

Notification of Environmental Justice Assessment on Workplace Safety and Climate Change Grant Program

Updated April 4, 2024

WHAT

The Washington Department of Health (DOH) is conducting an Environmental Justice Assessment on a \$10,000,000 grant provided by the legislature “solely to support and administer a workplace health and safety program for workers who are affected by climate impacts, including but not limited to, extreme heat and cold, wildfire smoke, drought, and flooding. This program will focus on workplace health and safety for farmworkers, construction workers, and other workers who face the most risk from climate-related impacts” (pg. 325 [ESSB 5187](#)).

Mechanisms available to the DOH to administer these funds include:

- Pass through grants to community-based organizations, tribal governments, and tribal organizations to support workplace health and safety for workers most burdened by climate impacts.
- Procurement and distribution of equipment and resources for workers, either directly by DOH, or through pass through grants to community-based organizations, tribal governments, and tribal organizations. Examples of equipment and resources may include but are not limited to: Personal protective equipment, other protective or safety clothing for cold and heat, air purifiers for the workplace or worker housing, protection from ticks and mosquitoes, and heating and cooling devices.

Under the same funding, the DOH, “in consultation with the environmental justice council, community groups, and the department of labor and industries, shall evaluate mechanisms to provide workers with financial assistance to cover lost wages or other financial hardships caused by extreme weather events and climate threats” (pg. 325-326 [ESSB 5187](#)).

The purpose of an environmental justice assessment is to identify:

- Who might be most impacted by an agency-administered grant program
- Environmental benefits, harms, and health impacts addressed by the grant program
- Ways to minimize or eliminate negative environmental impacts through grant funding
- How to equitably distribute grant funding and positive environmental impacts

Visit our [Environmental Justice webpage](#) to learn more about Environmental Justice Assessments.

WHY

Climate impacts such as extreme heat, wildfire smoke, drought, and flooding are not distributed equally or equitably across the Washington state workforce. Farmworkers, construction workers, and other workers required to work outdoors or in facilities without adequate cooling or ventilation are most burdened by climate impacts. Health impacts can include:

- Heat-related illnesses such as heat stroke, heat exhaustion, heat cramps, sunburn, and heat rash ([CDC.gov](#))

- Wildfire related illnesses such as reduced lung function, bronchitis, exacerbation of asthma and heart failure ([EPA.gov](https://www.epa.gov))

Through the mechanisms outlined above, the DOH seeks to mitigate the burden of climate impacts on these workers and reduce the associated adverse health impacts.

WHO

This grant program is designed to support “farmworkers, construction workers, and other workers who face the most risk from climate-related impacts” (pg. 325 [ESSB 5187](#)).

If you identify as a member of one or more of these groups and would like to share your thoughts or connect with one of our staff, please contact us at eigrants@doh.wa.gov or see ways to get involved below.

WHEN

See below for our proposed timeline and how the environmental justice assessment fits into that process. We highlighted **in yellow** when the public can engage with this grant program:

Date	Milestone
August 2023	Tribal listening session held
September 2023	Tribal roundtables held
February-June 2024	Collaborate with community organizations to: (1) gather input on high priority supplies and (2) develop partnerships for local distribution of supplies to climate impacted workers
May 2024	Tribal listening session on Workplace Safety grant
June-August 2024	Distribution of supplies to climate impacted workers to mitigate climate associated health risks
August-December 2024	Recruit and convene community advisory committee to develop guidelines for the design of the grant application process, application review, and awarding of grants and supplies in 2025
June 2024-June 2025	DOH collaborates with impacted community members to assess lost wages due to climate impacts and identify possible processes to distribute funding to make up for this loss

HOW TO GET INVOLVED

For updates, please visit [Environmental Justice and Climate Change Grants | DOH](#).

For questions about this grant program or the environmental justice assessment, please email eigrants@doh.wa.gov.



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