

Program Description

Delaware Environmental Justice Community Partnership- DEJCP members are the constituency that we serve. Our residents, organizations, and leaders representing community organizers, educators, scientists, researchers, policy experts and faith institutions are dedicated to addressing systemic racism that harms and denies Blacks and people of color equal access to environmental, climate and economic justice, health equity, political power, and civil and human rights.

The DEJCP was formed in January 2019 under the leadership of Octavia Dryden, a former resident of Rosegate, one of the underserved communities on the Route 9 Corridor in New Castle, Delaware and highlighted in the 2017 *Environmental Justice for Delaware* study. She is currently a resident of another underserved community on the Route 40 Corridor in Bear, Delaware where Blacks, people of color face inequities and disproportionate impacts of environmental pollutants daily. Being a well-known respected community leader in Delaware for more than thirty years, helped inspire other pertinent stakeholders in the New Castle County area to come together under DEJCP to address environmental injustices in a more effective way.

DEJCP, a collective of Delaware organizations and individuals, is the only statewide organization in Delaware that primarily focuses on climate and environmental justice issues and whose leadership and membership are predominantly black women and people of color directly impacted by environmental inequities. With emphasis on amplifying the voices of the most affected individuals, the DEJCP aim to successfully move environmental justice from the margin to the mainstream of environmental policy discussions. The DEJCP has served the Environmental Justice communities by influencing public policy initiatives, advocating for beneficial legislation, providing testimony at public hearings on environmental proposals, and educating about environmental justice through public articles, studies, and presentations over the past three decades.

DEJCP is a state-based multi-level consortium of grassroots community organizations, environmental and social justice groups, expert consultants, government and elected officials working together to effectively prevent, reduce and eliminate environmental and social injustices in Delaware's most vulnerable communities. There are a number of regional and national groups that focus on climate, energy, environmental and social justice across the country seeking alignment with community-led, state-based organizations like DEJCP, but find it difficult to effectively engage, without designated infrastructures. To support the national efforts and fulfill our state goals to effectively engage, educate, empower and employ; and extend climate, environmental and social justice to the most impacted communities in Delaware, Community Housing & Empowerment Connections Inc. (CHEC) will take the lead in developing and managing the DEJCP.

CHEC, as the lead agency of the DEJCP, is a community-based non-profit organization with an extensive history in substance abuse and violence prevention programming with special emphasis on environmental justice. It is the mission of (CHEC) to build healthy, strong, sustainable communities through advocacy, community engagement and partnerships. CHEC was a co-author of the *Environmental Justice for Delaware, Mitigating Toxic Pollution in New Castle County Communities* report in 2017, that highlighted health impacts of toxic pollution in seven black communities in comparison to one elite white community. CHEC implemented several nationally recognized evidenced-based programs; led the development of the Wilmington Prevention Coalition, the New Castle Prevention Coalition; a lead partner of the Delaware Concerned Residents for EJ and currently leading the development of the Delaware EJ Community Partnership and Building Community Power through: Community Air Monitoring Network 4 Delaware, Justice-Oriented Online Mapping Tools and Resource Guide, and Community Justice40 Task Force to monitor and enforce implementation of federal Justice40 Initiative at the community level . The executive director of CHEC most recently served as Co-PI for a ACCEL Sponsored Retreat on *Health Impacts of Toxic Pollution: Developing Community-Engaged Research*, alongside the Director of Neighborhood and Revitalization Office at Delaware State University.

DEJCP works to Build Community Power on the Frontlines through the following projects and priorities areas:

Current Projects:

- Community Air Monitoring Network 4 Delaware (Youth and Healthy Homes Assessments)
- Justice-Oriented Online Mapping Tools and Resource Guide
Healthy Homes Assessments
- Community- Engaged and Community- Based Participatory Research Certification Course (CITI)
- Neighborhood Youth Messaging Mascots
- Community Justice100 Task Force

Priorities Areas:

- Communication
- Leadership Development
- Advocacy Tools and Training
- Data and Information (Transportation, Public Health)
- Relationship and Trust
- Innovative Philanthropy