

Environmental Justice Committee

Overview

The Environmental Justice Committee (EJC) will strive to help those most-affected by environmental inequities have ownership in decision-making, environmental program/policy design and [Equity & Environment Agenda](#) implementation while enhancing partnerships with City departments and better connecting community-based solutions into government.

In addition to participating in facilitated meetings that will focus on community cohesion, leadership development and community capacity building, EJC members will have the opportunity to participate in environmental leadership development activities to support their increased understanding of the City's wide array of environmental investments. Facilitation will also support EJC providing input on ways in which the City and communities of color might partner to build power for communities of color in environmental work, mitigate environmental injustices and ensure equitable distribution of environmental benefits. The EJC is expected to begin convening in early 2017. We ask that committee members make a 2-year commitment to the committee.

While formal professional or educational experience in climate change and environmental issues is not an expectation, the ability to draw connections and work at the intersection of environmental issues and racial, social, economic justice, and community needs is essential. To ensure strong and ongoing partnerships, EJC members must have an organizational affiliation or serve as a City of Seattle Department of Neighborhoods Public Engagement and Outreach Liaison (POEL).

Selection

EJC member applications will be reviewed by a committee of City staff who serve as the Equity & Environment Leadership team as well as staff from Department of Neighborhoods who are leading efforts to increase the City's connections to communities of color. Final committee make-up will be approved by OSE Director and the Mayor's office.

EJC Member Minimum Commitments

- Participation Commitments:
 - Participate in retreats (8 hours) in February 2017 and Early 2018.
 - Participate in 8-10 meetings and leadership sessions lasting approximately three hours each in 2017. Meeting design and time frames may shift to accommodate the committee and ensure completion of deliverables
 - Review materials between meetings and provide comments via email, one-on-one meetings and tele-conferences as needed. (approximately 5-7 hours/month)
 - Attend ½ day retreat (4 hours) in September 2017 and September 2018
 - Attendance at all EJC meetings: Absences and make-up conversations or alternative ways of providing input must be discussed and approved by EEI program manager. If absences or scheduling prevent full participation in process (missing more than 2 regular meetings), participant's membership in EJC will be re-negotiated to better accommodate available resources
- Be responsible and accountable to community/organizational contacts through regular conversations, meetings (or similar type activities as defined by culturally sensitive practices),

when appropriate to influence and ensure that the EJC review of program/policies builds upon community best practices and increases community ownership and collaboration

- Independent work which may include research, community conversations
- Work alongside City of Seattle staff to identify metrics that measure progress towards equity and environmental justice outcomes
- Work alongside City of Seattle staff to identify impacts of current environmental programs and identify new actions to advance the goals of the Equity & Environment Agenda
- Additional subcommittee meetings as needed to advance EJC specific areas of interest (not related directly to City program requests)
- Participate in EJC evaluation/documentation interviews, surveys etc. to ensure ongoing success

EJC Pilot Project Creation Workgroup (additional commitment required)

In 2017, EJC Members will have an opportunity to participate in a workgroup that will work with the City of Seattle to create a pilot project that models environmental justice in action. This pilot project has private foundation support and subcommittee members will help develop the pilot project idea, align it with community needs, bring it back to the larger group for vetting and create guidelines to support implementation. Those that wish to participate in the pilot-project subcommittee must be committed to attending separate strategy and work planning sessions in addition to their participation in the EJC (times/dates TBD).

- At minimum 4 meetings of three hours (focused in the first half of 2017)
- 2- 4 additional hours in meeting preparation, community conversations, research etc

Support of EJC Committee Members

Thanks to partnerships with private foundations, funding of up to \$3,000 per EJC member will be available to support organizations whose staff, volunteers or board members participate in the EJC. This is inclusive of staff time, transportation expenses and any other expenses associated with participation. EEI staff will work with EJC members serving on the Pilot Project work group to develop partnerships with their organizations to support planning activities, research, community conversations or other items as identified by the workgroup to support the Pilot Project development. Additional funding will also be available for Pilot Project implementation in partnership with community partners.

Funds may be used to create a paid organizational internship and recruit a qualified member or community stakeholder to serve as a representative (organization must provide appropriate mentorship and support for this individual). For Community Based Organizations whose existing staff will serve as EJC participants, funds could be used to back-fill the representative's work (such as offering a paid internship or providing additional program resources) and to ensure that the individual and their program area has organizational support and appropriate capacity to participate in this process.

Meeting Facilitation

Meetings will be held in English and communication from City staff about programs will be in English through email, power point, and written documents. Only EJC co-chairs will be expected to write, edit and/or draft documents in English; fluency in reading and processing materials in English is necessary but Equity & Environment Initiative (EEI) staff will be responsible for synthesizing meeting notes, drafting content and reporting back with the EJC and City program staff. We will use creative facilitation to support full participation for those individuals for whom English is a second language.

Expectations of the Participant and their Affiliated Organization:

- Support EJC member by connecting to staff to historical documentation and reports of relevant community conversations, and other resources as appropriate
- Provide opportunities to discuss and present work with organization leadership, membership, or community and other staff
- Integrate organizational representative's EJC work into their work plans to allow for representative to fully participate in EJC and to ensure integration of EJC in community organizations

Characteristics of a Successful EJC Participant:

- Strong and regular connection to their community and expertise in community engagement
- Interest/experience in policy/program development
- Willingness to take initiative
- Ability to draw connections between environmental issues and racial, social, and economic justice issues and support solutions at the intersection of these issues
- Understand the impacts of systemic racism on communities of color
- Has experienced and/or understands the challenges, barriers to trust in government and mainstream environmental processes experienced by EEI populations (see list below)

Additional considerations: When possible, the EJC will include individuals and organizations who bring a multi-ethnic, multi-racial cross-community building focus to this effort. Additionally we will prioritize community members with experience working on issue intersections and across sectors. Finally, we seek to align with regional climate justice efforts and may include overlap with participants from these efforts. EJC members may either have an organizational affiliation or serve as a City of Seattle POEL.

Equity & Environment Initiative Populations:

The EJC shall consist of no more than 13 members balanced with expertise in working with the communities identified below. All EJC members will have personal or professional community expertise in at least one of the following identified communities or subgroups:

- Communities of color
- Immigrants
- Refugees
- Native American Communities
- Limited English proficiency
- Environmental justice communities
- MBE - Small businesses
- Youth of color and/or youth from low income communities
- Individuals with low incomes/low wealth communities
- Faith-based organizations and congregations that work with these communities