

North Carolina Department of Information Technology

Environmental Justice Goals

Please see the proposed Environmental Justice goals for the NC Department of Information Technology (NCDIT) as required in Gov. Roy Cooper's Executive Order 292. These goals are based on the principles of environmental justice, which encourages the just treatment and meaningful involvement of all people, regardless of income, race, color, national origin, or Tribal affiliation, in our agency policies and programming that affect human health, well-being, quality of life and the environment.

The proposed goals are as follows:

1. The Office of Digital Equity and Literacy will convene environmental justice leaders 1-2 times per year to support computer and device recycling and other internet access and adoption efforts. This goal aims to assure that North Carolinians have access to computer devices and increase education and training on how to use them effectively. This will help reduce the digital divide and empower these communities to participate in the digital economy and society.
2. Lead the effort to create an Environmental Justice Hub webpage that will host environmental justice information and activities, including a mapping tool and grant information available across the state agencies. (See Section 8 of Executive Order 292)
 - The mapping tool will integrate data used in the Department of Environmental Quality's Community Mapping System and Environmental Justice Tool, the Department of Health and Human Services' environmental health data dashboard, and the North Carolina Department of Transportation's EJ and Transportation Disadvantage Index mapping tool.
 - The NCDIT will provide the Environmental Justice Council with a monthly update on its progress.
 - Provide a minimum viable product no later than October 31, 2024, that can be enhanced as new data is made available or converted into a standard format that works with the mapping tool.
3. Develop a strategy to introduce middle and high school students in environmental justice communities to careers in growing IT fields. This goal seeks to inspire and prepare the next generation of IT professionals, especially from underrepresented groups, by exposing them to the diverse and exciting opportunities in the IT sector. This will also help address the workforce gap and talent shortage in the IT industry.
 - During fiscal year 2024-2025, NCDIT will partner with three middle schools and or high schools in EJ communities to conduct onsite visits by DIT technologists to discuss career opportunities in the technology field.
 - During fiscal year 2024-2025, NCDIT will promote internships created under its Future Technologists program to high school students.

4. Create a comprehensive NCDIT program that provides contracting information, technical assistance and networking opportunities for Historically Underutilized Businesses (HUBs) that offer IT services and products by October 1, 2024. This goal aims to increase the number of HUBs available in the IT category, which are defined as businesses where at least 51% of their ownership consists of one or more people in the following groups: Black, Hispanic, Asian American, Native American, Female, Disabled or Disadvantaged. Efforts will focus on strategic communications and events that raise awareness about the program and encourage agencies to consider HUBs for viable IT contract opportunities.
5. Require Environmental Justice training for NCDIT employees, beginning with senior leadership by November 1, 2024. This goal intends to raise awareness and understanding of environmental justice among NCDIT leadership who are responsible strategic and operational decisions. The training will cover the history, concepts, principles and best practices of environmental justice, as well as possible application in the IT context.

These goals are not only aligned with Gov. Cooper's vision of a more equitable and sustainable North Carolina, but also with NCDIT's vision of providing government that strategically leverages technology for an equitable, prosperous, healthier, and educated North Carolina. I believe that by pursuing these goals, NCDIT will make a unique contribution to the State's environmental justice efforts and be a leader among state agencies.