

EQUITY IN AIR QUALITY AND CLIMATE PLANNING

Staff Update

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Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (MWCOG)
Department of Environmental Programs (DEP)

Air and Climate Public Advisory Committee (ACPAC)

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Background

- In March 2023, the Climate Energy and Environment Policy Committee (CEEPC) and the Metropolitan Washington Air Quality Committee (MWAQC) approved ACPAC to update its 2017 EJ Toolkit
- Other COG-related work:
 - The Climate Pollution Reduction Grants (CPRG) climate plan program for the MSA requires significant new community engagement, emphasizing Justice40 and LIDAC. Consultant proposals currently under review include EJ/Equity/Community Engagement
- In May 2023, MWAQC adopted its FY24 work program including an objective to include a racial equity lens in work activities. The committee also included a goal of developing a new document to address environmental justice (EJ) in air quality planning

Joint Approach

- Joint exercise of COG/CEEPC and MWAQC
 - Continue work to update the EJ Toolkit (ACPAC)
 - Do good work on EJ and community engagement under the CPRG grant program (CEEPC)
 - Develop a new joint Resource Guide document (CEEPC and MWAQC)
- This approach would be consistent with:
 - MWAQC decision from May
 - COG's Region United Framework
 - Requirements for the CPRG Plan
- MWAQC TAC supported approach, September 12
- CEEPC and MWAQC approval, September 27

Resource Guide Document

- What will the Resource Guide be about?
 - Best practices in different sectors
 - How to identify and quantify inequities in all sectors that are attributable to environmental policies, programs, and projects
 - Drivers causing inequities
 - Opportunities to address inequities
 - How to factor the information into policies, programs, and projects to help address criteria, GHGs, or other environmental issues

EJ Toolkit Update

- What will be in the Toolkit?
 - Stand-alone tool to support the Resource Guide
 - Best practices for outreach and engagement on equity and EJ
 - New tools to assist in outreach/engagement, including metrics and assessing outcomes
 - More?

What will be in the COG staff efforts and the Consultant SOW?

- Work will flow into products – Resource Guide and Toolkit
- Survey of existing programs including performance and outcome assessment
- Gap analysis, what else is needed, what are priorities areas of needed support or resources
- Best practices in different sectors
 - Engagement and outreach approach
 - Program design, evaluation criteria, defining metrics,
 - Recommendations on how to factor them into policies, programs, and projects to help address criteria, GHGs, or other environmental issues

Existing Programs and Gap Analysis

- Inventory of Existing and Planned Equity and EJ Efforts
 - Inventory of 24 COG member governments equity and environmental justice efforts, certain State programs as well.
 - Focus areas: climate, energy and environment, and air
- Analyses: Benefits, Impacts, and Gaps
 - Baseline Justice40, equity requirements
 - Develop a methodology to measure benefits and impacts of efforts inventoried
 - Conduct a gap analysis
- External review from grassroots organizations

Next Steps and Potential Role of ACPAC

- COG Staff work and get prepared to engage with consultant
 - ACPAC input on what should go into an SOW, help review and comment on draft deliverables over time
 - Assist with EJ Toolkit Update and the new Resource Guide Document, including survey and focus group work
 - Assist with member, expert and community engagement with emphasis on low-income disadvantaged communities

Next Steps and Potential Role of ACPAC cont.

- COG Staff conduct survey and/or hold focus group discussions with COG member staff and experts to identify resource and assistance needs
- ACPAC's Potential Role:
 - ACPAC interest in holding or participating in events or other ways?
 - Input on how to go about engagement
 - Review survey results and comment on output from engagement, and recommended responses

Public Participation Encouraged

- To engage on equity and EJ for air quality and climate planning, share your thoughts and ideas:
 - Email: MWAQCPublicComment@mwkog.org
 - Identify as ACPAC member
 - Sign up in advance for public comments
 - Observe technical committee meetings
- Website update pending
- Please share resource ideas, recommend experts to participate in focus group, community engagement, etc.

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