

Notification of Environmental Justice Assessment on CHAI Community Capacity Building Grant Program

December 19, 2024

WHAT

The DOH is conducting an Environmental Justice Assessment on the Climate and Health Adaptation Initiative (CHAI)– Community Capacity Building grant program. The legislature funded DOH in the 2023-2025 biennium through ESSB 5950 SL¹ to advance healthy climate adaptation through community investments. CHAI was formed as a partnership among DOH and other state, federal, and academic entities to help communities address their self-identified needs in a changing climate. CHAI supports grassroots climate adaptation efforts, with a focus on promoting the health of communities facing the immediate impacts of climate change.

The Community Capacity Building grant program is intended to support communities advancing their own plans and projects related to climate justice, resilience, and health. Community-based organizations (CBOs), tribal entities, or academic/local government agencies in partnership with a CBO or tribe were eligible to apply. DOH awarded CHAI funding in Fiscal Year 2024 to eight recipients.² Eligible projects included but were not limited to community resilience planning efforts and local capacity building for climate hazard response.

In addition to funding, a public/private network of CHAI partners provide grantees with connections to experts in public health & climate adaptation; technical assistance with funding opportunities, data needs, and other climate and health priorities; identification of new funding resources to sustain implementation of climate action plans; and resources to address other needs identified by communities.

The purpose of an environmental justice assessment is to identify:

- Who might be most impacted by an agency action
- Environmental benefits, harms, and health impacts of the action
- Ways to minimize or eliminate negative environmental impacts
- How to equitably distribute positive environmental impacts.

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

WHY

Climate change threatens the health, livelihoods, and wellbeing of everyone, but climate impacts such as extreme heat, wildfire smoke, drought, and flooding negatively affect specific groups more than others and often make existing social and environmental inequities worse.

Communities are seeking resources to engage at a local level on health impacts related to air quality, extreme heat, pollution, flood resiliency, and emergency preparedness. Community partners and tribes may have climate change-related action plans and often request additional support to implement their priorities.

¹ ESSB 5950-SL, Sec. 222 (105), Pg. 477

<https://lawfilesexternal.wa.gov/biennium/2023-24/Pdf/Bills/Session%20Laws/Senate/5950-S.SL.pdf?q=20241210121631>

² [Climate and Health Adaptation Initiative Grant Recipients | Washington State Department of Health](#)

WHO

CHAI is designed to help protect and promote the health of communities who are experiencing the harmful consequences of climate change first and worst.

Organizations eligible to apply included community-based organizations (CBOs) with communities or populations disproportionately impacted by climate injustice OR a tribal government or organization OR an academic or local government agency in partnership with a CBO or tribe.

WHEN

See our proposed timeline for the environmental justice assessment reporting and grant process timeline. Community and tribal engagement are expected to begin in spring or summer 2025.

Date	Milestone
December 8, 2023	CHAI Grant Program announced (2023-2025 biennium)
February 15, 2024	Grant Awards Announced
December 2024	Start EJA process / Publish notification
July 2025	Finalize EJ Assessment report.

These timelines and milestones may change. To stay current, please visit the program website <https://doh.wa.gov/community-and-environment/climate-and-health/climate-and-health-adaptation-initiative-chai> or use the contact information provided below.

HOW TO GET INVOLVED

Visit the [CHAI webpage](#) for more information.

For questions about the CHAI Community Capacity Building Grant Program or the environmental justice assessment, please contact staff at OEPHSShared@doh.wa.gov.



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