
DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENT

EQUITY
FRAMEWORK

WASHINGTON, DC
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Contents

Greeting from
Director Tommy Wells

Greeting from
Chief Equity Officer Amber Hewitt

Acknowledgements

Guiding Definitions

Equity

Racial Equity

Environmental Justice

Equity Narrative

Appendices

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Terminology Guide

GREETING FROM DIRECTOR TOMMY WELLS



Dear Residents and Partners:

The Department of Energy and Environment developed a strategic plan setting out four distinct “North Stars” to guide the agency in a unified mission and vision. DOEE staff and leadership have worked together across the agency to infuse equity and inclusion in each of these common goals. The Equity Framework is a major action toward implementing our strategic plan.

DOEE North Stars:

1. Model internal excellence and an equitable and inclusive workplace.
2. Accelerate a green and equitable economy.
3. Expand green infrastructure and improve environmental health, with a focus on equity and inclusivity.
4. Equitably implement climate action; build resiliency; and provide national leadership

I'm proud of our work at DOEE serving the local and broader community, and that is reflected in the values of the Equity Framework.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Tommy Wells".

Tommy Wells
Director
Department of Energy and Environment

GREETING FROM CHIEF EQUITY OFFICER AMBER HEWITT



Dear Residents and Partners,

In February 2021, Mayor Muriel Bowser established the Office of Racial Equity (ORE) with the charge of developing an infrastructure to evaluate policy decisions and District programs through a racial equity lens. The ORE also carries forward the implementation of the Racial Equity Achieves Results “REACH Act” (D.C. Act 23-521). The Act includes several provisions designed to operationalize racial equity across government, such as racial equity trainings for District employees and the development of Racial Equity Action Plans.

As Mayor Bowser stated, “we have a unique opportunity to double down on our efforts to put racial equity at the forefront and revitalize systems to ensure a more inclusive and prosperous future for all Washingtonians.” Opportunity also brings with it the acknowledgement that government must work to repair harm and eliminate structures that reinforce differential experiences and outcomes by race. We must begin by normalizing conversations around race, racism, and racial equity. I am encouraged by the work that the Department of Energy and Environment (DOEE) has begun to normalize, organize, and operationalize racial equity. And I am pleased to be a part a team of directors who have initiated landmark projects across District government to achieve our vision for racial equity – when one’s race or ethnicity will no longer predict opportunities, outcomes, or the distribution of resources for residents of the District, particularly Black, Indigenous, and People of Color residents.

In the few months I’ve been Chief Equity Officer, many have asked about my vision for the Office. The vision will build upon the Mayor’s priorities and existing agency strategies and goals. Racial equity, nevertheless, requires prioritizing the voices and needs of those most affected by racial inequities. So, my goal is to foster a collective vision, one that includes:

- Acknowledging the cumulative and ongoing impact of historical trauma on communities of color, namely Black people living in the District,
- Shifting our individual and collective understanding of the impact of racism and what anti-racism and racial equity are and mean,
- Acknowledging the intersections of race and other intersecting social categories or experiences,
- Analyzing which communities will benefit and which communities will be harmed by policy decisions, according to race, and
- Targeting solutions and distribution of resources to residents that have experienced systemic and institutional oppression.

DOEE’s Equity Framework is an excellent illustration of this collective vision. But ultimately, this work requires all of us. My team is excited to collaborate with District agencies, residents, and external stakeholders to advance the Mayor’s vision of a more racially equitable city.

In Solidarity,

Amber Hewitt

Amber A. Hewitt, Ph.D.
Chief Equity Officer
District of Columbia Government

Acknowledgements

The Equity Framework for the Department of Energy and Environment was produced by the DOEE Equity Committee, with input from staff members across the agency. DOEE acknowledges the following partners and individuals for their contributions to the development of this Equity Framework and its earlier iterations:

- Desirée Williams-Rajee, Kapwa Consulting, LLC
- if, A Foundation for Radical Possibility (formerly Consumer Health Foundation)
- Urban Sustainability Directors Network
- Carmen Bolt

In its advisory role to the Director, the DOEE Equity Committee informs, reviews, and provides guidance around strategies and activities that meet the goal of operationalizing a commitment to justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion across the agency. DOEE thanks the members of the Equity Committee (2020-2021) for their contributions to this framework and the efforts to engage staff members across the agency in its development:

- Allyson Criner Brown
- Antonio Yaquian-Luna
- Cheryl Chan
- Chris Brown
- Jacob Zangrelli
- Kara Pennino
- Kelly Crawford, Committee Chair
- Kenley Farmer
- Lauren Maxwell
- Lynnetta Gibson
- Shamika Parker
- Tommy Wells, Director

Citation:

DC Department of Energy and Environment. Equity Framework. October 2021. Available at: <https://doee.dc.gov/node/19312>

Guiding Definitions

EQUITY

Equity refers to the fair treatment, access, opportunity, and advancement for all people.

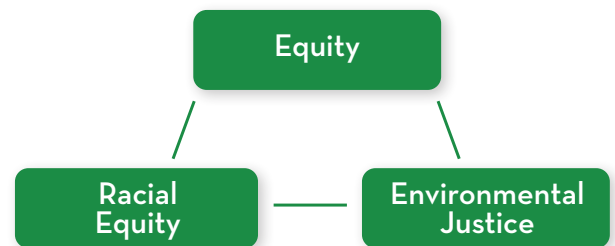
Pursuing equity requires the identification and elimination of barriers that prevent the full participation of people and exacerbate the unequal distribution of burdens across socially*, economically, or geographically defined groups.

Achieving equity involves ensuring justice and fairness within the procedures and processes of institutions and systems, and the distribution of resources, opportunities, and burdens.

Equity is based on need, and an equitable future requires understanding the root causes of outcome disparities within society.

**The term “socially defined groups” refers to social identity groups, including: race, ethnicity, nationality, citizenship, language, gender, sexual orientation, ability/disability, socio-economic status/class, religion, age, etc.*

Source: [Independent Sector](#), modified by the DOEE Equity Committee



RACIAL EQUITY

Racial equity is both a process and an outcome.

As an outcome, we achieve racial equity when one's race will no longer predict opportunities, outcomes, or the distribution of resources for residents of the District, particularly Black residents.

As a process, we apply racial equity when those most impacted by structural racial inequity are meaningfully involved in the creation and implementation of the institutional policies and practices that impact their lives.

Source: District of Columbia Office of Racial Equity, adapted from [Race Forward](#)

ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

Environmental justice (EJ) is the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin, or income with respect to the development, implementation and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations and policies.

Fair treatment means no group of people should bear a disproportionate share of the negative environmental consequences resulting from industrial, governmental and commercial operations or policies.

Meaningful involvement means:

- People have an opportunity to participate in decisions about activities that may affect their environment and/or health;
- The public's contribution can influence the regulatory agency's decision;
- Community concerns will be considered in the decision-making process; and
- Decision makers will seek out and facilitate the involvement of those potentially affected.

Source: [Environmental Protection Agency](#)

Equity Narrative

EQUITY AT DOEE (part I)

The Department of Energy and Environment (DOEE) upholds an intimate relationship between the natural environment and the built environment of Washington, DC, and acknowledges the complex history of the land upon which it sits. We strive to align our present and future work with the envisioned, yet not fully realized for all, aspirations of the nation's capital by serving as a regional, national, and international leader in climate action, resilience, and environmental health. We prioritize equity, environmental sustainability, public health, and economic opportunity for the District's communities.

DOEE recognizes that the District of Columbia occupies the unceded ancestral land of Nacotchtank, the sacred site of the Nacostine/Anacostan people, and the unceded ancestral land of the Piscataway people. We acknowledge the more than dozen tribal nations living across the region that for centuries have served as environmental stewards—along the Anacostia and Potomac watersheds, the broader Chesapeake Bay watershed, and on the land today considered part of Virginia, Maryland, and the District of Columbia. The displacement of indigenous peoples from their ancestral lands was the first of many dispossessions in what is now considered the District of Columbia. The legacies of slavery, disfranchisement, redlining, segregation, alley clearance, urban renewal projects, freeway construction and displacement, education inequality, and housing inequality are among the examples of discrimination and dispossession in the District that echo into present times. These formative policies are intertwined with a rich history of Washingtonians who have led the city and the nation in the struggles for civil, environmental, and human rights.

DOEE acknowledges that the District's urban and natural environments are constructed and managed in ways that have not benefitted the capital's communities equally. District residents that continue to suffer the effects of environmental hazards—and their compounding impacts—are disproportionately people of color and people experiencing poverty. These hazards manifest as air pollution, inequities in access to clean water and nutritious food, lack of proximate green space, proximity to industrial toxins, racial disparities in life expectancy, and increased vulnerability to extreme weather events and climate change. DOEE recognizes that environmental inequities in the District are exacerbated by other key factors that are social determinants of health, such as inadequate or insufficient housing.

DOEE's position as a public agency enables us to use public dollars and resources to prioritize and contribute to a green and equitable economy, expand green infrastructure, and improve public health and environmental health across all Wards. Equity and environmental justice at DOEE lead—but do not end—with a focus on race. By addressing racial inequity in the systems we manage and influence, we create opportunities for more communities to benefit from and participate in the process of identifying and implementing environmental solutions. We honor our commitment to racial equity and environmental justice by acknowledging, addressing, and ameliorating inequities within our agency and across the District. Further, a commitment to racial equity and environmental justice enables us to implement climate action, build resiliency, and provide national leadership on environmental policy for generations to come.

Why Must DOEE Center Racial Equity? (part II)

- **Resilient Design.** Equity as a design process requires consideration of inequitable outcomes on communities that are already environmentally overburdened, vulnerable to the impacts of systemic racism and other “-isms,” or both. By addressing their needs and concerns, and shifting processes to increase their influence, solutions can enhance the overall beneficial impact of government initiatives. This approach sets a course toward distributive justice, improves the sophistication of systems analysis for government staff, and builds long-term community capacity to address the major systemic problems we face in cities like climate change and energy burden.
- **Fiscal Responsibility.** Government has the duty to use public dollars responsibly. Data shows us that in Washington, DC, people of color—and more acutely Black people—and people facing poverty fare worse across life indicators (e.g. health, life expectancy, housing, economic prosperity, and education). As a performance metric, this is an indicator that government must work to improve outcomes. A racial equity approach that is driven by targeted universalism (i.e. universal goals, targeted processes) decreases the long-term social tax burden of everyone.
- **Regulatory Responsibility.** Many of the social and environmental challenges we face today can be traced to policy and regulatory decisions of government. Using the tools of regulation and policy can be a corrective mechanism to shift the impact of past decisions on communities vulnerable to poverty, systemic racism, and the impacts of climate change. Without the intentional consideration of racial equity, regulation risks exacerbating racial disparities.
- **Significance.** Race is consistently the indicator of greatest disparity in Washington, DC, and it may be ignored as a factor if not intentionally addressed. Life expectancy, wealth generation, economic opportunity, and poverty are defined more by race than by class in the District. The term “leading with race” does not mean “only race.” It is a practice of starting with a racial equity analysis and intersects with analyses of other marginalized groups* to understand how race dynamics may impact outcomes, amongst other factors.
- **Collective Action.** By addressing racial inequity in the systems we manage and influence, we create opportunity for more communities to participate actively in environmental solutions such as conservation, environmental protection, and reduction of carbon emissions. Not everyone is positioned equally to take action. Equity ensures that everyone can both contribute to and benefit from these actions.
- **Justice.** Those who are contributing least to structural and environmental problems are most negatively harmed by these systems. Government is in a position to take action utilizing public investments to achieve better and more equitable outcomes. Environmental sustainability and equitable governance are not mutually exclusive and, together, will advance DOEE’s and the District’s goals.

**The term “marginalized groups” refers to populations within socially, economically, or geographically defined groups that experience discrimination and exclusion as a consequence of unequal power relationships. Social identity groups include: race, ethnicity, nationality, citizenship, language, gender, sexual orientation, (dis)ability, socio-economic status/class, religion, age, etc.*

Note: The DC Human Rights Act makes discrimination illegal based on 21 protected traits for people that live, visit, or work in the District of Columbia (source: [DC Office of Human Rights](#)).

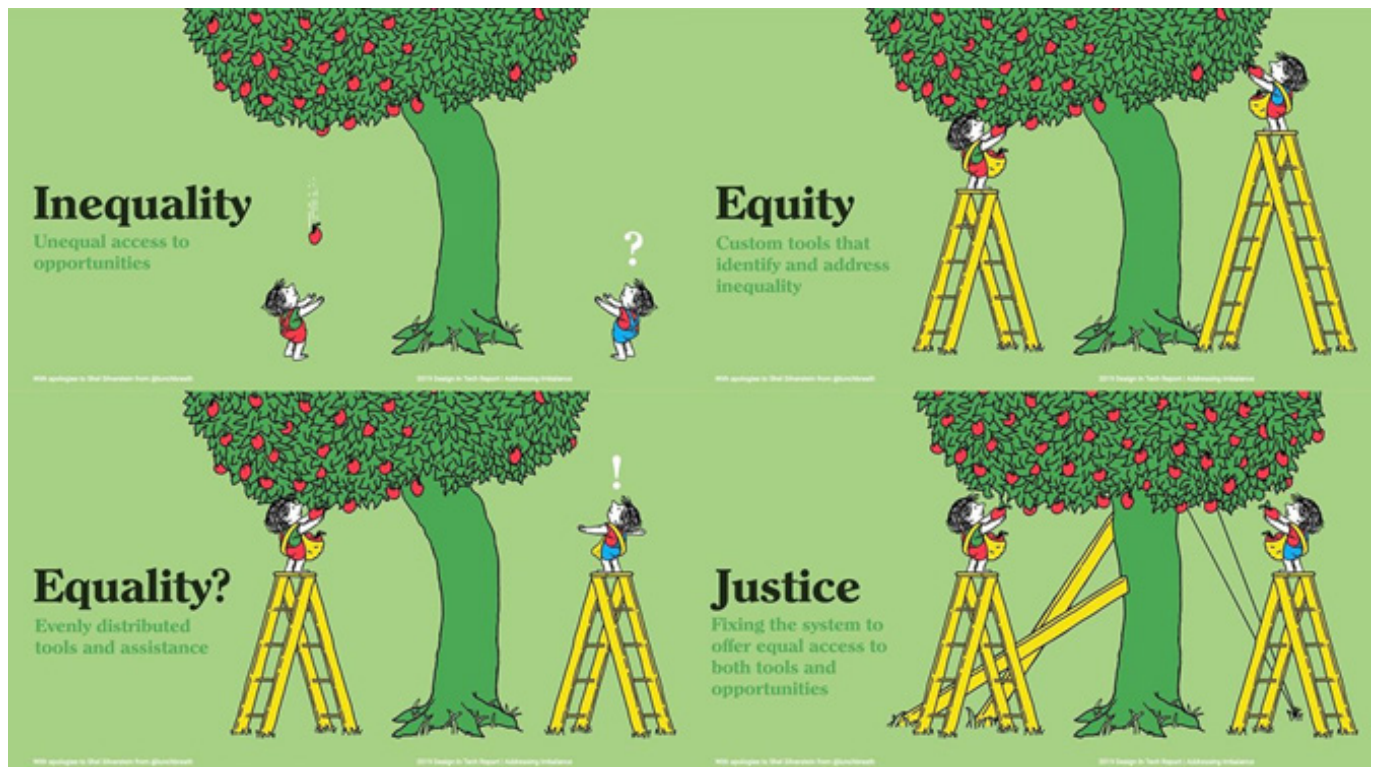
Frequently Asked Questions

Q: “What is the difference between equity and equality?”

Equality typically refers to treating everyone the same (i.e. providing **equal resources**), without regard to where they are starting or what they need. Equal treatment can result in unequal outcomes, particularly where inequalities are already present. An approach that emphasizes equality may stagnate or exacerbate the gaps in outcomes that currently exist.

Equity acknowledges that different people start in different places and have different needs, stemming from local and national historical context that includes race-based policies and practices (as well as policies and practices based on gender, nationality, and other social identities). An equity approach strives to give everyone what they need to reach the same outcomes. Equity is about **equal outcomes**.

Adapted and modified from: Government Alliance on Race and Equity (GARE)



Inequality: Unequal access to opportunities. Equity: Custom tools that identify and address inequality. Equality?: Evenly distributed tools and assistance. Justice: fixing the system to offer equal access to both tools and opportunities.

Source: <https://achievebrowncounty.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/EYz4uj8UwAAeAtJ.jpg>

Q: “Why does equity work lead with race?”

Race is consistently the indicator of greatest disparity in the District of Columbia, as with many jurisdictions across the country. One of the most important reasons to lead with and be explicit about race is that race may be ignored as a factor if not intentionally addressed. In Washington, DC, people of color—and more acutely Black people—and people facing poverty fare worse across life indicators (e.g. health, life expectancy, housing, economic prosperity, and education).

The [*2018 Health Equity Report for the District of Columbia*](#) (DC Health) documents multiple disparities, beginning with life expectancy at birth (ranging from an average of 89.4 years for residents in Ward 3's Woodley Park to an average of 68.4 years for residents near St. Elizabeths Hospital in Ward 8 – a gap of 21 years). The Report concludes:

Overall, as a result of the interplay of multiple socio-demographic contextual factors, including the District's historic and contemporary segregated residential geography, years of life expectancy vary across the District's 51-statistical neighborhoods by 21 years. As shown, this patterning is repeated across all the social determinants of health, underscoring differential opportunities for health by income and place, as well as by race, as a root cause of inequities.

[*The Color of Wealth in the Nation's Capital*](#), a report from the Urban Institute (2016), found significant present-day gaps in wealth along racial lines. Specifically, white households in DC were found to have a net worth 81 times greater than Black households, and home values are significantly lower for Black families. The DC Fiscal Policy Institute has also documented [*gaps in household income and wealth along racial lines*](#) in the District.

The roots of these inequities are explored in publications like *The Color of Wealth in the Nation's Capital*, which briefly describes a long history of blocked wealth for the District's Black residents:

These enormous wealth disparities did not arrive with the housing crisis or recession. Black people in DC have faced more than two centuries of deliberately constructed barriers to wealth building, and some of the highest barriers were embedded by design in law. Whether enslaved, barred from jobs in lucrative sectors, diverted from a stake in land giveaways, seeing their neighborhoods targeted for “urban renewal,” or watching their housing options squeezed by federal redlining, Black families in the District have had little chance to build wealth.

An equitable approach requires consideration of unequal outcomes on communities that are already environmentally overburdened, vulnerable to the impacts of systemic racism and other “-isms,” or both.

Adapted and modified from: Kapwa Consulting

Q: **“Why are we focusing on race instead of treating everyone equally (i.e. ‘colorblindness’)? Shouldn’t government aim for a neutral approach?”**

In the seminal book, *Stamped from the Beginning: The Definitive History of Racist Ideas in America* (Nation Books, 2016), historian Ibram X. Kendi asserts: “When you truly believe that the racial groups are equal, then you also believe that racial disparities must be the result of racial discrimination.”

Racial inequity is not natural and it is not random — it is the result of creating barriers to resources and full participation in American life, prosperity and civic society. Government played a primary role in the historical creation of racial inequities, and, despite milestone civil rights laws, has continued to maintain racial inequities. Although a “colorblind” approach might be well-intentioned, it is not possible, and attempting it is harmful, not helpful.

Neutrality should not mean ignoring racial inequity or the unequal distribution of environmental benefits and hazards.

Adapted and modified from: GARE, Harrison (2019)

Q: “We are already working to improve environmental and public health outcomes for all. Why does DOEE need a racial equity approach?”

DOEE’s Equity Narrative captures an important element of a racial equity approach:

The term “leading with race” does not mean “only race.” It is a practice of starting with a racial equity analysis and intersects with analyses of other marginalized groups* to understand how race dynamics may impact outcomes, amongst other factors.

**The term “marginalized groups” refers to populations within socially, economically, or geographically defined groups that experience discrimination and exclusion as a consequence of unequal power relationships. Social identity groups include: race, ethnicity, nationality, citizenship, language, gender, sexual orientation, (dis)ability, socio-economic status/class, religion, age, etc.*

In the acclaimed book, *From the Inside Out: The Fight for Environmental Justice within Government Agencies* (The MIT Press, 2019), researcher Jill Lindsey Harrison writes:

America’s poorest communities, communities of color, and Native American communities suffer environmental hazards in ways that other Americans do not, and their residents will pay for it with illness and suffering. These inequalities are inexcusable, and we cannot dismiss them by pointing to the aggregated, overall improvements in air and water quality...

DOEE’s approach to equity will be informed by targeted universalism. Targeted universalism means setting **universal goals** pursued by **targeted processes** to achieve those goals. The strategies developed to achieve those goals are targeted, based on how different groups are situated within structures, culture, and across geographies to obtain the universal goal. Targeted universalism is used as a design principle within equity work to produce broad benefits for everyone.

Adapted and modified from: Kapwa Consulting, Harrison (2019)



Two people sit comfortably in a boat watching two others use buckets to remove water from their end of the boat. One sitting comfortably says, “Sure glad the hole isn’t at our end.”

“Systems that are failing communities of color are actually failing us all.” – GARE

Source: <https://www.idahofallsmagazine.com/2020/08/its-not-my-problem>

Q: “Do we have sufficient data and tools to apply a racial equity and/or environmental justice analysis to our work?”

Yes. In her assessment of environmental government agencies, researcher Jill Lindsey Harrison concludes: despite limitations on environmental justice (EJ) analytical tools and protocol, agencies have enough data and sufficiently robust tools for their EJ efforts to proceed. Using tools like DC Geographic Information System (GIS) and EPA’s EJSCREEN, and data such as the *2018 Health Equity Report for the District of Columbia* that capture current inequities, DOEE can and should integrate racial equity and environmental justice analysis into our work. The agency, and the DC Office of Racial Equity, are developing new tools and will refine existing tools and strategies to improve these analyses over time. Harrison further explains:

Indeed, EPA has asserted multiple times that cumulative impact assessment, notwithstanding current limitations, is feasible now in many circumstances and becoming increasingly robust (EPA n.d., 2003). While regulatory agency staff cannot do EJ analyses that fully characterize all existing environmental impacts and social vulnerabilities, they can do rudimentary but functional EJ analyses that will undoubtedly improve regulatory decision-making over current practice.

The *2018 Health Equity Report for the District of Columbia* provides additional insight and consideration:

Although many of our residents and neighborhoods enjoy exceptional health, we know that others, particularly people of color, are being left behind. The same residents and neighborhoods experiencing disproportionately poor health outcomes also generally fare worse when measured by any of the nine key drivers of opportunities for health that frame this report: education, employment, income, housing, transportation, food environment, medical care, outdoor environment, and community safety.

Adapted and modified from: Harrison (2019)

Q: “To whom and where should I direct my questions?”

Staff members should begin by directing questions to their supervisors, then to the Equity Committee. DOEE Equity Ambassadors may be a resource to staff during the fall 2021 Equity at DOEE rollout.

Staff members may also submit questions through the online [Question & Suggestion Box for the DOEE Equity Committee](#).

Terminology Guide

Anti-Racism

The active process of identifying and challenging racism, by changing systems, organizational structures, policies and practices, and attitudes, to redistribute power in an equitable manner.

Source: ICMA. "Glossary of Terms: Race, Equity and Social Justice"
<https://icma.org/glossary-terms-race-equity-and-social-justice>

Bias

Bias

An inclination of preference, especially one that interferes with impartial judgment.

Source: ABCs of Social Justice. "ABCs of Social Justice: A Glossary of Working Language for Socially Conscious Conversation" from Lewis & Clark College Department of Inclusion & Multicultural Engagement.
<https://college.lclark.edu/live/files/18474-abcs-of-social-justice>

Explicit Bias

Biases that people are aware of and that operate consciously. They are expressed directly.

Source: Government Alliance on Race and Equity (GARE). "Racial Equity Toolkit: An Opportunity to Operationalize Equity"

Implicit Bias

Biases people are usually unaware of and that operate at the subconscious level. Implicit bias is usually expressed indirectly.

Source: Government Alliance on Race and Equity (GARE). "Racial Equity Toolkit: An Opportunity to Operationalize Equity"

Communities

See also: Populations

Communities

Refers to place-based locations (e.g., a neighborhood, city, ecosystem) while populations represent a subset defined by a characteristic such as race/ethnicity or commonality (e.g., African Americans, immigrants, disabled people, frontline communities affected by a given environmental hazard).

Source: Charles Lee, 2021. "Confronting Disproportionate Impacts And Systemic Racism In Environmental Policy"
https://www.eli.org/sites/default/files/docs/elr_pdf/51.10207.pdf

Environmentally Burdened Communities

Refer to: "Overburdened" Populations

Cultural Competence

The ability to effectively and empathetically work and engage with people of different cultural identities and backgrounds in order to provide safe and accountable spaces for dialogue and discourse; cultural competence is relevant in all fields of work, education, and informal social interactions.

Source: ABCs of Social Justice. "ABCs of Social Justice: A Glossary of Working Language for Socially Conscious Conversation" from Lewis & Clark College Department of Inclusion & Multicultural Engagement.
<https://college.lclark.edu/live/files/18474-abcs-of-social-justice>

Cumulative Impacts

The exposures, public health or environmental effects from the combined emissions and discharges, in a geographic area, including environmental pollution from all sources, whether single or multi-media, routinely, accidentally, or otherwise released. Impacts will take into account sensitive populations and socio-economic factors, where applicable and to the extent data are available.

Source: California Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHA), 2010. "Cumulative Impacts: Building a Scientific Foundation"
<https://oehha.ca.gov/media/downloads/calenviroscreen/report/cireport123110.pdf>

Discrimination

Actions — including policies and practices — or thoughts, based on conscious or unconscious bias, that favor one group over others.

Source: Modified from ABCs of Social Justice. "ABCs of Social Justice: A Glossary of Working Language for Socially Conscious Conversation" from Lewis & Clark College Department of Inclusion & Multicultural Engagement.
<https://college.lclark.edu/live/files/18474-abcs-of-social-justice>

Disparity

Disparity

A measurable difference in outcomes for populations or communities.

Source: Modified from City of Durham. "City of Durham Racial Equity Terms and Definitions: Shared Language"
<https://durhamnc.gov/4346/Racial-Equity-Terms-and-Definitions>

Racial Disparity

Differences in outcomes or community conditions based on race. Examples include different outcomes in health, education, environment and criminal justice outcomes based on race.

Source: DC Council Office on Racial Equity.
<https://www.dcraciaequity.org/equity-term-glossary>.

Original source:
<http://www.seattle.gov/Documents/Departments/Neighborhoods/PPatch/Inclusive-Outreach-and-Public-Engagement-Guide.pdf>

Diversity

A multiplicity of shared and different individual and group experiences, values, beliefs, and characteristics among people.

Source: ABCs of Social Justice. "ABCs of Social Justice: A Glossary of Working Language for Socially Conscious Conversation" from Lewis & Clark College Department of Inclusion & Multicultural Engagement.
<https://college.lclark.edu/live/files/18474-abcs-of-social-justice>

Environmental Impacts

Include degradations in air, water, and soil quality.

Source: Charles Lee, 2021. "Confronting Disproportionate Impacts And Systemic Racism In Environmental Policy"
https://www.eli.org/sites/default/files/docs/elr_pdf/51.10207.pdf

See also: **Public Health Impacts**

Equity

Equity

Equity refers to the fair treatment, access, opportunity, and advancement for all people. Pursuing equity requires the identification and elimination of barriers that prevent the full participation of people and exacerbate the unequal distribution of burdens across socially*, economically, or geographically defined groups. Achieving equity involves ensuring justice and fairness within the procedures and processes of institutions and systems, and the distribution of resources, opportunities, and burdens. Equity is based on need, and an equitable future requires understanding the root causes of outcome disparities within society.

**The term “marginalized groups” refers to populations within socially, economically, or geographically defined groups that experience discrimination and exclusion as a consequence of unequal power relationships. Social identity groups include: race, ethnicity, nationality, citizenship, language, gender, sexual orientation, (dis)ability, socio-economic status/class, religion, age, etc.*

*Source: Modified from Independent Sector with contributions from the DOEE Equity Committee.
<https://independentsector.org/resource/why-diversity-equity-and-inclusion-matter/>*

Cultural Equity

A commitment to undoing racism and anti-blackness through an intentional deconstruction of white supremacist assumptions and behaviors and the concurrent construction of equitable multicultural norms.

Source: DOEE Racial Equity Impact Assessment Process Guide, 1st edition. Prepared by Kapwa Consulting, LLC

Distributional Equity

Ensuring that resources or benefits and burdens of a policy or program are distributed fairly, prioritizing those with highest need first.

Source: DOEE Racial Equity Impact Assessment Process Guide, 1st edition. Prepared by Kapwa Consulting, LLC

Procedural Equity

Ensuring that processes are inclusive and just in the development and implementation of any program or policy.

Source: DOEE Racial Equity Impact Assessment Process Guide, 1st edition. Prepared by Kapwa Consulting, LLC

Racial Equity

Is both a process and an outcome. As a process, we apply a racial equity lens when those most impacted by structural racial inequity are meaningfully involved in the creation and implementation of the institutional policies and practices that impact their lives. As an outcome, we achieve racial equity when one’s race will no longer predict opportunities, outcomes, or the distribution of resources for residents of the District, particularly Black residents.

Source: District of Columbia Office of Racial Equity, adapted from Race Forward. “What is racial equity?” (2021, March 12)

<https://www.raceforward.org/about/what-is-racial-equity>

Structural Equity

A commitment and action to correct past harms and prevent future negative consequences by institutionalizing accountability and decision-making structures that aim to sustain positive outcomes.

Source: DOE Racial Equity Impact Assessment Process Guide, 1st edition. Prepared by Kapwa Consulting, LLC

Gentrification

Entails the conversion of a neighborhood that usually has been the home of lower-income families to a higher-income neighborhood through the influx of new residents who purchase and renovate housing units; individuals or developers who buy, renovate, and sell multiple homes at much higher prices than they paid for them; developers who build or renovate buildings; and new goods and services. This process pushes up the purchase and rental prices for housing and increases property taxes. This typically leads to the displacement of people with lower incomes.

Source: Urban Institute (2016) "The Color of Wealth in the Nation's Capital" joint publication of the Urban Institute, Duke University, The New School, and the Insight Center for Community Economic Development.
<https://www.urban.org/research/publication/color-wealth-nations-capital>

Gentrification

[Alternative]

Gentrification is often defined as the transformation of neighborhoods from low value to high value. This change has the potential to cause displacement of long-time residents and businesses. Displacement happens when long-time or original neighborhood residents move from a gentrified area because of higher rents, mortgages, and property taxes.

Gentrification is a housing, economic, and health issue that affects a community's history and culture and reduces social capital. It often shifts a neighborhood's characteristics (e.g., racial/ethnic composition and household income) by adding new businesses and resources in previously neglected neighborhoods.

Source: Centers for Disease Control (modified) "Health Effects of Gentrification"
<https://www.cdc.gov/healthyplaces/healthtopics/gentrification.htm>

Inclusion

Authentically bringing traditionally excluded individuals and/or groups into processes, activities, and decision/policy making in a way that shares power.

Source: ICMA. "Glossary of Terms: Race, Equity and Social Justice"
<https://icma.org/glossary-terms-race-equity-and-social-justice>

Just Transition

(To a clean energy economy)

Seeks to ensure that all people, including workers and low-income individuals, are not left behind in the transition to a clean energy economy.

Source: Charles Lee, 2021. "Confronting Disproportionate Impacts And Systemic Racism In Environmental Policy"
https://www.eli.org/sites/default/files/docs/elr_pdf/51.10207.pdf

Justice

Justice

The establishment or determination of rights according to rules of law and standards of equity; the process or result of using laws to fairly judge crimes and criminality.

Source: ABCs of Social Justice. "ABCs of Social Justice: A Glossary of Working Language for Socially Conscious Conversation" from Lewis & Clark College Department of Inclusion & Multicultural Engagement.
<https://college.lclark.edu/live/files/18474-abc-of-social-justice>

Environmental Justice (EJ)

The fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin, or income with respect to the development, implementation and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations and policies.

Fair treatment means no group of people should bear a disproportionate share of the negative environmental consequences resulting from industrial, governmental and commercial operations or policies.

Meaningful involvement means:

- People have an opportunity to participate in decisions about activities that may affect their environment and/or health;
- The public's contribution can influence the regulatory agency's decision;
- Community concerns will be considered in the decision-making process; and
- Decision makers will seek out and facilitate the involvement of those potentially affected.

Source: Environmental Protection Agency.

<https://www.epa.gov/environmentaljustice/learn-about-environmental-justice>

Racial Justice

The proactive reinforcement and creation of policies, practices, attitudes, and actions with the goal of repairing harm and eliminating structures that reinforce differential experiences and outcomes by race.

Source: District of Columbia Office of Racial Equity, modified from ICMA.

<https://icma.org/glossary-terms-race-equity-and-social-justice>

Social Justice

A process, not an outcome, which (1) seeks fair (re)distribution of resources, opportunities, and responsibilities; (2) challenges the roots of oppression and injustice; (3) empowers all people to exercise self-determination and realize their full potential; (4) and builds social solidarity and community capacity for collaborative action.

Source: ICMA. "Glossary of Terms: Race, Equity and Social Justice"

<https://icma.org/glossary-terms-race-equity-and-social-justice>

Marginalize

The systematic disempowerment of a person or community by denying access to necessary resources, enforcing prejudice through society's institutions, and/or not allowing for that individual or community's voice, history, and perspective to be heard.

Source: ABCs of Social Justice. "ABCs of Social Justice: A Glossary of Working Language for Socially Conscious Conversation" from Lewis & Clark College Department of Inclusion & Multicultural Engagement.

<https://college.lclark.edu/live/files/18474-abcs-of-social-justice>

“Overburdened” Populations

See also: “Vulnerable” Populations

Populations that are disproportionately subjected to multiple environmental stressors, which can include contaminated water, air pollution, risk of flooding and other harm from disasters, unsafe housing conditions, workplace hazards, dangerous street traffic, lack of safe play spaces, threats to Indigenous people’s subsistence and cultural resources, and inability to access fresh, nutritious, affordable, and culturally appropriate food.

Source: From the Inside Out: The Fight for Environmental Justice within Government Agencies by Jill Lindsey Harrison (The MIT Press, 2019)

Patterns

Repeated events, policies, behaviors, or outcomes with respect to type of occurrence, affected communities or populations, or time.

Source: Charles Lee, 2021. “Confronting Disproportionate Impacts And Systemic Racism In Environmental Policy”
https://www.eli.org/sites/default/files/docs/elr_pdf/51.10207.pdf

People of Color

Often the preferred collective term for referring to non-white racial groups. Racial justice advocates have been using the term “people of color” (not to be confused with the pejorative “colored people”) since the late 1970s as an inclusive and unifying frame across different racial groups that are not white, to address racial inequities.

While “people of color” can be a politically useful term, and describes people with their own attributes (as opposed to what they are not, e.g., “non-white”), it is also important whenever possible to identify people through their own racial/ethnic group, as each has its own distinct experience and meaning and the more specific identifier may be more appropriate.

Source: ICMA. “Glossary of Terms: Race, Equity and Social Justice”
<https://icma.org/glossary-terms-race-equity-and-social-justice>

Pollution Burden

Consists of exposure and environmental effects. Exposure refers to inhalation, ingestion, or direct contact with potentially harmful chemical, physical, or biological agents. Environmental effects are degradations in air, water, or soil quality.

Source: Charles Lee, 2021. “Confronting Disproportionate Impacts And Systemic Racism In Environmental Policy”
https://www.eli.org/sites/default/files/docs/elr_pdf/51.10207.pdf

Populations

See also: Communities

Represent a subset of a geographic location defined by a characteristic such as race/ethnicity or commonality (e.g. African Americans, immigrants, disabled people, frontline communities affected by a given environmental hazard) while communities are place-based locations (e.g., a neighborhood, city, ecosystem).

Source: Charles Lee, 2021. “Confronting Disproportionate Impacts And Systemic Racism In Environmental Policy”
https://www.eli.org/sites/default/files/docs/elr_pdf/51.10207.pdf

Precautionary Principle

Taking anticipatory action to protect public health or the environment if a reasonable threat of serious harm exists, even if absolute scientific evidence is not available to assess the exact risk.

Source: California Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHA), 2010. “Cumulative Impacts: Building a Scientific Foundation”
<https://oehha.ca.gov/media/downloads/calenviroscreen/report/cireport123110.pdf>

Prejudice

A preconceived, often unconscious, judgment or opinion about a person or group; usually a negative bias.

Source: ABCs of Social Justice. "ABCs of Social Justice: A Glossary of Working Language for Socially Conscious Conversation" from Lewis & Clark College Department of Inclusion & Multicultural Engagement. <https://college.lclark.edu/live/files/18474-abcs-of-social-justice>

Privilege

Benefit, advantage, or favor granted to individuals and communities by unequal social structures and institutions.

Privilege is usually invisible to those who have it because we're taught not to see it, but nevertheless it puts them at an advantage over those who do not have it.

*Source: ABCs of Social Justice. "ABCs of Social Justice: A Glossary of Working Language for Socially Conscious Conversation" from Lewis & Clark College Department of Inclusion & Multicultural Engagement. "Glossary of Terms: Race, Equity and Social Justice" <https://college.lclark.edu/live/files/18474-abcs-of-social-justice>
ICMA. "Glossary of Terms: Race, Equity and Social Justice" <https://icma.org/glossary-terms-race-equity-and-social-justice>*

Public Health Impacts

Include physiological and/or mental health endpoints or effects on members of a community or population.

Source: Charles Lee, 2021. "Confronting Disproportionate Impacts And Systemic Racism In Environmental Policy" https://www.eli.org/sites/default/files/docs/elr_pdf/51.10207.pdf

See also: Environmental Impacts

Racial and Ethnic Identity

An individual's awareness and experience of being a member of a racial and ethnic group; the racial and ethnic categories that an individual chooses to describe him or herself based on such factors as biological heritage, physical appearance, cultural affiliation, early socialization, and personal experience.

- Race: a social construct that categorizes people based on physical characteristics and ancestry to justify inequitable distribution of resources and power.
- Ethnicity: a social group that shares a common and distinctive culture, religion, language, history and customs.

*Source: ICMA. "Glossary of Terms: Race, Equity and Social Justice" <https://icma.org/glossary-terms-race-equity-and-social-justice>
Government Alliance on Race and Equity (GARE). "Communications Guide" (2018) <https://www.racialequityalliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/1-052018-GARE-Comms-Guide-v1-1.pdf>*

Racial Equity Impact Assessment (REIA)

A systematic examination of how different racial and ethnic groups will likely be affected by a proposed action or decision. REIAs are used to minimize unanticipated adverse consequences in a variety of contexts, including the analysis of proposed policies, institutional practices, programs, plans and budgetary decisions. The REIA can be a vital tool for preventing institutional racism and for identifying new options to remedy long-standing inequities.

Source: Race Forward. https://www.raceforward.org/sites/default/files/RacialJusticeImpactAssessment_v5.pdf

Racial Inequity

When racial identity is a predictor of individual or group opportunities, the distribution of resources and/or life outcomes (e.g., wealth, income, employment, criminal justice, housing, health care, education).

City of Durham. "City of Durham Racial Equity Terms and Definitions: Shared Language"
<https://durhamnc.gov/4346/Racial-Equity-Terms-and-Definitions>

Racism

Racism

A doctrine or teaching, without scientific support, that does three things:

- Claims to find racial differences in things like character and intelligence;
- Asserts the superiority of one race over another or others;
- Seeks to maintain that dominance through a complex system of beliefs, behaviors, use of language and policies.

Racism = race prejudice + social and institutional power

Racism = a system of advantage based on race

Racism = a system of oppression based on race

Racism = a white supremacy system

Racism is different from racial prejudice, hatred, or discrimination. Racism involves one group having the power to carry out systematic discrimination through the institutional policies and practices of the society and by shaping the cultural beliefs and values that support those racist policies and practices.

Source: ICMA. "Glossary of Terms: Race, Equity and Social Justice"
<https://icma.org/glossary-terms-race-equity-and-social-justice>

Individual Racism

The beliefs, attitudes, and actions of individuals that support or perpetuate racism. Individual racism can be deliberate, or the individual may act to perpetuate or support racism without knowing that is what they are doing.

Individual racism, as a term, is sometimes used referring both to interpersonal racism and internalized racism:

- Interpersonal racism: When we bring our private beliefs on race into our interactions with others, racism becomes interpersonal, whether intended (e.g., racial violence and hate speech) or not (e.g., microaggressions).
- Internalized racism: The result of people of targeted racial groups believing, acting on, or enforcing the dominant system of beliefs about themselves and members of their own racial group.

Source: Racial Equity Tools Glossary. "Racial Equity Tools"
<https://www.racialequitytools.org/glossary>
DOEE Racial Equity Impact Assessment Process Guide, 1st edition. Prepared by Kapwa Consulting, LLC.
ICMA. "Glossary of Terms: Race, Equity and Social Justice"
<https://icma.org/glossary-terms-race-equity-and-social-justice>

Institutional Racism

The policies and practices within and across institutions that, intentionally or not, produce outcomes that chronically favor one racial group and/or put a racial group at a disadvantage. Institutional racism refers specifically to the ways in which institutional policies and practices create different outcomes for different racial groups. The institutional policies may never mention any racial group, but their effect is to create advantages for white people and oppression and disadvantage for people from groups classified as people of color.

Source: ICMA. "Glossary of Terms: Race, Equity and Social Justice"
<https://icma.org/glossary-terms-race-equity-and-social-justice>

Cultural Racism

Representations, messages and stories conveying the idea that behaviors and values associated with white people or "whiteness" are automatically "better" or more "normal" than those associated with other racially defined groups. Cultural racism shows up in advertising, movies, history books, definitions of patriotism, and in policies and laws. Cultural racism is also a powerful force in maintaining systems of internalized supremacy and internalized racism, which it does by influencing collective beliefs about what constitutes appropriate behavior, what is seen as beautiful, and the value placed on various forms of expression.

Source: ICMA. "Glossary of Terms: Race, Equity and Social Justice"
<https://icma.org/glossary-terms-race-equity-and-social-justice>

Environmental Racism

Results when decision-making and policy on environmental issues results in a disproportionate burden or prohibits the extension of benefits for communities of color. Environmental work includes anything that addresses impacts to air, land, water, and climate. It is inclusive of sustainability initiatives that integrate environmental outcomes with economic initiatives.

Source: DOEE Racial Equity Impact Assessment Process Guide, 1st edition. Prepared by Kapwa Consulting, LLC

Systemic Racism

The interaction of multiple institutions working together to reinforce and perpetuate racial group inequities.

Source: Modified from DOEE 1st edition REIA. Modified from definition prepared by Kapwa Consulting, LLC.

Structural Racism

A system in which public policies, institutional practices, cultural representations, and other norms work in various, often reinforcing ways to perpetuate racial group inequity.

Source: ICMA. "Glossary of Terms: Race, Equity and Social Justice"
<https://icma.org/glossary-terms-race-equity-and-social-justice>

Social Determinants of Health

The World Health Organization (WHO) defines social determinants of health as “the conditions in which people are born, grow, work, live, and age, and the wider set of forces and systems shaping the conditions of daily life. These forces and systems include economic policies and systems, development agendas, social norms, social policies and political systems.” Examples of social determinants of health include, but are not limited to: socioeconomic conditions, social norms and attitudes, access to educational, economic, and job opportunities, access to health care services, quality of education and job training, racial segregation, exposure to crime, violence, and social disorder, language/literacy, and culture.

The social determinants of health are the most significant drivers of differences in health outcomes (i.e., health disparities) and health inequities in the District of Columbia. Neighborhoods and communities with poor social determinants indicators typically have the worst health outcomes.

Source: DC Department of Health. “DC Healthy People 2020 Framework” (2016)
<https://dchealth.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/doh/publication/attachments/FINAL%20DC%20HP2020%20Framework%20Report%205-23-16.pdf>

Targeted Universalism

An analysis that alters the usual approach of universal strategies (policies that make no distinctions among citizens’ status, such as universal health care) to achieve universal goals (improved health), and instead suggests we use targeted strategies to reach universal goals. Targeted universalism is used as a design principle within equity work in order to produce broad benefits for everyone.

Source: DOE Racial Equity Impact Assessment Process Guide, 1st edition. Prepared by Kapwa Consulting, LLC.

White Supremacy

A historically based, institutionally perpetuated system of exploitation and oppression of continents, nations and peoples of color by white peoples and nations of the European continent; for the purpose of maintaining and defending a system of wealth, power and privilege.

The idea (ideology) that white people and the ideas, thoughts, beliefs, and actions of white people are superior to People of Color and their ideas, thoughts, beliefs, and actions. While most people associate white supremacy with extremist groups like the Ku Klux Klan and the neo-Nazis, white supremacy is ever present in our institutional and cultural assumptions that assign value, morality, goodness, and humanity to the white group while casting people and communities of color as worthless (“worth less”), immoral, bad, and inhuman and “undeserving.”

Source: ICMA. “Glossary of Terms: Race, Equity and Social Justice”
<https://icma.org/glossary-terms-race-equity-and-social-justice>

“Vulnerable” Populations

See also: “Overburdened” Populations

Populations more susceptible to the adverse effects of environmental harms. These include groups that public health experts widely regard as physiologically vulnerable--children, the elderly, pregnant individuals, and individuals with asthma or compromised immune systems. They also include members of working-class, racially marginalized, immigrant, linguistically isolated, and Native American communities, whose abilities to withstand and recover from environmental harms are compromised by racist biases and violence, exclusion from medical and other social services, fear of interacting with law enforcement, and other social factors.

Source: From the Inside Out: The Fight for Environmental Justice within Government Agencies by Jill Lindsey Harrison (The MIT Press, 2019)