

**UNITED STATES
GENERAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION**




**ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE
IMPLEMENTATION PROGRESS REPORT
FISCAL YEARS 2016–2018**

Letter From the Associate Administrator, Office of Civil Rights

In August 2011, the U.S. General Services Administration (GSA) joined 15 other Federal departments and agencies, along with the White House Council on Environmental Quality, in signing a Memorandum of Understanding on Environmental Justice. Since then, GSA published its first Environmental Justice Strategy in February 2012, identifying key areas that GSA would focus on in subsequent years.

I am pleased to publish GSA's Environmental Justice Implementation Progress Report for FY 2016–FY 2018, which sets out GSA's accomplishments toward implementing its May 2016 latest environmental justice strategy.

This report highlights the broad reach of GSA's programs and activities and the agency's partnership with multiple Federal agencies, State and local governments, and community representatives/groups that work to improve communities impacted by long-term environmental issues. I encourage you to share feedback regarding the report with us at eistrategy@gsa.gov.

 4.30.2019

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I. INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

The U.S. General Services Administration (GSA) is committed to meeting the goals of Executive Order 12898, *Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations*, which directs each Federal agency to make environmental justice part of its mission and mandated the creation of the Federal Interagency Working Group on Environmental Justice (EJIWG).

In August 2011, GSA joined other Federal department and agencies in signing the Federal interagency Memorandum of Understanding on Environmental Justice and Executive Order 12898 (MOU). Among other things, the MOU adopts an updated charter for the EJIWG, reaffirms the importance of identifying and addressing environmental justice considerations in the programs, policies, and activities of MOU agencies and provides that by signing the MOU, GSA became a participating agency member of the EJIWG. The MOU further directs agencies to “periodically review and update Environmental Justice Strategies and ... provide a concise report on progress during the previous fiscal year.” GSA published the agency’s very first Environmental Justice Strategy in February 2012.

In March 2016, the EJIWG issued Fiscal Years 2016–2018 Framework for Collaboration (hereinafter referred to as the Framework for Collaboration), a strategic document that outlined goals to advance greater Federal agency collaboration to improve quality-of-life and support economic opportunities in overburdened and under-resourced communities. The Framework for Collaboration builds on existing environmental justice work to focus the collective efforts of the Federal agencies on four goals for fiscal years (FY) 2016, 2017, and 2018:

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.

The GSA Environmental Justice Progress Report for FY 2016 through 2018 presents an assessment of GSA’s implementation of its environmental justice strategy. From major construction projects where GSA’s engagement with communities fosters community development to sharing information with minority and low-income communities about GSA’s largest, ongoing Federal financial assistance program, the Federal Surplus

Personal Property Donation Program (hereinafter referred to as the Donation Program), GSA's work supports the principles of environmental justice.

II. GSA AND ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

GSA's mission is to *“[d]eliver value and savings in real estate, acquisition, technology, and other mission-support services across government.”* GSA works to maximize the effectiveness of every tax dollar by supporting more than \$54 billion in procurement spend, and managing over 8,700 owned and leased properties across the United States and its territories. GSA achieves cost savings and efficiencies through smarter acquisition, responsible management of Federal real estate, transformative use of technology, and leading Governmentwide policymaking that covers the areas of personal and real property, travel and transportation, information technology, regulatory information, and use of Federal advisory committees. GSA also makes it easier to do business with Government by striving to be an exceptional partner to industry, especially small and innovative companies.

III. ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE STRATEGY UPDATES/REVISIONS

GSA published its Environmental Justice Strategy for Fiscal Years 2016–2018 in May 2016, which aligned with the EJIWG's Framework for Collaboration for FY 2016–2018. The Strategy was published and posted on GSA's Environmental Justice webpage at www.gsa.gov/portal/content/100886. To date, GSA has not received any public comments regarding the agency's April 2016 EJ Strategy. GSA anticipates updating its Strategy upon the EJIWG's completion of the next multiyear Framework for Collaboration.

IV. IMPLEMENTING GSA's ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE STRATEGY

GSA uses its resources to carry out the agency's mission in communities across the nation. GSA has expertise in sustainability and a history of leadership in green Government. These practices contribute to reducing its environmental footprint by embracing its responsibility to increase the sustainability of the Federal Government by reducing its use of natural resources and the environmental impact of its buildings, products, services, and its processes and activities. GSA also partners with other Federal agencies, State and local officials, and community representatives to share information about how communities can obtain surplus personal property through GSA's Donation Program and the Computers for Learning Program for no cost or at a fraction of the retail cost. Donations of personal property to communities and eligible non-profits and small businesses help make a difference in many communities that otherwise would be unable to obtain needed property due to their limited financial resources. The following accomplishments are examples of how GSA's place-based initiatives, Federal partnerships, and community engagements support environmentally overburdened, underserved, and economically distressed communities:

A. Siting and Development of Federal Facilities: GSA collaborates with local communities in the siting and development of Federal space. Industry research indicates that more dense development patterns (in other words, not sprawl) result in lower infrastructure costs, fewer greenhouse gas emissions/pollution, and generally positive economic development impacts. Building on that premise, Federal policy generally directs Federal agencies to pursue sites in more centralized locations to reduce negative impacts and increase positive impacts of Federal development. For example:

- a. In FYs 2014 through 2016, GSA incorporated in-depth consultation with local public officials on local development plans and transit networks as an important component of GSA's Federal facility and location decisions. GSA's urban development officers continue to work as liaisons between GSA business lines and local communities on GSA facility and location decisions.
- b. Between FYs 2016 through 2018, GSA revised the Leasing Desk Guide, which defines the processes leasing contracting officers use in pursuing new space for Federal facilities on the private market. The updated Guide incorporates sustainable location principles, which reiterates GSA's commitment to sound location policy and includes guidelines that analyze four factors:
 - i. Local and regional planning and economic development goals;
 - ii. Sustainability and transportation infrastructure and plans;
 - iii. New and existing infrastructure and resources; and
 - iv. Protection of the natural environment.
- c. Since 2016, GSA has been measuring and tracking its inventory using the Smart Location Calculator (SLC). The SLC is a web-based tool developed in partnership with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) for exploring how workplace location impacts worker commute travel. Indicators include worker commute greenhouse gas emissions, mode-share, vehicle miles traveled, and workplace accessibility via transit. These are predictors of air pollution, infrastructure costs, and economic development within a given community, all factors GSA considers when using the tool to identify location efficient sites during real property lease acquisition and customer portfolio planning. The calculator provides a Smart Location Index, which ranges in value from 0-100, where 0 indicates the least location efficient site and 100 indicates the most location efficient site.

B. Community Engagement Partnerships: GSA continues to support Federal partners in outreach and community engagement efforts. Some examples of GSA's support include the following areas:

Brownfields to Healthfields Initiatives:¹ GSA collaborated with the Rural Communities Committee of the EJ IWG, which uses an approach called Brownfields to Healthfields (B2H). The B2H approach brings partners such as Government representatives, members of academia, non-profit groups, and healthcare providers together to transform contaminated properties, such as an abandoned gas station, into spaces that improve community health, equity, sustainability, and resiliency for vulnerable populations (e.g., eye clinic, community centers). A major part of this effort is convening and connecting stakeholders with each other to build relationships, share knowledge, and align resources. GSA shares information with the B2H communities about the Federal Surplus Personal Property Donation Program, which may be a resource that communities could use to meet some of their personal property needs.

- i. Examples of the types of personal property that local agencies and eligible organizations receive through participation in the Donation Program include industrial-sized generators for a community's emergency operations, road graders to maintain a community's roadways, different types of motor vehicles, furniture and office equipment, lawn equipment, firefighting equipment, commercial-use kitchen equipment and appliances, and building materials and tools. For numerous examples of other property that may be available through the Donation Program, visit [GSAXcess.gov](https://www.gsa.gov/xp/c2766101). Some B2H initiatives that GSA supported (and continues to support) include:
 1. Grundy County, Tennessee (TN): GSA connected the TN State Agency for Surplus Property (SASP) with Grundy County, TN, which was in the process of turning a contaminated property in Tracy City, TN, into a learning and development center. As a result of these connections, Tracy City received Federal surplus personal property through the Donation Program to furnish their new community center and the TN SASP continues to work with Tracy City to identify additional surplus property that the community center needs.
 2. B2H Conferences: GSA participated on Federal panels at two major B2H conferences to provide information on how communities can access Federal surplus personal property through the Donation Program.
 - a. West Virginia Brownfields Conference: GSA partnered with EPA and the Appalachian Regional

¹ EPA defines a brownfield as "a property, the expansion, redevelopment, or reuse of which may be complicated by the presence or potential presence of a hazardous substance, pollutant, or contaminant." See <https://www.epa.gov/brownfields/brownfield-overview-and-definition>.

Commission at the 2016 Brownfield Summit in Charleston, WV. The gathering included dozens of community and regional partners supporting the B2H efforts across multiple States, allowing GSA to directly inform potentially eligible organizations on how they could directly take advantage of the assistance GSA provides through the Donation Program. During the presentation, organizations already participating in the Donation Program provided examples that amplified GSA's message. The examples particularly focused on how communities may tap into Federal financial assistance programs to help make their limited budgets go further.

- b. **Southeast Brownfields Conference:** GSA also participated at the 2017 Southeast Brownfields Conference in Florida to share information about the Donation Program and the Computers for Learning Program. This event led to GSA partnering with the U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development and the State of Florida's SASP to provide a tour to the Northwest Jacksonville Community Development Corporation, 100 Black Men of Jacksonville, Inc., and the Eastside Environmental Council, Inc. of the Florida SASP and Federal surplus property warehouse.

- b. **Outreach and Community Engagement Initiatives:** From FY 2016 through 2018, GSA partnered with other Federal agencies to engage with communities to promote awareness of GSA's Donation Program. Hundreds of millions of dollars of Federal surplus personal property flows through the Donation Program each year to eligible nonprofits (such as homeless shelters, food banks, and child care centers), State agencies, and local governments. The Donation Program allows eligible entities to obtain a variety of items at a cost much lower than that of typical procurement channels. Such community engagements included:

- i. **Birmingham, Alabama (AL):** GSA partnered with EPA to assist in the revitalization of North Birmingham, AL, with the AL SASP as a key partner in promoting access to Federal surplus personal property by the community. GSA approached this partnership from the beginning as a model for future efforts. The AL SASP engaged with GSA and the community through a variety of efforts that were tailored to the needs of the North Birmingham community. The AL SASP model for outreach to overburdened communities has been used by other State and territory SASPs, as well.

- ii. State of Mississippi (MS) Outreach & Community Engagement: GSA partnered with EPA, Federal and State agencies, and local non-profit organizations in Mississippi to reach overburdened communities throughout the State.

--Itta Bena, MS: GSA collaborated with EPA, the MS Department of Environmental Quality, and the MS SASP to provide the Mayor of Itta Bena an on-site briefing at the MS SASP in Pearl, MS. The City of Itta Bena is an economically disadvantaged community that has many needs, but a limited budget. The briefing included details about the Donation Program operated by the MS SASP and concluded with a private tour of the MS SASP's warehouse that contains large quantities of Federal surplus property. The MS SASP staff explained to the mayor the scope of what could be obtained through the Donation Program. OCR shared this model with other SASPs as an effective way to engage with communities in need in their respective States.

--Environmental Education Training Program: GSA presented at the Mississippi Environmental Education Training, Community Engagement Panel, in its ongoing partnership with EPA to reach communities that could benefit from Federal resources. GSA shared information about the Donation Program with more than 100 attendees representing various communities throughout Mississippi.

--MS Gulf Coast Outreach: GSA also partnered with EPA and the MS SASP to host representatives of the 34th Street Wholistic Gardens and Education Center, Inc., in Gulfport, MS. The gathering included a briefing by the MS SASP regarding the Donation Program and a private tour of the Federal surplus property warehouse.

- c. National Environmental Justice Conference: GSA's Office of Civil Rights joined with other Federal civil rights experts from the U.S. Departments of Justice, Homeland Security, and Transportation, and EPA to present a training workshop held by the EJIWG's Title VI Committee at the 2016 National Environmental Justice Conference. The training focused on building capacity with respect to three topics: Title VI 101, Title VI and Environmental Justice, and How to File a Complaint with Federal Civil Rights Agencies. Title VI refers to Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended, which prohibits race, color and national origin discrimination in federally assisted programs and activities.

C. Computers for Learning Program: In order to encourage and promote the reuse of computer and technology, GSA is proud to sponsor the Computers for Learning (CFL) website. CFL evolved as a guide for implementing Executive Order 12999,

Educational Technology: Ensuring Opportunity for all Children in the Next Century. The order encourages agencies, to the extent permitted by law, to transfer computers and related peripheral equipment excess to their needs directly to schools and educational non-profit organizations. The CFL website allows eligible recipients to view and select the computer equipment that Federal agencies have reported as excess.

GSA regularly donates computers and related equipment through the Federal Government's CFL program. GSA made direct donations in FY 2017 and FY 2018 through CFL to schools and educational non-profit organizations totaling more than \$7.7 million, benefiting schools from minority and low-income communities in Alabama, Arkansas, California, Colorado, the District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Indiana, Kansas, Louisiana, Maryland, Mississippi, Missouri, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, Texas, Virginia, and Washington.

D. Outreach to Tribal Leaders: GSA's participation with EPA in a regional meeting of Tribal representatives in the Northwest United States highlighted Federal excess and surplus personal property that Tribal organizations may be eligible to obtain. This gathering provided another opportunity for GSA to maximize the number of groups of potentially eligible organizations from a number of States that would otherwise be difficult to reach in an effective manner. Success stories of Federal excess and surplus personal property contributing to supporting Tribal communities include the following:

- i. **Makah Tribe, Washington:** More than \$200,000 of personal property has been transferred to the Tribe, including two tractors and compact rollers. The equipment will be used at the Tribal rock quarry, thereby creating more local jobs. The donated property will also be used to build a sidewalk, develop and improve roads in the Neah Bay area, and complete other construction projects. Later in the year, the Makah Indian Nation obtained a sliding axle trailer through GSA's Personal Property Excess Program that typically costs \$70,000 on the open market. The sliding axle trailer has been used on multiple occasions to transport large tractors and heavy equipment, resulting in cost savings from not needing to rent or otherwise procure the necessary equipment.
- ii. **Indian Health Services, Oklahoma and TN:** More than \$2.8 million of personal property has been transferred to Indian Health Services (IHS). The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) - Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in Atlanta, GA, excessed 404 cases of Tamiflu that were no longer required for CDC use. The Tamiflu was transferred to the IHS offices in Oklahoma City, OK, and in Smyrna, TN. IHS then distributed the Tamiflu to pharmacies to assist various Tribes throughout those regions, with special attention

to Tribes with high levels of influenza. This promoted both economic savings and community health.

- iii. IHS, Project TransAm, TN: Approximately \$21,600 of personal property has been transferred from the Miami Veterans Administration Medical Center to the IHS Project TransAm in Murfreesboro, TN, including brand new exercise equipment. The exercise equipment will be used to promote fitness for IHS patients.

E. Development of Partnerships with Academic Institutions: In FY 2016, GSA collaborated with EPA's College/Underserved Communities Partnership Program (CUPP) to provide CUPP participant schools that have a small business outreach office with training on GSA's programs that facilitate economic activity. The training focused on the eligibility of 8(a) small businesses to participate in GSA's Donation Program, as well as how small businesses can compete for and obtain Federal contracts.

F. Faith-Based Environmental Organizations: GSA participates in the Faith-Based Environmental Organizations meetings with other Federal agencies and the EJIWG. The Faith-Based Environmental Organizations' meetings were organized by EPA and hosted by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. The meetings continue earlier efforts by the EJIWG to expand the partnerships possible to all sectors of the country. The primary aim of this engagement is to target potential partners with expansive charitable footprints across the country. Several major charities were represented, including the National Religious Partnership for Environment, Christian Justice Ministries, Coalition on Environment and Jewish Life, Episcopal Church, Catholic Climate Covenant, and other religious organizations. Federal representatives include EPA, U.S. Department of Energy, U.S. Department of Justice, U.S. Department of Labor, U.S. Department of Transportation, and GSA.

V. RESILIENCE TO OBSERVED AND EXPECTED CHANGES IN CLIMATE

As GSA's customer agencies identify their resilience needs at mission-critical sites and in their supply chains, GSA will partner with them to identify ways to promote resilience, manage risks, and help customer agencies to assist vulnerable communities to *prepare for and recover from* the observed and expected changes in climate.

Introduction/Overview: Climate change continues to be identified as a "high risk" identified by the U.S. Government Accountability Office.² The observed and expected changes in climate aggravate stressors such as poverty and environmental degradation and prompt an increased need for resiliency. GSA promotes resilience in the context of the administrative, fiscal, and informational conditions in order to support Federal customers that engage directly with State, local, and Tribal-level stakeholders.

² GAO-19-157SP, *Substantial Efforts Needed to Achieve Greater Progress on High-Risk Areas*

B. Progress toward implementing Agency Climate Risk Management Plans related to vulnerable communities: GSA responds to issues that affect its Federal customers and the communities they serve. As GSA's customers continue to identify vulnerable mission-critical sites and supply chain components, GSA will collaborate with them to identify and avoid maladaptation—actions that increase vulnerability to the observed and expected changes in climate. Real property response actions may vary across a spectrum of protection, accommodation, or retreat from high risk areas. Supply chain response actions may vary across a spectrum of planning for disruption, minimizing damage, or damage control. GSA must continue to work with its customers to understand how the observed and expected changes in climate, in conjunction with other socio-economic and demographic trends, affect customer agency missions and their capacity to support vulnerable communities directly. For GSA, these efforts include integration of key Federal science documents since 2016, including: the U.S. Climate and Health Assessment (2016), *Volume I: Climate Science Special Report (CSSR) of the Fourth National Climate Assessment (2017) and Volume II: Impacts, Risks, and Adaptation in the United States*)³ (2018). These documents were issued by the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy and U.S. Global Change Research Program (USGCRP).⁴ The documents are risk-framed and the advances in attribution science⁵ compel all Federal managers to take heed that the observed and expected changes in climate are foreseeable.⁶

C. Interagency collaborative efforts to help vulnerable communities prepare for and recover from impacts of observed and expected changes in climate: In addition to the integration of the interagency science documents mentioned above, GSA is engaged with the USGCRP Social Science Coordinating Committee and the National Integrated Heat Health Information System (NOAA lead) to deepen GSA's understanding of health concerns within vulnerable populations, which GSA's customers support directly. GSA developed a decision-making framework for its customers (other Federal agencies) to use in conjunction with their agency and service-level vulnerability assessments to define the implications of climate change on their services, supplies, and space needs. This framework includes environmental justice considerations in these sectors to support the customer agency statutory mission.

D. Conclusion: Providing an enabling environment to understand the observed and expected changes in climate and managing the risks, both at the level of individual decisions and at the organizational level, builds capacity and capability in preparedness and resilience. These efforts improve understanding of the exposure, vulnerability and risk to advance local planning. GSA has focused efforts to make an

³ <https://nca2018.globalchange.gov/>

⁴ www.globalchange.gov/about/legal-mandate#Public%20Law; The Global Change Research Act of 1990

⁵ Assessing whether certain observed changes in the climate, including certain extreme events, are unlikely to be due to natural variability alone and whether changes or events can be attributed to known forcing mechanisms.

⁶ See CSSR Chapter 4, Key message 5

enabling environment for change with its partners who directly engage with State, local, and Tribal entities.

VI. ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE IWG FY 2016 – FY 2018 FRAMEWORK FOR COLLABORATION:

As a member agency of the EJIWG, GSA continues to actively collaborate with other member agencies. The EJIWG's "Fiscal Year 2016 Progress Report" and "Fiscal Year 2017 Progress Report" address the accomplishments and activities of the EJIWG.
