



Overview

What is Environmental Justice?

Environmental justice occurs when all people, regardless of race, gender, socioeconomic status, or national origin, have meaningful involvement and fair treatment with respect to development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies. Environmental Justice ensures that every person has the ability to live, learn, work, and exist in a safe and clean environment.

What is Environmental Injustice?

Environmental injustice is the disproportionate exposure of Black, Indigenous, and communities of color and low socioeconomic status to pollution and poor quality of life through unequal environmental protection laws, regulations, and practices.

- [Three out of five Black Americans](#) live in communities with uncontrolled toxic waste sites.
- A [case study of the Bronx](#), New York, found that individuals who live close to noxious industrial facilities and waste sites were **66%** more likely to be hospitalized for asthma. Significantly, these same individuals were **13%** more likely to be people of color.
- A [study by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) determined that **11.2%** of African American children and **4%** of Mexican-American children are poisoned by lead, compared with **2.3%** of white children.

KEY DEFINITIONS

- **Cumulative Health Impacts:** The combined impact of exposure to multiple environmental hazards over a duration of time
- **Environmental Hazards:** Sources of harm that pose a risk to the community's health, including any contaminants that pollute air, water, land, and agriculture.
- **Environmental Liberation:** This concept states that environmental justice, climate justice, and Black liberation can only be achieved together, and that Black liberation is liberation for everyone. ([Generation Green](#))
- **Environmental Racism:** Policies, structures, and practices that disproportionately impact (intentionally or unintentionally) Black, Indigenous, and people of color, exposing them to environmental and health risks in their homes, communities, and work. (@chicago_enviro_educators)
- **Equitable Community Access** - The just and equal access to essential services, including but not limited to: transportation, housing, food, and healthcare.
- **Fenceline Monitoring:** Community-based research to monitor a particular environmental issue occurring in the community's backyard or by their "fenceline."
- **Overburdened Community:** A community that experiences the disproportionate burdens of environmental hazards. Black, Brown, and Indigenous communities are disproportionately located in areas with environmental hazards.
 - Also known as Environmental Justice community and frontline community
- **Social Determinants of Health:** Conditions in the environments where people are born, live, work, play, worship, and age that affect a wide range of health, functioning, and quality-of-life outcomes and risks.

STRATEGIES

- **Community Outreach and Engagement**
 - Long-term partnerships
 - Cultivate community engagement and ownership
 - Create community-led strategies/ programs
 - Resources
 - [Best Practices for Community Engagement](#)
 - [Engaging Your Community Toolkit](#)
- **Hold working groups with EJ organizations**
 - Partner-driven action
 - Strategic guidance
 - Mobilize resources
 - Resource: [How to Lead Collective Impact Working Groups](#)
- **Take an Intersectional Approach**
 - Draws connections to all environmental inequalities
 - Provides tools to analyze issues holistically
 - Critically evaluate environmental issues
 - Resources
 - [Environmental Justice & Deep Intersectionality](#)
 - [Intersectionality and Environmental Justice](#)
- **Introduce Green Jobs**
 - Work with the community to create solutions
 - Address environmental damages and introduce a transition plan
 - Fund/support workers through the transition from one sector to another
 - Resource: [Green Jobs Report](#)
- **Indigenous Rights**
 - Ensure freedoms to practice traditions, cosmologies, and relationships with nature.
 - Indigenous access to healthy land, air, and water.
 - Prevent/cease industrial development on or near Indigenous land (DAPL and NAPL)
 - Resource: [Indigenous Environmental Network](#)