# Results Washington Project



SEEP Office

## State Agency GHG Emissions Reduction Planning

### Equity and Environmental Justice Considerations Tool – Summary and Instructions

#### Summary

When making plans, processes, or decisions on projects that have energy efficiency or GHG reduction components, it is important that state agencies consider equity and environmental justice.

Environmental Justice and equity goals are to:

1. Understand who benefits and who is impacted by the project.
2. Ensure the project does not have adverse impacts or contribute to environmental and health disparities for overburdened communities and underserved populations.
3. Where possible, create benefits for communities that reduce environmental and health burdens.

#### What to Consider

When answering the questions below, consider:

* **Location**
* **Lifecycle impacts**, do not limit your analysis to the final product, consider the base materials, parts, and components that the project will use
* **Human health and environmental impacts** of the project
* **Greenhouse gas emissions** of the project (while developing the project as well as once implemented or operating)
* **Local resources and contractors** to do this work

Note: Keep in mind that by working with local contractors and minority- and women-owned businesses, state projects can promote a more equitable economy, and help develop new skills, service offerings, and expertise with new technology that will advance environmental goals and benefit overburdened communities or underserved populations.

#### Completing the Questionnaire

This questionnaire should be the initial step in your analysis and is intended to strengthen decision making. Don’t let individual questions derail you from making progress on environmental justice and equity goals. For instance, analyzing every material used in a project may be impossible. Focus your efforts on the most toxic or energy-intensive ones and use available guidance to choose alternatives. The goal is to take reasonable and meaningful steps towards decisions and projects with pro-equity outcomes.

Timing

The following questions must be answered and incorporated into agency decision-making processes. This should be done early enough in the decision-making process to adjust the project to better meet equity and environmental justice goals. Projects should aim to maximize the benefits to overburdened communities or underserved populations and should not support or create environmental, social, economic, or health disparities for these communities or populations.

Tribal collaboration and stakeholder input

Consider Tribal collaboration and stakeholder meetings to provide affected communities and populations an opportunity to learn about, contribute to, and influence the project. Meaningful engagement can support your evaluation of how you can minimize impacts and maximize benefits to those populations. Every project may have an impact on overburdened communities and underserved populations in some way, and this analysis should explicitly identify the impacts your project will have on these communities and populations.

### Environmental Justice and Equity Considerations Questionnaire

**Project Title:**

(Enter Here)

**Description of Project:**

(Enter Here)

**Answer all questions:**

1. **Who is affected? Identify overburdened communities or underserved populations who will benefit or be burdened by the project (short term and long term).** This might include impacts to communities or populations who are people of color, low-income, Tribes, indigenous, linguistically isolated, geographically isolated, politically underrepresented, and vulnerable or sensitive groups. Key demographic information may be found with online data and mapping tools such as the [Washington Tracking Network Environmental Health Disparities Map (DOH)](https://doh.wa.gov/data-statistical-reports/washington-tracking-network-wtn/washington-environmental-health-disparities-map), [EJSCREEN (EPA)](https://www.epa.gov/ejscreen), [Language Mapping Tool (MIL)](https://waseocgis.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=ffd638d41f7045fe97a27d1e2ccbe0af) and [the US Census](https://www.census.gov/data.html).

**Answer (short term):**

**Answer (long term):**

1. **How will those communities or populations be affected by this project?** 
   1. **Environmental Impacts**For example: Local communities may potentially be affected by short and long term impacts to the natural environment such as degradation of plants, habitat, air, water, and land. As well as the built environment, including impacts to infrastructure such as buildings, roads, parks, and other spaces.

**Answer:**

* 1. **Health impacts**  
     For example: This might include short term health impacts from diesel fumes during construction, or long term health impacts from local air pollution due to burning natural gas onsite or gasoline vehicles traveling to and from the building. There may be health impacts to communities near mines or factories far away due to material choices and future consequences to communities due to this project’s incremental contribution to global GHG emissions. There could also be positive impacts to local health from job creation or other benefits.

**Answer:**

* 1. **Cultural impacts**For example: Projects may impact culturally significant resources. A solar installation may be on land significant to tribes. Historically important landscapes or buildings may be impacted by projects.

**Answer:**

* 1. **Economic impacts**For example: Projects may have short or long term impacts to local economies. Roads may need to be shut down while a project is under construction. This could harm local businesses. Note both negative and positive impacts from projects. A positive impact could be increased employment in the area.

**Answer:**

* 1. **Community cohesion and well-being from the project**For example: The potential effects may include natural and built environment changes that impact community cohesion. Does this project build physical structures that may split or disrupt a community? Are there impacts that may limit community events in the area? Does the project negatively affect the scenic views or recreational spaces in the area? Does the community accept and want the project?

**Answer:**

1. **Are there any unavoidable negative environmental, health, cultural, economic, or community cohesion and wellbeing impacts from the project? Can any impacts be mitigated? If so, how?**

**Answer:**

1. **How could the project be adapted to maximize benefits to overburdened communities or underserved populations?**

Such as change of location; use of alternative materials or equipment; contracting with local-, minority- and women-owned businesses; leveraging community assets and resources; and adjustments to infrastructure, products, or services.

**Answer:**

1. **Does this project prioritize considerations to overburdened communities or underserved populations?** For example, does the project focus on overburdened communities or underserved populations, or address specific environmental and health disparities?

**Answer:**

#### Resources

* [2021 State Energy Strategy](https://www.commerce.wa.gov/growing-the-economy/energy/2021-state-energy-strategy/)
* [SEEP webpage](https://www.commerce.wa.gov/growing-the-economy/energy/state-efficiency-and-environmental-performance-seep/) (see our Zero Energy Toolkit for built environment resources)
* [Office of Minority and Women’s Business Enterprises](https://omwbe.wa.gov/)
* Please don’t hesitate to [contact the SEEP Office](mailto:hanna.waterstrat@commerce.wa.gov) for help.