



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES | WASHINGTON, D.C.

POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND DISSEMINATION • EDUCATION AND TRAINING • RESEARCH AND DATA COLLECTION, ANALYSIS, AND UTILIZATION • SERVICES

PLAN-AT-A-GLANCE

2012 Environmental Justice Strategy and Implementation Plan

FEBRUARY 2012

Message from Secretary Kathleen Sebelius

Every American deserves to have a clean, safe and healthy environment. Today, we understand better than ever before that our health is not only dependent on what happens in the doctor's office but is determined by the air we breathe, the water we drink and the communities we call home. Over the past two years, the Administration and our agency have taken unprecedented steps to ensure strong protection from environmental and health hazards for all Americans.

There's nothing more important than health. When we live longer, healthier lives, we have more time to do our jobs, volunteer in our neighborhoods, play with our children, and watch our grandchildren grow up. Health is the foundation of our country's prosperity. Healthy adults are more productive workers, healthy children are better students and healthy families can make bigger contributions to their communities.

In our Environmental Justice Strategy and Implementation Plan, you can find many programs that are already making a difference, such as the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences (NIEHS) Minority Worker Training Program. This program has awarded grants in more than 30 communities across the United States to recruit and train individuals who live in vulnerable communities at risk of exposure to contaminants for employment in the environmental field.

The Affordable Care Act, the health reform law of 2010, includes a new community transformation grant program that builds on the Economic Empowerment Zone model. By promoting healthy lifestyles, especially among population groups experiencing the greatest burden of chronic disease, these grants help improve health, reduce health disparities, and control health care spending. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention made 61 awards, totaling approximately \$103 million, to state and local government agencies, Tribes, and territories, and to non-profit organizations. Several awardees are planning to focus on expanding efforts to address healthy and safe physical environments.

With the release of our Strategy and Implementation Plan, we are renewing our commitment to working with our Federal partners to promote environmental justice. Equally important, we are reaffirming our commitment to work with communities who are eager to get involved in this effort. We look forward to this collaboration as we continue to focus on building safe and healthy communities.

Kathleen Sebelius
Secretary, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services



Secretary Sebelius (second from right) at a community roundtable in New Orleans with Dr. Beverly Wright, Deep South Center for Environmental Justice Executive Director (left), and other participants.

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Environmental Justice

Environmental Justice is “the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin, or income with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies”. Executive Order 12898, *Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-income Populations* requires each Federal agency to “make achieving environmental justice part of its mission by identifying and addressing, as appropriate, disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects of its programs, policies, and activities on minority populations and low-income populations.” The Executive Order also states that “each Federal agency responsibility set forth under this order shall apply equally to Native American programs.”

HHS Mission

The mission of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) is to enhance the health and well-being of 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. HHS is the U.S. government’s principal agency for protecting the health of all Americans and providing essential human services, especially for those who are least able to help themselves.

HHS Vision for Environmental Justice

The HHS vision for environmental justice is:

“A NATION THAT EQUITABLY PROMOTES HEALTHY COMMUNITY ENVIRONMENTS AND PROTECTS THE HEALTH OF ALL PEOPLE.”

HHS EJ Guiding Principles

The 2012 HHS EJ Strategy* provides direction for HHS efforts to achieve environmental justice as part of its mission by: (1) identifying and addressing disproportionately high and adverse human health and environmental effects on low-income populations and Indian Tribes, and (2) encouraging the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of affected parties with the goal of building healthy, resilient communities and reducing disparities in health and well-being associated with environmental factors. Driven by public input and HHS support, the strategy maintains the following three guiding principles:

- Create and implement meaningful public partnerships
- Ensure interagency and intra-agency coordination
- Establish and implement accountability measures

* Link to the 2012 HHS Environmental Justice Strategy and Implementation Plan:
<http://www.hhs.gov/environmentaljustice/strategy.html>

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HHS EJ Strategic Elements

On the basis of the guiding principles, the 2012 HHS EJ Strategy is organized into four strategic elements; (1) Policy Development and Dissemination, (2) Education and Training, (3) Research and Data Collection, Analysis, and Utilization, and (4) Services. The 2012 HHS EJ Strategy reflects new and ongoing actions that are underway or planned for the near term. Each strategic element has targeted goals, strategies, and actions to be undertaken by HHS. The heightened coordination within and outside of HHS and the engagement of communities and other stakeholders will facilitate the implementation of the 2012 HHS EJ Strategy and support the realization of the HHS vision for environmental justice.

POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND DISSEMINATION – EJ ACTIONS

A.1 Incorporate, where feasible and appropriate, environmental justice in award criteria of HHS grants and other funding opportunities.
A.2 Update existing public information materials on Title VI to include information and resources on environmental justice.
A.3 Conduct outreach events to educate local communities on the purpose and functions of the HHS Office for Civil Rights.
A.4 Update the HHS NEPA Policy to incorporate relevant environmental justice guidance and the principles of environmental justice.
B.1 Integrate environmental justice principles and EJ actions into the HHS Strategic Sustainability Performance Plan (SSPP).
B.2 Conduct a vulnerability assessment of HHS’s programs to climate change and develop an adaptation strategy, as required by Executive Order 13514.
B.3 Promote the consideration of factors such as health, environment, distributive impacts and equity in the development of Federal agencies’ policies and program planning.
B.4 Advance research that contributes to a better understanding of the relationship between health, sustainability, and environmental quality to support environmental justice efforts and initiatives.
B.5 Support research on potential health impacts of climate change, including the impacts of climate mitigation and adaptation measures that includes methodologies such as community-based participatory research and incorporates environmental justice principles.
B.6 Produce guidance for state, local, territorial, and tribal health departments on integrating extreme weather and public health surveillance systems with special emphasis on communities most vulnerable to changes in extreme weather patterns, including minority and low-income populations and Indian Tribes with disproportionately high and adverse environmental exposures.
B.7 Develop guidance on identifying the spatial and temporal extent of climate and extreme weather vulnerability and risk within communities containing existing environmental inequalities.
B.8 Develop guidance on how state, local, territorial, and tribal public health departments can adopt

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policies and programs that minimize climate-related health impacts among vulnerable populations, including minority and low-income populations and Indian Tribes with disproportionately high and adverse environmental exposures.

B.9 Build community resilience and sustainable, stronger health and emergency response systems in at-risk populations with disproportionately high and adverse environmental exposures to prevent or reduce emerging health threats and chronic health problems.

B.10 Strengthen community partnerships, in particular among vulnerable populations, to organize adaptation measures to prevent health impacts of climate change at the local level.

C.1 Collaborate, where appropriate and feasible, with Federal partners to advance a “health in all policies” approach and reduce disproportionately high and adverse environmental exposures.

EDUCATION AND TRAINING – EJ ACTIONS

A.1 Increase public awareness of and access to information on health and environmental justice by developing an HHS environmental justice website.

A.2 Partner with other Federal departments to develop and implement integrated educational outreach and intervention programs.

A.3 Prepare guidance for HHS-funded worker training programs that are designed to assist disadvantaged communities.

B.1 Expand and promote educational outreach on health and environmental justice to primary health care and behavioral health care providers, other health professionals, public health professionals and the human services workforce.

B.2 Incorporate environmental justice and environmental and occupational safety and health education in the training curricula.

B.3 Increase partnerships with Historically Black Colleges and Universities, Tribal Colleges and Universities, and Hispanic-Serving Institutions.

C.1 Develop and implement a training program for HHS employees on the principles and practice of environmental justice, including community engagement.

RESEARCH & DATA COLLECTION, ANALYSIS, AND UTILIZATION– EJ ACTIONS

A.1 Draft and implement guidance to HHS agencies conducting or funding research in partnership with minority and low-income populations and Indian Tribes with disproportionately high and adverse environmental exposures.

A.2 Host a Health and Environmental Justice Workshop periodically in conjunction with disproportionately impacted communities.

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A.3 Increase public access to information about research and data by expanding HHS Environmental Justice web pages.
B.1 Strengthen capacity for research on the health effects of disproportionately high and adverse environmental exposures in minority and low-income populations and Indian Tribes.
C.1 Promote inclusion of questions related to industry, occupation and other parameters of the workplace in HHS-supported surveys and other data collection instruments. Promote analysis of data related to occupational safety and health collected from HHS-supported surveys and other data collection instruments.
C.2 Partner with EPA and other Federal departments to review and update community mapping tools and other databases designed to identify minority and low-income populations and Indian Tribes with disproportionately high and adverse environmental exposures and health effects.
C.3 Expand information on health disparities and environmental justice concepts on the National Center for Environmental Health's (NCEH) National Environmental Public Health Tracking Network.

SERVICES– EJ ACTIONS

A.1 Promote inclusion and use of environmental and occupational exposure history in electronic health records (EHR).
A.2 Promote the availability of specialty resources in environmental health to health care providers.
A.3 Improve the quality of behavioral health care received by minority and low-income populations and Indian Tribes with disproportionately high and adverse environmental exposures.
B.1 Evaluate the use of health impact assessments (HIA) in minority and low-income populations and Indian Tribes to achieve risk reduction and reduce health disparities.
C.1 Build community capacity to conduct community health assessments.
C.2 Assess health and human services needs for minority and low-income populations and Indian Tribes with disproportionately high and adverse environmental exposures.
C.3 Increase outreach to minority populations and low-income populations and Indian Tribes with disproportionately high and adverse environmental exposures to raise their awareness of the availability of technical assistance for applying for HHS funding.
D.1 Expand funding opportunities, where appropriate and feasible, to underserved communities for economic development and social services