

# EJ UPDATE

Your Environment, Your Voice



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## Greetings, Environmental Justice partners!

We hope you are staying safe and well. The Office of Environmental Justice (OEJ) team is writing to send you important updates and resources from the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) and others that may help during these challenging times.

### Commonwealth Updates and Resources:

#### Commonwealth Updates:

The [Commonwealth of Pennsylvania](#) is maintaining a very useful webpage that serves as a guide on COVID-19. You can find up-to-date information and resources for Pennsylvanians.

#### DEP Updates:

In order to prevent the further spread of COVID-19, all DEP offices are physically closed. DEP is committed to its mission of protecting public health and the environment and will continue to monitor permitted facilities that are still in operation and those that have temporarily ceased operations. All environmental laws and regulations will continue to be enforced for the duration of the disaster declaration.

To report environmental emergencies, please call 1-800-541-2050. DEP staff that are capable of teleworking, including Office of Environmental Justice staff, are continuing to telework and fulfill the mission of the department. For the latest updates on the status of other DEP work functions, see our [COVID-19 update page](#). For general inquiries, please continue to [contact DEP](#). Please contact the [Office of Environmental Justice](#) with any environmental justice inquiries.

#### EJAB Meeting

The next Environmental Justice Advisory Board (EJAB) meeting will be held virtually on Thursday, February 18 from 9:00 am to 3:00 pm. The meeting agenda and other materials will be on the [EJAB webpage](#). The meeting will include a presentation from the [Pennsylvania Energy Development Authority](#) and an update on environmental justice from the United States Environmental Protection Agency (US EPA).

#### EJ Website Update

Please help us improve our website by answering [this short four question survey](#) and share the survey with your networks. The Office of Environmental Justice is looking for your feedback to update our website in effort to make it more user-friendly, easier to navigate, and be a better resource. The website will need to continue to match Pennsylvania's website format design, so we are focusing on content updates (the text and information shared) as opposed to design elements.

We want feedback on what resources you would like to see on the website to help make this most useful for you. Your feedback will greatly guide us in sharing the right content on the site.

#### EJ training

OEJ collaborated with EPA and other Commonwealth agencies to develop an Environmental Justice training module in Pennsylvania. The training module was developed and presented through six (6) training sessions to DEP staff throughout December 2020. Over 1,500 DEP employees participated in the trainings! The purpose of the training was to provide DEP staff with a baseline knowledge of environmental justice, discuss the current EJ Policy, and obtain feedback from staff on how to improve and expand environmental justice within the agency. OEJ is reviewing feedback gathered from the trainings and identifying next steps.

#### EJ Policy

In October 2020, DEP announced in the [Pennsylvania Bulletin](#) that it withdrew the draft EJ Policy to create a new policy that is more comprehensive and includes public participation and more. OEJ is identifying stakeholders for feedback on the EJ Policy and planning outreach that will include virtual public feedback sessions. Stay tuned for more information on the public feedback sessions!

**DEP Grants, Loans, Rebates** – If your environmental improvement project needs funding, DEP can help. We offer [31 grant and rebate programs](#) to support a range of projects to improve or protect the water, land, and air in Pennsylvania.

- [Small Business Advantage Grant](#)
- [Alternative Fuel Vehicle Grants and Rebates](#)
- [Driving PA Forward Grants and Rebates](#)
- [Recycling and Waste Grants for Local Governments](#)

## Other Opportunities and Updates:

#### [Executive Actions to Create Jobs, Build Infrastructure, and Deliver Environmental Justice](#) –

President Biden signed Executive Orders on Wednesday, January 27 to address environmental justice and climate change. The EJ changes include establishing a White House EJ Interagency Council, establishing a White House EJ Advisory Council, creating the Justice40 Initiative with the goal of ensuring 40% of benefits of key federal investments go to disadvantaged communities, and development of a Climate and EJ Screening Tool to identify disadvantaged communities and help decision making in the government. The [Executive Order](#) addressing EJ and other climate actions taken by President Biden can be found on the White House website.

[Virtual Grant-Writing Workshop for PA Environmental Educators](#) – Join successful grant writers and program officers of funding agencies on February 18 at 4:00 p.m. to increase your likelihood of success in applying for environmental education (EE) grant funding. Presenters will introduce the world of funding, describe how to read a request for proposal (RFP), describe tips for success, describe where to find EE grants, and then open the discussion for Q&A.

[Digital Literacy and Workforce Development Grants](#) – The Department of Labor & Industry (L&I) announced the availability of \$4.5 million in funding for the Digital Literacy and Workforce Development Grant focused on supporting effective programs that enhance foundational digital literacy skills for job seekers in their local community.

[Community Conservation Partnerships Program Grants](#) – The Department of Conservation and Natural Resources' (DCNR) Bureau of Recreation and Conservation (BRC) assists local governments and recreation and conservation organizations with funding for projects related to parks, recreation, and conservation.

[The EPA Environmental Justice and Systemic Racism Speaker Series Features the Mapping Inequality Project](#) – The US EPA is launching the Environmental Justice and Systemic Racism Speaker Series by featuring [The Mapping Inequality Project](#) on March 4, 2021 at 12:00 pm. The first five sessions will focus on redlining and current environmental challenges. Future topics will include: Title VI and civil rights program, EJ research and analysis, rural inequities, and others.

[EPA Nominations for NEJAC Membership is Now Open](#) – The US EPA invites nominations from a diverse range of qualified candidates to be considered for appointment to its [National Environmental Justice Advisory Council](#) (NEJAC). The Agency is seeking nominations to fill approximately eight (8) new vacancies for terms through September 2022. The nomination process for NEJAC Membership is open until March 24, 2021.

[GreenGov Council & Penn State Sustainability Institute Series](#) – This monthly series includes webinars on a variety of sustainability topics on the second Friday of each month at 12:00 p.m. The May 14, 2021 session is **Hidden Burdens: Using Mapping to Advance PA's Environmental Justice**.

[Environmental Justice Programming – Penn State's Sustainability Institute](#) will be holding a series of sessions throughout 2021 focused on encouraging dialogue, understanding, and informed, compassionate action related to ensuring environmental justice for all. On April 1, 2021 at 7 p.m., Dr. Robert Bullard, known as the father of the environmental justice movement, will provide a speaking presentation at the [2021 Colloquium on the Environment](#).

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