Environmental Justice, Health, Community Resilience, and Revitalization Program

September - November 2025

Quarter 1 Report

Fiscal Year 2025

NWF environmental justice

www.nwf.org/our-work/environmental-justice

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Meet the Team

NWF environmental justice

www.nwf.org/our-work/environmental-justice

Adrienne Hollis, PhD, JD
Vice President of Environmental Justice

Jason Harrison
Director of Environmental Justice Programs

Alaura Carter
Sr. Program Manager, TCTAC

Nishant Shah
Community Partnerships Specialist

Fabiola Gomez
Sr. Environmental Justice Coordinator

Taofik Oladipo
Policy Manager, Environmental Justice

Megnot Mulugeta
Communications Coordinator

Becca Ward
Sr. Administrative Coordinator

Holly Kistner
NICER Program Manager

Rebeca Villegas
National Director, Environmental Justice Strategy

Executive Summary

Community Partnerships

This quarter, we hosted and participated in **twelve meetings/events**, wrote **letters of support** for community grant proposals, and kicked off our community-driven **Rain Garden Project**, and provided **$5,000 sponsorship for Toxic Tours** and **$86,000 to the Transformational Tours of National Parks**.

Policy & Advocacy in Action

The policy team drafted and supported **2 statements, 2 op-ed's, a letter to congress**, and joined the Water Equals Life coalition in an **endorsement of the Water Access and Affordability Act**.

NICER Program

NICER Program Manager Holly Kistner has spoken to over **50 people** across the Federation and has put together preliminary results from the **internal audit, peer scan, and literature review** this quarter.

EPA Region III TCTAC

The EJHCR2 team attended and tabled at the Overbrook Environmental Education Center 2024 Thriving Communities Symposium, with Dr. Adrienne Hollis as a keynote speaker at the event. Additionally, we have **received 229 technical assistance requests,** with **126 in progress** to receive tailored technical assistance and **103 requests completed and closed.**

Environmental Justice Mapping Tool & Community Audit

Using this mapping tool, our program **connected with 6 new organizations**. Additionally, we hosted **3 workshops** across the federation, and updated information to 11 states, resulting in **110 new community assets** and **updates to 529 community assets and 70 environmental justice issues.**

Community Partnerships

Prioritizing and uplifting marginalized communities through authentic and meaningful relationship

Centered on Community

We center our work on the needs and dreams of the communities we partner with. This quarter, we hosted and participated in **twelve meetings/events,** wrote **letters of support** for community grant proposals, and kicked off our community-driven **Rain Garden Project,** and **provided $5,000 sponsorship for Toxic Tours and $86,000 to the Transformational Tours of National Parks.**

Attended and Hosted Meetings/Events

We understand that building reciprocal and equitable partnerships means more than offering funds or resources. It relies on investing the time to build relationships, understand nuanced issues, and center communities' needs. Below are details from a few of the events and meetings we attended over Quarter 1 of Fiscal Year 2025.

EVENT/MEETING	HIGHLIGHTS
Toxic Tour: CAUSE and California Environmental Justice Alliance	Attended by Fabiola Gomez. The event focused on hidden dangers and the resulting health impacts from the toxic air around the gas-fired power plant to the ongoing contamination at the Halaco Superfund site. This event was sponsored by the EJHCR[2] team last quarter.
One Step A La Vez Resource and Community Awareness Event	This event hosted many different community resource organizations across Ventura County. Fabiola Gomez presented on environmental justice issues mentioned during youth discussions and how communities can support the youth's efforts.
Altgeld Gardens Toxic Tour: CAAEJ and People for Community Recovery	Nishant Shah attended the Altgeld Gardens Toxic Tour hosted through Chicago Asian Americans for EJ and People for Community Recovery in September. **Read Nishant's blog about the Altgeld Neighborhood and this event here.**
CAAEJ Steering Committee	This November, Nishant Shah joined the Chicago Asian Americans for Environmental Justice Steering Committee
Santa Paula School District Partner Dinner	Fabiola Gomez attended this annual event, designed to help attendees stay connected with fellow partners, ongoing projects, and the overall goals of the school district.

EVENT/ MEETING	HIGHLIGHTS
Disaster Preparedness in Chicago	Nishant Shah met with Kyra Woods at Chicago Department of Environment to learn about the city's Disaster Preparedness Plans, and with Pooj Ravindran to discuss disaster preparedness plans in the 40th ward of Chicago.
Engaging with Santa Clara River Valley Youth	Fabiola Gomez joined the One Step A La Vez youth meeting to lead conversation about environmental justice issues in Santa Clara River Valley
Monitoring Community Health in Keaukaha	Becca Ward met with Terri Napeahi from the Keaukaha Action Network and the Lavoie Lab from Colorado State University to learn about the creation of a community health survey to quantify rates of environmental pollution caused community illness in the Keaukaha community

Letter of Support

We submitted a letter of support to One Step A La Vez for their application for the California Coastal Commission's Whale Tail Grants fund. This grant would provide Santa Clara River Valley youth with the financial resources needed to access and explore green spaces like national parks, beaches, and other natural areas.

Rain Gardens Project

In collaboration with Chicago Asian Americans for Environmental Justice, the EJHCR^2 is developing community-driven rain garden projects through intentional engagement and outreach within the Chicagoland region to address the impacts of flooding in the Great Lakes region. This will be done through education workshops, personalized planting consultations, and planting days for community sites.

Building Capacity, Enabling Change

The EJHCR^2 program provided $5,000 to the Chicago Asian Americans for Environmental Justice to support their Chinatown Environmental Justice Initiative and the cost of their Toxic Tour events.

Centro de Apoyo Familiar Annual Conference

Our team drafted and coordinated a blog post on behalf of TCTAC partner Centro de Apoyo Familiar to highlight their upcoming 18th Annual Conference

Social Media Engagement

Our Communications Coordinator, Megnot Mulugeta, coordinated social media posts for the Overbrook Environmental Education Center's Symposium and for Morgan State University's HBCU Environmental Justice Summit.

Funding of Transformational Tours of National Parks

Earlier this year, the EJHCR^2 program gave $86,000 to fund the Transformational Tours of National Parks, an initiative led by Audrey Peterman to reconnect Black communities with nature and promote conservation through immersive park experiences. Partnering with the Hip-Hop Caucus, the program leverages cultural influence and social media to showcase public lands, address historical barriers, and inspire renewed interest in the outdoors.

Environmental Justice Mapping Tool & Community Audit

The Environmental Justice Mapping Tool is a living, growing resource, both for the EJHCR^2 team and the communities we engage with. Below are some engagements from this quarter:

Community Audit

Our team has been conducting 1:1 meetings with community-based organizations (CBO) identified in the mapping tool to expand our program's reach. This quarter we hosted **6 first meetings with CBOs,** including D.I.N.E. Care, Vermont Energy Education Program, Center for Sustainable Communities, Maine Peoples Alliance, Just Me for Just Us, and Oregon Just Transition Alliance.

Data Updates

This quarter we've updated the information for 11 states, resulting in the addition of **110 new community assets** and **updates to the information of 529 community assets and 70 environmental justice issues.**

Workshops

We've **hosted 3 workshops** for internal NWF teams and programs, including the Education and Engagements team, Mayor's Monarch Pledge, and Community Wildlife Habitat Network.

EPA Region III TCTAC

Environmental Justice Thriving Communities Technical Assistance Center

Overbrook Environmental Education Center's 2024 Thriving Communities Symposium

The Overbrook Environmental Education Center's three-day symposium this October, held at the Academy of Natural Sciences of Drexel University and Moore College of Art & Design in Philidelphia, brought together community-based organizations, frontline communities, and resource-challenged groups to connect with environmental experts, funders, and agencies. Attendees gained valuable insights on grant applications, IRA-funded projects, and capacity-building resources while celebrating the official launch of the Greater Philadelphia hub for the Mid-Atlantic EPA TCTAC. This impactful event marked a key step forward in fostering environmental justice and empowering communities in the region. The EJHCR^2 team tabled at the event and assisted attendees with submitting intake requests. Additionally, Dr. Hollis was a featured keynote speaker at the event.

Alaura Carter, Sr. Program Manager of Region III TCTAC, presenting on the TCTAC program at the event.

Supporting our Hubs

The assistance we offer our hubs is as diverse as the hubs themselves. Here are a few ways we've provided support this quarter:

- Linked 3 hubs with organizations interested in TCTAC representation at their events.
- Created a Hub Blog Intake Form to gather topics from hubs for potential blog features.
- Held 1:1 meetings with hubs for feedback about the intake process.

Technical Assistance Intakes

As of the end of this quarter, we have received **229 technical assistance requests**, with **126 in progress** to receive tailored technical assistance and **103 requests completed and closed**. For each intake this quarter, we hosted 1:1 with the applicants to identify and answer any questions and address any issues or confusion that may arise during the process.

Policy & Advocacy

Engaging with decision-makers to support just, equitable, and community-driven solutions

EPA's Safe Drinking Water Rule- Lead and Copper Improvements

The EJHCR[2] program joined a community statement on the EPA's new Lead and Copper Rule Improvements (LCRI). We also sent a statement of support the the EPA's Water Office regarding the LRCI.

"For far too long, low-income neighborhoods and communities of color have faced the highest risks of lead contamination in their drinking water. The Biden-Harris Administration's Lead and Copper Rule not only strengthens protections for marginalized communities, but also prioritizes replacing lead pipes in these areas first. Ensuring clean, safe water for all is essential, and this rule moves us closer to environmental justice for everyone."

Op-Ed's

- Submitted an op-ed to Ventura County newspaper supporting and informing residents about California Proposition 4, a $10 billion bond aimed at prioritizing wildfire prevention, protecting water resources, and other climate challenges.
- Provided feedback on the National Wildlife Federation's op-ed taking a stance on Colorado's Prop. 127

Letter to Congress

We contributed to the organizational letter NWF sent to the House Natural Resources Committee about disaster aid funding. Some of the funding provisions we advocated for include: Disaster preparedness kits/education, Resilience and adaptation – specifically for vulnerable communities, Community-led recovery programs, environmental cleanup and remediation, and data collection and analysis (e.g. Health Impact Assessments)

EJ4All Act In-Person Convening

Policy Manager Taofik Oladipo joined an all-day convening on the EJ4All Act hosted by Earthjustice, WE ACT, and the Equitable and Just National Climate Platform. The session included exploring the EJ4All Act, defining wins for the 119th Congress, and strategies and tactics to explore a pathway forward on the bill.

Graphic designed by WE ACT for Environmental Justice. Learn more about their work and the EJ4All act here: https://www.weact.org/ej4all/

Collaborative Capacity Building with EmpowerDC

As part of our policy and communications-focused community engagement efforts, we collaborated with EmpowerDC to support their numerous environmental justice initiatives. In a recent meeting, we discussed ways to enhance their policy capacity and shared key resources, including a Policy Engagement Primer and Letter to the Editor (LTE) Guide. EmpowerDC also shared their cumulative impacts bill with us for review and provide feedback.

Endorsements

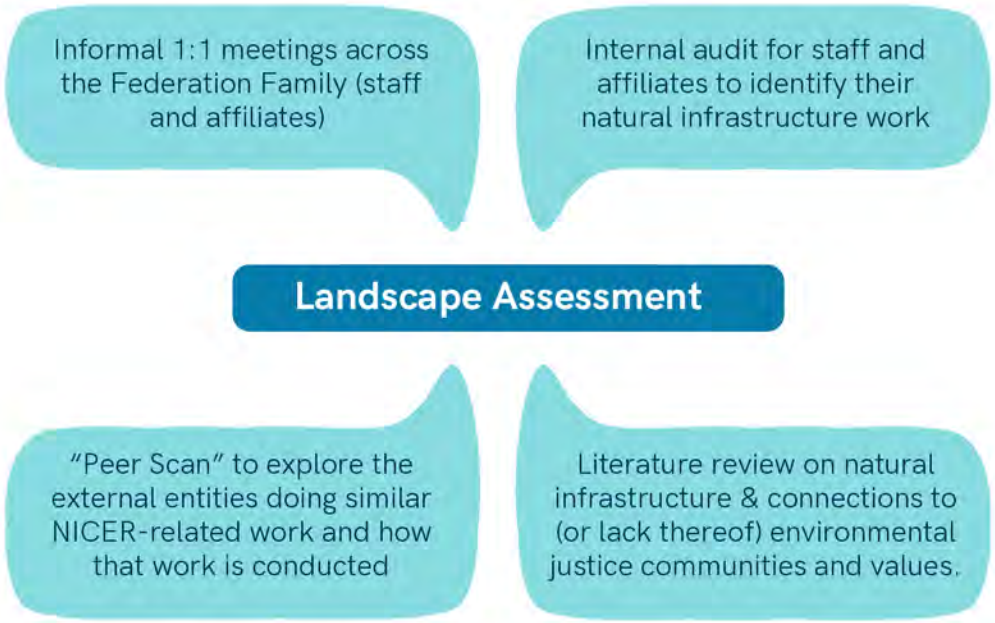
We joined the Water Equals Life (WEL) Coalition in endorsing H.R.10150 - Half-Century Update for Water Access and Affordability Act. The bill establishes the first-ever permanent, federal low-income water affordability program at the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

NICER

Natural Infrastructure Center for Environmental Justice and Resilience

Landscape Assessment of Natural Infrastructure

The Natural Infrastructure Center for Environmental Justice and Resilience (NICER) focuses on leveraging natural infrastructure solutions to address climate impacts in marginalized communities. The program is currently in its "scoping phase" and conducting a multi-faceted landscape assessment that consists of:



Connecting Across the Federation

Holly, the NICER Program Manager, has spoken to **over 50 people across the Federation** and has put together **preliminary results from the internal audit, peer scan, and literature review** this quarter.

Mississippi River Basin Collaboration

The NICER program will be collaborating with NWF's Mississippi River Program moving forward. The NAC Coasts and Water team leads the Mississippi River Program which collaborates cross-regionally and partners with affiliates to have an on-the-ground impact.

Future Plans & Milestones

Where the EJHCR² program is headed next

Always Looking Ahead

The work is never over, and the EJHCR² program is continually striving to develop our program to better serve and uplift fenceline and frontline communities across the United States.

Below are a few of our upcoming projects and milestones.

NICER Landscape Assessment Report

We are putting together a Results and Recommendations report based on the results of the Landscape Assessment

Upcoming Blogs

Our team will be releasing a number of blogs in this next quarter on topics including: Toxic Tours, Carbon Management, the Sackett Decision, and more!

New year, Newsletters!

We will be launching newsletters for the TCTAC program and the EJHCR team in the new year

Interested in Collaborating?

Let's Connect!

Email us at EnvironmentalJustice@nwf.org
Visit us https://www.nwf.org/Our-Work/Environmental-Justice

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Designed by Becca Ward, EJHCR^2 Senior Administrative Coordinator