Region 6 RTOC Meeting

December 1, 2022

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Office of Environmental Justice and External Civil Rights (OEJECR)

A New EPA National Program Office

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- Established as a new National Program Office in September 2022, the Office of Environmental Justice and External Civil Rights (OEJECR) came about through the combining of three offices: Office of Environmental Justice, the External Civil Rights Compliance Office, and the Conflict Prevention and Resolution Center.

- Senate-confirmed Assistant Administrator to lead the office

- OEJECR elevates environmental justice and civil rights at EPA, placing the programs at the level of all other EPA national programs, such as the Office Water, Office of Air and Radiation, etc.

EPA EJ Headquarters Office, EJ Grants and Technical Assistance (TA) Strategy

EPA Tribal & Indigenous Peoples EJ Policy

Issued: 2014

Purpose: Clarify and integrate EJ principles in a consistent manner in the Agency's work with **federally recognized tribes**, **indigenous peoples** and **others living in Indian countr**y.

Scope: Federally recognized tribes, state recognized tribes, tribal members, indigenous community organizations, Native Hawaiians, Pacific Islanders, individual Native Americans, and others living in Indian country.

Tribal & Indigenous EJ Policy Focuses on Four Areas

1. EPA's integration of EJ when **directly implementing** federal environmental programs in Indian country, and throughout the United States.

2. EPA's work with **federally recognized tribes/tribal governments** on EJ.

3. EPA's work with **indigenous peoples** (state recognized tribes, tribal members, indigenous community-based organizations, etc.) on EJ.

4. EPA's **coordination and collaboration with federal agencies and others** on EJ issues of tribes, indigenous peoples, and others living in Indian country.

Policy

The **Policy** can be found at:
http://www.epa.gov/compliance/environmentaljustice/resources/policy/indigenous/ej-indigenous-policy.pdf

Further information on the Development & Implementation of the Policy can be found at:
http://www.epa.gov/compliance/environmentaljustice/indigenous/index.html

Office of Environmental Justice and External Civil Rights Organizational Chart

EJ Grants & Thriving Communities Technical Assistance Overview ('22-23)

Office of Environmental Justice
& External Civil Rights

December 1, 2022

FY 2022 - 2023 EJ Grants & TA Budget

- Approximately $2.8 billion through Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) + funding from baseline EJ appropriations
- **Tentative breakdown:**
  - **$100 million** for **new** Thriving Communities Technical Assistance Centers Program (EJ-TCTAC)
  - **$100 million** for **new** EJ Communities Pass-through Funder Program (EJCPF) – to determine which external organization(s) will manage the EJ Small Grants program
  - **$30 million** for EJ Collaborative Problem-Solving (EJCPS)
  - **$60+ million** for Government grants (State, Local, Tribal, Territories, Freely associated States)
    - Separate tracks for Tribes, States, and Local governments
    - Set-aside for US Territories and Freely Associated States (FAS)
  - **$2+ billion** for Environment and Climate Justice Block Grants

Technical Assistance Services to be provided by Thriving Communities TA Centers

- **Examples of TA to underserved communities and stakeholders:**
  - "How to" assistance on writing competitive grant proposals
  - Financial resource management assistance
  - Community engagement
  - Tracking and analyzing results
  - Environmental justice analysis of communities (EJSCREEN analysis, on-the-ground problem site identification, and/or interviews of community residents detailing their EJ concerns)
  - Energy justice support and the transition to clean energy (e.g., workforce development)
  - Coordination and/or facilitation services for meetings between local stakeholders (community residents, local elected officials, port authority, industry, etc.)
  - Translation and interpreting services for meaningful engagement with Limited English-Speaking participants

New Implementation Authority

- **Previously, EJ grant activities were limited to:**
  - Research
  - Demonstrations
  - Training, and/or
  - Education activities

- **Now, EJ grant activities have been <u>expanded</u> to include implementation activities:**
  - Small scale construction
  - Refurbishment and Mitigation
  - Hazardous Waste Disposal and general Clean ups
  - Installations

Redesign of EJ Small Grants

EJ Communities Pass-through Funder (EJCPF) Program

EPA

- Agency will provide all funds for EJ Small Grants to 1 - 2 entities to manage the program
- The EPA Project Officer team will communicate primarily with funders, not necessarily communities

Funder(s) - nonprofit or college/university

- This organization will manage the competition process and subaward funds to communities
- Two or more entities could manage the program collectively

Communities / Subgrantees

- Communities will technically be subgrantees and will receive the funds through the Funder(s) instead of directly through EPA
- Communities will submit reports and project updates to the funder(s)
- 1 to 2-year projects

Things to Consider (EJ Small Grants)

- **Easier Application Process** - These small grants are specifically for community orgs who are capacity-constrained and will avoid Grants.gov and lengthy workplans.

- **Open Call** - There will likely be an open call for applications so eligible entities can apply when they are ready rather than by a certain deadline.

- **Subaward Model Expedites Funding Process** – this restructuring will get funds to eligible recipients as expeditiously as possible

- **Connection/History with Communities** - All applicants will be evaluated on their historical connections with underserved communities/populations and capacity to do broad outreach

- **Direct Involvement/Oversight/Scoring by EPA** - EPA will have a direct hand in how the funder(s) develop the evaluation/scoring and management processes for the EJ Small Grants. Additionally, Regional EJ staff will be on the subaward evaluation panels (i.e., scoring community applications)

Excerpts from IRA Legislation

SEC. 60201. ENVIRONMENTAL AND CLIMATE JUSTICE BLOCK GRANTS.

(1) $2,800,000,000 to remain available until September 30, 2026

(a)(1) to award grants for periods of up to 3 years to eligible entities to carry out activities described in paragraph

(2) that benefit disadvantaged communities, as defined by the Administrator.

(3) ELIGIBLE ENTITIES.—In this subsection, the term ‘eligible entity’ means—

(A) a partnership between— (i) an Indian tribe, a local government, or an institution of higher education; **and** (ii) a community-based nonprofit organization;

(B) a community-based nonprofit organization; or

(C) a partnership of community-based nonprofit organizations.

Excerpts from IRA Legislation - Continued

SEC. 60201. ENVIRONMENTAL AND CLIMATE JUSTICE BLOCK GRANTS.

(2) ELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES. —An eligible entity may use a grant awarded under this subsection for

—“(A) community-led air and other pollution monitoring, prevention, and remediation, and investments in low- and zero-emission and resilient technologies and related infrastructure and workforce development that help reduce greenhouse gas emissions and other air pollutants;

(B) mitigating climate and health risks from urban heat islands, extreme heat, wood heater emissions, and wildfire events;

(C) climate resiliency and adaptation;

(D) reducing indoor toxics and indoor air pollution; or

(E) facilitating engagement of disadvantaged communities in State and Federal advisory groups, workshops, rulemakings, and other public processes.

Environmental Justice Engagement & Support

- **EJ Webinar Series for Tribes and Indigenous Peoples –** https://www.epa.gov/environmentaljustice/environmental-justice-tribes-and-indigenous-peoples#webinars
  - Examples of Topics: NEPA, Meaningful Public Engagement, Wildfires and Air Quality, Competitive Grants Awards Process, Justice40 Initiative, Considering Traditional Knowledge, EJScreen, etc.
  - Held once a month/once every two months covering topics of interest to tribes and indigenous peoples

- **Environmental Justice for Tribes and Indigenous Peoples (EPA Webpage) -** https://www.epa.gov/environmentaljustice/environmental-justice-tribes-and-indigenous-peoples

- **Environmental Justice Tribal and Indigenous Peoples Advisors (EJ TIPAs)** – Randy Gee, EPA Region 6

- **National Environmental Justice Community Engagement Calls** - https://www.epa.gov/environmentaljustice/national-environmental-justice-community-engagement-calls

- To receive up-to-date information on Environmental Justice **subscribe to EPA's EJ Listserv** by sending a blank email to: join-epa-ej@lists.epa.gov.

Contact

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