



At a Glance

Catalyst for Improving the Environment

Why We Did This Review

We conducted this review to determine whether the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA's) program and regional offices performed environmental justice reviews of their programs, policies, and activities as required by Executive Order 12898, and whether they needed additional guidance.

Background

Environmental justice reviews seek to identify and address disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects on minority and low-income populations. The 1994 Executive Order 12898, *Federal Action to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations*, directs agencies to make environmental justice part of their mission by reviewing the effects of their programs on minority and low-income populations.

For further information, contact our Office of Congressional and Public Liaison at (202) 566-2391.

To view the full report, click on the following link:
www.epa.gov/oig/reports/2006/20060918-2006-P-00034.pdf

EPA Needs to Conduct Environmental Justice Reviews of Its Programs, Policies, and Activities

What We Found

Our survey results showed that EPA senior management has not sufficiently directed program and regional offices to conduct environmental justice reviews in accordance with Executive Order 12898. Consequently, the majority of respondents reported their programs or offices have not performed environmental justice reviews. Though some offices may not be subject to an environmental justice review, the respondents expressed a need for further guidance to conduct reviews, including protocols, a framework, or additional directions. Until these program and regional offices perform environmental justice reviews, the Agency cannot determine whether its programs cause disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects on minority and low-income populations.

What We Recommend

We recommended that the Deputy Administrator:

- (1) Require the Agency's program and regional offices to identify which programs, policies, and activities need environmental justice reviews and require these offices to establish a plan to complete the necessary reviews.
- (2) Ensure that environmental justice reviews determine whether the programs, policies, and activities may have a disproportionately high and adverse health or environmental impact on minority and low-income populations.
- (3) Require each program and regional office to develop, with the assistance of the Office of Environmental Justice, specific environmental justice review guidance, which includes protocols, a framework, or directions for conducting environmental justice reviews.
- (4) Designate a responsible office to (a) compile the results of environmental justice reviews, and (b) recommend appropriate actions to review findings and make recommendations to the decisionmaking office's senior leadership.

The Agency accepted our recommendations.