



MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF
ENVIRONMENT, GREAT LAKES, AND ENERGY

Energy, Equity & Environmental Justice

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EJ History in Michigan

- Both the Granholm and Snyder administrations made previous attempts to address environmental justice.
- Working groups were convened during both administrations to look at the best ways to engage environmental justice communities.
- Advocates have long advocated and pushed for recognition of environmental justice issues. Flint served as a tipping point.

EJ History in Michigan

- In the wake of Flint, Snyder administration convened an Environmental Justice Work Group in 2016. The Work Group issued a report in 2018 with 33 recommendations designed to help the state address environmental justice issues.

Executive Order

- Michigan Governor Gretchen Whitmer created the Office of the Environmental Justice Public Advocate and the role of Environmental Justice Public Advocate in Executive Order 2019-06
- The Office of Climate and Energy was also created as part of EO 2019-06 within the Department of Environment, Great Lakes and Energy.
- Both offices are working collaboratively to ensure that the state moves forward to address climate impacts through an equity lens.

What is the EJPA's Role

- Accept and investigate complaints and concerns related to environmental justice within the state of Michigan.
- Establish a statewide uniform reporting system to collect and analyze complaints about environmental justice.
- Ensure the equitable application of environmental laws and regulations throughout the state.

What is the EJPA's Role

- Work with communities across the state to improve handling of concerns and to enhance community engagement.
- Cooperate with public and private agencies and organizations to improve environmental justice in the state.
- Serve as a bridge between community concerns and business opportunities to enhance the response to environmental concerns.

Interagency EJ Response Team

- Participating departments identified through the executive order, include:
 - Natural Resources
 - Civil Rights
 - Transportation
 - Public Service Commission
 - Strategic Fund/Economic Development
 - Agriculture and Rural Development
 - Health and Human Services

Interagency EJ Response Team

- Work Groups have been established, including:
 - Planning and Policy
 - Communications and Outreach
 - Research and Data
 - Training

Equity and Environmental Justice

- Diversity vs. **Inclusion**
 - Diversity simply points to difference
 - **Inclusion** describes the need to incorporate these differences on a shared platform where they are accepted and valued
- Equality vs. **Equity**
 - Equality reflects treating everything the same
 - **Equity** takes into consideration how the past has shaped the present and assesses social advantage/disadvantage. It reflects providing what is needed versus equal amounts.

What is Environmental Justice?

EPA defines environmental justice as the fair 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.

Two Pillars of EJ

- **Fair treatment** of all people.
- **Meaningful public involvement** in government decision making
 - People have the opportunity to participate in decisions about activities that may affect their health and/or environment;
 - The public can influence the regulatory agency's decision;
 - Concerns will be considered in the decision-making process; and
 - Decision makers will seek out and facilitate the involvement of those potentially affected

Disparate Impact Factors



Proximity and Exposure



Unique Exposure Pathways



Physical Infrastructure



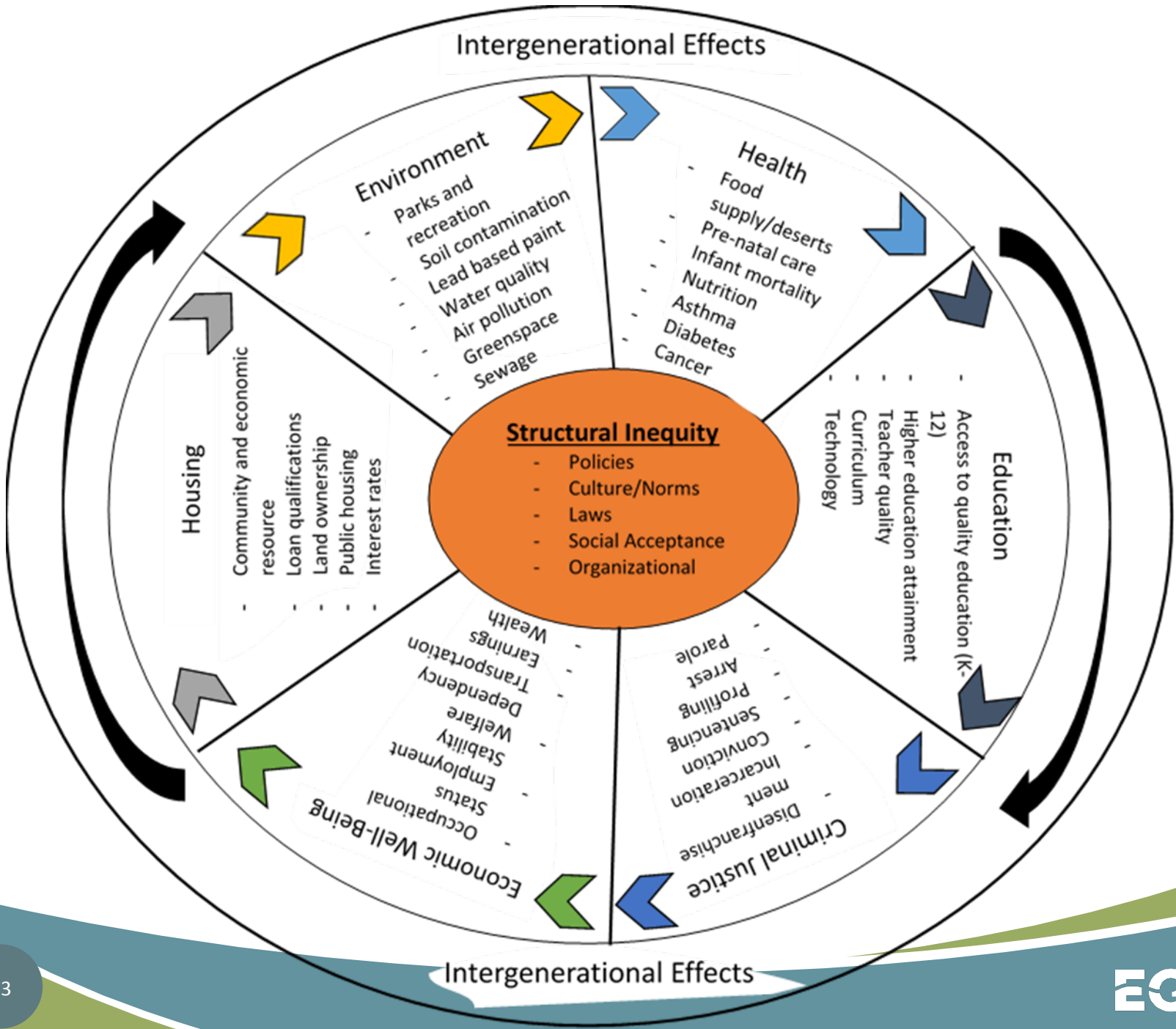
Cumulative Impacts



Public Participation



Vulnerable Populations



Where are we now?

- The Interagency Environmental Justice Response Team began meeting monthly in July of last year.
- Work Groups of the Response Team have been meeting since the fall.
- Michigan Advisory Council for Environmental Justice (MAC EJ) has been created.
- Engagement with communities throughout the state to address equitable application of environmental laws and regulations.

Michigan Advisory Council on Environmental Justice



COVID 19 and EJ

- EJ communities hit hard by COVID 19
- Water reconnections and communities without water
- Air pollution impacted communities (Harvard Study)
- Opportunities to address systemic inequities that impact communities.

An Equitable Lens for Our Work

- How will being more intentionally inclusive enhance our work?
- How can we think of equity as an element of how we move forward and not an add on or something extra?
- How can we learn to value diverse perspectives, diversify our workforce and use a broader lens to view what we do and why?
- How do we let communities speak for themselves?

The Intersection of Climate, Energy & Equity

- Prioritize saving people and the planet
- Engage frontline communities in renewable energy future
- Consider energy siting options in community transitions
- Prioritize electrification of public transportation, as well as personal vehicles

Key Considerations

- Look at over-burdened communities and assess cumulative impact as mitigation strategies are developed.
- Consider just transition for communities and employees as we transition away from the fossil fuel economy.
- Provide opportunities for meaningful engagement and equitable participation for impacted communities.

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