



COG ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE TOOLKIT 2.0

Final Approval

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January 26, 2026



Metropolitan Washington
Council of Governments

Agenda Item #4

Review

Purpose of Toolkit Refresh

- To provide recommendations or strategies for local governments to more effectively and appropriately engage vulnerable/disfavored communities on issues related to climate, energy and air quality.
- Update recommendations, best practices, and case studies for engagement.
- Incorporate new research and EJ engagement tools.
- Two-pronged Approach
 - Local government workshops - COG held two sessions with local government staff that have EJ community engagement experience (February 14, and March 13).
 - Community engagement - Equinival held workshops and in-person engagements with community-based organizations and grassroots communities, as well as ACPAC.



Toolkit 2.0

Body of Toolkit

- Updated with information from “on the ground” perspectives gathered from local government listening sessions, Equival interviews, EJ conference speakers, and online research of national examples.
- Features regional and national examples of effective engagement, partnerships, and equitable programs and policies.

Appendix

- Policies
- Funding resources (grants and foundations)
- Reports and guides
- References



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Comment Process

- Draft 1 Review (November 7-21)
 - Emailed to ACPAC, Equival, and several cited sources.
 - Comments received from:
 - ACPAC members
 - Kevin Bryan and Liana Quiñones, Equival LLC
 - Four cited sources
- Draft 2 Review (December 12-January 7)
 - Emailed to ACPAC, CEEPC members, local government sustainability and outreach staff, community-based organizations reached by Equival, leaders from the Piscataway and Patawomeck Indigenous Nations, and Equival.
 - Comments received from:
 - ACPAC
 - CEEPC members
 - Community-based organization



Comments Incorporated

- **Draft 1**
- Made edits to “vulnerable populations” terminology (e.g., replaced outdated term “minority” with “BIPOC” to encompass Black, Indigenous, Latinx, and Asian communities).
- Approach 1, Added a call out box to better highlight the EJ Screening and Mapping Tools.
- Incorporated text edits to Approach 2, Providing Meaningful Engagement Opportunities
 - Text order and flow.
 - Expanded on childcare and transportation barriers.
- Received additional resources.
- Corrections to formatting of text and hyperlinks (per recommendations that they be underlined).
- Staff expanded Approach 3, Metrics, to go beyond measuring engagement to measure changes to energy programs and policies.
- Staff added a Spotlight on energy cost burden and tree canopy in the Background section.



Comments Incorporated

- **Draft 2**
- Edited “vulnerable populations” to include pregnant women, and unhoused individuals.
- Edits to “Background and Purpose” to better explain the audience and intention of the Toolkit 2.0. and the why now? And to clarify that this Toolkit is more narrowly focused on climate, energy and air quality justice than the encompassing all EJ issues, such as water quality, access to green space, etc.
- Placed more emphasis on providing virtual meeting options, and to include phone only.
- Updated resources/links for Montgomery County and City of Rockville.
- Added photos.
- Edited Conclusion to recap climate justice issues as they currently stand, and what is looming.



Next Steps

- Committee expectations of use
- Committee vote



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