral Health

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration released policy guidance in June 2023 on incorporating the input and needs of people with lived experience in all aspects of behavioral health prevention, treatment, and recovery organizations. This approach aligns with environmental justice frameworks by including disadvantaged and low-income populations and people most impacted in planning and resource development.

[Learn more](#) 

...  
impacting  
their  
communities.

[Learn more](#) 

## **Closer to Zero: Reducing Childhood Exposure to Contaminants from Foods**

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) evaluated the science for arsenic and cadmium in foods intended for babies and young children and established interim reference levels for cadmium. For mercury, FDA sponsored a study on the role of seafood consumption in child growth and development (bioaccumulation of mercury in seafood is the primary dietary source).

**Learn more** 

## Administration for Children and Families Highlight Flexibilities During Disasters and Extreme Heat

The Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program released a Dear Colleague Letter (DCL) 2023-08, Flexibilities During Hurricane and Tropical Storm Season regarding disaster and extreme heat flexibilities. The Community Services Block Grant program issued guidance reminding grant recipients of the ways in which they can use funding to support hurricane preparedness and response. This program also issued guidance to grant recipients highlighting how funds can be used to respond to disasters and climate change. Recipients of these programs include states, Tribes, territories, and non-profit and community-based organizations.

[Learn more](#) 

- **Has** assessed barriers and obstacles related to regulations, policies, or practices, including historical

inequities

- Over the past four years **is working** to create an Environmental Justice Strategic Plan pursuant to [Executive Order 14096](#)

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## Advancing Environmental Justice Tools or Resources

([show less](#) ^ )

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- **28** tool(s) or resources that advance environmental justice, including access to health, environmental or other impacts, such as:

### **CDC/ATSDR Environmental Justice Index**

Developed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and Agency Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR), the Environmental Justice Index is the first national, place-based tool designed to measure the cumulative impacts of environmental burden through the lens of human health and health equity.

[Learn more](#) 

## Head Start Environmental Exposure Mapping Tool and Resource Library

HHS sponsored the development of an interactive mapping tool and resources for Head Start providers and other early childhood stakeholders to identify environmental risks to low-income children and families and better address their concerns.

[Learn more](#) 

## Disaster Flexibilities Hub

The Administration for Children and Families maintains the Disaster Flexibilities Hub tool, which visually tracks and displays key data, guidance, and resources on declared disasters, disaster preparedness efforts, and the flexibilities built into Office of Community Services' block grant programs. The hub includes a tab to help individuals and families find assistance in their communities.

[Learn more](#) 

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## Advancing Institutional Partnerships or Federal Advisory Committees

([show less](#) ^)

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- **10** new or strengthened internal agency working group(s), committee(s), or partnership(s) to advance environmental justice, or new federal advisory committee(s) on environmental justice

## **HHS Environmental Justice Working Group**

Members of the HHS Environmental Justice Working Group work together to address environmental health disparities and environmental injustices by building resilient communities, making health systems more sustainable, strengthening community partnerships, and growing educational outreach. Members meet monthly to share information and new approaches, identify opportunities for collaboration, and track progress toward priority areas of focus surrounding environmental justice. HHS Environmental Justice Working Group members organize and report on environmental justice activities within their agencies.



## National Institutes of Health Environmental Justice Working Group

The National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences (NIH) Deputy Director was selected to lead a newly established NIH Environmental Justice Working Group. This new Environmental Justice Working group brings together 70 people from across the 27 Institutes and Centers of the NIH.

[Learn more](#) 

## Environmental Health Disparities and Environmental Justice Faculty

The Environmental Health Disparities and Environmental Justice Faculty at National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences (NIEHS) have met regularly to discuss internal efforts related to environmental justice and federal partnerships. The group facilitated interactions among local environmental justice organizations and NIEHS senior leadership.

Learn more 

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## Interagency Collaboration ([show less](#) ^)

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HHS participates in the [White House Environmental Justice Interagency Council](#) (IAC), which President Biden established in 2021 and expanded in 2023 through executive orders on tackling the climate crisis and environmental justice.

HHS also participates in the National Science and Technology Council's Environmental Justice Subcommittee, launched in 2023 as provided by President Biden's executive order on environmental justice. The purpose of the Environmental Justice Subcommittee is to address the need for a coordinated federal strategy to identify and address gaps in science, data, and research related to environmental justice.

Multiple HHS agencies partnered with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration to revise [Heat.gov](#) with critical information and resources related to the [needs of at-risk groups](#) in order to be more inclusive, including older adults and individuals with disabilities. HHS' Office of Climate Change and Health Equity coordinated this effort across the department and collaborated with the HHS Administration for Community Living, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the National Institutes of Health, the Administration for Strategic Preparedness and Response, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Agencies, and the Administration for Children and Families to accomplish this update.

The Department of Health and Human Services worked side-by-side with other

federal agencies to advance a whole of government approach to environmental justice, including:

### **Federal Collaboration Addressing Environmental Asthma Triggers in Homes**

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) staff collaborated with the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and the Environmental Protection Agency to build external partner capacity regarding evaluation of public health actions and practices, by conducting an evaluation of CDC's Training for Home Assessment for Asthma Triggers project and presenting these evaluation findings to HUD managers.

## **President’s Task Force for Environmental Health and Safety Risks to Children, Subcommittee on Climate, Emergencies, and Disasters**

In FY 2023, National Institute of Child Health and Human Development staff co-led this subcommittee of the President’s Task Force, which is focused on climate, environmental, and disaster risks to children’s health. Environmental justice – including engagement of communities experiencing or most at risk for natural and man-made disasters – is a central focus.

**Learn more** 

## **HHS Federal Summit on Environmental and Climate Justice: Strengthening Partnerships for Healthy, Climate Resilient, and Thriving Communities**

The HHS Federal Summit on Environmental Justice and Climate Justice: Strengthening Partnerships for Healthy, Climate Resilient, and Thriving Communities was a collaboration by Administration for Children and Families (ACF), Office of the Assistant Secretary for Health (OASH), and Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation (ASPE) that occurred in August 2023. Day 1 included 481 participants, including public stakeholders, and day 2 included 275 federal staff participants. Speakers were from Tribal and community organizations, philanthropy, and academia. The event also featured report-outs on 12 community conversations from around the country hosted by ACF and OASH's Office of Climate Change and Health Equity.

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