

CORE Forest Fund-MVP Grant Round

Appendix E: Environmental Justice

Environmental Justice has been defined by the Governor of Virginia's Advisory Council on Environmental Justice as:

The fair and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, faith, national origin, or income, with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies.

1. *Fair treatment (nondiscriminatory actions) is the fair and equitable treatment of all whereby no group of people bear a disproportionate share of negative environmental consequences resulting from environmental decisions.*
2. *Meaningful involvement is the guarantee that:*
 - a. *Impacted and vulnerable community residents have a realistic opportunity to participate in the full cycle of the decision-making process about a proposed activity that will affect their environment and/or health; and,*
 - b. *Decision-makers will seek out and consider participation, allowing it to shape and influence the decision.*

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) states:

Environmental justice is the fair treatment 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.

This goal will be achieved when everyone enjoys:

- *the same degree of protection from environmental and health hazards, and*
- *equal access to the decision-making process to have a healthy environment in which to live, learn, and work.*

For further clarification, considerations include geographic, socioeconomic, public health, and environmental hazard criteria. Underserved communities can be defined as:

- *Areas disproportionately affected by environmental pollution and other hazards that can lead to negative public health effects, exposure, or environmental degradation.*
- *Areas with concentrations of people that are of low-income, high unemployment, low levels of home ownership, high rent burden, sensitive populations, or low levels of educational attainment.*

To perform a site-specific inquiry in order to gather data about the region of a proposed project, refer to the Environmental Protection Agency's Environmental Justice Screening and Mapping Tool (EJSCREEN Tool), found at <https://www.epa.gov/ejscreen>. This tool may be used to evaluate environmental and demographic indicators.