



Environmental Justice,
Health, Community
Resilience, &
Revitalization Program

Aerial view of data centers being built in Leesburg, VA. Getty Images

December 2025 - May 2026

Quarter 2 & 3 Report

Fiscal Year 2026



www.nwf.org/our-work/environmental-justice

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Meet the Team



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Adrienne Hollis, PhD, JD

Vice President of Environmental Justice



Jacob Carter, PhD

Associate Vice President of Environmental Justice



Alaura Carter

Senior Program Manager



Holly Kistner

NICER Program Manager



Taofik Oladipo

Policy Manager



Fabiola Gomez

Senior Coordinator, Environmental Justice



Becca Jimenez-Ward

Senior Coordinator, Environmental Justice



Megnot Mulugeta

Communications Coordinator

Attended and Hosted Meetings/Events

We understand that building reciprocal and equitable partnerships means more than offering funds or resources. It relies on taking the time to build relationships, show up in the community, understand nuanced issues, and center communities' needs.

EVENT/MEETING	HIGHLIGHTS
Make Polluters Pay- National Week of Action in California	Attended Make Polluters Pay National Week of Action in California. Local groups collectively wrote to their representatives, created banners, and signed up for upcoming action events
	Fabiola Gomez attended the Webinar training EPA 101: Superfund and Brownfield Sites, focusing on how community involvement with superfund and brownfield sites can be affected.
GreenLatinos- Ka Madre Tierra Media Training	Fabiola Gomez and Bec Jimenez-Ward attended the GreenLatinos-La Madre Tierra Narrative Power Leadership Program training on Media training. This training focused on how to deliver your message during a media interview with reporters.
Debunking Data Centers Workshop	During Q3, Fabi attended the 'Debunking Data Centers: Public Health and Health Equity' workshop hosted by Climate Justice Alliance
FEMA and the Appalachian Region	Our team learned about the 'New Report: Tracking the Changes to FEMA and its Impact in the Appalachian Region' hosted by Relmagine Appalachia
Earth Day- Ventura County	Attended 'Earth Day event' hosted by Ventura County and MERITO Foundation, focusing on environmental education and community advocacy
Relmagine Appalachia	Participated in a series of Data Center webinars hosted by Relmagine Appalachia
Land Rights for Lineal Descendants- Keaukaha Action Network	Supported the network's successful campaign to secure a voting seat for Indigenous lineal descendants on a local development authority board, giving community members a direct say in decisions affecting their ancestral lands.

Community Partnerships

Prioritizing and uplifting marginalized communities through authentic and meaningful relationship



Boots on the Ground: Building Bridges

During quarters 2 and 3, EJHCR staff actively engaged with the broader environmental justice community through a range of events, webinars, and convenings spanning local, regional, and national levels. From rallying alongside frontline advocates during the Make Polluters Pay Week of Action in California, to exploring the public health implications of data centers, to deepening understanding of the evolving federal emergency management landscape, staff deepened their expertise across critical issue areas. Dr. Hollis attended key convenings, including a Toxic Tour in Memphis, the HBCU Climate Change Conference, the NWF Board meeting, and the William K. Reilly Award ceremony, building relationships and strengthening the EJHCR Program's presence within national environmental justice networks. Collectively, these engagements reflect our team's commitment to staying connected, informed, and embedded within the communities and coalitions driving change.

Toxic Tour, Memphis TN with Sowing Justice

Dr. Adrienne Hollis attended a Toxic Tour in Memphis, Tennessee, home of the XAI Colossus Data Center, with Marquita Bradshaw of the environmental justice organization Sowing Justice. From that initial engagement, Ms. Bradshaw was invited to be a panelist on our first CECC Roundtable, "AI Data Centers: Local Perspectives and Community Impacts". In addition, we later submitted a funding proposal in partnership with Sowing Justice.

Spring Travels

In March, Dr. Hollis attended the HBCU Climate Change Conference and the NWF Board meeting, both held in New Orleans, Louisiana. In April, Dr. Hollis attended the William K. Reilly Award ceremony at American University in DC to celebrate the 2026 Awardees, Dr. Charles Lee and Fran Ulmer. Dr. Charles Lee, is well- recognized as a pioneering figure in the environmental justice movement, known for his work leading the EPA's environmental justice initiatives, and Fran Ulmer, is well-recognized for her extensive public service career, including serving as Lieutenant Governor of Alaska, Chancellor of the University of Alaska Anchorage, and Chair of the U.S. Arctic Research Commission.

A.I. Data Centers - CECC Round Table Series

The Clean Economy Coalition of Color hosted a three-part roundtable series examining the growing environmental justice crisis posed by the rapid expansion of AI data centers. The series gathered more than 600 attendees from across the nation, as well as community organizers, researchers, and advocates to explore how data center development is impacting underserved communities across the country, raising concerns around water use, air pollution, noise, energy costs, and health equity.



Data Center in Council Bluffs, Iowa. Credit: Chad Davis

A consistent theme across all three conversations was that the promised economic benefits of data centers rarely match the burdens placed on host communities. Panelists challenged the narrative that data centers bring meaningful jobs and prosperity, pointing out that they often receive public subsidies, increase utility costs for residents, and shift infrastructure expenses onto the people least equipped to absorb them. Perhaps most critically, communities are frequently left out of the planning process entirely, learning about proposed projects only after decisions have already been made.

Despite these challenges, the series also highlighted that communities are fighting back. From permit challenges to moratoriums to coalition-building, residents and advocates are refusing to accept the data center boom as inevitable. In places across the country, they are naming the costs, demanding accountability, and in some cases, winning- a reminder that democratic organizing remains a powerful tool even against well-resourced industries.

Policy & Advocacy

Engaging with decision-makers to support just, equitable, and community-driven solutions



Executive Order on AI Preemption

In December, we released a statement on the President's "Ensuring a National Policy Framework for Artificial Intelligence" executive order. This EO restricts states' ability to regulate the use and expansion of artificial intelligence. Read the [full statement](#).

"AI is perpetuating bias in decision-making, including in environmental enforcement, fueling significant water and energy demands that threaten communities' access to affordable, reliable power, and clean water, and potentially keeping dirty energy online longer. Instead of tying states' hands, federal AI policy should empower them to set strong guardrails and ensure this technology serves communities, rather than sacrificing them to an unchecked data center boom."

Jacob Carter, Associate Vice President for Environmental Justice, Health, and Community Resilience and Revitalization

Executive Order on Siting Data Centers on Superfund and Brownfield Sites

AVP Jacob Carter spoke to Ellie Borst with E&E News about President Trump's executive order to speed up federal permitting of data center infrastructure and place data centers at superfund and brownfield sites.

"I think that anything that helps to speed up these land cleanup issues is good," said Jacob Carter, associate vice president of the National Wildlife Federation's environmental justice program. "My biggest concern is that a lot of these data centers are being placed in underserved communities, and we know brownfield and Superfund sites are disproportionately located in Black, brown, and low-income communities," Carter continued. "The spread of data centers has already targeted those communities that are already dealing with air pollution issues, already dealing with water issues, and now they have to deal with a data center."

The Endangerment Findings

On February 9, 2026, Dr. Hollis participated in a call with EPA's Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs (OIRA). The purpose of the call was to express NWF's concerns regarding the EPA's plan to repeal the 2009 Endangerment Finding, which, based on the strong preponderance of scientific evidence, concluded that greenhouse gases (GHGs) harm public health and welfare, a fact that affirms EPA's authority and legal responsibility to regulate GHGs.

Dr. Hollis spoke about the imminent threat posed to people, particularly disadvantaged communities, by a repeal of the Endangerment finding for GHGs, which would thereby revoke the original 2009 finding. Together with Jim Murphy (EPA's clear obligation to regulate greenhouse gases, and there is no legal basis to revoke the endangerment finding), Shannon Heyck-Williams (the impacts that unabated climate change, caused by excess greenhouse gas emissions, will have on wildlife, ecosystems, and human health and well-being - especially for the most vulnerable) and Dr. Diane Pataki (The multitude of inaccurate statements in the proposed ruling about the state of the science related to the causes and consequences of climate change) members of OIRA was provided with a multitude of concerns regarding repeal of the Endangerment Finding.

Mercury and Air Toxics Standards (MATS)

In February, the EPA proposed a plan to dismantle its Mercury and Air Toxics Standards (MATS) rule for power plants. MATS are one of the most important clean air protections we have to protect public health and communities. With the announcement of the repeal, the EPA referenced only the millions of dollars that could be saved, but not the impact this move would have on millions of people across the country. AVP Jacob Carter provided testimony, and VP Adrienne Hollis released a press [statement](#) on the issue.

"Rolling back these standards exposes people and wildlife to toxins that we know damage developing brains, impact reproductive health, contaminate ecosystems and food chains, and contribute to the worsening climate crisis. We urge the EPA to not only keep emissions standards in place, but to strengthen them to keep Americans healthy."

- Dr. Adrienne Hollis, Vice President for Environmental Justice, Health, and Community Resilience and Revitalization

Sign-On Letters

In March, we joined 2 EJ-related appropriations sign-on letters, both led by EarthJustice.

FY27 Air Monitoring Priorities

- This letter urged Congressional appropriators to: 1) support funding for EPA's work to measure and reduce air pollution in FY27 appropriations, 2) include report language directing EPA to expand and improve ambient and fence-line air monitoring, and 3) prioritize deploying monitoring systems and providing better access to air quality information in communities most impacted by air pollution.

Letter to EPA on Reprogramming Appropriated Funds and Closing the Office of Research and Development (ORD)

- The letter urged Congressional appropriators to disapprove of EPA's plan to eliminate the agency's Office of Research and Development and reprogram its appropriated Science and Technology funding. This funding covers things like community-level chemical exposure research, PFAS research, long-term independent science, and key staffing at ORD, which has already been severely depleted since January 2025. ORD's closure would impact public health and have broad implications for EJ communities by compromising the EPA's ability to carry out its mission.

Community Public Comment Toolkit- In Progress

We are in the process of developing a community public comment toolkit. This toolkit will be a resource developed with and for communities. This guide is intended to be utilized by communities during federal agency public comment periods to demystify federal rulemaking. Stay tuned for more on this project!

Communications

Strengthening Connections & Engaging Communities



Growing Our Digital Community

CECC's social media presence saw strong growth over the past two quarters, with a roughly 21% increase in followers in Q2 and an additional 8% growth in Q3. This steady momentum reflects growing interest in our work and outreach efforts across the environmental justice community.

Putting Our Work Into Words

CECC published four blogs in Quarter 2, including two recap blogs from our roundtable series designed to make webinar content more accessible and engaging for a broader audience. In Quarter 3, we released two additional blogs: a [Community Spotlight on the Keaukaha Action Network](#) and a recap of our AI data center roundtable series titled [The AI Data Center Boom is an Environmental Justice Crisis](#) — which surpassed 1,000 views within weeks of publication.

Staying Connected with Our Network

Our Quarter 2 newsletter, released in December 2025, covered key updates including advocacy around the Diesel Emissions Reduction Act reauthorization, a spotlight on the Keaukaha community in Hawai'i, and a local environmental win in Central California. Our Quarter 3 newsletter, released in March 2026, highlighted Sr. EJ Coordinator Fabi's participation in Make Polluters Pay community events and featured Dr. Hollis's appearance as a guest co-host on the [North Star Gaze podcast](#), focused on environmental justice and the importance of GIS mapping. Guests of the EJ Podcast included Maria and Michael Payan, Founders of Sussex Health and Environmental Network and Sentinels of Eastern Shore Health and former Region 3 TCTAC Partner organization (Where Farming Harms: Mapping Environmental Justice with Maria & Michael Payan), Montina Cole, Principal and Founder of Jai Green Consulting (Mapping the Black Baseline: Environmental Justice, Pipelines, and Regulatory Power), Dr. Khalil Shahyd, Sr. Strategist at the National Resources Defense Council (Who Bears the Burden? Spatial Justice and the New AI Frontier: Environmental Justice), Rashida Ferdinand (Founder and CEO of Sankofa Nola) (Designing

Resilience: GIS, Wetlands, and Community Vision in New Orleans). The final episode features Dr Mustafa Santiago Ali, Executive Vice President at the National Wildlife Federation and summarizes the podcast series and discusses the importance of EJ and Mapping partnerships.

Website Refresh! A New Look, Record Numbers

Quarter 2 brought a major website transformation. In partnership with NWF's Web Team, we revamped our site to better reflect our current priorities, mission, and values. The investment paid off: in April 2026, we recorded our highest number of website views since we began tracking in December 2024, reaching 1,839 views in a single month.

Finances

Funding Our Mission



Grants in Motion

Over the past two quarters, the Environmental Justice, Health and Community Resilience and Revitalization Program pursued two grant opportunities in partnership with community-based organizations. The first, submitted to the Climate Smart Communities Initiative, proposed a one-year collaborative project with the West End Revitalization Association (WERA) and the City Council of Mebane, North Carolina to integrate climate resilience strategies into Mebane's 2045 Comprehensive Plan, connecting city leadership, residents, and technical experts around shared planning goals. While this application was not accepted, our team continues to build our partnerships with the West End Revitalization Association.

The second proposal, submitted to the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation's Local Data for Equitable Communities grant, was developed in partnership with Sowing Justice, an environmental justice organization based in Memphis, Tennessee. That project focuses on mapping current air monitors in communities near data centers in Memphis and identifying additional areas where monitoring is needed. Presently, we are still awaiting a decision on this grant application.

Connecting Communities to Funding Opportunities

In Q2, the team shared over 20 funding opportunities from foundations across the country with community groups in our network. Opportunities spanned a wide range of focus areas, including environmental justice, community development, food justice, disaster relief, conservation, green infrastructure, and general operating support, reflecting our commitment to connecting partners with resources that match their needs.



Future Plans & Milestones

Where the EJHCR² program is headed next

Always Looking Ahead

The work is never over, and the EJHCR² 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.

Grassroots Building

Pillar 3 Strategy #4 Grassroots building is recruiting an additional advisor- Contact Fabiola Gomez gomezf@nwf.org for additional information

Updates to Strategic Planning

Dr. Hollis and Dr. Carter are currently revising the strategies for Pillar 3 to ensure that the 2027 workplans reflect and focus on accomplishing actions specific to the strategic plan and the EJ Pillar.

Interested in Collaborating?

Let's Connect!

Email us at EnvironmentalJustice@nwf.org

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



Designed by Bec Jimenez-Ward, EJHCR² Senior Administrative Coordinator

