

**NATIONAL  
WILDLIFE  
FEDERATION**

Environmental Justice,  
Health, Community  
Resilience & Revitalization  
Program

*A Year in Review*

# Annual Report

**Fiscal Year 2024**



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# The Team



**Adrienne Hollis, PhD, JD**  
Vice President of Environmental Justice



**Jason Harrison**  
Director of Environmental Justice Programs



**Alaura Carter**  
Sr. Program Manager, TCTAC



**Rebeca Villegas**  
National Director, Environmental Justice Strategy



**Fabiola Gomez**  
Sr. Environmental Justice Coordinator



**Nishant Shah**  
Community Partnerships Specialist



**Megnot Mulugeta**  
Communications Coordinator



**Taofik Oladipo**  
Policy Manager, Environmental Justice



**Holly Kistner**  
NICER Program Manager



**Becca Ward**  
Sr. Administrative Coordinator





## A Letter from our Vice President

Over the past year, the Environmental Justice, Health, and Community Resilience and Revitalization Program (EJHCR<sup>2</sup>) at NWF has undergone transformative changes that extend beyond our name. We have not only doubled the size of our program but also significantly enhanced our engagement and impact on critical environmental justice issues. Our commitment to diversity and inclusion is deeply reflected in our Environmental Justice family, which brings a wealth of lived experiences and a shared passion for driving change in our work.

As articulated in our vision statement, “We envision a world where communities most affected by oppressive systems can cultivate and benefit from innovative, collaborative, and transformative solutions that promote healthy, sustainable, and just environments.” We are firmly on the path to realizing this vision. Our mission prioritizes uplifting the voices of marginalized communities by fostering authentic, meaningful relationships. We strive for a future in which environmental policies are equitable and inclusive, ensuring that marginalized communities are integral to all decision-making processes.

We collaborate with stakeholders at all levels of government and co-develop projects and policies alongside our community partners. Together, we champion community-driven solutions to environmental challenges, ensuring that justice and equity remain at the forefront of our efforts.

As Matshona Dhliwayo wisely stated,

“Let your work speak for itself: If poor, it will remain silent. If average, it will whisper. If good, it will talk. If great, it will shout. If genius, it will sing.”

We are committed to ensuring that our work resonates and inspires as we continue to strive for a just and sustainable future.

And we are extremely pleased to share our impactful work this past year with you.

*-Dr. Adrienne Hollis*

Vice President of Environmental Justice

# Executive Summary



**“The EJHCR<sup>2</sup> Program is dedicated to supporting the vital efforts taking place within environmental justice spaces. We are here for our communities.”**

-DR. ADRIENNE HOLLIS, VICE PRESIDENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

## Uplifting Communities

As an active participant in the communities we partner with, our team has participated in **12 events**, cultivated relationships with over **45 communities and organizations** across the U.S., and provided **over \$400,000 in funds** directly to community organizations.

## Policy & Advocacy in Action

Our program actively advocates for environmental justice through policy and advocacy, submitting **4 public comments**, **a letter to Congress**, **blogs**, and **12 statements** on EPA rulings, environmental justice issues, and endorsing key legislation, such as the [Green New Deal for Public Housing Act](#).

## Launching of the Environmental Justice Mapping Tool

Allowing users to visualize the issues and who is leading the fight for justice by showcasing over **500 environmental justice issues** and highlighting over **2,200** community organizations, foundations, Tribal nations, & more.

## EPA Region III TCTAC

Following the launch of the EPA Region III TCTAC this fiscal year, we have grown Region III to house **10 assistance hubs** and have received over **119 technical assistance requests**. In partnership with our hubs we are making moves to bring technical assistance to front and fence-line communities by offering capacity building trainings and hosting multiple community events.

## Environmental Justice Action Planning

NWF is one of the few environmental institutions to undergo a comprehensive environmental justice (EJ) assessment to evaluate its efforts to advance EJ and accelerate meaningful progress. A key outcome was the implementation of Action Planning to prioritize the needs of communities disproportionately impacted by environmental degradation and climate change. This second year of action planning resulted in a **96% submission rate** and the comprehensive review of **37 Action Plans and Assessments**.

# Uplifting Communities



## Centered on Community

We center our work on the needs and dreams of the communities we partner with. This fiscal year, we hosted, participated in, and attended **12 events**, cultivated relationships with **over 45 communities and organizations** across the United States and its territories, and provided **over \$400,000 in funds** directly to community organizations.



*Santa Cruz of the Channel Islands, location of the CAUSE Hike and Talk event*

## Building Capacity, Enabling Change

The EJHCR<sup>2</sup> program provided **over \$400,000** in financial sponsorships to bolster key organizations in environmental justice communities. Learn more about some of the organizations and the direct impact of these funds below:

- [The Bullard Center](#): Rapid Response Team in Elba, AL, with the Shiloh Community
- [Move Mountains](#): Health Equity Youth Alliance Summer Convening
- [The Imani Group](#): EMERGE and SUN Job Training Programs
- [Green Latinos](#): 2024 National Summit
- [Environmental Learning for Kids](#): 2024 ELK 'n EGGs Event



- [Chicago Desi Youth Rising](#): Youth Fellowship Program
- [Chicago Asian Americans for Environmental Justice \(CAA EJ\)](#): Altgeld Gardens Toxic Tour and Chinatown Environmental Justice Initiative
- [Central Climate Alliance United for a Sustainable Economy \(CAUSE\)](#): Youth-led Toxic Tour event
- [Climate First: Replacing Oil and Gas \(CFROG\)](#): Environmental Voices Academy 2024 Climate Summit
- [Keaukaha Action Network](#): Environmental monitoring equipment and capacity building to address cumulative exposure to hazardous waste
- [Friends of Freedom Park](#) - Stewardship and Engagement activities to increase accessibility and engagement of community events

## Attended and Hosted 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 Fiscal Year 2024.

EVENT/ MEETING	HIGHLIGHTS
<a href="#">Healing Our Waters Conference</a>	Hosted by the <a href="#">Great Lakes Coalition</a> . Nishant Shah attended a trip to Cuyahoga Valley National Park (CVNP) to learn about the cleanup and restoration of Stanford Run.
<a href="#">Creating a Climate for Change</a>	Environmental justice advocates, professionals, and community members united to discuss environmental and climate issues through expert panels, workshops, and keynotes. Featured speakers included Dr. Hollis (keynote), Mustafa Santiago Ali (panelist), and Alaura Carter (panelist).
2023 Packard Grassroots Convening	We gathered 14 organizations across Canada and the United States who are working to disrupt harmful fossil fuel based projects in their communities to share space and stories about the collective movement of our work. Leaders for each organization presented on the myriad challenges they face and their nuanced approach to disrupting power.
<a href="#">Empower DC Toxic Tour Event</a>	EJHCR <sup>2</sup> team led a toxic tour with our partners Empower DC during the NWF Annual Meeting where roughly a dozen staff, affiliates, and board members walked through the Ivy City neighborhood in Washington DC to learn about the disproportionate burdens the community faces and the ways it is fighting back.

MEETING	HIGHLIGHTS
<a href="#"><u>CAUSE Hike and Talk</u></a>	CAUSE invited Fabiola Gomez, to lead a hike with their youth leaders. Fabi discussed the interconnections between nature and environmental justice, and tied it back to their ongoing environmental justice campaigns across several cities on the California Central Coast.
<a href="#"><u>2024 Hawaii Conservation Conference</u></a>	A gathering of conservation professionals, community leaders, and Indigenous cultural practitioners from across Oceania. Becca Ward attended, learning and connecting with folks over issues such as the Lahina Fires, Loko I'a (traditional fish ponds), disaster relief, water rights, and more.
<a href="#"><u>CAAEJ Regular Meetings</u></a>	Nishant Shah attended Chicago Asian Americans for Environmental Justice general meetings and Disaster Research Meetings. He learned more about the toxic lead levels in Bridgeport soil and about organizing around disaster prevention within Chicago.
<a href="#"><u>Keaukaha Community Association</u></a>	Becca Ward attended the Keakuaha Community Association meeting to learn more about ongoing cumulative exposures from toxic release inventory facilities within the Native Hawaiian community of Keaukaha,

## Cultivating Relationships with Community

It's impossible to quantify the value of a relationship, and the connections built by the EJHCR<sup>2</sup> team are all uniquely nuanced and significant. Reach out to our team to learn more about authentic relationship building and to explore how your program can partner with environmental justice communities and organizations.







# Policy & Advocacy

## An Active Voice for Change

Our program actively advocates for Environmental Justice through policy and advocacy, submitting **4 public comments**, **a letter to Congress**, and **12 statements** on EPA rulings, environmental justice issues, and endorsing key legislation.

*Click on the boxes below to read the full statement*

STATEMENTS	<a href="#">EPA Lead Pipe Proposal</a>	<a href="#">COP28 Resolution Comment</a>	<a href="#">EPA Soot Rule</a>
	<a href="#">EPA Superfund Investment</a>	<a href="#">Incomplete EPA Power Plant Emissions Rule</a>	<a href="#">2024 Chocolate Industry Scorecard</a>
	<a href="#">EPA Chemical Emissions Rule</a>	<a href="#">EPA Updated PFAS, Water Quality Standards</a>	<a href="#">Tribal Rights in the Line 5 Fight</a>
	<a href="#">Forest Biomass Emissions Act</a>	<a href="#">EPA Mercury, Air Toxins Rule</a>	<a href="#">EPA Power Plant Emissions Rule</a>

## Public Comments

- To FERC on the Transco SSEP
- To the EPA on the Secondary National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS)
- To DOJ on their Environmental Justice Strategic Plan
- To DOI on new oil and gas leasing
- We joined a public comment from the [Closing the Water Gap Working Group to EPA on the Water Restructuring Assessment Rule](#)

## Letter to Congress

We collaboratively authored a letter to Congress on the Energy Permitting Reform Act and the impact it would have on Environmental Justice

## NWF Lobby Day

The EJHCR<sup>2</sup> team participated in NWF's Lobby Day, meeting with legislators from the Colorado delegation to uplift our priorities in this current Congress.

## Green New Deal for Public Housing Act

We endorsed the reintroduction of the [Green New Deal for Public Housing Act](#), a bill that, if passed, would invest in upgrading the public housing stock across the country to improve energy efficiency, reduce emissions, and mitigate environmental hazards and impacts. NWF joined over 70+ groups to endorse.

## Supporting Community Through Policy

In addition to tackling national environmental justice issues, our program also offers communities support with navigating local policy issues. This fiscal year, we supported the [Save Morley Field Coalition](#) with identifying advocacy targets regarding a National Park Service's proposal to develop a local park and green space in Pawtucket, RI.

## Voting for Our Planet: Environmental Justice & the 2024 Elections

We released a blog, written by Taofik Oladipo, emphasizing the critical role of environmental justice (EJ) in the upcoming 2024 elections, urging voters to recognize the interconnectedness of climate, health, and social justice issues. The blog highlights how marginalized communities, often burdened by pollution and environmental hazards, must be prioritized through policy decisions, and it calls for bolder efforts to address environmental racism and push for comprehensive legislation like the Environmental Justice For All Act.

[Click here to read the blog and learn more.](#)



RISE St. James Action in DC October 2022. RISE St. James is a faith-based grassroots organization that is fighting for environmental justice as it works to defeat the proliferation of petrochemical industries in St. James Parish, Louisiana. Credit: Lani Furbank, Center for International Environmental Law via the RISE St. James website

# EPA Region III TCTAC



## Thriving Communities Technical Assistance Centers

The Environmental Justice Thriving Communities Technical Assistance Centers ([EJ TCTAC](#)) Program, part of the EPA's broader Thriving Communities initiative, aims to support underserved and overburdened communities by providing technical assistance and capacity-building resources. Currently, 16 EJ TCTACs, funded with \$177 million in collaboration with the U.S. Department of Energy, are active nationwide.

The [Region III Center](#), led by the National Wildlife Federation (EJHCR<sup>2</sup> Program) and the University of Maryland, received a \$12 million award to serve EPA Region III (DE, MD, PA, VA, WV, and DC). This center, known as the Mid-Atlantic Thriving Communities Hub (MATCH), partners with various community-based organizations to deliver accessible and culturally relevant services. The program's goals include outreach, capacity building, training, and engagement to address environmental and energy justice issues and secure funding for local initiatives.

## Region III Technical Assistance Hubs

All of our community-based 'hubs' are selected due to their experience and expertise in environmental and energy justice work. They allow for assistance delivery to be more accessible to potential program participants, both geographically as well as culturally, due to their on-the-ground community presence. Over the course of this fiscal year, we have worked intimately with our 'hubs' to increase capacity building, and have added three additional 'hubs' to increase our coverage of Region III. Explore our Hubs to the right!

1. [Centro De Apoyo Familiar \(CAF\)](#);
2. [Empower DC](#);
3. [South Baltimore Community Land Trust \(SBCLT\)](#);
4. [Overbrook Environmental Education Center](#);
5. [Sussex Health & Environmental Network \(SHEN\)/Sentinels of Eastern Shore Health \(SESH\)](#);
6. [Morgan State University \(MSU\)](#);
7. [West Virginia State University](#)
8. [Appalachian Voices](#)
9. [Urbankind Institute](#)
10. [Virginia State University](#)

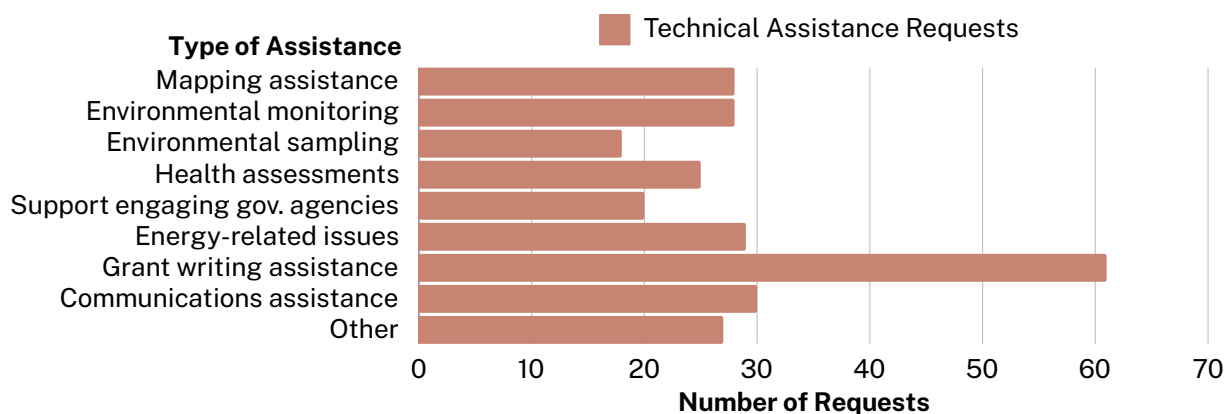
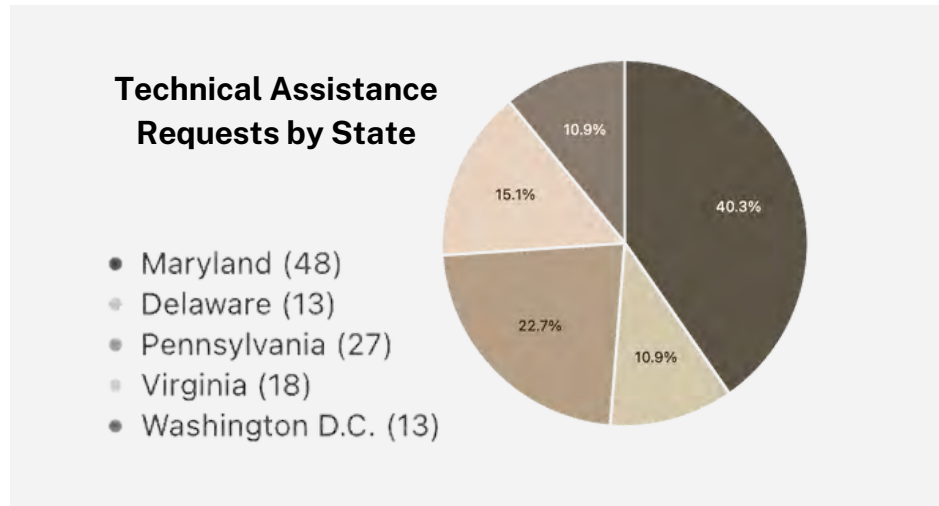


## Technical Assistance Requests

Since the launch of our technical assistance intake forms in March of 2024, **119 responses** have been received, requesting support from a wide range of assistance offered by Region II TCTAC Hubs.

Grant writing assistance has been the most commonly requesting method of assistance, followed by communications support.

The majority of these technical assistance requested have been received from the Maryland and Pennsylvania regions.



## MATCH and TCTAC Meet & Greet

Hosted by the NWF and [Community Engagement, Environmental Justice & Health Center \(CEEJH\)](#), the Mid-Atlantic Climate Action Hub (MATCH) and TCTAC Meet & Greet brought together community organizations and hubs across Region III for learning sessions, resources, and mentorship.

## Community Events

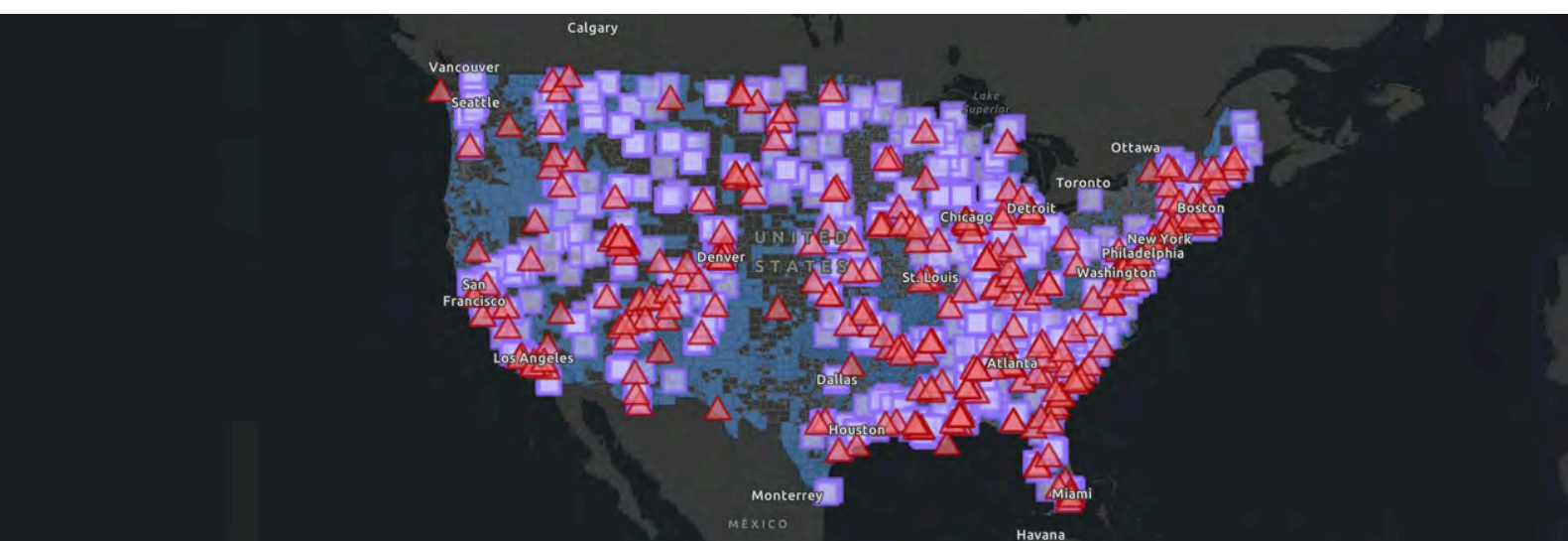
Region III hubs have organized community events to raise awareness about environmental justice, funding opportunities, and support from the TCTAC. Events were held by the South Baltimore Community Land Trust (July), Empower DC (June-August), and Sussex Environmental Health Network (July), focusing on local environmental justice concerns, available TCTAC resources, and potential solutions.



# Environmental Justice Mapping Tool

## Visualizing Issues and Amplifying Solutions

The Environmental Justice Mapping Tool is a comprehensive platform designed to identify and uplift environmental justice communities and the nuanced issues they face. By showcasing over 500 environmental justice issues across the U.S. and highlighting over 2,200 community organizations, foundations, tribal nations, & more, the platform allows users to see where needs exist and who is leading the fight for justice. Additionally, the tool integrates environmental, health, and socio-economic data, providing users with a clear visualization of pollution sources, risks, and vulnerable populations.



To explore the map, watch tutorial videos, or suggest the addition of a community asset or issues, go to [www.nwf.org/EJMappingTool](http://www.nwf.org/EJMappingTool)

These functionalities enhance collaboration by helping users identify active stakeholders and ongoing projects in specific regions, promoting a more efficient flow of resources and support. The tool aims to enable organizations, policymakers, and communities to better identify resources and coordinate efforts, ensuring that resources are directed to the areas and people most in need, ultimately fostering stronger partnerships and more impactful environmental justice outcomes.

# EJ Action Planning

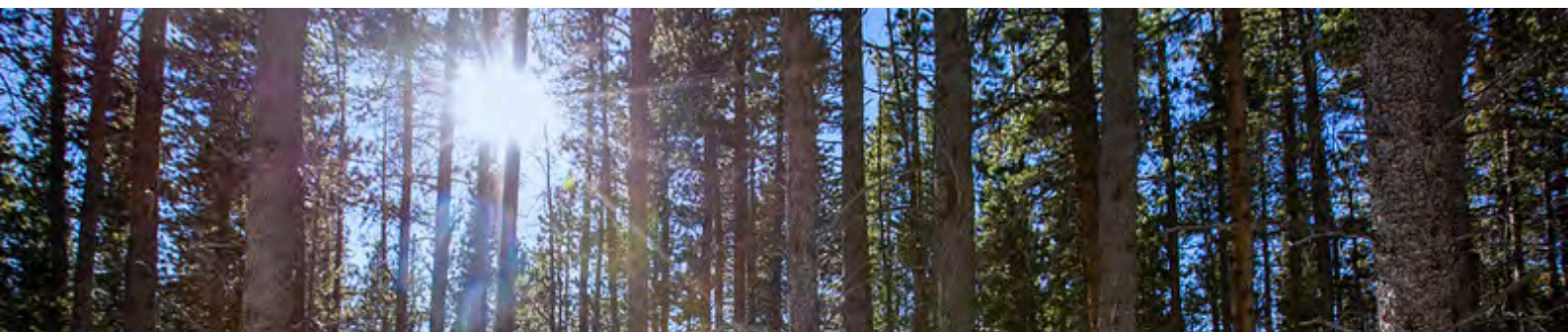


## Integrating Environmental Justice Across NWF

The National Wildlife Federation is one of the few environmental institutions to undergo a comprehensive environmental justice assessment, evaluating the baseline of its efforts to advance environmental justice and accelerate meaningful progress. A key recommendation from the assessment was to implement Action Planning, enabling programs and departments to set clear goals that prioritize the needs of communities disproportionately impacted by environmental degradation and climate change. In collaboration with the Equity and Justice and Tribal and Indigenous Partnerships teams, the EJHCR<sup>2</sup> program worked to fully integrate equity, justice, environmental justice, and Tribal and Indigenous partnerships into the Federation's Action Planning process. This collaborative approach led to a successful launch of the second year of **Action Planning** for fiscal year 2024, showcasing a **96% submission rate** among teams.

## Implementing Strategic Change

The partnership between the Equity and Justice, Environmental Justice, and Tribal and Indigenous Partnerships Enhancement Strategy teams resulted in a comprehensive review of **37 Action Plans and Assessments**. This review produced an internal report presented to the NWF Board of Directors in February 2024. The insights from these assessments were instrumental in shaping key components of the 2024 – 2030 NWF Strategic Plan, especially in [Strategy #5: Live the Values in the Federation's Realization Foundation](#).







# Future Plans & Milestones

Where the EJHCR<sup>2</sup> program is headed next

## Always Looking Ahead

The work is never over, and the EJHCR<sup>2</sup> 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.*

<b>Community Engagement Environmental Justice Health Symposium</b> A 4-day symposium focused on environmental issues and solutions. Our team will be tabling and doing intake for Region III TCTAC.	<b>Launch of Equity Assessment Tool via 2024-25 Action Planning</b> The tool will serve to to assess growth, gaps, and opportunities as it pertains to equity and justice, environmental justice, & Tribal and Indigenous partnerships	<b>Overbrook Education Center Symposium</b> A 3-day symposium about environmental climate issues and solutions. We will be offering panel discussions, & tabling for Region III TCTAC	<b>Dana Alston Fellow</b> Our newest team addition, Solomon McBride, will work with the Water and EJHCR <sup>2</sup> team to address government responsibility to address housing following natural disasters
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# Team Highlights!



**Holly Kistner**  
NICER Program  
Manager

- The EJHCR<sup>2</sup> team's newest member! (June 2024)
- Building a cross-organizational NICER program from the ground up
- Developing an internal audit of NWF nature-based infrastructure work (to be released FY25)



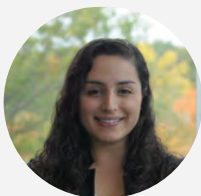
**Megnot Mulugeta**  
Communications  
Coordinator

- Joined our team in April 2024!
- Established communications processes and protocols for the EJHCR<sup>2</sup> program
- Offering tailored comms support to the EPA Region III TCTAC hubs.
- Overseen release of upcoming statements, public comments, blogs, and reports



**Taofik Oladipo**  
Policy Manager,  
Environmental  
Justice

- Hired on to the EJHCR<sup>2</sup> team in January 2024!
- Serves as the Strategy Captain for Policy Strategic Action Planning Team for the Environmental Justice Pillar
- Released first blog on the Election and its importance to Environmental Justice
- Submitted 3 public comments on EPA, FERC, and DOJ
- Developed cross-organizational relationships with policy teams
- Power mapped of current congress



**Rebeca Villegas**  
National Director,  
Environmental  
Justice Strategy

- Led the Development of the EJ Action Planning, resulting in a 96% response rate across programs
- Deepened partnerships with internal partners, which resulted in supporting the development of NWF's [Free, Prior, and Informed Consent Protocols and Guidelines](#)
- Reviewing NWF Policy Resolutions to identify problematic content that no longer aligns with our current values
- Advising on the direction and integration of democracy and civic engagement efforts across the Federation.
- Served on the 2024-2030 Strategic Planning Core Team

## Team Highlights Continued



**Fabiola Gomez**  
Sr. Environmental  
Justice  
Coordinator

- Hired on to the team in November of 2023!
- Cultivated connections with over 20 communities and organizations across CA, including leading the hike with CAUSE youth
- Overseen the EPA Region III TCTAC intake requests, form development, and reporting
- Participated in: Equity and Justice Grant Review, Dana Alston fellowship interviews
- Opened 1:1 meetings with TCTAC hubs and applicants
- Serves as Strategy Captain for the Strategic Action Planning group for the Environmental Justice Pillar



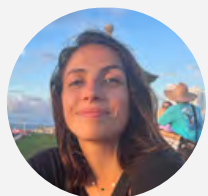
**Alaura Carter**  
Sr. Program  
Manager, TCTAC

- Hired during quarter 1 of fiscal year 2024!
- Overseen the EPA Region III TCTAC
- Successful onboarding of Appalachian Voices (WV) and UrbankindInstitute (PA) to the Region III hubs
- Successfully manages all of Region III's finances, supporting capacity building and technical assistance fulfillment across the program's nine hubs
- Team member for the Strategic Action Planning group for the Environmental Justice Pillar



**Nishant Shah**  
Community  
Partnerships  
Specialist

- Conducting an audit of community organizations within the EJ Mapping tool
  - Serves as Strategy Captain for the Strategic Action Planning group for the Environmental Justice Pillar
  - Joined as 5th Cohort Movement Working Group
- Committee Member of the U.S. Youth Action Council for the UN Ocean Decade through Heirs to Our Oceans
- Attended meetings and collaborated with: Chicago Asian Americans for Env Justice and the University of Illinois Extension



**Becca Ward**  
Sr. Administrative  
Coordinator

- Joined the EJHCR<sup>2</sup> team in December 2023!
- Serves as Strategy Captain for the Strategic Action Planning group for the Environmental Justice Pillar
- Supported the growth of EJHCR<sup>2</sup> team programs through process development, creation of reporting interfaces, and tailored program support
- Oversaw data verification/cleaning for the EJ Mapping Tool, adding over 300 new organizations and 40 environmental justice issues
- Cultivated connections with the Keaukaha Hawaiian Homelands community





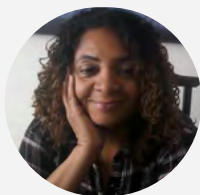
## Jason Harrison

Director of  
Environmental  
Justice Programs

- Hired, onboarded, trained, managed, and evaluated seven new staff and one prior staff
- Worked with the City of Denver and State of Colorado on EJ efforts, including the creation of the first fund for Indigenous communities

in the city of Denver and engaging EJ communities in the build out of carbon capture work across the state

- Supported the facilitation of our Packard Grassroots Convening in Birmingham, AL
- Led the rollout of the Environmental Justice Data Mapping Tool
- **Supported internal efforts on** Anti-Racism Trainings, Social Justice Statements Policy development, enhancing and embedding Internal Communications, Equitable Story-Telling initiatives and processes, uplifting the Environmental Justice Advisory Council, the launch of our NICER Institute, and the creation of the first cross-program fellow at NWF with the Water team



## Dr. Adrienne Hollis

Vice President of  
Environmental  
Justice

### Co-Authored Chapters in:

- 5th National Climate Assessment, Mitigation Chapter, US
- Climate Justice and Public Health, “Connecting the Dots – Climate Change,

Social Justice, and Public Health”, University of Massachusetts Press.

- Environmental Health: Foundations for Public Health, “Environmental Health Policies and Protections: Successes and Failures”, Springer Publishing

### Appears in:

- “Mind of State: Conversations on the Psychological Conflicts Stirring U.S. Politics and Society”

### Participated in:

- EPA’s Board of Scientific Counselor’s Climate Change Subcommittee
- EPA’s Thriving Communities’ Technical Assistance Grant as Co-chair, \$12M grant
- Lancet Countdown: US Brief 2023
- Center for Community Engagement, Environmental Justice and Health (CEEJH) Symposium
- Women Environmental Leaders Summit
- Women Environmental Leaders Environmental Justice Academy

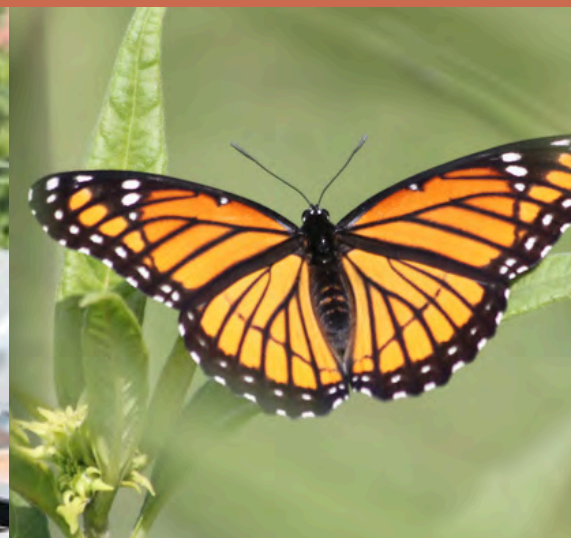
# Interested in Collaborating?

Let's Connect!

Email us at [EnvironmentalJustice@nwf.org](mailto:EnvironmentalJustice@nwf.org)

Visit us <https://www.nwf.org/Our-Work/Environmental-Justice>

*Designed by Becca Ward, EJHCR<sup>2</sup> Senior Administrative Coordinator*



**NATIONAL  
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Photo taken by [Chona Kasinger](https://affecttheverb.com/disabledandhere) for Disabled and Here.  
<https://affecttheverb.com/disabledandhere>