

## **Fiscal Year 2016 Environmental Justice**

### **Annual Implementation Progress Report of the US Department of Labor**

#### **Making a Visible Difference in Overburdened Communities**

The Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on Environmental Justice (EJ) and Executive Order (EO) 12898 direct each Federal agency to provide a concise report on progress during the previous fiscal year in carrying out the agency's EJ Strategy. This Fiscal Year 2016 Annual Implementation Progress Report provides an opportunity to demonstrate how the Department of Labor has integrated EJ into our mission.

#### **I. INTRODUCTION/OVERVIEW**

The Department of Labor (DOL or Labor) is working to make a visible difference in overburdened, underserved, and economically distressed communities, including tribes. Environmental Justice in this context is the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people, regardless of race, ethnicity, culture, income, or education level, in the development, implementation, and enforcement of employment-related statutes, regulations, programs, and policies. Federal agencies have made significant progress towards fulfilling the promise of Environmental Justice. Starting with a cabinet-level meeting and the White House Forum on Environmental Justice, Federal agencies reinvigorated the Interagency Working Group on Environmental Justice (EJ IWG) established under EO 12898. Seventeen cabinet members and White House offices signed the EJ MOU in 2011.

Throughout 2012, led by the Environmental Protection Agency and the White House Council on Environmental Quality, Federal agencies issued final agency EJ strategies, implementation plans, and/or progress reports. The EJ IWG further identified the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, and goods movement as priority issues, and initiated efforts to address them. In addition, the EJ IWG collaborated with other Federal and regional partners to minimize and mitigate disproportionate negative impacts while fostering environmental benefits, public health benefits, and economic benefits for overburdened communities. These strategies represent a significant step forward in integrating EJ into Federal decision-making. In 2013, a Climate Action Plan was initiated which calls upon Federal agencies to continue to identify innovative ways to help vulnerable communities prepare for and recover from impacts of climate change through these Annual Implementation Progress Reports.

## **II. IMPLEMENTING ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE STRATEGY AT THE DEPARTMENT OF LABOR**

The DOL continues to pursue EJ as a part of our efforts to protect the health, safety, equity, and security of workers, including low-income, minority, and Native American workers. Labor’s Environmental Justice Strategy is an important part of our vision of shared prosperity for all America’s workers. This vision includes ensuring that workplaces are safe and healthy, helping workers who are in low-wage jobs or out of the labor market find a path into middle class jobs, and helping middle class households remain in the middle class.

### **ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE STRATEGY**

This Annual Implementation Progress Report documents some of the specific EJ related programs or projects of DOL agencies in fiscal year 2016. The following agencies of DOL have performance measures for Environmental Justice: the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), the Civil Rights Center (CRC), the Employment and Training Administration (ETA), the Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA), the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), the Office of Workers’ Compensation Programs (OWCP), the Wage and Hour Division (WHD), and the Women’s Bureau (WB).

## **III. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR NOTABLE ACCOMPLISHMENTS**

DOL fosters and promotes the welfare of the job seekers, wage earners, and retirees of the United States by improving their working conditions, advancing their opportunities for profitable employment, and protecting their retirement, health care, and other benefits. Toward this end, DOL, through its component agencies, administers and enforces Federal laws and regulations that cover the workplace for more than 10 million employers and 125 million workers all for the purpose of expanding access to opportunity for America’s workers.

## **IV. STRATEGY PERFORMANCE MEASURES**

BLS

Collect data that can help identify disparities in the safety and health workplace environments faced by workers of different races and ethnicities.

CRC

Enforce civil rights laws in programs that receive certain types of Federal

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financial assistance so that these programs provide equal opportunity for members of minority and tribal populations, and that the programs provide meaningful access for people with limited English proficiency.

### ETA

Ensure that minority, tribal, and low-income individuals, who have multiple barriers to employment, obtain access to the training needed to secure good, safe jobs.

### MSHA

Through inspections and the promulgation of regulations, protect and significantly improve the lives of miners, including tribal, low-income, and minority miners, from health and safety hazards associated with mining.

### OSHA

Promote programs that improve working conditions in industries and occupations that have large numbers of minority and low-income workers as well as fund grant projects to provide training to workers in occupations populated by minority and low-income workers.

### OWCP

Assist eligible workers or their dependents receive compensation if injuries due to environmental hazards occur.

### WHD

Use both enforcement and public education efforts to ensure that workers are paid the minimum wage as well as reduce misclassification through a WHD initiative.

### WB

Through data collection and analysis, highlight employment indicators, outcomes and challenges for vulnerable worker populations, including older women and women of color.

Below are some of the specific EJ related programs or projects of DOL agencies in fiscal year 2016.

The BLS collected several sets of data that together helped identify disparities in the workplace safety and health environments faced by workers of different earnings, race, and ethnicity. The BLS Survey of Occupational Injuries and Illnesses (SOII) provides annual, national information about non-fatal workplace injuries and illnesses, including by

race, ethnicity, industry, and occupation. The BLS Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries (CFOI) supplies similar data on fatal work-related injuries and includes fatality information according to country of birth. Both the SOII and CFOI report the number of workplace injury and illness cases experienced by different groups of workers, as well as the rate of occurrence of these cases per hundred, ten-thousand or one-hundred-thousand workers. In addition to information on worker characteristics, both the SOII and CFOI contain data about case circumstances, including the nature of the case (e.g., fracture), the body part affected, the event (e.g., fall), and source (e.g., floor) and, for non-fatal cases, the median number of days away from work for recuperation. The latter is a measure of the severity of a non-fatal workplace injury or illness. These case circumstances can be used to identify race and ethnicity disparities in the severity and occurrence of types of workplace injuries and illness.

Neither of the BLS workplace injury and illness data sources supplies information on job risks by the earnings levels of workers. However, other BLS sources, including the Current Population Survey (CPS) and Occupational Employment Statistics (OES) program, tabulate earnings by occupation that can be matched to the workplace injury and illness data. Together, these data can indicate the riskiness of various occupations by earnings level.

BLS publishes a report annually, [Labor Force Characteristics by Race and Ethnicity](#), that describes the labor force characteristics and earnings patterns among the largest race and ethnicity groups living in the US—Whites, Blacks, Asians, and Hispanics—and provides detailed data through a set of supporting tables. The report also includes a limited amount of data for American Indians and Alaska Natives, Native Hawaiians and Other Pacific Islanders, people of Two or More Races, detailed Asian groups, and detailed Hispanic ethnicity. These data address EJ goals by providing important information about how hazards in the workplace affect workers of differing earning levels, race and ethnicity.

The memorandum accompanying EO 12898, “Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations,” states that “each Federal agency shall ensure that all programs or activities receiving Federal financial assistance that affect human health or the environment do not directly, or through contractual or other arrangements, use criteria, methods, or practices that discriminate on the basis of race, color, or national origin.” The statutes through which DOL effectuates that mandate are Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and Section 188 of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, both of which prohibit discrimination on the cited bases.

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These statutory provisions are administered and enforced by DOL's CRC.

In CRC's view, environmental justice complaints principally are those that raise discrimination issues in the context of programs and activities designed to protect workers from workplace safety and health hazards. CRC's main role in supporting the EJ initiative is to make sure that these programs provide equal opportunity regardless of race, color or national origin, including the provision of meaningful access for Limited English Proficient (LEP) people. Through its published guidance, CRC has explained how to assess the needs of the relevant LEP population, balance those needs against the nature and importance of a given program, and decide what steps must be taken to ensure meaningful access to that program for LEP persons. Equal Opportunity Officers, who are employees at the state and local levels of the nation's workforce development system, are charged with ensuring nondiscrimination and equal opportunity in covered programs.

The Title VI committee of the Interagency Working Group (convened by the Department of Justice) acts as a resource to help agencies connect their civil rights enforcement responsibilities with their efforts to achieve environmental justice. CRC participates on the Title VI committee and continues to work with our partners to identify opportunities for interagency collaboration, including contributing to the upcoming National Environmental Justice Conference and Training Program.

DOL continues to expand access to opportunity by helping people obtain the skills they need and find jobs to help them enter the middle class. DOL – together with the Departments of Education, Health and Human Services, Agriculture, and Housing Development – reviewed 57 Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) four-year Strategic Plans submitted by 57 States and Territories during 2016. WIOA is designed to help job seekers access employment, education, training, and support services to succeed in the labor market and to match employers with the skilled workers they need to compete in the global economy. In the nation's decentralized public workforce system, these approved Plans outline the Governor's vision for educational preparation and workforce development, describing both "strategic elements" and "operational planning elements," as well as the individual program requirements. In helping job seekers access services to succeed in the labor market, the WIOA 2014 statute (and the regulations released by the Departments of Labor and Education in 2016) address and accentuate the importance of career pathways and sector strategies. The States outlined their individual approaches to strengthening these strategies in the Plan.

ETA collaborated with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) during

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2016 to ensure that the solicitations for Environmental Job Training Grant Program and Environmental Justice Small Grant Program were posted on ETA's usworkforce website and other agency websites to ensure that Workforce Development Boards were aware of the opportunity to apply as a prime (or as a partner) grant recipient. The Northwest Regional Workforce Investment Board in Waterbury, Connecticut was a direct grant recipient in 2016. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and Department of Energy grant opportunities which focus on renewable energy were also highlighted on the website. Maps were prepared for Workforce Development Boards to reflect the location of relevant grants, highlighting the opportunity to partner in providing training and placement services through American Job Centers situated in geographic area of award.

ETA's Division of Indian and Native American Programs (DINAP) coordinates with EPA's Tribal Environmental offices at the regional level. As independent, sovereign nations, tribes are responsible for setting standards, making environmental policy, and managing environmental programs for its people. During 2016, for example, ETA's region-based DINAP staff participated in various interagency discussions that have environmental justice implications, including attendance at Federal Regional Councils with colleagues concerned with Native America issues in other agencies (including EPA, the Departments of Agriculture and Health and Human Services). DINAP staff also joined with EPA staff in the mutual discussion of environmental cleanup projects on tribal lands and the potential for coordination with employment and training providers.

ETA staff joined Departments of Health and Human Services and Interior staff at the initial webinar sponsored by the EJ IWG in its "Access and Awareness Series." The August 2016 event was entitled "Federal Agencies Convening for Environmental Justice: Connecting Communities to Green Space, Healthcare and Jobs." ETA staff presented both background and opportunities under WIOA and YouthBuild.

ETA also continued to represent the DOL with membership in the interagency Economy, Energy and Environment (E-3) Initiative, with EPA, Small Business Administration, and the Departments of Commerce, Energy, and Agriculture. The E-3 Initiative is designed to spark regional E-3 projects around the country to help manufacturers become more efficient, competitive, and sustainable, including through connections to trained and skilled workers in the "green" economy.

Job Corps has instituted a number of measures in recent years to "green" its job training programs as well as its facilities. Job Corps, ETA's

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residential job training program for at-risk youth, serves more than 60,000 young people per year. The majority of participants are economically disadvantaged youth who dropped out of high school. The mission of Job Corps is to teach participants the relevant skills needed to become employable and independent and help prepare them for success in life by securing meaningful jobs or opportunities for further education. Job Corps now offers employers a group of highly employable young people who are at the forefront of "green" industry practices. The focus on protecting our environment, energy diversity, and efficiency means more job opportunities in fields like green building, hazardous waste removal, recycling and consumer goods, manufacturing, and technology. Job Corps' green graduates are well-positioned to enter the workforce with specialized skills that set them apart from other applicants.

Job Corps also works with other Federal agencies in emergencies, many of which result from extreme weather. Over the years, Job Corps students have been involved in fire-fighting and other disaster management efforts all across the country.

ETA's YouthBuild programs can support students to prepare for environmental leadership and to secure industry-recognized credentials with labor market value. YouthBuild programs fund competitive awards to organizations that include a variety of community and faith-based organizations, housing authorities, workforce investment boards, community colleges, and school systems. The YouthBuild program targets out-of-school youth and gives an alternative education pathway that provides youth with a high school diploma or GED credential and promotes advancement to post-secondary education or employment. YouthBuild participants include youth who have been adjudicated as youth offenders, are in or aging out of foster care, are disabled, have one or both parents incarcerated, are a minority youth, or are low-income. As part of the YouthBuild program, young people not only receive academic instruction but also receive occupational skills training while building affordable housing for their communities. The majority of YouthBuild programs have incorporated green building into their construction training. As part of this training, participants may learn about environmental issues that affect their communities and how they can provide leadership in this area. Many of their community service learning projects are also environmentally focused. The Environmental Justice community is encouraged to reach out to the 2016 grantee class which can be found [here](#); multiple partnership involvement can strengthen participants' commitment to their communities and ensures that the program's positive impact endures long after individuals graduate.

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MSHA protections help ensure the fair treatment of workers. In August 2016, MSHA began implementing provisions of the third – and final – phase of the final rule—Lowering Miners’ Exposures to Respirable Coal Mine Dust, Including Continuous Personal Dust Monitors. The respirable dust standard in coal mines is reduced from 2.0 to 1.5 milligrams per cubic meter of air. The rule also reduces the standard for miners diagnosed with black lung, and for air used to ventilate areas where miners work, from 1.0 to 0.5 milligrams per cubic meter of air. Additionally MSHA provided \$8.4 million in grants to 47 states and the Navajo Nation to provide mine safety and health courses to miners.

OSHA awarded \$10.5 million in fiscal year 2016’s Susan Harwood Training Grant Program to 80 nonprofit organizations on a competitive basis. The focus of the program is to provide training and education for workers and employers on the recognition, avoidance, and prevention of safety and health hazards in their workplaces, and to inform workers of their rights and employers of their responsibilities.

Every year, dozens of workers die due to working in the heat and thousands become ill. Heat illness can affect anyone, regardless of age or physical condition. Some of the occupations most affected by heat-related illnesses are industries of construction, agriculture, building grounds maintenance and cleaning, transportation and utility work, and support activities for oil and gas operations. Every one of these deaths and illnesses is preventable. That is why in fiscal year 2016, OSHA continued its annual nationwide heat illness prevention campaign to provide outreach and resources to workers and employers to prevent these tragedies.

In fiscal year 2016, the OSHA Heat Tool was made available to workers and supervisors in English and in Spanish for Android and iPhone devices. The “app” allows workers and supervisors to calculate the heat index for their worksite, and, based on the heat index, displays a risk level to outdoor workers. Then, with a simple “click,” they can get reminders about the protective measures that should be taken at that risk level to protect workers from heat-related illness. For example, the reminders include drinking enough fluids, scheduling rest breaks, planning for and knowing what to do in an emergency, adjusting work operations, gradually building up the workload for new workers, training on heat illness signs and symptoms, and monitoring each other for signs and symptoms of heat-related illness.

In OWCP, EJ issues show up in several different areas. For example, many

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of the uranium miners, millers and ore transporters that are eligible for Energy Employees Occupational Illness Compensation Program Act benefits are from the Navajo Nation. OWCP conducts quarterly outreach targeting this community in New Mexico and Arizona in efforts to ensure that they are aware of the benefits and to provide status updates for existing claims and contracts with an interpreter for these events. In addition, in the last two years, the Energy program has added 10 informational brochures translated into Spanish about how to apply to the program and benefits available.

Coal company bankruptcies have added claims to the Black Lung program's inventory for future handling under the Black Lung Disability Trust Fund. The Black Lung program ensures that claimants are made aware of ETA job training programs to assist out-of-work coal miners. District Directors were instructed to discuss the possibility of vocational training with unemployed miners seeking Black Lung benefits. OWCP is committed to connecting coal miners in need of help with DOL grant dollars.

In March of 2015, OWCP, the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health, the Health Resources and Services Administration and MSHA created the Miner's Health Collaborative designed to share data and other information to identify commonalities and intersections among agency missions in order to synergistically expand the reach and enhance the quality of service delivery to the agencies' common constituency: coal miners and their families. In fiscal year 2016, OWCP continued to collaborate with other agencies to further this group's objectives: conducting outreach to expand the pool of doctors who perform OWCP's diagnostic examinations to determine a miner's level of Black Lung disease and disability; improving the quality and timeliness of these examinations; and exploring ways to potentially identify mines or regions that may exhibit trends with regard to disease incidence.

As with CRC, OWCP supports the EJ initiative by improving opportunity, including the provision of meaningful access for individuals with Limited English Proficiency. OWCP website includes Spanish Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) about the Longshore Act, its extensions, how to obtain benefits under the program, and how to communicate with the appropriate office. OWCP also has: a Spanish Claimant Portal; expanded its initial claim acknowledgement letter to include a Spanish section that refers Spanish-speaking stakeholders to the appropriate website; and translated its existing Vocational Rehabilitation FAQs to Spanish. (The portal and FAQs can be found by going to the Longshore homepage.)

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At DOL, EJ considerations are evaluated as part of the scope of the DOL's NEPA process. Additionally, a big part of what DOL does is to try to protect workers, including minority, tribal and low-income populations, ensuring not only their physical safety but also helping to ensure a fair day's pay for a fair day's work and keeping with the EJ IWG's desire to minimize and mitigate disproportionate negative impacts while fostering environmental benefits, public health benefits, and economic benefits for overburdened communities.

## **V. CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION**

DOL responds to the requirement for Federal agencies to identify innovative ways to help our most vulnerable communities *prepare for and recover from* impacts of climate change.”

DOL agency mission requirements were paramount in conducting the high-level analysis of the vulnerability to climate change. The agency’s three highest-risk critical vulnerabilities/assets were found to be personnel, utilities (including information technology, telecommunications (data and voice), power, and water) infrastructure, and buildings (for Job Corps).

Across these three major asset categories, DOL agencies most frequently identified severe weather events and extreme temperatures as the key climate stressors, followed by drought and temperature changes, and then sea level rise. Common climate change vulnerabilities fell into four broad categories: 1) workers health and access to workplace impacts; 2) infrastructure including information technology, telecommunications, transportation, utility and connectivity disruption among personnel and workers resulting from weather events; 3) fiscal resources diversion away from completing agency mission to funding climate change adaptive accommodations, e.g., additional travel, personnel and technical assistance, and lack of fiscal resources for completing mission in the face of climate change events; and 4) buildings on the Job Corps Center campuses across the Nation affected by climate change. DOL agency workforces accomplish the missions of their agencies and the nearly 200 Federal laws and regulations through a variety of means, including inspecting work sites.

For example, MSHA administers the Federal Mine Safety and Health Act of 1977 to enforce compliance with mandatory safety and health standards in the nation’s mines. MSHA’s mission is to prevent death, disease, and injury from mining and promote safe and healthful workplaces for the Nation’s miners. Statutorily, MSHA is required to conduct complete inspections of all underground mines four times per year, and all active surface mines twice per year. Consequently, each day mining inspectors travel many miles to inspect the nation’s mines to safeguard worker health and safety. Mines may be many miles apart and inspectors are subject to the impact of climate change to accomplish required inspections, e.g., extreme weather.

Similarly, Labor's other six worker protection and enforcement agencies inspectors examine work sites every day. Approximately half of the DOL vehicle fleet is used by these worker protection agencies, which exposes the workers, work and vehicles to the effects of climate change, e.g., extreme weather.

DOL's Job Corps delivers comprehensive job skills training and education to eligible youth, most of whom live, train, and study on the 125 campuses comprising nearly 2400 buildings located in 50 states, Puerto Rico, and the District of Columbia. The other half of the DOL vehicle fleet is used on Job Corps campuses for student transportation and for staff to conduct key functions of the program's mission. For example, fleet vehicles transport students to work-based learning sites, community colleges, recreational activities, public and private transportation (e.g., bus lines, airports), and are used to evacuate students during emergency events. These students and the workers who run the programs are subject to climate change impacts.

Greenhouse gas emissions contribute to climate change and extreme climatic events. DOL has undertaken a two-pronged approach to the reduction in greenhouse gas emissions. We helped develop the new government-wide greenhouse gas reduction targeting tools and the Public Sector Standard for developing inventories of greenhouse gas emissions and have taken a number of steps in environmental, energy and transportation management to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

To proactively reduce Scope 1 and 2 greenhouse gas emissions, the Department of Labor is reducing facility energy intensity, installing and using renewable energy, reducing fleet vehicle petroleum use, increasing fleet alternative fuel vehicle (AFV) use, optimizing vehicles' use, right-sizing its fleet, and increasing low emission and high fuel economy vehicle use. Significantly, DOL's Scope 1 & 2 emissions, as evaluated through annual reporting, have dropped 20.7 percent from the 2006 baseline.

Recently DOL has increased its percentage of buildings over 5,000 square feet meeting the Federal Guiding Principles to 5.3 percent, representing 6.3 percent gross square feet of the applicable building portfolio. This is up from 1.4 percent in fiscal year 2012. The New Hampshire and Wind River Job Corps Centers now completed, and the Ottumwa, Iowa, and Milwaukee Centers—were designed in accordance with the Guiding Principles. Ottumwa Job Corps Center and Milwaukee Job Corps Center received substantial rebates for energy efficient construction. For existing Job Corps Centers, the Centers of Environmental Excellence (CEE) program was developed to help centers reduce greenhouse gas emissions and meet the sustainability goals at the lowest possible cost, and by

promoting activities beyond physical facility upgrades. This is a whole-center approach that includes changing the behaviors of building occupants to be mindful of energy and water usage, incorporate green practices and policies, and significantly involve students and staff. Once a center has completed the deliverables required for the CEE program, it is evaluated by a panel before being certified as a “Center of Environmental Excellence.” As part of the CEE program, Alaska, Penobscot, Cleveland, and Flint Genesee Job Corps Centers have been verified to meet and are operating in accordance with the Guiding Principles.

DOL’s and Job Corps’ sustainability efforts are boosted through these technologies by installing these solutions on Job Corps Centers nationwide. Job Corps produces renewable energy with wind turbines at the Pine Ridge, Angell, Cassadaga, and Hawaii/Maui Job Corps Centers, Muhlenberg, Joliet, Shreveport, Pittsburgh, Earle C. Clements, and Northlands Job Corps Centers. Solar photovoltaic production occurs at the Muhlenberg, Oneonta, Pittsburgh, Ramey, Westover, Edison, and Woodland Job Corps Centers, and solar hot water is produced at the Miami Job Corps Center. The Loring and Albuquerque Job Corps Centers produce domestic hot water using biomass. Job Corps also funded the following renewable energy projects: biomass boilers at the Boxelder Job Corps Center and a wind turbine at the Weber Basin Job Corps

DOL efforts to install renewable energy on Job Corps campuses, some of which is sold to the national grid, are intended to reduce the carbon emissions that are contributing to climate change and also to help to make these geographic localities more resilient to withstand power outages due to climate change. Through these efforts, and others, the Department of Labor met the former EO 13514 requirement to increase the use of renewable energy, and is already prepared to meet the higher requirements of the new EO 13693—Planning for Federal Sustainability in the Next Decade. Further, DOL has exceeded the EPA Act 2005 requirement that agencies increase renewable energy use such that at least 7.5 percent of the agency’s total electricity consumption is accounted for by Renewable Energy Credits for fiscal year 2013 and beyond. In fiscal year 2015, DOL’s renewable energy use as a percentage of total electricity consumption clocked in at 13 percent.

DOL’s Job Corps’ has a unique strength lying in its role as a community member and Federal partner positioned to provide trained young adults who volunteer to provide assistance. As mentioned previously, over the years, Job Corps students have been involved in fire-fighting and other disaster management efforts all across the country. Job Corps’ federally operated centers (Civilian Conservation Centers), operated by the US Department of Agriculture’s Forest Service, work closely with DOL to

establish health, safety, and emergency planning and responses. Job Corps works with other Federal agencies in emergencies, many of which result from extreme weather.

DOL has considered the need to improve climate adaptation resilience, including the costs and benefits of such improvement. DOL's capital equipment investment in information technology infrastructure and the move to the cloud increases resilience in the ability of DOL personnel to telework and, therefore, accomplish mission despite climate change impacts. DOL has relocated and consolidated existing facilities, e.g., data centers. This move provides resilience for the DOL IT infrastructure and for telework. As to suppliers and supply chain, agency leasing and building upgrades, DOL, like all Federal agencies, looks to the General Service Administration to address climate change adaptation matters in these areas.

DOL will look at any barriers that discourage investments or actions to increase resilience. DOL will continue to look at how its component agencies' funding programs affect State, local and tribal communities' climate change risk, e.g., grantees through the employment and training agencies. Further, DOL will continue to update policies related to the National Environmental Policy Act. DOL is proud of its unique contribution to the opportunity for America's workers to work in a safe environment.

## **VI. ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE INTERAGENCY WORKING GROUP COLLABORATION**

The partners work together to advance environmental justice principles across the Federal government, engage and support local communities in addressing environmental and human health impacts, and promote and implement comprehensive solutions and opportunities to environmental justice concerns.

Developed with the support of over 100 Federal agency staff, these reports are a compilation of methodologies gleaned from current agency best practices that provide clear flexible approaches for agencies as they consider environmental justice in National Environmental Policy Act reviews. The annual reports do not establish new or legally binding requirements, but instead give agencies a way to compare and improve their methodologies for robust consideration of impacts to low-income and minority populations now and in the future.

The EJ IWG also engages and supports local groups working to create

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healthy and sustainable communities by bringing together key stakeholders from communities; educational institutions; and Federal, state, local and tribal governments to address critical EJ issues. For example, the EJ IWG's College/Underserved Community Partnership Program (CUPP) promotes interagency collaboration and community engagement with local colleges and universities. CUPP provides opportunities for government agencies to partner with local colleges and universities to address environmental justice concerns and provide free technical assistance to communities. For instance, Savannah State University is working with the Coastal Commission of Georgia to assist students in small cities, such as Riceboro and Midway, to develop designs for sustainable buildings and improvements to water infrastructure systems.

The Brownfields to Healthfields ("B2H") approach is another inventive strategy the EJ IWG is using to foster collaborations that promote healthy, equitable, sustainable and resilient communities for overburdened and underserved populations, with a special focus on rural communities. The B2H strategy improves the health, economic and environmental vitality in overburdened and underserved populations. It remediates and transforms brownfields (contaminated property) into uses that increase access to health care, recreation, healthy foods, renewable resources, education and jobs. For example, in Central Appalachia the University of Pikeville (Pikeville, Kentucky) leveraged health, environmental, and economic resources to establish a health center on a former brownfields site in the Big Sandy Area Development District.

The EJ IWG's governance structure includes the following standing (i.e., permanent) committees:

- Public Participation
- Regional Interagency Working Groups
- Strategy and Implementation Progress Reports
- Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964

During fiscal year 2016 and the next two fiscal years, the EJ IWG will maintain committees to address the following five focus areas:

- Native Americans/Indigenous Peoples
- Rural Communities
- Impacts from Climate Change
- Impacts from Commercial Transportation (Goods Movement)
- National Environmental Policy Act

These committees consist of senior level agency staff and are responsible for

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working together with state and local governments, tribes, and local communities to improve the health of communities and protect the environment across this country.

Agency senior leadership met twice over the fiscal year to discuss agency collaborative efforts and commitments.

For a full range of the EJ IWG activities, please visit the EJ IWG [website](#).