

U.S. GENERAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION



Fiscal Years 2016–18 Environmental Justice Strategy

May 2016



Making a Visible Difference in Overburdened Communities

LETTER FROM THE GSA ADMINISTRATOR

The U.S. General Services Administration (GSA) is pleased to release its *Environmental Justice Strategy for Fiscal Years 2016–18*. Since joining with 16 other Federal agencies and publishing GSA's very first Environmental Justice Strategy in February 2012, GSA assessed its policies, programs, and activities to ensure the principles of environmental justice are incorporated in what we do for the American taxpayer.

From major construction projects that consider the impact that GSA's projects have on the surrounding communities, to ensuring governmentwide policies support the goals of environmental justice, the principles of environmental justice are interwoven in GSA's day-to-day activities.

As GSA looks forward to the next 3 years, today's *Strategy* highlights the importance of interagency partnerships and alliances with local communities and small businesses to bring about a positive, visible difference in the communities.

I encourage you to make your individual contribution by reviewing this *Strategy* and providing GSA feedback regarding other possible actions so that GSA can serve as an economic catalyst in communities throughout this great nation.

Comments may be submitted to EJStrategy@gsa.gov.

DENISE TURNER ROTH, ADMINISTRATOR

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A. Overview

[Executive Order \(E.O.\) 12898 Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations](#) was issued by President Clinton in 1994.

Environmental justice is defined as, “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.”

On August 4, 2011, the Administrator of the U.S. General Services Administration (GSA) signed the [Memorandum of Understanding \(MOU\) on Environmental Justice and Executive Order 12898 \(MOU on Environmental Justice\)](#). By signing the MOU, GSA affirms the agency’s commitment to E.O. 12898, which directs agencies to make environmental justice (EJ) part of their missions and to identify and address, as appropriate, disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects of programs, policies, and activities on minority and low-income populations. It also reaffirms the GSA commitment to implementing [Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964](#), which states, “No person in the United States shall, on the ground of race, color, or national origin, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance.”

Through the signing of the MOU, GSA agreed to:

- Declare the importance of identifying and addressing environmental justice considerations in agency programs, policies, and activities;
- Develop an environmental justice strategy and annual implementation progress reports;
- Ensure meaningful opportunities exist for the public to submit comments and recommendations relating to the strategy, implementation, and ongoing efforts associated with environmental justice; and
- Serve as an active member of the Interagency Working Group on Environmental Justice (EJIWG).

The [General Services Administration Environmental Justice Strategy](#), published in February 2012 and covering fiscal years (FY) 2012–15, set the direction for the agency to address environmental justice through a more collaborative, comprehensive, and efficient process. Since the publication of the *Strategy*, the agency has reviewed its programs and activities, and implemented actions that further integrate the principles of environmental justice into GSA’s programs and activities.

Throughout much of FY 2015, GSA collaborated with other member agencies of the EJIWG in developing the [EJIWG Framework for Collaboration Fiscal Years 2016–18](#). The interagency framework was adopted in February 2016. It builds upon decades of environmental justice work and focuses the collective efforts of the Federal agencies on four strategic goals to improve the quality of life and expand economic opportunity in overburdened and under-resourced communities. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) defines the term “overburdened

community” as the minority, low-income, tribal and indigenous populations or communities in the United States that potentially experience disproportionate environmental harms and risks due to exposures or cumulative impacts or greater vulnerability to environmental hazards. This increased vulnerability may be attributable to an accumulation of negative and lack of positive environmental, health, economic, or social conditions within these populations or communities.

GSA's new Environmental Justice Strategy, as outlined below, updates the GSA 2012 Environmental Justice Strategy by aligning with the goals and priorities of the EJIWG's new framework for collaboration, and sets out how GSA will work to support and achieve the EJIWG's goals over the next 3 fiscal years.

B. About the U.S. General Services Administration

GSA's mission is to deliver the best value in real estate, acquisition, and technology services to government and the American people.

GSA provides the spaces, services, and goods required to operate the Federal Government through centralized procurement and property management functions, promoting management best practices and efficient Government operations. GSA provides workplaces by constructing, managing, and preserving Government buildings and by leasing and managing commercial real estate. GSA's acquisition solutions offer private sector professional services, equipment, supplies, telecommunications, and information technology across Government.

C. Relationship of Environmental Justice to GSA's Mission, Vision, and Agency Goals

As the Federal Government's real property, personal property, and acquisition steward, GSA is uniquely positioned to leverage its policies, programs and activities to make a visible difference in the communities throughout the country where GSA has a presence. For example, GSA has reduced the Federal Government's carbon footprint, reduced petroleum fuel emissions for the Federal fleet of vehicles; impacted Governmentwide transportation policy to ensure goods are tracked and moved efficiently; reached out to small and disadvantaged small businesses to expand their opportunities to do business with the Federal Government throughout the country; and advanced Governmentwide policy that impacts current and future generations' re-use and safe disposal of electronics. Additionally, GSA engages with communities near GSA's projects to ensure that the agency considers communities' concerns when planning and executing a wide variety of construction activities and Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA) projects.

Together, these accomplishments and efforts align with the underlying principle of environmental justice—that Federal actions do not have “disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects on minority populations and low-income populations” (EO 12898).

GSA's vision is to be recognized as an economic catalyst and proactive Federal partner, while continuing GSA's efforts around operational excellence. GSA launched a nationwide Economic Catalyst Initiative in FY 2016 to better align the agency's building, leasing, and relocation plans with the economic development goals of local communities while also improving outcomes for the Federal Government and GSA's partner agencies.

Additionally, GSA serves as an economic catalyst in many ways, to include, but not limited to:

- Enhancing the community benefit of real estate decisions by GSA. Recognizing GSA's significant economic impact on the neighborhoods in which Federal agencies reside, GSA will work to maximize our positive impact on communities. The Federal presence within these communities determines where employees go every day and how accessible the jobs in those buildings are to the surrounding communities. GSA will renew efforts to support local and regional planning and economic development goals, wherever possible, through its real estate portfolio decisions.
- Strategically using the resources that GSA has to carry out the agency mission that spurs economic development among small businesses and within communities across the Nation. These practices have contributed to reducing our environmental footprint, creating valuable savings, and serving the communities where we reside in a positive way.
- Consulting with State Agencies for Surplus Property (SASP) that administer the Federal Surplus Personal Property Donation Program to ensure SASPs are including overburdened communities in their outreach to recruit eligible participants of the donation program.
- Reaching out to small businesses to make it easier for them to contract with the Federal Government.
- Enhancing educational opportunities by donating computers and other technology (through the Computers for Learning program, computersforlearning.gov) to schools in minority and low-income communities.

D. GSA Environmental Justice Vision Statement

GSA will make a visible difference in overburdened communities throughout the country by serving as a proactive Federal partner and economic catalyst.

ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE STRATEGIC GOALS, PRIORITIES, AND ACTIONS

GSA is pleased to publish its updated strategy in support of the [EJIWG Framework for Collaboration Fiscal Years 2016–18](#) (*Framework*). This *Framework*, issued in February 2016, outlines the goals for the next 3 fiscal years that advance greater Federal agency collaboration to improve quality of life and support economic opportunities in overburdened and under-resourced communities. The four major goals identified in the *Framework* are to:

- (1) Enhance communication and coordination to improve the health, quality-of-life, and economic opportunities in overburdened communities;
- (2) Enhance multi-agency support of holistic community-based solutions to provide assistance, as needed, to address environmental justice issues;
- (3) Advance interagency strategies to identify and address environmental justice concerns in agency programs, policies, and activities; and
- (4) Develop partnerships with academic institutions to assist in providing long-term technical assistance to overburdened communities.

GSA identified the following priorities and actions that align with each of the EJIWG's four goals, which the agency will work toward through FY 2018. These action items build upon the strong environmental justice foundation established over the past 3-year period at GSA, and recognize the importance of collaborating with other EJIWG member agencies, communities throughout the Nation, and key stakeholders to provide comprehensive Federal assistance and support to overburdened communities.

EJIWG'S Goal 1: Enhance communication and coordination to improve the health, quality-of-life, and economic opportunities in overburdened communities.

GSA will seek out community solutions from agency counterparts and continue to promote GSA's programs and activities that provide opportunities, assistance, and solutions to communities. For example, GSA partnered with EPA to develop the "Sustainable Location Calculator (SLC), which is used to assign a location efficiency score (LES) to each GSA facility and potential facility.

The launch of the Opportunities Center at a large construction project at the St. Elizabeths West Campus, located in the Anacostia neighborhood of southeast Washington, DC, is one example of GSA's outreach to communities. The Opportunities Center officially opened to the public on February 1, 2010. The Center is designed to raise awareness about project objectives, employment and business opportunities, and other community benefits. In addition, the Center acts as a community resource where interested parties can access updated information on

project progress and doing business with GSA. The Center accepts employment applications from the community, which are then made available to the contractors working on the U.S. Department of Homeland Security Headquarters Consolidation at the St. Elizabeths Campus, as well as contractors working on other Federal projects. GSA has made the Center available to workforce groups and civic organizations for meetings, job fairs and training sessions.

GSA conducts robust outreach to community stakeholders, including community leaders and members, small businesses, industries in the private sector, and major recipients of Federal financial assistance for the purpose of increasing awareness about the GSA future initiatives, projects, and activities that may affect the various communities. Outreach activities include partnering with other Federal agencies to achieve more holistic, community-based solutions for communities.

The GSA Urban Development Program is piloting the use of the Sustainability Location Calculator tool with state and local governments in Northern California through a grant with EPA to see how the tool can be used outside the Federal Government for other entities looking to maximize locations efficiency in facility decisions. That pilot will conclude in FY 2016, with the goal of ultimately making the tool available to the public. The tool will help communities to learn more about sustainability and green purchasing.

Action Items for FY 2016–18:

- 1. Conduct public forums, community meetings and training, for the purpose of increasing awareness about GSA’s initiatives, projects, programs, and activities that contribute to economic development in overburdened communities.*
- 2. Develop and implement Local Portfolio Plans that include consultation with local jurisdictions regarding their development plans, infrastructure plans, transit networks, and other areas of interest that will contribute to sound decisions by GSA on the location of client agencies.*
- 3. Incorporate sustainable location principles into setting delineated areas and into the Request for Proposal (RFP) clauses. The principles focus is on regional accessibility to Federal worksites and service centers, transit access, emissions reduction, and economic development, among others.*
- 4. Implement internal policy changes that identify ways to incorporate Sustainable Location Calculator scores into agency location decision making processes, including Local Portfolio Planning, Client Portfolio Planning, and Acquisition Planning.*

5. *Collaborate with State Agencies for Surplus Property to conduct outreach to overburdened communities to increase awareness of and enhance participation in GSA's Federal Surplus Personal Property Donation Program.*
6. *Reach out to and follow up with small businesses located in overburdened communities to share information and provide technical assistance to small businesses to enhance their awareness of contracting opportunities with overburdened communities and connect vendors with GSA acquisition personnel for support and engagement.*

EJIWG'S Goal 2: Enhance multi-agency support of holistic community-based solutions to provide assistance, as needed, to address environmental justice issues.

GSA is an active member of the EJIWG and participates on several of the IWG's standing committees and focus committees. GSA's participation includes the Regional Interagency Working Groups Committee; Strategy and Implementation Progress Report Committee; Title VI of the Civil Rights Committee; Impacts from Climate Change Committee; the Rural Communities Committee; the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Committee, and the Goods Movement Committee.

GSA supports the Region 4 Regional Interagency Working Group, which is currently engaged in coordinated outreach efforts and community engagement activities with EPA in North Birmingham, Alabama. GSA provided information to North Birmingham representatives regarding two of the GSA Federal financial assistance programs (i.e., Federal Surplus Personal Property Donation Program and the Computers for Learning Program), and the GSA Office of Small Business Utilization provided information on how to do business with the Federal Government. GSA is also coordinating with the Alabama State Agency for Surplus Property (SASP) to conduct outreach with the North Birmingham communities. GSA has coordinated with other SASPs (in Alabama, California, Louisiana and Mississippi, for example) to enhance outreach to low-income and minority communities and to educate community leaders on the benefits and affordability of the Federal surplus property.

Action Items for FY 2016–18:

1. *Identify opportunities to coordinate with the EJIWG to share information with advisory boards and community leaders regarding GSA's programs and activities that support the principles of environmental justice.*
2. *Partner with other EJIWG member agencies to identify opportunities where GSA can add value to joint Federal efforts to address challenges faced by overburdened communities.*

3. *Host Shared Knowledge sessions on lessons learned and best practices on projects of all types, including those projects that may have affected certain disadvantaged stakeholders.*
4. *GSA will collaborate with State Agencies for Surplus Property to promote outreach to minority, low income and rural communities in their individual states to ensure knowledge and awareness of the Federal Surplus Personal Property Donation Program for the purpose of promoting those communities' participation in the program.*

EJIWG's Goal 3: Advance interagency strategies to identify and address environmental justice concerns in agency programs, policies, and activities.

One of the GSA Office of Governmentwide Policy's key activities is the development and publication of FMR 102-36, which addresses electronic stewardship. In addition to continuing efforts to support this project, GSA co-hosts the Federal Electronic Stewardship Working Group (FESWG) along with EPA and the U.S. Department of Energy. This is a tremendous outreach activity to further the Federal Government's activities in the electronic stewardship realm. In addition, GSA is a co-chair on the revamped National Strategy for Electronic Stewardship (NSES), which seeks to address new issues and opportunities that have arisen since the 2011 NSES report was published. GSA also published its National Environmental Justice Strategy in February 2012, along with annual progress reports for FY 2013, 2014, and 2015. The GSA Environmental Justice Strategy (2012) and annual progress reports are posted on the GSA Environmental Justice [webpage](#) and open for public review and comment.

The GSA Urban Development Program will continue to partner with the EPA Office of Sustainable Communities to provide technical assistance to GSA project communities where additional planning assistance will help communities to better leverage GSA's real estate actions. Recent examples of partnership with EPA include: (1) a U.S. Department of State project that will drive private investment in hotels and restaurants, where technical assistance will tackle how the community should put plans in place that guide developers to meet community needs with new development, as well as the Federal need; and (2) a Federal courthouse project located in Mobile, Alabama, that has been reduced in size, making a large Federal parcel potentially available in an area targeted by local officials for redevelopment. Lessons learned from these projects will help identify other communities that would benefit from similar assistance as well as teach GSA whether and how to modify future business practices to achieve locally beneficial outcomes.

Action Items for FY 2016–18:

1. *GSA will support and provide educational, training and outreach opportunities with partner agencies, Governmentwide councils/workgroups, and State and local stakeholders for the purpose of making a visible difference in communities.*

2. *GSA will work in conjunction with the National Capital Planning Commission (which includes the general public, as appropriate) on local and regional projects for the GSA, which may impact overburdened communities in the National Capital Region.*
3. *Per [GSA's 2014 and 2015 Climate Change Risk Management Plan](#), as GSA's customer agencies identify vulnerable mission-critical sites and supply chain components, GSA will partner with them to identify and avoid maladaptation actions that increase vulnerability to climate risks, rather than reducing them, to vulnerable communities. Real property adaptation actions may vary across a spectrum of protection, accommodation, or retreat. Supply chain adaptation actions may vary across a spectrum of planning for disruption, minimizing damage, or damage control.*
4. *Within the NEPA process for GSA projects, and pursuant to Executive Order 12898 and the GSA NEPA Desk Guide, GSA will identify other Federal agencies that should be included as cooperating agencies for potential environmental justice issues. In addition, GSA will participate in NEPA studies in which GSA is requested to be a cooperating agency on projects with environmental justice impacts.*

EJIWG'S Goal 4: Develop partnerships with academic institutions to assist in providing long-term technical assistance to overburdened communities.

GSA continues in its 10th year as a partner with the ACE Mentor program. The ACE Mentor Program is a not-for-profit organization that encourages high school students to pursue architecture, construction, engineering and related careers, and provides mentoring opportunities for top industry professionals. The National Capital Region is working with ACE Mentor and Friendship Tech Prep High Academy in Washington, DC's Ward 8 community. The school is adjacent to the St. Elizabeths Campus where GSA is developing the headquarters for the U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

Leaders throughout GSA have existing (and sometimes long-term) relationships with multiple educational institutions. GSA looks forward to exploring possible expansion of these relationships into coordinated assistance and/or support to overburdened communities. GSA recognizes the importance of such educational institutions' relationships with local communities and is interested in seeing how collaboration between Federal agencies, educational institutions and overburdened communities might be a positive outcome for all involved.

Action Items for FY 2016–18:

- 1. GSA will continue its partnership with local high schools with the ACE Mentor Program.*
- 2. In FY 2016, GSA will explore existing relationships with academic institutions, to include Minority-Serving Institutions, to determine how GSA may leverage opportunities with educational institutions that will promote assistance to overburdened communities. GSA will develop an action plan on how the agency will engage with specific educational institutions to provide technical assistance to overburdened communities, which will be implemented in FY 2017.*