

Draft – Pre-decisional

***DRAFT - DHS Environmental Justice Strategic Plan***

**Message from the Secretary**

***DHS will add a message from the Secretary prior to finalization.***

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## I. Executive Summary

***DHS will add to this Executive Summary following CEQ’s review and tribal consultation.***

While EO 14096 and the Council on Environmental Quality’s (CEQ) *Strategic Planning to Advance Environmental Justice Under Executive Order 14096* template<sup>1</sup> helped guide the development and content of this Plan, the DHS Environmental Justice Strategic Plan takes a holistic approach to focus on synergizing with other federal environmental justice legal requirements and initiatives and Departmental plans and priorities. The Office of the Chief Readiness Support Officer (OCRSO), Sustainability and Environmental Programs (SEP), and the Office for Civil Rights and Civil Liberties (CRCL), Antidiscrimination Group will lead efforts to implement this Plan over the next four years, building on the Fiscal Year (FY) 2021-2025 *Environmental Justice Strategy*.<sup>2</sup> This Plan identifies the Department’s goals for advancing environmental justice throughout DHS and DHS-funded programs and activities to consider disproportionate impacts on human health and the environment. It commits DHS to pursuing environmental justice through internal and external DHS partnerships and considering the potential effects of DHS actions on communities with environmental justice concerns.

Throughout this Plan, when “DHS” is identified, it refers to all Operational and Support Components.<sup>3</sup> The acronym “HQ” will be used when referring to DHS Headquarters. The term “DHS programs and activities” will be used throughout this Plan and encompasses all DHS and DHS-funded programs, policies, and activities, including statutory or regulatory requirements of grant recipients, unless otherwise noted.

Successful implementation of this Strategic Plan would include the following outcomes:

- Educating and empowering DHS staff on environmental justice considerations and understanding employee responsibilities to work toward environmental justice within their respective roles;
- Prioritizing meaningful community involvement and early tribal consultation related to DHS and DHS-funded programs and activities that may impact human health or the environment to reduce burdens and maximize benefits to potentially impacted communities;
- Optimizing the DHS Environmental Justice Program to integrate environmental justice Department-wide in a cohesive, consistent, and strategic manner.

This Plan outlines how DHS will operationalize EO 14096 and promote environmental justice within the wide range of homeland security missions.

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<sup>1</sup> [https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/Strategic-Planning-to-Advance-Environmental-Justice\\_final-Oct.-2023.pdf](https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/Strategic-Planning-to-Advance-Environmental-Justice_final-Oct.-2023.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> DHS. 2012. *Environmental Justice Strategy*. February 2012. <https://www.dhs.gov/xlibrary/assets/mgmt/dhs-environmental-justice-strategy.pdf>.

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.dhs.gov/operational-and-support-components>

DHS environmental justice goals, objectives, and priority actions are summarized in the table below.

*An executive summary table will be provided in the final submission after goal setting is finalized.*

## II. Vision Statement

The Department envisions a future in which environmental justice is fully integrated into the fabric of DHS programs and activities that may impact human health and the environment by creating a safer, healthier, and more resilient homeland for current and future generations — a homeland where everyone, in every community across the nation, can live in a safe, sustainable, and resilient environment. DHS continues to seek ways to improve its efforts to incorporate environmental justice considerations into its programs and activities through meaningful engagement, policy revisions and development, training and employee competency building, regulatory actions, environmental hazards information disclosure, and public reporting.

## III. Mission Statement

In recognition of the fundamental role environmental justice plays in advancing our mission of homeland protection and national security enhancement, the Department affirms its commitment to promoting environmental justice and promoting equitable outcomes for all communities. We will work collaboratively with overburdened communities to understand their needs and concerns and to develop solutions that promote environmental health and equity for all consistent with the Department’s mission: **With honor and integrity, we will safeguard the American people, our homeland, and our values.**

## IV. Approach to Advancing Environmental Justice

Advancing environmental justice across the Department should be considered in the context of DHS’s core values, principles, and priorities. Established in 2002 after the September 11<sup>th</sup> terrorist attacks, DHS combined 22 different federal departments and agencies into a unified, integrated Cabinet agency with an overarching mission to secure the nation from the many threats faced. With the core values of integrity, vigilance, and respect, the Department holds five guiding principles<sup>4</sup> to shape its mission:

1. Champion “Relentless Resilience” for All Threats and Hazards
2. Reduce the Nation’s Risk to Homeland Security Threats
3. Promote Citizenship Engagement and Strengthen and Expand Trusted Partnerships
4. Uphold Privacy, Transparency, Civil Rights, and Civil Liberties

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<sup>4</sup> <https://www.dhs.gov/guiding-principles>

## 5. Ensure Mission-Driven Management and Integration

All DHS offices and Components consider how their programs and activities could affect the health and environment of the people in surrounding communities, especially communities with environmental justice concerns. Environmental justice considerations may arise in certain DHS mission areas and specifically relates to facility and operational needs, ongoing human migration across U.S. borders, planning for the increase in number and intensity of natural disasters, adapting to the impacts of climate change, the equitable distribution of services and programs to help the country increase resilience, the drive to increase reliance on cleaner energy sources, guarding against environmental contaminants, and remediating legacy pollution. These considerations guide the Department’s approach to advancing environmental justice.

The Office of the Chief Readiness Support Officer (OCRSO), supported by the Office for Civil Rights and Civil Liberties (CRCL), leads the Department’s Environmental Justice Program. OCRSO leads the DHS Environmental Justice Program and has Department-wide oversight of real property, asset management, logistics, energy, resilience, sustainability, environmental compliance, and environmental planning and historic preservation (EHP) program areas and compliance. OCRSO considers environmental justice in planning new policies, programs, and activities across the Department in these program areas. CRCL supports OCRSO by co-leading the Department’s Environmental Justice Working Group and providing oversight of the Department’s mission to secure the nation while preserving individual liberty, fairness, and equality under the law. CRCL works to integrate civil rights throughout programs and activities carried out by the Department and funded by the Department, including those that affect human health or the environment and enforces Title VI of the Civil Rights Act, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, and the requirements of other civil rights authorities.

As expanded upon in this Strategic Plan, past DHS environmental justice strategies have directed our approach to advance environmental justice through the following:

- increasing employee competency, awareness, and educational opportunities related to environmental justice considerations;
- providing technical assistance to DHS recipients about environmental justice;
- seeking to integrate environmental justice considerations into existing DHS plans and activities; and
- participating in interagency environmental justice efforts.

For over a decade, the Department has built an Environmental Justice Program to identify and address disproportionately high and adverse human health and environmental effects. DHS developed its first Environmental Justice Strategy in 2012,<sup>5</sup> with a revised Strategy signed by the Secretary in 2021. DHS has reported annually on progress toward meeting the goals identified within these strategies since 2012. DHS also formed an environmental justice working group in

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<sup>5</sup> <https://www.dhs.gov/dhs-and-environmental-justice>

2015, consisting of members from Component environmental and civil rights and civil liberties programs.

With a large contingency of law enforcement and emergency management personnel with vital responsibilities in keeping our country safe, our approach has been to provide environmental justice training materials in a brief, succinct manner focusing more in-depth training efforts for sustainability and environmental and civil rights and civil liberties offices. The former efforts focus on linking employee roles with considerations of environmental justice. The latter efforts have primarily focused on ensuring compliance with EOs 12898 and 14096, as well as various environmental laws, such as the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, 42 U.S.C. 4321 et seq.<sup>6</sup>, and civil rights laws, such as Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, 42 U.S.C. § 2000d et seq (Title VI).<sup>7</sup>

These trainings have focused on promoting technical consistency in environmental reviews, meaningful approaches to public engagement, and utilization of publicly available environmental justice tools, such as CEQ’s CEJST and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency’s EJScreen. Additional internal and external training and engagement opportunities have included overviews of the Justice40 Initiative to ensure equitable distribution of financial assistance to state, local, and tribal governments; information disclosure; and guidance documents and technical assistance for communities to build resilience.

External approaches have included providing clear, concise, and accessible information to the communities we serve whether we are holding public meetings on a proposed construction project during NEPA, presenting on Title VI at a National Environmental Justice Conference, providing environmental justice Frequently Asked Questions on dhs.gov, releasing our first Indigenous Language Plan, or issuing our first Request for Information in the Federal Register on our program and strategy. This Plan builds upon those efforts and prioritizes objectives and priority action areas to further improve accessibility and meaningful engagement.

Another integral piece to DHS's approach to advancing environmental justice is to coordinate the implementation of several EOs issued since 2020, with other Departmental and Component plans to ensure overlapping environmental justice considerations are cross referenced. These key EOs have further empowered the Department to advance equity and environmental justice. Ensuring consistency in our approach to advancing environmental justice across multiple plans helps focus Departmental efforts and provides the public with our vision (Table 1). For example:

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<sup>6</sup> <https://uscode.house.gov/view.xhtml?path=/prelim@title42/chapter55&edition=prelim>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.justice.gov/crt/fcs/TitleVI>

<b>Executive Order</b>	<b>DHS Action</b>
<p>EO 13985, <i>Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government</i><sup>8</sup></p>	<p>In 2021, DHS created its first-ever Equity Task Force, bringing together senior leaders from DHS HQ and Components to take a hard look at our programs and policies to assess whether underserved communities face barriers to accessing DHS programs and services. In January 2022, DHS released its first Equity Action Plan<sup>9</sup> to identify seven key programs with the greatest potential for advancing equity in DHS operations and activities. The programs were selected based on input from the DHS Equity Task Force in consultation with the Office of Management and Budget, as well as public feedback and input from stakeholder organizations representing underserved communities.</p>
<p>EO 13990, <i>Protecting Public Health and the Environment and Restoring Science to Tackle the Climate Crisis</i><sup>10</sup></p>	<p>DHS integrated environmental justice considerations and goals in its Climate Adaptation Plan and Strategic Framework for Addressing Climate Change<sup>11</sup> in 2021.</p>
<p>EO 14008, <i>Tackling the Climate Crisis at Home and Abroad</i><sup>12</sup></p>	<p>The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has four programs under the Justice40 Initiative: Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities, Regional Catastrophic Preparedness Grant Program, Risk Mapping, Assessment, and Planning, and Flood Mitigation Assistance. Through Fiscal Years 2022-2023, approximately \$7.4 billion was made available through Justice40 covered programs. Further, FEMA has integrated Justice40 into its 2022-2026 Strategic Plan.<sup>13</sup></p>

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2021/01/25/2021-01753/advancing-racial-equity-and-support-for-underserved-communities-through-the-federal-government>

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.dhs.gov/publication/equity>

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2021/01/25/2021-01765/protecting-public-health-and-the-environment-and-restoring-science-to-tackle-the-climate-crisis>

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.dhs.gov/climate-change>

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2021/02/01/2021-02177/tackling-the-climate-crisis-at-home-and-abroad>

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.fema.gov/about/strategic-plan/goal-1/objective-1-3>

<p>EO 14057, <i>Catalyzing Clean Energy Industries and Jobs Through Federal Sustainability</i><sup>14</sup></p>	<p>The Department continues to integrate environmental considerations into Department sustainability goals as outlined in the 2022 Sustainability Plan<sup>15</sup>. Additionally, in Fiscal Year 2022, DHS received \$500M in the Inflation Reduction Act for sustainability and environmental programs. Of the \$500M, \$25M was slated for projects that have an added benefit toward communities with environmental justice concerns as identified in CEQ’s Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool (CEJST) as a disadvantaged community. Through this funding effort, projects must retain a facilities nexus and must support the Component mission.</p>
<p>EO 14091, <i>Further Advancing Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government</i><sup>16</sup></p>	<p>DHS developed the 2023 update to the DHS Equity Action Plan, setting forth strategies to advance equity in nine focus areas selected based on their potential for advancing equity and considering feedback from external stakeholders representing underserved communities.</p>

Table 1: DHS actions in response to recent Executive Orders addressing environmental justice.

Intra- and interagency coordination and collaboration is also an important mechanism in our approach. DHS has been active on councils, committees, and working groups with other federal agencies in efforts to advance environmental justice. These efforts aid in the identification of cross-cutting environmental justice issues and leverage resources to advance environmental justice through collaboration and participation in national environmental justice symposiums, conferences, and trainings.

Internally, the DHS Environmental Justice Working Group was formed in 2015 through the first DHS Environmental Justice Directive, 023-04, *Environmental Justice*,<sup>17</sup> and charged with aiding in the integration of environmental justice principles, including but not limited to, Title VI (as applicable), goods movement, climate change, and the NEPA, into Component programs, policies, and activities. The working group meets several times a year and is composed of environmental and civil rights and civil liberties representatives from HQ programs and Components.

<sup>14</sup> <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2021/12/13/2021-27114/catalyzing-clean-energy-industries-and-jobs-through-federal-sustainability>

<sup>15</sup> 2022 DHS Sustainability Plan | Homeland Security

<sup>16</sup> <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2023/02/22/2023-03779/further-advancing-racial-equity-and-support-for-underserved-communities-through-the-federal>

<sup>17</sup> <https://www.dhs.gov/publication/environmental-management>



Finally, the amendments to NEPA from the Fiscal Responsibility Act<sup>18</sup> and the NEPA Phase II regulations (40 C.F.R. 1501-1510)<sup>19</sup> are additional legal requirements that have guided our past, and now future, approaches. DHS has prioritized collaboration within the Department, the federal interagency space, and through strong relationships with the communities we serve, reviews of current policy and future needs, hiring of environmental justice subject matter experts, alignment with other Department plans, development of new methodologies to ensure equitable access to disadvantaged communities, and simply pausing to listen to communities facing the most environmental injustices. By focusing on building a stronger foundation to support an evolving and maturing Environmental Justice Program, the Department is working to achieve the environmental justice outcomes defined in EO 12898 and now EO 14096 — meaningful involvement, engagement, and information; just treatment, equitable access, and protection from environmental injustice; work and partnerships with non-Federal entities; and institutionalization of environmental justice.

To continue refining our approach to advance environmental justice, DHS has participated in a year of listening and engagement. Efforts to conduct meaningful engagement on the development of this Plan are outlined in the final section of this Plan: Meaningful Engagement and Tribal Consultation. As the Department moves to implement this Plan, it is understood that consistent internal coordination and meaningful engagement must continue. The following goals are consistent with our past approach to advancing environmental justice but remains an iterative process, building on lessons learned from the ongoing work of DHS employees and public engagement.

## **V. Advancing Environmental Justice Through Goal Setting**

The Department established three environmental justice strategic goals which align with the DHS mission. Each is a critical step toward strengthening the capacity of DHS to further integrate environmental justice considerations throughout the Department. Each of the three strategic goals incorporates several objectives with steps that lead to achievement of the overall goal. Each objective includes prioritized actions identifying key activities that can guide resource allocation. Lastly, to track progress and performance in the implementation of the strategic goals and their objectives, each objective also includes defined metrics. A detailed implementation plan, which will include guidance, key staff and their responsibilities, and a timeline for accomplishing these goals, is forthcoming. For the purposes of this Plan, “short-term” is defined as one-to-two years, “mid-term” three-to-five years, and “long-term” five-to-ten years.

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<sup>18</sup> FRA. [H.R.3746 - 118th Congress \(2023-2024\): Fiscal Responsibility Act of 2023 | Congress.gov | Library of Congress](#)

<sup>19</sup> CEQ. 2024. [National Environmental Policy Act Implementing Regulations Revisions Phase 2](#). May 2024. [Federal Register: National Environmental Policy Act Implementing Regulations Revisions Phase 2](#)

The three strategic goals are described below. They are not presented in order of priority, but rather with respect to their feasibility and the Department’s current capacity to achieve them.

**Goal 1: Increase Department-wide environmental justice competency.**

The Department seeks to strengthen knowledge and understanding of environmental justice principles among decisionmakers and practitioners and provide resources to foster accountability and educate DHS personnel about how to advance environmental justice in DHS programs and activities.

Objective 1.1: Develop a comprehensive understanding of the application of environmental justice within the Department.

**Priority Action 1.1.1:** Strengthen the Department’s efforts to advance environmental justice through collaboration with federal interagency partners, as appropriate, on environmental justice-related training materials, community engagement opportunities, and civil rights enforcement efforts.

- **Metric:** Track participation in environmental justice-related interagency trainings, community engagements, and civil rights enforcement activities. (Short-term)

**Priority Action 1.1.2:** Develop fact sheets on topics related to environmental justice including DHS-specific examples of what advancing environmental justice means within DHS and DHS-funded programs and activities.

- **Metric:** Number of fact sheets developed and shared internally or externally, as appropriate. (Short-term)

**Priority Action 1.1.3:** Develop environmental justice training and revise relevant existing training for DHS employees and DHS recipients; ensure that the training focuses on meaningful engagement, and environmental justice impacts, including civil rights considerations.

- **Metric:** Number of trainings developed or revised to incorporate meaningful engagement. (Mid-term)
- **Metric:** Agency competition rate of environmental justice trainings. (Mid-term)

**Priority Action 1.1.4:** Promote the integration of environmental justice principles into Departmental tribal competency trainings.

- **Metric:** Number of tribal competency trainings with environmental justice principles. (Mid-term)

**Priority Action 1.1.5:** Develop an environmental justice handbook for environmental planning and historic preservation programs to consistently analyze potential impacts on human health and the environment from DHS programs and activities.

- **Metric:** Completion, deployment, and training to appropriate DHS employees of the environmental justice handbook. (Mid-term)

Objective 1.2: Build internal policy and structure to embed environmental justice throughout DHS and DHS-funded programs and activities that impact human health and the environment.

**Priority Action 1.2.1:** Update DHS Directive 023-04, Environmental Justice (Issue date: 9/19/2016) and develop a DHS environmental justice Instruction.

- **Metric:** Completion of DHS Directive 023-04, Rev 01, *Environmental Justice*. (Short-term)
- **Metric:** Completion of DHS environmental justice instruction. (Short-term)

**Priority Action 1.2.2:** Recharter the existing DHS Environmental Justice Working Group as a cross-functional environmental justice technical advisory group. Designate Environmental Justice Coordinators and supporting coordinators, as needed, within DHS component agencies and offices with programs or activities that impact human health and the environment.

- **Metric:** Signed charter establishing roles, responsibilities, and scope of the DHS Environmental Justice Working Group. (Short-term)

**Goal 2: Remove barriers to the meaningful involvement of the public in DHS programs and activities that may impact human health or the environment.**

Meaningful public engagement includes the intentional sharing of information in a manner that promotes opportunities for mutual learning and dialogue and informs decision making. DHS recognizes the public’s lack of access to information is often a barrier to meaningful engagement and an impediment to advancing environmental justice within the Department. It is essential for information to be presented in a manner which is easily accessible, comprehensible, and ready for utilization to support public sharing of concerns about DHS programs and activities that may impact human health and the environment. DHS must ensure information is accessible to individuals with disabilities, individuals who are limited English proficient, and individuals who lack resources. Meaningful engagement with communities with environmental justice concerns, including tribal nations, is crucial in guiding Department efforts to achieve its vision of everyone living in a sustainable and resilient environment.

Objective 2.1: Improve DHS decision-making through increased meaningful engagement within the NEPA process for individuals with disabilities, individuals who are limited English proficient, and individuals who lack resources.

**Priority Action 2.1.1:** Improve user accessibility of DHS NEPA documents to increase public awareness and identification of potential environmental justice impacts from proposed DHS programs and activities.

- **Metric:** Enhance user experience on dhs.gov/nepa to support efficient access to NEPA documentation throughout a variety of platforms (phone, tablet, computer). (Mid-term)
- **Metric:** Enhance NEPA public engagement opportunities on the DHS website by creating a stakeholder/public notification system for NEPA documents posted at dhs.gov. (Mid-term)
- **Metric:** Ensure that summaries of NEPA documentation and public comment opportunities are translated and distributed according to the DHS Language Access Plan and EO 13166 (“Improving Access to Services for Persons with Limited English Proficiency”), accessible, and optimized for readability. (Mid-term)
- **Metric:** Improve access to NEPA documentation for individuals with disabilities through increased training for DHS personnel on the requirements under Sections 504 and 508 of the Rehabilitation Act. (Short-term)

Objective 2.2: Enhance tribal consultation and the engagement of Indigenous peoples on DHS programs and activities that have the potential to impact health and the environment.

**Priority Action 2.2.1:** Incorporate considerations of Indigenous Traditional Knowledge into Departmental considerations through tribal consultation, especially with respect to land management, biodiversity loss, invasive species, carbon management, and climate resilience/adaptation efforts.

- **Metric:** Develop and provide training to DHS personnel on utilization of Indigenous Traditional Knowledge in environmental planning and historic preservation matters. (Mid-term)
- **Metric:** Actively engage with tribal nations regarding opportunities to enhance utilization of Indigenous Traditional Knowledge and resource management throughout DHS programs and activities. (Annual)

**Priority Action 2.2.2:** *Seek input at July 8 and 10, 2024, tribal consultation sessions.*

**Priority Action 2.2.3:** Continue to identify organizations that represent Indigenous peoples and develop a strategy for engaging them regarding environmental justice considerations related to DHS programs and activities.

- **Metric:** Collaborate across DHS and with external partners to create a comprehensive list of organizations that represent Indigenous peoples. (Short-term)
- **Metric:** Develop an approach to engage Indigenous peoples in a culturally and linguistically appropriate manner. (Long-term)

Objective 2.3: Enhance understanding, access, and transparency in environmental engagement and decision-making processes.

**Priority Action 2.3.1:** Coordinate timing of DHS engagements with interagency partners to minimize the potential for overburdening communities by engaging repeatedly on the same topics or in the same geographical area when considering cumulative potential impacts on communities with environmental justice concerns.

- **Metric:** Number of events with multiple offices, programs, and/or Component interests represented. (Annual)

**Priority Action 2.3.2:** Develop resources, training, and technical assistance on environmental justice considerations for DHS recipients related to their programs and activities with the potential to impact human health and the environment.

- **Metric:** Number of funding announcements made per fiscal year for Justice 40-covered programs that incorporate environmental justice considerations. (Annual)
- **Metric:** Number of technical assistance events hosted. (Annual)

**Goal 3: Evaluate the DHS Environmental Justice Program and develop a consistent approach to effectively coordinate related efforts across DHS.**

Various Department-wide plans are integrating environmental justice goals and implementation plans. These efforts need to be coordinated and relate to each other to ensure that Department resources are used efficiently and in a manner that achieves the desired outcomes for communities with environmental justice concerns. This goal will enhance the Department's ability to advance its environmental justice objectives in accordance with the EO 14096 instruction to consider federal actions.

Objective 3.1: Execute DHS Environmental Justice Strategic Plan in a methodical manner which maximizes existing resources while planning for future growth of program needs.

**Priority Action 3.1.1:** Create an Implementation Plan for the DHS Environmental Justice Strategic Plan with a collaborative inventory and internal tracking system.

- **Metric:** Prepare DHS Environmental Justice Strategy Implementation Plan. (Short-term)
- **Metric:** Develop electronic tracking tool for status reporting. (Short-term)
- **Metric:** Brief Environmental Justice Officer on implementation status and impediments to achieving the Environmental Justice Strategy Implementation Plan initiatives. (Annual)

**Priority Action 3.1.2:** Develop component agency-specific implementation plans for the *DHS Environmental Justice Strategic Plan*.

- **Metric:** Create Component Environmental Justice Strategy Implementation Plan template. (Short-term)
- **Metric:** Identify relevant Component agencies that will create implementation plans.
- **Metric:** Support Component agencies through guidance and timeline to prepare their Component Environmental Justice Strategy Implementation Plans. (Short-term)

Objective 3.2: Evaluate DHS policies, programs, plans, and activities regarding how they relate to and address environmental justice concerns and impacts.

**Priority Action 3.2.1:** Conduct an internal assessment of relevant Departmental and Component agency policies, programs, plans, activities, and staffing pertaining to environmental justice. Identify gaps and opportunities to further integrate environmental justice considerations and resource needs.

- **Metric:** Develop report template and data collection methodology for application across all DHS components. Utilize existing opportunities for integrating data needs. (Short-term)
- **Metric:** Conduct program management review of environmental justice programs at DHS headquarters and within Component agencies. Focus on identification of best practices, impediments, and resources. (Annual)
- **Metric:** Assess barriers and obstacles related to regulations, policies, or practices, including historical inequities. (Mid-term)

**Priority Action 3.2.2:** Within the DHS NEPA Auditing Program, develop criteria and guidance to review the consideration of beneficial and disproportionately adverse effects

on communities with environmental justice concerns within NEPA analysis, as tracked in the Environmental Planning and Historic Preservation Decision Support System.

- **Metric:** Creation of auditing program protocols targeting environmental justice and integrate within the DHS NEPA Auditing Program. (Short-term)
- **Metric:** Utilizing auditing findings, develop training to increase the quality of environmental justice reviews within NEPA documentation. Focus on early identification of potential harms to the human health and environment. (Mid-term)

Objective 3.3: Develop an approach to consistently incorporate environmental justice considerations and a framework for meaningful engagement in DHS policies, programs, plans, and activities.

**Priority Action 3.3.1:** Identify and promote existing data collection processes and data sources, capabilities, tools, and resource hubs related to environmental justice. Identify gaps and inadequacies that may affect the ability of agencies to advance environmental justice. Leverage coordination of data requests, data collection, data sharing, and reporting across Component agencies and other DHS planning documents.

- **Metric:** Execute source survey to identify existing data collection integration opportunities. (Short-term)
- **Metric:** Develop and maintain repository listing utilizing survey information to track and monitor integration opportunities. (Short-term)

**Priority Action 3.3.2:** Integrate the existing data sources and tools with the DHS Consolidated Asset Portfolio and Sustainability Information System (CAPSIS), with the Environmental Planning and Historic Preservation Decision Support System, and in asset management, operations, climate action, and sustainability planning for a consistent approach to identifying communities with environmental justice concerns.

- **Metric:** Development of environmental justice dashboards within CAPSIS. (Mid-term)
- **Metric:** Development of environmental justice questionnaire and template within the Environmental Planning and Historic Preservation Decision Support System. (Short-term)

## **VI. Meaningful Engagement and Tribal Consultation**

To foster meaningful involvement in the development of this Plan, DHS developed the engagement opportunities described below according to Sections 3(a)(vii) and (xi) of EO 14096,

which outline how to provide opportunities for meaningful engagement and adequate access to information about federal activities. The goal of the engagement activities was to support the Plan’s development.

DHS posted a Request for Information (RFI) to the *Federal Register* on December 18, 2023.<sup>20</sup> The RFI requested public feedback on how to advance the DHS Program, conduct meaningful engagement of the public in decision-making, and address challenges facing communities with environmental justice concerns related to DHS programs and activities. The RFI and the announcement of the RFI were made available in Chinese, Spanish, and Vietnamese on the DHS website and shared electronically with the Environmental Planning and Historic Preservation Community of Practice, DHS Environmental Justice Work Group, DHS Office for Civil Rights and Civil Liberties and Tribal Affairs email distribution lists, the Environmental Protection Agency and CEQ for dissemination in e-newsletters, Bureau of Indian Affairs Tribal Leader Directory, National Park Service’s Native Hawai’ian organization list, White House Environmental Justice Advisory Council, the Climate Justice Alliance, NAACP Environmental and Climate Justice Program, WE ACT for Environmental Justice, and dozens of other local and national environmental justice advocacy groups and academic programs.

In accordance with the RFI, DHS hosted three external virtual listening sessions on January 19, January 23, and January 29, 2024, after providing notice of the listening sessions via its listserv, website, and social media. DHS hosted these sessions on Zoom, so that participants were able to join virtually or by phone. In addition, participants could select Spanish language and American Sign Language interpretation and Communication Access Realtime Translation (CART) captioning when registering for a virtual session. Contractor support was also available for anyone needing technical assistance with joining or participating in the meeting, including with accessing features such as CART and interpretation rooms within the Zoom listening sessions.

One listening session was focused on topics of special interest to federally recognized Tribes, Native Hawaiian organizations, and indigenous peoples, and two listening sessions were oriented to the public. All listening sessions were open to the public. DHS staff gave a short presentation that provided an overview of environmental justice at DHS. Staff also shared guiding questions with meeting participants to generate conversation and solicit feedback, although all comments were welcome. Staff were available to answer questions or referred questions from participants to the relevant Components, assisting as needed to ensure the dialogue and conversations were meaningful. More than 250 participated in these listening sessions.

The 60-day public comment period closed on February 16, 2024. Comments were accepted during the listening sessions, through the RFI posted in the *Federal Register*, and by email. Individuals and organizations submitted more than 175 comments to DHS in response to the request to help shape the Plan. Major comment and response themes throughout the public input period included:

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<sup>20</sup> DHS. 2023. “Request for Information Regarding Department of Homeland Security Activities and Advancing Environmental Justice.” *Federal Register* Vol. 88, No. 241 (December 18, 2023): 87445, <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/FR-2023-12-18/pdf/2023-27628.pdf>.



- Engagement and collaboration to include tribal considerations
- DHS program assessments
- Sustainability, including themes around green spaces, redevelopment, climate resilience, pollution reduction, energy efficiency, and real estate assets
- Anti-discrimination
- Migrant communities
- Justice40
- Border security
- Technical assistance and disaster assistance
- Public health
- Radiofrequency radiation
- Data analysis
- Consensus standards

This broad spectrum of public engagement themes helped to determine some of the goals and objectives now reflected in the Plan, but the Plan’s goals and objectives may not directly reference all these themes. However, they may be included in the scope and authority of other DHS plans or may require additional capacity or resourcing so that goals related to them can be included in future versions of the Plan. DHS is committed to seeking meaningful public involvement in decision-making regarding the direction and implementation of the DHS Environmental Justice Program.

**Summary of Tribal consultation:** Tribal consultation was initiated in June 2024, and two consultation sessions were scheduled for early July 2024. *A summary will be provided upon completion of the consultation sessions.*

**Interagency collaboration:** On February 13, 2024, DHS and several other agencies joined the National Congress of American Indians Winter Session to receive feedback from Tribal Nations on federal efforts to advance environmental justice. On April 16, 2024, DHS also joined other agencies on a panel led by CEQ at the National Environmental Justice Conference to solicit input on the proposed goals of the Department’s Plan. On June 5-6, DHS attended the joint WHEJAC/IAC public meeting to hear comments on federal environmental justice efforts.

**Internal collaboration:** An internal working group of DHS program offices and Components was also created to focus specifically on developing the Department’s Plan.

## Appendix A: Acronyms

CAPGIS	Consolidated Asset Portfolio and Sustainability Information System
CART	Communication Access Realtime Translation
CEJST	Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool
CEQ	Council on Environmental Quality
CRCL	Office for Civil Rights and Civil Liberties
DHS	Department of Homeland Security
EJ	Environmental Justice
EO	Executive Order
EPHP	Environmental Planning and Historic Preservation
FEMA	Federal Emergency Management Agency
FY	Fiscal Year
HQ	Headquarters
IAC	Interagency Council
IGA	Office of Intergovernmental Affairs
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act
OCRSO	Office of the Chief Readiness Support Officer
RFI	Request for Information
SEP	Sustainability and Environmental Programs
WG	Working Group
WHEJAC	White House Environmental Justice Advisory Council