

EPA to Award \$100M to Advance Environmental Justice

Grants will fund projects that focus on disproportionately affected areas.

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The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) will award \$100 million in [grants](#) to projects aiming to advance environmental justice in communities disproportionately affected by environmental hazards, reports [The Associated Press](#) (AP).

The grants are the largest [environmental](#) justice grants to be awarded by the EPA. Funding for the grants was established by a [climate and health law](#) President Joe Biden signed in 2022 . These grants are just the first of a total \$3 billion that will be awarded in block grants focusing on underserved communities.

The EPA's new office of environmental justice and external civil rights, created last year by EPA Administrator Michael Regan, will oversee the program. "Since day one, President Biden pledged to prioritize environmental justice and equity for all, and EPA is at the heart of delivering on that mission," Regan told the AP.

Regan said the funding "is a key step that will help build strong partnerships with communities across the country and move us close to realizing a more just and equitable future for all."

Community-based [nonprofit](#) organizations and partners will receive \$30 million in direct grants, and small community-based groups with five or fewer full-time employees will receive \$5 million.

Senator Tammy Duckworth (D-Ill.), who cochairs the Senate's Environmental Justice Caucus, said the grant will "help deliver results for environmental justice communities that have been ignored for too long."

Duckworth pointed to areas such as Chicago's South Side and an industrial 85-mile region of Louisiana known as "Cancer Alley" as places where residents disproportionately experience air and water pollution from chemical and fertilizer plants and refineries.

"It's a matter of health and safety, systemic racism and persistent discrimination against those in low-income communities. Every American deserves access to clean air and water—no matter their ZIP code, the color of their skin or the size of their paycheck," Duckworth said.

Grant applications are due in April; projects are expected to kick off as soon as October, according to the EPA.

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