

Scorecard National Science Foundation



National Science Foundation

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About the National Science Foundation (NSF)

The U.S. National Science Foundation (NSF) is an independent federal agency that supports science and engineering in all 50 states and U.S. territories. NSF grants support research at America's colleges and universities, research driven by curiosity and discovery. NSF also supports solutions-oriented research with the potential to produce advancements for the American people.

This page provides information on how **the National Science Foundation (NSF)** is working to advance environmental justice for communities across America. It is part of Phase One of the Biden-Harris Administration's Environmental Justice Scorecard.

Justice40 Initiative

As part of President Biden's [Justice40 Initiative](#), the federal government is working toward the goal that 40 percent of the overall benefits of certain federal investments reach disadvantaged communities that are marginalized and overburdened by pollution and underinvestment. In particular, the President's Justice40 Initiative applies to federal investments that address climate change, clean energy and energy efficiency, clean transit, affordable and sustainable housing, training and workforce development, remediation and reduction of legacy pollution, and the development of critical clean water and wastewater infrastructure.

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This Phase One Scorecard provides an update on initial progress made by **the National Science Foundation (NSF)** in implementing the Justice40 Initiative. Future versions of the Environmental Justice Scorecard will provide additional information and updates on the benefits of Justice40 covered programs.

For more information on NSF's Justice40 covered programs, please contact info@nsf.gov.

Phase One Scorecard metrics and highlights in Fiscal Year 2022 include:

- **3** Justice40 covered program(s)
- **3** funding announcement(s) covered under the Justice40 Initiative
- **\$49 million** in funding made available from Justice40 covered programs¹
 - For example, a \$19 million funding opportunity through the Coastlines and People Hubs for Research and Broadening Participation supports multi-institutional coastal research hubs that study interactions between natural, human-built and social systems in coastal populated environments.
 - NSF opened submissions for \$25 million in awards through the Smart and Connected Communities (S&CC) Program, which supports research that addresses communities' social, economic, and environmental challenges. Projects must work with community stakeholders on pilots that integrate intelligent technologies with the natural and built environments.
 - NSF opened submissions for \$5 million in funding through the Civic Innovation Challenge Program, which supports planning and implementation of community-university partnerships with the potential for significant near-term community impact in one of two focus areas: communities and mobility, or resilience to natural disasters.

¹ This funding amount describes examples of the funding that was made available in Fiscal Year 2022 through Justice40 covered programs. The amount does not represent the total funding that benefits disadvantaged communities. The funding was made available through grants, 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). The Justice40 Initiative sets a goal that 40 percent of overall benefits from certain federal investments flow to disadvantaged communities.

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 **the National Science Foundation (NSF)** has done from January 2021 to September 2022.

For more information, please visit [NSF's Strategic Plan](#) .

National Environmental Policy Act

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. Environmental reviews help ensure the public is informed about potential actions, and give communities an opportunity to participate in the government's decision-making process. Environmental reviews also ensure that federal agencies consider ways to protect and enhance public health and the environment, and advance environmental justice in their decision-making. The following information highlights some work **the National Science Foundation (NSF)** has done from January 2021 to September 2022.

Phase One Scorecard metrics and highlights include:

- **2** project modification(s) where environmental justice concerns were raised during the NEPA process
 - For example, after considering concerns raised by Tribal Nations on a project that proposed to study the Cascadia Subduction Zone, NSF modified the proposed action. More details outlined in the Consultation with Tribal Nations section below.

Centering Environmental Justice in Decision-Making

Federal agencies work to ensure that the voices, perspectives, and lived experiences of communities are heard and reflected in the priorities, policies, and decision-making of the federal government. Agencies also take steps to respect Tribal sovereignty and ensure government-to-government consultation on federal policies. The following information highlights work **the National Science Foundation (NSF)** has done from January 2021 to September 2022 to center environmental justice in its decision-making.

Community Input and Engagement

Phase One Scorecard metrics and highlights include:

- **4** technical assistance outreach event(s) in Fiscal Year 2022
 - NSF, the Department of Homeland Security, and the Department of Energy, hosted a webinar on the Civic Innovation Challenge on February 25, 2022. This 90-minute webinar discussed the goals and structure of the CIVIC program, details about the new funding opportunity, and important submission information. Additionally, it included a question-and-answer session with CIVIC Program Directors. NSF hosted 2 additional question-and-answer sessions during March 2022.
 - In March 2022, NSF hosted a webinar for the public on the S&CC Program to provide an overview of the program, details on the updated solicitation, and important submission information. The webinar also included a question-and-answer session with the S&CC Program Directors.
- **1** public process(es) related to environmental justice, e.g., requests for information or listening sessions

- In 2021, NSF, as the recipient of a proposal for design and planning of the proposed Thirty Meter Telescope (TMT) and the owner of two astronomical facilities on Maunakea (i.e., the Gemini North telescope and the Very Long Baseline Array antenna), continued an Informal Outreach Effort to engage with those who have a connection to Maunakea, including Native Hawaiians. The purpose of this engagement was to listen to and seek an understanding of the viewpoints regarding the proposed TMT project and the future of astronomy on Maunakea. For more than a year, NSF received community input via e-mail and through “talk story” sessions (conducted via videoconferencing). Based on what was learned, NSF developed a Draft Community Engagement Plan to enhance its public engagement during its environmental review for a proposed investment in TMT.

Consultation and Partnership with Tribal Nations

Phase One Scorecard metrics and highlights include:

- Developed and began implementing the NSF Action Plan to Enhance Tribal Consultation in April 2021, which reflected verbal and written comments from Tribal Nations submitted through April 14, 2021. Progress reports that followed in 2021 and 2022 show continued progress in listening to Tribal Nations. NSF held a townhall and multiple listening sessions to learn about Tribal Nations’ concerns regarding NSF's mission. While not specifically focused on environmental justice, Tribal representatives were asked how research impacts them and how to best consult with them. These efforts will inform enhancements to NSF's consultation policies, which will include environmental justice concerns.
- **1** Tribal Consultation(s) related to environmental justice from January 2021 to September 2022
 - After considering concerns raised by Tribal Nations on a project that proposed to study the Cascadia Subduction Zone, NSF modified the proposed action to reduce potential conflict with Tribal fisheries and impacts on biological resources of interest.
- **13** internal training(s) on Tribal Consultation or working with Tribes and Indigenous Peoples to advance environmental justice

Institutionalizing Environmental Justice

Since the start of the Biden-Harris Administration, federal agencies have been working to embed environmental justice into all aspects of their work, including by implementing [Executive Order 12898](#) and [Executive Order 14008](#). The following information shares some of the work **the National Science Foundation (NSF)** has done from January 2021 to September 2022 to institutionalize environmental justice.

Phase One Scorecard metrics and highlights include:

- **Does not have** an environmental justice strategic plan that **has not been** updated in the past 5 years
- **3** tool(s) or resources to advance environmental justice

- The environmental compliance team participates in interagency meetings to learn about environmental justice activities and improve agency practices. Additionally, NSF participates in federal interagency activities focused on environmental justice related to ocean sciences. NSF plans to use tools provided by the Environmental Protection Agency for deploying Electric Vehicle Supply Equipment in locations that will most benefit disadvantaged communities.

NSF's Highlights

While NSF does not have dedicated environmental justice personnel, the environmental compliance team and program personnel periodically contribute to discussions of environmental justice issues and funding considerations. Additionally, the environmental compliance team includes basic information about Tribal consultations as part of training new staff on the NSF merit review process, which is held 6 times each year. This training also focuses on compliance with federal environmental laws and policies, and includes training on NSF's environmental impacts screening tool, which is designed to flag impacts on minority and Indigenous communities.

[Return to top](#)

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