



# ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

OVERVIEW OF ISSUES FOR THE CHICAGO METRO REGION

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# Environmental Justice Overview

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## **Purpose: Educate & Activate municipalities on EJ issues and opportunities**

Tools for identifying EJ status

Awareness of EJ indicators & “status”

EJ Leadership

- Municipal and suburban

Advocacy

Opportunities & solutions for EJ Communities (EJC)



# EJ Maps & Tools

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## Federal

- EJ Screen
- Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool
- CDC Environmental Justice Index (EJI)

## State

- EJ Start
- IL Solar for All
  - Self-designation
- Equity Investment Eligible Community

# Question about EJ Indicators/Status

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What does it mean to be an "Environmental Justice Community" (EJC)?

What does it mean to be an "Disadvantaged Community" (DAC)

How do I communicate this status? Should I?

What if my community isn't identified as EJC (or DAC) but should be?

What if my community is on one of the maps, but not others?

# Environmental Justice Leadership

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➤ **IL Environmental Justice Commission** – composition - 14 members

*Seats* - “4 members of affected communities concerned with environmental justice”

*Current members* - one representing Waukegan Township)  
three (presumably) represent Chicago”

*Seat* - “units of local government”

*Current member* – MWRD Commissioner

# Environmental Justice Leadership

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- **White House Environmental Justice Advisory Council**

MMC & SSMMA nominated Mayor Vernard Alsberry, Hazel Crest

- **Low Income Energy Efficiency Advisory Committee (Income Qualified “North”)**

(advises investments of \$500/million year)

Leadership Team

recent election diversified to add regional and municipal representatives

# Advocacy

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- **EJ organizations** and “**community based organizations**” (**CBO**) are empowered in EJ legislation and policy
  - In **CEJA “community based organizations”** are empowered

The definition from Climate and Equitable Jobs Act (CEJA) is: "**Community-based organizations**" means an organization that: (1) provides employment, skill development, or related services to members of the community; (2) **includes** community colleges, nonprofits, and **local governments**; (3) has at least one main operating office in the community or region it serves; and (4) demonstrates relationships with local residents and other organizations serving the community.

# Statute

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CEJA narrowly defined environmental justice communities (EJC)

Funding and investments are guided by this definition

➤ Now in ILGA:

- 2 Bills amending Environmental Protection Act regarding designation as EJC
- Bill to establish Justice 40 oversight



# Opportunities and Solutions for EJC

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EJC's will be preferred for investments in:

- Clean energy
- Clean transportation
- Tree equity and “nature based solutions”
- Water infrastructure
- Reduce household energy burden
- Workforce development
- Much more

# Empowering Effective Local Leadership for Environmental Justice in the Chicago Region

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- MMC assembled a coalition to seek an US EPA Government to Government Grant for EJ (pending)
- Seek to engage & empower municipal leaders on EJ
- Cultivate community EJ leadership broadly from:
  - municipal
  - SSMMA focus
  - faith
  - civic

# Empowering Effective Local Leadership for Environmental Justice in the Chicago Region



Faith in Place

Expand Green Teams – environmental leadership groups at houses of worship

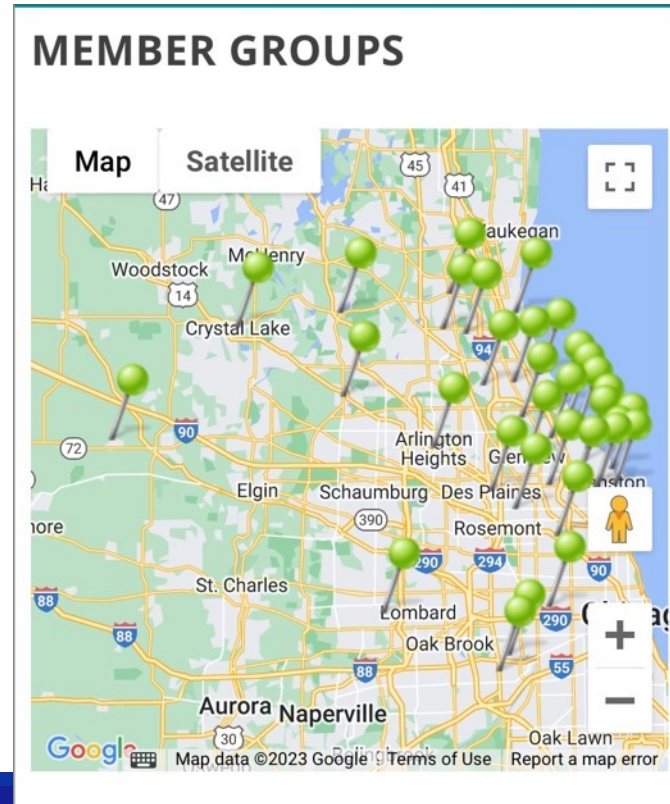
A screenshot of the Faith in Place website. The top navigation bar includes the "faith in place" logo, a "Register for the Green Team Summit" button, a "Register Here!" button, and a search bar. Below the navigation bar are links for "GTS Home", "About Us", "Our Programs", "Take Action", "More", and a prominent "Donate" button. The main content area features a map of the Chicago region with numerous blue location pins. To the right of the map is a sidebar with a search bar, a "Category: All" dropdown, and a list of three church entries, each with its name, address, phone number, and a "View Website" link.

Church Name	Address	Phone Number	Website
Abingdon United Methodist Church	401 N Washington St IL 60521	309-462-3444	
Abraham Lincoln Unitarian Universalist Congregation	745 Woodside Rd, Springfield IL 62711	217-585-9550	info@aluc.org
A Just Harvest	7649 N Paulina St, Chicago, Illinois, 60626	773-262-2297	View Website info@ajustharvest.org

# Empowering Effective Local Leadership for Environmental Justice in the Chicago Region

Go Green Illinois

Mentor grass roots, community-based environmental groups



# Empowering Effective Local Leadership for Environmental Justice in the Chicago Region

## Additional Partners :

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One Earth Collective (One Earth Film Festival)

- Arts & cultural engagement



University of Illinois College of Law

- Research and advocacy support
- SSMMA
- Create and staff an EJ Committee

