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HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT  
ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE STRATEGY

# **2013 IMPLEMENTATION PROGRESS REPORT**

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U.S. Department of  
Housing and Urban Development

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ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE STRATEGY

# **2013 IMPLEMENTATION PROGRESS REPORT**

*FEBRUARY 2014*

*Prepared by*

U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development

*For more information*

[http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/program\\_offices/sustainable\\_housing\\_communities/Environmental\\_Justice\\_Strategy](http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/program_offices/sustainable_housing_communities/Environmental_Justice_Strategy)

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## MESSAGE FROM SECRETARY SHAUN DONOVAN



Today in the United States, there are children being exposed to hazardous conditions while playing in the park. Why? Simply because of the location of their neighborhood. They may live next to a highway ramp, a train track or other causes of poor air quality – and are getting sick simply because of where they live.

Their story is a common one. Every day across the nation—particularly in low-income and minority communities—families are subjected to pollution, contaminated drinking water and other risks to public health because of where they live. The consequences of these conditions are great. Children can't learn if they are at home sick. Parents can't work if they are dealing with illnesses.

Communities can't thrive if families are burdened with health challenges.

This is simply wrong. Every American's future should be determined by their talent and work ethic, not the zip code they live in. Our nation is at its best when every person has a fair chance at lifting themselves up. Accordingly, President Obama is committed to building ladders of opportunity that reach all Americans.

As part of this mission, in April of 2012, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development launched its [2012-2015 Environmental Justice Strategy](#). There is a direct correlation between the physical condition and location of housing with health; the Strategy outlined a number of ways, working with our Federal partners, we aimed to improve the environment for communities.

As this 2013 Implementation Progress Report illustrates, HUD and this Administration have made tremendous strides in meeting our goals.

As part of the President's Climate Action Plan, working with the Department of Energy, we have expanded the Better Buildings Challenge, asking multifamily owners to commit to a 20% portfolio-wide energy reduction over the next decade. In just a few short months, we have received commitments from dozens of owners, impacting hundreds of thousands of households – reducing energy waste across the country.

In addition, our Office of Health Homes and Lead Hazard Control continues to provide communities with the resources they need to combat the environmental challenges facing their residents. And, at every level, we continue to train HUD staff to incorporate environmental justice as part of their daily work.

Furthermore, we published a proposed new rule to Affirmatively Further Fair Housing (AFFH) and are working on final rule. This rule will better inform the public, empower local decision makers as they identify local barriers and help all Americans have access to fair housing opportunities. .

In total, 2013 was a year of progress. We are proud of the progress we've made, but are far from content. We know there is more work to do and, over the next two years, are determined to fulfill the goals of the strategy. There are a number of milestones on the horizon—the pivot to implementation of the Sustainable Communities grants, the expansion of Choice Neighborhoods and Promise Zones, and the finalization and implementation of the AFFH rule—that will bring us closer to these goals.

HUD will not rest till every family has access to a clean and safe environment. No child deserves to get sick from playing in a park. No person should be exposed to hazardous conditions when walking around their neighborhood. Every American deserves a fair chance to thrive. HUD looks forward to working with its partners to give communities that opportunity.

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# OVERVIEW

## Development of HUD’s Environmental Justice Strategy

With the publication of its [2012-2015 Environmental Justice Strategy](#) (EJ Strategy) in April 2012, the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) took an important step in addressing disproportionately adverse health and environmental impacts faced by minority, low-income, and tribal populations. The strategy outlined key actions HUD would take to further incorporate EJ activities into agency-wide initiatives, program operations, and interagency efforts.

HUD’s EJ Strategy organizes these key actions into three general categories of efforts necessary to achieve HUD’s Environmental Justice goals: agency-wide, program office, and interagency efforts. Supporting the achievement of these goals are 28 more specific sub-goals to be carried out between the Fiscal Years of 2012 through 2015. This report is organized by these categories of activities and goals..

HUD 2012-2015 Environmental Justice Strategy	
Agency-Wide Efforts	A1. Integrate environmental justice into discretionary funding opportunities.
	A2. Ensure quality of place.
	A3. Clarify environmental justice in environmental review requirements.
	A4. Promote fairness, equity and non-discrimination, and equal opportunity.
	A5. Ensure integration of tribal consultation into HUD’s programs and policies.
Program Office Efforts	P1. Build inclusive and sustainable communities free from discrimination.
	P2. Promote healthy homes free of environmental and health hazards.
	P3. Use data tools to expand HUD and public knowledge of environmental justice.
	P4. Support tribal self-governance and improving living environments.
Interagency Efforts	I1. Partnership for Sustainable Communities – Team EJ.
	I2. Addressing Local EJ Concerns that Affect Residents of HUD-Assisted Housing.
	I3. Healthy Homes and Communities.
	I4. Tribal Issues Interagency Working Group.

## 2013 Implementation Progress Report

This *Implementation Progress Report* outlines the headway HUD has made through the end of Fiscal Year (FY) 2013 in addressing the goals laid out in HUD’s *2012-2015 Environmental Justice Strategy*. The report is organized by the three general categories, detailing progress on: agency-wide efforts; program office efforts; and interagency efforts. This report fulfills HUD’s responsibilities to report on progress under Executive Order 12898 (Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations) and the August 2011 Environmental Justice Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) among federal agencies.

The progress made at the **agency-wide level** includes:

- The publication of a proposed rule to update Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing (AFFH) planning requirements for HUD funding recipients, which included a proposal to provide data on exposure to environmental hazards;
- The release of a Radon policy by the Office of Multifamily Programs, in HUD's Office of Housing; and
- Key energy initiatives such as the expansion of the Better Buildings Challenge to multifamily residential developments as part of the President's *Climate Action Plan*.<sup>1</sup>

This report also includes key achievements at the **program level**, including:

- Increased use of Fair Housing and Equity Assessments (FHEA) by Sustainable Communities grantees in their regional planning efforts;
- Continued effort to integrate environmental justice considerations into HUD's sustainable communities work;
- The award of a combined \$4.37 million to transform nine distressed communities through HUD FY 2013 Choice Neighborhoods planning grant program;
- Completion of the development process for the Safe and Healthy Homes Investment Partnerships (SHHIP) to coordinate home improvements across housing, health and energy;
- The total number of home energy retrofits and lead remediation efforts completed through the Green and Healthy Homes Initiative (GHHI) reached 3,473;
- Issuance of 37 new grant agreements by the Office of Healthy Homes and Lead Hazard Control (OHHLHC) to provide local communities funding for healthy home improvements for families;
- Continued support of tribal communities through investments in the Indian Housing Block Grant and Indian Community Development Block Grant programs; and
- Additional progress such as the launch of the Healthy Communities Transformation Initiative, a three-year project to provide better information to communities about healthy neighborhoods.

Because revitalization issues facing low-income and minority communities are by their nature complex and require multiple financial resources and technical expertise, HUD must engage in an interdisciplinary response which, frequently, requires **interagency level** collaboration. HUD's collaboration across federal agencies includes:

- Appointing 10 HUD field staff as federal environmental justice liaisons to collaborate with other agency partners and community members to address environmental justice concerns;
- HUD's participation in the Partnership for Sustainable Communities Team-Environmental Justice (EJ) working group;<sup>2</sup>
- Participation in the Interagency Working Group on Environmental Justice;<sup>3</sup>
- Participation in the Healthy Homes Working Group;<sup>4</sup>
- Participation in the Interagency Tribal Issues Working Group;<sup>5</sup> and

<sup>1</sup> See <http://www4.eere.energy.gov/challenge/home>

<sup>2</sup> See <http://www.epa.gov/compliance/ej/sustainability/index.html>

<sup>3</sup> See <http://www.epa.gov/compliance/ej/interagency/>

<sup>4</sup> See <http://www.greenandhealthyhomes.org/policy-makers/federal-interagency-healthy-homes-work-group>

- Other cross-agency collaborations.

With nearly two years of implementation progress under HUD's belt under the Department's EJ Strategy, much work remains to be done and HUD will continue to fulfill its mission of creating strong, sustainable, inclusive communities and quality affordable homes for all by seeking improvements in environmental health for low-income and minority communities. HUD continues to believe that where one lives should not limit one's aspirations, and that everyone should have access to a healthy and prosperous community in which to live, work, and play.

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<sup>5</sup> See <http://www.epa.gov/oppt/npptac/pubs/draftgreenbldgsrecommend.pdf>.

# A: AGENCY-WIDE STATUTES, REGULATIONS, AND PRACTICES THAT ADVANCE ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

## A1. Integrating Environmental Justice into Discretionary Funding Opportunities

*A1.1 – HUD program offices will work with the Grants Management and Oversight Division of the Office of Strategic Planning and Management and relevant program offices to identify ways to further integrate environmental justice into discretionary funding opportunities.*

The Office of Sustainable Housing and Communities, the Office of General Counsel 's Office of Fair Housing continue to work with the Grants Management and Oversight Division within HUD's Office of Strategic Planning and Management to identify ways to further integrate environmental justice into discretionary funding announcements.

## A2. Ensuring Quality of Place

*A2.1 – HUD policy includes Site and Neighborhood Standards as a regulatory document for new construction and rehabilitation. HUD will work with other Federal agencies to identify ways to address EJ issues affecting HUD-assisted residents of existing developments.*

*Site and Neighborhood Standards* are continually enforced in existing programs, as well as being incorporated into HUD's new work. The Rental Assistance Demonstration (RAD), for example, is one of HUD's new priority initiatives. RAD allows owners of public housing and other at-risk properties to convert their HUD assistance to long-term, project-based Section 8 (project-based voucher or project-based rental assistance) contracts. These long-term contracts allow owners to better preserve affordable housing opportunities for current and future residents and enable PHAs to attract funding to rehabilitate affordable properties by leveraging public funds with additional private funding. Certain RAD projects will involve, when warranted, transferring assistance from the current public housing site, historically areas of high poverty and minority concentration, to other sites that afford greater opportunities for employment, education, services, and recreation. Before final approval, these projects must pass a site and neighborhood standards review. HUD will review proposals and evaluate whether the new site is adequate for the needs of residents, will contribute to the goals of deconcentrating poverty, and whether additional resources may be available to residents of the new site. Built into the RAD approval process is the coordination of review activities between the Office of Housing, the Office of Public and Indian Housing, and the Office of Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity. RAD will result in better-maintained and healthier homes for thousands of the country's low-income families.

Please see Interagency Collaboration section for details regarding HUD's interagency work on environmental justice.

### **A3. Clarifying Environmental Justice in Environmental Review Requirements**

*A3.1 – HUD will evaluate the administration of environmental policies found at 24 CFR Part 51, Environmental Criteria and Standards, and environmental justice policy documents.*

This evaluation was completed in 2012.

*A3.2 – HUD will develop and deliver special training materials for HUD and grantee staff on environmental justice.*

As of FY 2012, HUD-administered environmental justice training for environmental review practitioners now incorporates HUD's refinement of its EJ policies as part of the Office of Environment and Energy's environmental compliance training.

*A3.3 – HUD will initiate research on the effectiveness of environmental noise standards.*

HUD completed the research on environmental noise in 2012. Please see the [2012 HUD Environmental Justice Strategy Implementation Progress Report](#) for additional details.

*A3.4 - The Office of Housing will reemphasize its environmental review responsibilities and will advise applicants of any environmental justice concerns including recommendations on their resolution.*

During FY 2013, HUD's Office of Housing staff continued to evaluate applications for Federal Housing Administration (FHA) mortgage insurance for compliance with the multitude of environmental laws and regulations, including Executive Order 12898. Staff thoroughly evaluated applications to ensure that project sites were not negatively impacted by environmental issues such as flooding, site contamination and noise. For example, Office of Housing staff worked with applicants to ensure that Brownfield sites throughout the country were adequately remediated, many of which are in low-income and minority communities. These efforts contributed to the improved health of residents and their environment in EJ communities. Housing staff were able to utilize training provided by the Office of Environment with HUD's Office of Community Planning and Development (CPD) to guide their EJ analysis. In addition, HUD environmental staff continued to provide advice and guidance on EJ issues to the Office of Housing and their external stakeholders.

Significantly, the Office of Multifamily Programs, within HUD's Office of Housing, published a [Radon Policy](#) in FY 2013, which takes considerable steps toward eliminating radon exposure in FHA-insured multifamily housing. Radon exposure is estimated to cause 21,000 lung cancer deaths each year in the United States ([EPA Assessment of Risks from Radon in Homes](#), June 2003, publication number EPA 402-R-03-003).

In addition, in FY 2013, the Office of Healthcare Programs, within HUD's Office of Housing, worked on guidance documents for both the Office of Housing's Office of Hospital Facilities and the Office of Residential Care Facilities. The handbooks inform HUD staff and outside stakeholders of HUD's responsibility to review each application for compliance with environmental laws and authorities and to ensure the health of their residents. Both guidance documents specifically highlight Environmental Justice. The Office of Hospital Facilities handbook is entitled [Mortgage Insurance for Hospitals](#) and the Office of Residential Care Facilities handbook is expected to be published soon.

FY 2014 will bring changes to the Office of Multifamily Programs, and with that, opportunity. The Office of Multifamily Programs will be rolling out a new organizational structure. As part of that roll-out, extensive environmental training is planned for staff, including training on Environmental Justice.

## **A4. Promoting Fairness, Equity and Non-discrimination, and Equal opportunity**

*A4.1 – **Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing:** HUD will refine its fair housing planning requirements (including the requirements for Analysis of Impediments) to help grantees improve access to opportunity, create inclusive communities, and foster true housing choice for all.*

On July 19, 2013, HUD published in the *Federal Register* a proposed rule offering, for public comment, a more effective means to affirmatively further the purposes and policies of the Fair Housing Act, which is Title VIII of the Civil Rights Act of 1968. The proposed rule was prompted by the U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO), stakeholders, advocates and program participants stating that the current practice of affirmatively furthering fair housing has not been as effective as envisioned. The July 19, 2013, rule proposed to refine existing requirements with a fair housing assessment and planning process that is intended to better aid HUD program participants fulfill this statutory obligation.

Specifically, the July 19, 2013, rule, proposed that HUD would provide program participants with:

- A more clearly articulated definition of what it means to affirmatively further fair housing;
- Continued emphasis on community participation in the fair housing planning process;
- An assessment template that replaces the current, loosely defined Analysis of Impediments;
- Nationally uniform data and a geospatial tool; and
- Clear guidance and technical assistance.

The rule was open for public comment through September 17, 2013, providing a 60-day public comment period. HUD staff is currently in the process of reviewing the comments and suggestions of offered in the public comments submitted in response to the proposed rule. For more information and access to the tools, please review the [AFFH Homepage](#).

## **A5. Ensuring Integration of Tribal Consultation into HUD's Programs and Policies**

*A5.1 – **Tribal Consultation Update:** In accordance with President Obama's November 5, 2009, Executive Memorandum on Tribal Consultation, HUD's Office of Native American Programs (ONAP) is working with the many offices within HUD that develop Federal policy that affects tribes to familiarize them with the requirements of Tribal Consultation and provide assistance in the execution of meaningful consultation and collaboration.*

The Office of Native American Programs' work of assisting other program offices in tribal matters is ongoing.

## Additional Agency-Wide Environmental Justice Progress

### *Environmental Justice in the President's Climate Action Plan*

Across the United States and the world, climate change is already affecting communities, livelihoods, and the environment in significant ways. The impacts of climate change – including an increase in prolonged periods of excessively high temperatures, poor air quality, heavier downpours, increased flooding, an increase in wildfires, more severe droughts, permafrost thawing, ocean acidification, and sea-level rise – are already affecting communities, natural resources, ecosystems, economies, and public health across the Nation. These impacts are often most significant for communities that already face economic or health-related challenges. The uneven nature of climate change impacts creates differing levels of vulnerability across countries, communities, and even households, with important implications for adaptive actions. In addition, non-climatic stressors can interact with and exacerbate the impacts of climate stressors. Social and economic factors (e.g., economic status, race, ethnicity, age, gender, and health) can significantly affect people's exposure and sensitivity to climate change, as well as their ability to prepare and recover.

On June 25, 2013, President Obama announced his plan to cut carbon pollution and prepare the U.S. for the impacts of climate change.<sup>6</sup> The President's *Climate Action Plan* calls upon federal agencies to "continue to identify innovative ways to help our most vulnerable communities prepare for and recover from impacts of climate change" through annual federal agency Environmental Justice Progress Reports. This focus on building capacity in low-income, minority and tribal communities for climate adaptation comes from a number of policy mandates from both the White House and individual Agency leadership. These include:

- On November 1, 2013, President Obama signed an Executive Order (Executive Order 13653, Preparing the United States for the Impacts of Climate Change), which called for the Federal government to build on recent progress and pursue new strategies to improve the nation's preparedness and resilience. The Executive Order states that "adaptation measures should focus on helping the most vulnerable people and places reduce their exposure and sensitivity to climate change and improve their capacity to predict, prepare for, and avoid adverse impacts."<sup>7</sup>
- In its 2010 Progress Report, the Interagency Climate Change Adaptation Task Force recommended actions in support of a national climate change adaptation strategy, and set forth among its guiding principles that agencies should "prioritize the vulnerable." The report noted that adaptation plans should prioritize helping people, places, and infrastructure that are most vulnerable to climate impacts. These plans also should be designed and implemented with meaningful involvement from these same communities. Issues of inequality and environmental justice associated with climate change impacts and adaptation should be addressed.<sup>8</sup>

As part of the President's *Climate Action Plan*, federal agencies committed to both increase energy savings through expanded use of energy efficiency programs and promote leadership in renewable energy through accelerating renewable energy permitting. HUD's support for the *Climate Action Plan*

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<sup>6</sup> See <http://www.whitehouse.gov/share/climate-action-plan>.

<sup>7</sup> See <http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2013/11/01/executive-order-preparing-united-states-impacts-climate-change>.

<sup>8</sup> See <http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/microsites/ceq/Interagency-Climate-Change-Adaptation-Progress-Report.pdf>.

further extends participation in these programs to low- and moderate-income communities through the Better Buildings Challenge and the new federal renewable energy target.<sup>9</sup>

### **Better Buildings Challenge**

The Better Buildings Challenge is a voluntary leadership program wherein building owners pledge to reduce the energy intensity of their portfolio by 20% within 10 years. The Challenge has recently been expanded to the multifamily residential sector, and HUD is working with the Department of Energy (DOE) to recruit and provide technical assistance to HUD's multifamily and Public Housing portfolios. The Challenge has a positive environmental justice component because HUD's focus on recruiting subsidized housing owners and the portfolio-wide requirement ensures that low-income families and communities will see benefits of lower utility bills and increased comfort from energy efficiency improvements.

### **Federal Renewable Energy Target**

The Federal Renewable Energy Target represents the first time HUD has had a goal of increasing renewable energy onsite at its federally-assisted properties. Onsite renewable energy generation will give low-income residents and communities the opportunity to benefit from local clean energy jobs and potentially lower energy costs.

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<sup>9</sup> See December 5, 2013, Presidential Memorandum on Federal Leadership in Energy Management at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2013/12/05/presidential-memorandum-federal-leadership-energy-management>

## P: HUD PROGRAM OFFICE EFFORTS THAT ADVANCE ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

### P1. Build Inclusive and Sustainable Communities Free From Discrimination

*P1.1 – HUD’s Office of Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity (FHEO) will continue work on its Fair Housing Initiatives Program (FHIP) and Fair Housing Agency Program (FHAP) to incorporate more Environmental Justice-related compliance and enforcement activity.*

FHEO continues to strive to incorporate environmental justice strategies within fair housing programs.

*P1.2 – As part of the Sustainable Communities Regional Planning Grant program, all grantees must complete a Regional Fair Housing and Equity Assessment (FHEA) exercise.*

Between the FY 2010 and FY2011 Sustainable Communities Regional Planning grant cohorts, 75 regions across the U.S. will be conducting an FHEA. The FHEA includes the following assessment components:

1. Segregated areas and areas of increasing diversity and/or racial/ethnic integration
2. Racially/Ethnically concentrated areas of poverty
3. Access to existing areas of high opportunity
4. Major public investments
5. Fair housing issues, services, and activities

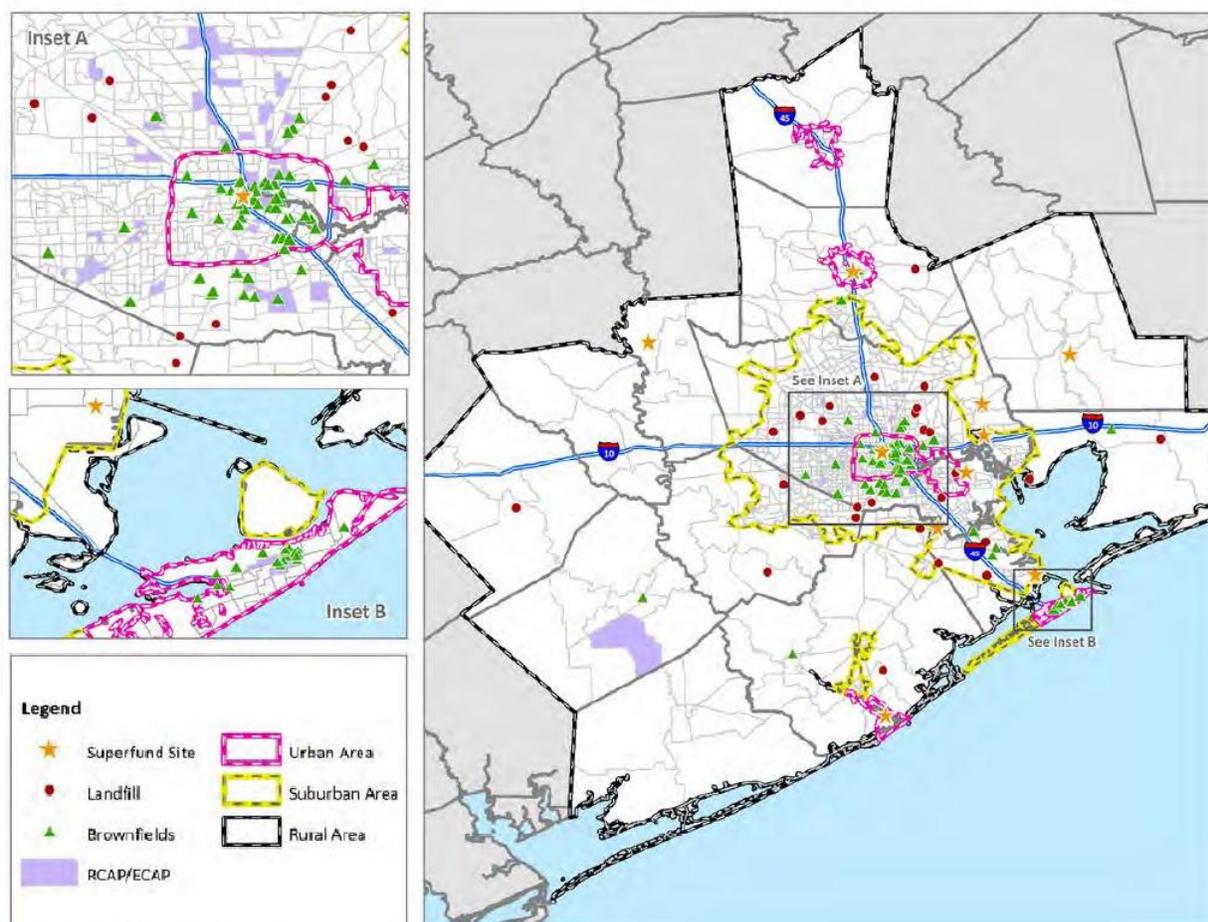
Grantees are asked to focus their analysis at regional scale across these components, comparing within and across jurisdictions to gain a full picture of regional equity and access to opportunity.

This progress is significant to HUD’s vision of achieving environmental justice because it requires grantees to examine their region’s geography for areas of opportunity, determine how those areas align or do not align with racially or ethnically concentrated areas of poverty, and use this information to guide decision-making related to future investments. In particular, the iteration of this work undertaken by grantees funded in FY 2011 includes data for analysis on health hazards exposure, job access, and transit, in addition to three other categories. These data can be used to identify areas of the region where concentrations of racial/ethnic groups are disproportionately exposed to health hazards or lack equitable access to jobs and transit.

In spring 2014, over half of the Sustainable Communities Regional Planning grantees will complete their three-year grant period, resulting in over 40 completed equity assessments. Among this group, eight grantees took the additional measure of completing a Regional Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice, allowing their equity assessment to meet other federal requirements.

The FHEAs have also provided another point of entry for HUD field staff to engage with municipal decision-makers. As an example of a regional Fair Housing and Equity Assessment, the Houston-Galveston Area Council (H-GAC) prepared a [FHEA assessment](#) that is currently being used for collaboration with the HUD field office in Houston.

Figure P1.2 – Images from the Houston-Galveston Fair Housing and Equity Assessment (FHEA)



The images above from the Houston-Galveston Area Council (H-GAC, Texas) Fair Housing and Equity Assessment illustrate the type of analysis Sustainable Communities Initiative grantees are conducting. The map shows the spatial distribution of environmentally hazardous sites along with identified racially and/or ethnically concentrated areas of poverty (RCAP/ECAP).

*P1.3 – In each future year for Sustainable Communities grant programs, HUD’s Office of Sustainable Housing and Communities (OSHC) will review its Notices of Funding Availability to further integrate environmental justice principles into the funding.*

While the Sustainable Communities grant programs did not receive FY 2013 appropriations, OSHC has continued to work to integrate sustainable communities and environmental justice in its existing work, including provision of technical assistance to existing grantees through the Sustainable Communities Capacity Building Program. Technical assistance provided has included topics such as advancing environmental justice through sustainability planning, preserving affordable housing near transit, and engaging marginalized communities.

*P1.4 - OSHC will continue to coordinate HUD’s participation in the Interagency Working Group on Environmental Justice.*

OSHC has continued to take a leading role in HUD's interagency collaboration, including participation in stakeholder listening sessions, coordinating the HUD internal working group on Environmental Justice, and identifying opportunities for interagency collaboration.

*P1.5 - The Choice Neighborhoods program will continue to encourage applicants to consider the environment, energy efficiency and sustainability in their Transformation Plans.*

**Choice Neighborhoods** (CN) is HUD's signature place-based initiative and is a central element of the White House's Promise Zones Initiative.<sup>10</sup> Choice Neighborhoods enables communities to revitalize struggling neighborhoods with distressed public housing or HUD-assisted housing. Through these grants, local leaders, residents, and other community stakeholders are replacing distressed housing with vibrant, mixed-income communities, catalyzing new retail and businesses, turning around failing schools, strengthening early education, preventing crime, improving transportation, ensuring basic neighborhood assets, and increasing access to jobs.

As part of this effort, Choice Neighborhoods specifically promotes sustainability and livability. Choice Neighborhoods' Implementation Grantees are required to achieve efficiency standards in new housing construction and incorporate sustainable construction and demolition practices. They are also encouraged to achieve LEED-ND certification or a similar neighborhood sustainability standard.<sup>11</sup> Meanwhile, Choice Neighborhoods' Planning Grantees are required to incorporate sustainable development practices into their transformation plans, including supporting compact development and proximity to transportation choices, amenities, services, and employment opportunities. Planning Grantees are also encouraged to improve resident health by adopting green building practices.

On November 22, 2013, HUD announced nine FY 2013 Choice Neighborhoods Planning Grant awards for a combined \$4.37 million to transform distressed communities in: Baton Rouge, LA; Denver, CO; Los Angeles, CA; Meriden, CT; New Bern, NC; Philadelphia, PA; Sacramento, CA; Wellston, MO; and Winston-Salem, NC. Awards were a maximum of \$500,000 each.<sup>12</sup> To date, Choice Neighborhoods has funded 56 Planning Grantees and 8 Implementation Grantees.

The progress made by the Choice Neighborhoods Initiative is expected to be significant to HUD's vision of achieving environmental justice because tenant involvement and neighborhood participation are required as part of the transformation plan process and during subsequent revitalization. This revitalization provides distressed communities with the opportunity to improve the livability and sustainability of their surrounding environment.

## **P2. Promote Healthy Homes Free of Environmental and Health Hazards**

*P2.1 - Safe and Healthy Homes Investment Partnerships (SHHIP): HUD will create a certification for communities that coordinate home interventions across housing, health, and energy programs. SHHIP communities will advance*

<sup>10</sup> See "Partner with Communities to Help them Rebuild" in "Building Ladders of Opportunity" at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/budget/factsheet/building-ladders-of-opportunity>.

<sup>11</sup> LEED stands for Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design. LEED standards present a rating system based on standards created by the United States Green Building Council (USGBC). (See <http://admin.usgbc.org/maintenance/gbci.html>.) LEED-ND stands for LEED for Neighborhood Development. (See

<sup>12</sup> See [http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/press/press\\_releases\\_media\\_advisories/2013/HUDNo.13-175](http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/press/press_releases_media_advisories/2013/HUDNo.13-175).

*environmental justice by removing the barriers and programmatic impediments to comprehensive home assessments and citizen need-based coordinated housing interventions.*

HUD's Office of Healthy Homes and Lead Hazard Control (OHHLHC) has completed the internal and external development process for the SHHIP development. The development process included the publication of a notice in the Federal Register requesting comments and feedback on the SHHIP concept, taking in comments and developing responses.

In addition to program development efforts, OHHLHC promoted SHHIP certification to national and regional audiences in multiple venues, including the national conference of Lead and Healthy Homes Grantees, the Green and Healthy Homes Initiative annual training conference, and several statewide healthy homes conferences. These national and regional outreach efforts focused heavily on programs representing environmental justice-oriented communities.

Several other OHHLHC and HUD-wide activities are currently underway, including the development and anticipated adoption of priority points for NOFA applicants who prioritize coordination between housing, health and energy efficiency programs. HUD also adopted the inclusion of promoting resident health through housing as a strategic, cross-cutting objective in the *HUD FY 2014 – 2018 Strategic Plan*. Currently the office is evaluating whether a separate certification process, external to the NOFA review, is required to convey the status and benefits of the SHHIP designation.

***P2.2 - Green and Healthy Homes Initiative: OHHLHC continues to support a public-private partnership known as the Green and Healthy Homes Initiative (GHHI) pilot. This pilot performs healthy and green retrofits of low-income housing units by bringing together federal, state and local government, and philanthropic funding streams.***

Each of the cities in this HUD-supported GHHI pilot program committed to conducting lead remediation and energy efficiency retrofitting efforts simultaneously through schedule alignment, execution of inter-program compacts, and adoption of common assessment tools. In addition to retrofitting units, the GHHI has been actively coordinating training of workers in multiple sites. This training, funded in large part by a grant to the GHHI by the Open Society Initiative, has focused on building skills in multiple housing and energy efficiency disciplines among ex-offenders and low wage or unemployed workers.

Although the HUD-supported pilot phase of the GHHI has been completed, the local sites continue to conduct inspections and interventions under their compacts. In FY 2013, participating jurisdictions in the Green and Healthy Homes Initiative performed healthy and green retrofits of housing units in fifteen cities bringing the overall number of units assisted by GHHI to 3,473, nearly reaching the goal of 3,500.

***P2.3 - Technical Assistance for Grantees and Identifying Opportunities for Effective Advocacy: OHHLHC will spearhead the development of an interagency website, [healthyhomes.hud.gov](http://healthyhomes.hud.gov), which will contain substantial content on lead and lead poisoning prevention.***

In FY 2013, OHHLHC developed several informational products and strategic initiatives to support implementation of the healthy homes elements of the environmental justice strategy. OHHLHC heads an interagency healthy homes outreach work group to develop federal healthy homes messaging, leverage resources and better collaborate on the following:

1. [Advancing Healthy Housing-A Strategy for Action](#) - The strategy was officially launched in February by the leadership of five partner federal agencies and includes major commitments on health promotion through better housing.
2. [Healthyhomes.hud.gov](#) –Progress on the website continued to move forward, including the development of major partnerships and federal resources to assist consumers on healthy homes concerns. A variety of complex federal web security and information technology issues were overcome and a site completion plan was written. This plan will greatly improve usability by consumers and provide for efficient site maintenance.
3. [Federal Healthy Homes Outreach Strategy and Healthy Homes Campaign](#)-This will help launch the healthyhomes.hud.gov website and establish a federal healthy homes “brand.” In FY 2013, OHHLHC secured the support of the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) for this campaign.
4. [Disaster Recovery](#)- As evidenced by the response to Hurricane Katrina, communities struggling with environmental justice issues can be greatly impacted by poor planning and uneven disaster response by governments and other stakeholders. In FY 2013, OHHLHC expanded its assistance to consumers and began partnering more closely with appropriate federal agencies on healthy homes issues in post-natural disaster rebuilding. Activities ranged from the creation of materials detailing how to safely return home after a disaster to the development of website content and applications for new mobile technology.

*P2.4 - The Lead Hazard Control and Healthy Homes Programs will continue to provide states and local communities with grants to make housing improvements that will yield positive health outcomes for individuals and families.*

In FY 2013, OHHLHC continued to provide states and local communities with resources to combat lead based paint and other hazards in homes. The office quickly issued the FY 2013 Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA), reviewed the grant applications and completed new grant agreements with 37 states or local communities.

Throughout FY 2013, existing OHHLHC grantees controlled lead paint hazards, reduced allergens and remediated mold in 10,495 units. The great majority of this activity was focused on older, pre-1978 housing stock primarily located in inner city neighborhoods. The Lead Hazard Control and Healthy Home grant programs are among HUD’s preeminent programs that positively impact environmental justice.

### **P3. Use Data Tools to Expand HUD and Public Knowledge about Environmental Justice**

*P3.1 – **Disaster Assistance Planning:** HUD’s Office of Policy Development and Research (PD&R) will coordinate the preparation of an initial Housing Needs Assessment to estimate the housing impact of a disaster, especially for minorities and vulnerable populations.*

PD&R continues to maintain such efforts spearheading this project and has already published a [webpage listing disaster assistance resources](#), which includes reports, guides, and ordinances to aid in the disaster recovery process.

*P3.2 - **Geospatial Mapping (GIS):** PD&R will enhance GIS functionality and HUD data to more fully utilize the capabilities that spatial data analysis can provide.*

PD&R is continuing its efforts to create a formal governance structure for managing HUD's geospatial portfolio. Such a governance structure will allow PD&R to establish operational protocols for the eGIS Platform and to strategically identify and mitigate gaps in the current geospatial portfolio.

## **P4. Supporting Tribal Self-Governance and Improving Living Environments**

*P4.1 – **Indian Housing Block Grant (IHBG):** Along with active tribal input in the development process, HUD consolidated a number of separate assistance programs and replaced them with the Indian Housing Block Grant program. These formula block grants for Indian tribes benefit primarily low-income families living on Indian reservations.*

In FY 2013, \$599,246,999 was awarded to IHBG recipients.

*P4.2 – **Indian Community Development Block Grant (ICDBG):** HUD's ICDBG Program provides grants for developing suitable housing and economic opportunities for low and moderate income persons in Indian and Alaska Native communities.*

In FY 2013, \$53,615,010 was awarded to ICDBG recipients.

*P4.3 – **Environmental Review:** In accordance with HUD's commitment to tribal self-governance and tribal self-determination, Indian tribes may assume the environmental review responsibilities of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and other laws and authorities.*

The Office of Public and Indian Housing (PIH) and the Office of Native American Programs (ONAP), within PIH, have maintained their commitment to servicing these grant programs and initiatives. Their work continues to increase environmental justice for low- and moderate-income Native American families across the nation.

## **Additional Program Office Environmental Justice Progress**

### *Building understanding of community and health connections*

While not explicitly mentioned under HUD's EJ Strategy, a number of efforts across HUD program offices and HUD partners are furthering understanding of the connections between neighborhoods and health.

### **Healthy Communities Transformation Initiative**

The [Healthy Communities Transformation Initiative \(HCTI\)](#) is a new three-year project, funded by OHHLHC, to improve the health systems and the physical, social, and economic service structures that support healthy living and healthy behaviors in our communities. Healthy Housing Solutions, Inc. is leading a team of partners in developing this initiative. Two key elements of the HCTI are the development of a Healthy Communities Index (HCI) and a Healthy Communities Assessment Tool (HCAT). OSHC is providing support to the HCTI in incorporating environmental justice and sustainability issues into the project.

### **Sustainable Communities Research Grants**

Fiscal Year 2010 [Sustainable Communities Research Grant program](#) recipients are wrapping up their work in 2014. Two research projects that may yield especially interesting results that connect health and environmental justice are:

- **University of Miami, FL: “Health Impacts of the Built Environment among Miami Medicare/Medicaid Beneficiaries”** - This study evaluates the extent to which the built environment that supports walkable neighborhoods is linked to beneficial health outcomes and lower health care costs among Medicaid and Medicare beneficiaries. The underlying assumption is that walkable neighborhoods predict the degree of physical activity which is linked to rates of obesity and related health problems. The researchers utilize Medicare/Medicaid claim submissions for the 350,000 Medicare and 400,000 Medicaid recipients in the Miami-Dade County metropolitan area. The analysis involves a quantitative evaluation of the relationship between built environment, walkability, and health outcomes.
- **International City/County Management Association (ICMA), District of Columbia: “Local Government Sustainable Communities Research Program: Advancing Social Equity Goals to Achieve Sustainability”** - Without a commitment to social equity and inclusive engagement, local governments may establish programs that protect natural resources, reduce energy use, or address other components of sustainability, but do not truly have programs that advance sustainable communities. The focus of the proposed research is to understand how current activities and practices that promote more sustainable neighborhoods are also supported through active and inclusive public and civic engagement. ICMA will collaborate with stakeholder groups to build on the results of a comprehensive survey on sustainability policies and practices by local governments. This survey will serve as the foundation for examining local government strategies that foster social equity and contribute to broader sustainability goals by including the entire community in the planning and development process.

### Health Impact Bonds Finance Illness Prevention

While not a HUD-initiated or sponsored effort, innovative work in Fresno, California, that HUD staff was consulted on shows a promising practice for addressing environmental health issues. Researchers in Fresno are testing a health care funding strategy that could reduce treatment costs and provide financial incentive for investors to fund preventative medicine. By paying for preventative treatment for asthma—including consistent medication compliance, changes in behavior, or changing carpets—investors hope to reduce the number of emergency room trips and hospital stays made by asthmatics. The personal and public healthcare costs that would have been spent on emergency room visits are then passed on as a financial return to the initial investors. HUD looks forward to supporting similar work to undertake social impact bonds as a strategy for promoting healthy environments for all.

# I: INTERAGENCY COLLABORATIONS THAT ADVANCE ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

## I1. Partnership for Sustainable Communities – Team EJ

*I1.1 – The Partnership for Sustainable Communities (PSC) will develop and deliver training materials that describe the integration of the fields of sustainable communities and environmental justice.*

The PSC completed initial sustainable communities and environmental justice training in 2012.

*I1.2 – The Partnership for Sustainable Communities Environmental Justice Team will identify and highlight best practices of projects using federal assistance to address environmental justice through sustainable communities.*

The Partnership for Sustainable Communities' Team EJ (Environmental Justice) continued its work in 2013, adding representatives from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) to its ranks. Among the work undertaken was disseminating environmental justice and sustainability staff contact information across the four agencies involved in the PSC (HUD, DOT, EPA, CDC) and compiling a catalog of ['Equity and Environmental Justice' federal data and mapping tools](#) that communities may use to learn more about key indicators in their communities. In addition, the team also compiled a website of relevant [environmental justice and sustainable communities resources](#).

## I2. Addressing Local EJ Concerns that Affect Residents of HUD-Assisted Housing

*I2.1 - HUD will initiate work with the Interagency Working Group (IWG) at the Headquarters, Regional Office, and Field Office levels to identify interagency and intergovernmental approaches to impact environmental justice issues which originate in areas where HUD may not have jurisdiction.*

In an effort to expand the reach of HUD's environmental justice strategy, select HUD field employees—who have already been trained as regional lead sustainability officers—have now also been designated as “Field Environmental Justice Liaisons,” giving them the responsibility to promote EJ initiatives on the ground across all 10 HUD regions. A complete list of the ten Lead Sustainability Officers who have taken on this role and their contact information is [available online](#) (see those staff labeled “Lead SO”).

In addition to the lead sustainability officers accepting this role, many other HUD field staff have also participated in community meetings focused on environmental justice. For example, in April 2013, Region VI field office leadership participated in a day-long community engagement activity with citizens and local officials from the city of Corpus Christi, Texas. Other participants included non-profit agencies, philanthropic organizations, and other federal agencies such as the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). The federal and local officials, including HUD regional EJ liaisons, were given a tour of the city of Corpus Christi and the nearby Colonia in Nueces County. The tour illustrated core sewer and water infrastructure deficiencies while also highlighting resident concerns about industrial facilities sited adjacent to residential communities.

After the tour, federal and local officials (including the mayor) gathered with citizens for a participation and listening meeting. After almost forty citizens presented their concerns and desires for the region, federal field officials joined together in an interagency capacity to present the federal funding sources to assist the city and colonia. The ensuing conversation brought to light the capacity challenges faced by organizations serving colonia communities—driven by a variety of factors including inconsistent public funding availability to help organizations grow and build their capacity. For more developed organizations, the lack of access to capital was also a key barrier to expansion of service provision to meet the needs of colonia communities. The meeting also brought to light the need for local organizations and federal agencies to find ways to communicate effectively about environmental justice issues on an ongoing basis, rather than concentrating communications in single events.

### **I3. Healthy Homes and Communities**

*I3.1 - **Science and Technology:** HUD will work with key agencies to analyze the effectiveness of current lead testing and abatement technology, including an evaluation of lead hazard control interventions conducted by recipients of the initial two rounds of Lead Hazard Control grants.*

HUD is currently coordinating with the EPA by reviewing the adequacy of the current federal paint-lead and dust-lead standards. The Department has completed an initial review of the paint-lead standard and is collecting data to inform the EPA review of the dust-lead standards.

HUD, collaborating with the EPA and the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences, conducted two nationwide surveys of environmental conditions in housing. The surveys found that low-income families and families in older homes were at higher risk of exposures. The survey also found that for lead paint hazards, low-income families receiving government housing assistance had as few exposures as middle-class families, benefiting from home inspections and repairs required under the housing assistance.

HUD is also considering drafting a revision to the Lead Safe Housing Rule (codified in HUD regulations at 24 CFR 35, subparts B through R). This revision would cause the current regulations governing the identification and remediation of lead paint hazards to conform to the latest CDC issued guidance on elevated blood lead levels in children. This revision will be sent through HUD clearance in FY 2014 and subsequently to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB).

*I3.2 – HUD's Office of Healthy Homes/Lead Hazard Control chairs the federal interagency Healthy Homes Working Group.*

OHHLHC has continued to chair the interagency Healthy Homes Working Group.

### **I4. Tribal Issues Interagency Working Group**

In 2007, a group of federal agencies, including HUD, assembled an Infrastructure Task Force and signed two Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) to improve interagency coordination for the planning and funding of tribal infrastructure projects. Upon expiration of these MOU's the Task Force agreed to execute one MOU that combined aspects of the two earlier MOUs.

The MOU has been fully executed between HUD, the Indian Health Service (IHS), Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), and the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). The MOU was effective with the final signature on March 28, 2013 and was announced at the Tribal Utility Summit on April 10, 2013 in Nashville, TN.<sup>13</sup>

As a result of the MOU, the Inter-Agency Infrastructure Taskforce developed a workgroup that is presently working on streamlining interagency project planning for tribal grantees. Agency coordination is focusing on:

*14.1 - Streamlining the environmental review process for projects that receive funding from multiple federal sources;*

*14.2 - Enhancing the selection and timing of project funding; and*

*14.3 - Working jointly or individually as agencies to fund specified projects.*

## **Additional Interagency Environmental Justice Progress**

### *Efforts of the Federal Interagency Working Group in Environmental Justice*

The Federal [Interagency Working Group on Environmental Justice \(EJ IWG\)](#) was established in 1994 to guide, support, and enhance federal environmental justice and community-based activities. The EJ IWG is comprised of 17 federal agencies and White House offices. As one of its outreach efforts, the EJ IWG has created a [directory of member agencies](#) and a [guide of community-based resources](#) to assist communities with accessing information about federal agencies and their programs as a part of the ongoing effort to improve community participation in federal programs.

Representatives from HUD's Office of Sustainable Housing and Communities (OSHC) and Office of Environment and Energy (OEE) participate in the Goods Movement and National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Committees of the EJ IWG, respectively. Representatives from HUD's Office of Field Policy and Management have also participated in events and activities organized by the Regional IWG committee. The accomplishments of the Interagency Working Group are as follows:

- The EJ IWG is working to facilitate the active involvement of all Federal agencies in implementing *Executive Order 12898* by minimizing and mitigating disproportionate negative impacts while fostering environmental, public health, and economic benefits for overburdened communities. Federal agencies have made significant progress towards fulfilling the promise of *EO 12898* under the leadership of EPA and the White House Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ). Starting with a cabinet-level meeting and the first-ever White House Forum on Environmental Justice in 2010, federal agencies reinvigorated the EJ IWG. Seventeen cabinet members and White House offices signed the [Memorandum of Understanding on Environmental Justice and Executive Order 12898](#) (EJ MOU) in 2011. In keeping with a commitment to hear from communities, the EJ IWG conducted 18 community listening sessions across the country in 2011-2012. Fifteen Federal agencies issued final agency EJ strategies, implementation plans, and/or progress reports in 2013. In August 2011, the EJ IWG identified

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<sup>13</sup> See

<http://www.usda.gov/wps/portal/usda/usdamediafb?contentid=2013/04/0066.xml&printable=true&contentidonly=true>.

the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Goods Movement, and Climate Change as priority issues, and has initiated efforts to address them.

- The EJ IWG will continue to focus its efforts on the four focus areas identified in the EJ MOU and continue to conduct listening sessions. The four focus areas identified are: (1) NEPA, (2) Goods Movement, (3) Climate Change and (4) Title VI. In addition, the EJ IWG established a committee on Regional Activities. Specific activities include:

#### **National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Committee**

The NEPA Committee is improving the effectiveness, efficiency and consistency of the NEPA process to enhance consideration of EJ through the sharing of best practices, lessons learned, training and other tools. Since its inception in May 2012, the NEPA committee has taken several steps toward achieving its mission. An electronic compendium of publicly-available NEPA and EJ-related documents from almost twenty federal agencies is now provided on the IWG website; key references from this Environmental Justice and NEPA Agency Resource Compendium are also included on EPA's NEPA Webpage. In addition, the NEPA Committee has conducted a cross-agency training series on existing tools, methods, and agency-specific focal areas. The Community of Practice Subcommittee is compiling a best practices approach that efficiently and effectively considers environmental justice in NEPA reviews. The Education Subcommittee has conducted a review of existing federal agency training materials on EJ and NEPA, and is using this assessment to produce a national NEPA training module on NEPA and EJ with the focus on effective EJ analysis in the NEPA process.

Moving forward, the NEPA Committee will continue to advance cross agency understanding of opportunities to advance environmental justice through increased understanding of challenges and opportunities, articulation of effective best practices, training on general and specific NEPA and EJ topics, and other measures. Altogether, these efforts will continue to provide federal officials, at all levels, with a foundational understanding of NEPA's role in addressing EJ through assessment, consideration of alternatives, avoidance and mitigation during the NEPA review process.

#### **Goods Movement Committee**

Goods Movement refers to the transportation of raw materials and products from their harvesting to their processing and final retail destinations. The Goods Movement Committee identifies 'overburdened' communities that are experiencing disproportionate health and environmental impacts from the transportation of goods through them, and seeks to assist federal agencies in the reduction of those impacts. In 2013, the Goods Movement Committee focused on identifying Federal activities related to goods movement, developing better partnerships with community groups, and identifying issues that most concern impacted communities. Moving forward, the committee will continue developing partnerships with communities and begin supporting the integration of environmental justice into specific agency efforts.

#### **Climate Change Committee**

Federal agencies will support President Obama's *Climate Action Plan* by reporting, through their annual environmental justice implementation progress reports, innovative actions they have taken to help overburdened communities prepare for, and recover from, the impacts of climate change.

#### **Title VI Committee**

Coordinated by the Justice Department, the Title VI Committee acts as a resource to help agencies connect their civil rights enforcement responsibilities with their efforts to achieve environmental justice. In 2013, the committee surveyed agencies to determine the extent to which Title VI complaints have

included environmental justice issues and evaluated the relationship between Title VI and EJ. Moving forward, the committee plans on posting a webpage on the EJ IWG website that articulates the interrelationship between Title VI and EJ and will identify further opportunities for interagency collaboration.

### **Regional Interagency Working Group Committee**

The Regional Interagency Working Group Committee (RIWG) responds to communities at the local and regional level. In 2013, the RIWG Committee finalized its concept to include its vision, goals, membership, organization, and key principles. This internal concept is designed to help guide the RIWG in the process of forming regional workgroups (designed around the EPA regional structure) and working with existing workgroups with the goal of better addressing issues, concerns, and recommendations that may result from public engagement at the local and regional levels, and to increase cooperation across Federal agencies in support of *Executive Order 12898*. The committee's goals, in part, are to help respond to environmental justice issues or concerns in a more timely and unified manner, help build community capacity, and leverage resources of federal, state, tribal and local agencies, as well as individual communities, the private sector and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) regarding EJ issues. The committee is moving forward with identifying and selecting cross-government collaborations to aid communities.