

# **Equity and Adaptation for Vulnerable Populations**

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# Overview

- Vulnerable Populations
- Vulnerable Places
- Unique Climate Change Impacts
- EPA's Role
- Building Adaptive Capacity
- Challenges

# Vulnerable Populations

- Children
- Elderly
- Disabled
- Immigrants
- Ethnic minorities
- Tribal and indigenous
- Low-income



# Vulnerable Places

- High density urban
- Coastal, low-lying land
- Multi-family buildings
- High-rise buildings
- Assisted living and nursing homes
- Tribal lands and isolated rural areas
- Low-income neighborhoods

# Climate Impacts on Vulnerable Populations

- Illness and injury
  - Co-occurring conditions (illness, poverty)
  - Synergistic impacts (pollution, poverty)
- Displacement
  - Economic losses (income, housing)
  - Mental health, disrupted social fabric
  - Ecosystem services, e.g., subsistence fishing
  - Cultural resources, TEK

# EPA's Basis for Action

- Major environmental statutes
- EPA Strategic Plan
- EO 12898 – Environmental Justice
- EO 13514 – Sustainability
- National Climate Assessment
- EPA Climate Adaptation Plan
- EPA Program and National Implementation Plans

# Building Adaptive Capacity

- Awareness and training
- Decision support tools (EJ Seat??)
- Integrating adaptation and equity concerns
- Dialogue with existing networks
- National and local partnerships
- Environmental job grants

# Moving Forward: Examples

- Gulf Coast Restoration Plan
- Los Angeles Regional Collaborative for Climate Action and Sustainability
- Florida Reef Action



# Challenges

- Coordination within federal family (Agency Adaptation Workgroup)
- Localized information and tools
  - Better ways to ID vulnerable populations, e.g. social vulnerability index
- Tribal concerns coupled with lack of resources
- Climate and social science for decision-makers

# Next Steps

- Increasing meaningful engagement
- Building adaptive capacity
- Strengthening enforcement
- Supporting trans-generation leadership

# Resources

- National Climate Assessment  
[www.globalchange.gov](http://www.globalchange.gov)
- EPA climate change portal  
[www.epa.gov/climatechange](http://www.epa.gov/climatechange)
- Office of Environmental Justice  
[www.epa.gov/environmentaljustice](http://www.epa.gov/environmentaljustice)