

EJ Analysis Strategies



AASHTO's Center for Environmental Excellence, AMPO, and FHWA conducted a peer exchange at the 2019 AMPO Annual Conference. Over 30 participants from MPOs and state DOTs met to discuss the successes, challenges, and best practices of environmental justice analysis at their agencies. Five key takeaways are detailed below. For more information on the Center's work on environmental justice, please visit our website at environment.transportation.org.

1 What is EJ Analysis?

It's more than just ticking a box.

Participants recognized that there are significant variations in how their agencies conduct EJ analysis. Whereas some agencies may not have conducted an EJ analysis in the past, other agencies are looking for ways to expand their efforts. Practitioners expressed a need for standardized processes or checklists.

2 Communicating with stakeholders.

Engaging with stakeholders across levels.

Practitioners discussed communicating the value of EJ analysis not only within their agencies but also to outside stakeholders. In their discussions, they focused on using language that describes the topic in a way that all stakeholders can understand.

3 Finding partners to conduct analysis.

Cooperation is key.

Agencies can make their outreach efforts more effective by engaging with partners. Some MPOs utilized community centers and libraries for public involvement and as a way to increase meeting turnout. One city created an ambassador program that allowed community members to conduct outreach on food equity for a stipend.

4 Leadership buy-in.

Valuable support from the top.

Successful EJ analysis requires the support of agency leadership. These leaders can amplify the messaging surrounding the importance of EJ analysis within and outside the agency and support outreach efforts.

5 Agency roles and responsibilities

Understanding the larger process.

In many instances, practitioners were uncertain about where laws and regulations came from and the agencies that need to be involved in the EJ analysis process. Practitioners would benefit from clarity regarding the roles and responsibilities of MPOs, state DOTs, and federal agencies in regards to EJ requirements.