

# PACE

(Public Awareness = Community Empowerment)

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PACE (*Public Awareness=Community Empowerment*) is a progressive coalition of community-based organizations, public officials, environmental justice advocates and activists committed to promoting environmental justice awareness in the communities of the Portland Metro area. Environmental Justice is the fair treatment of people of all races, cultures, incomes, and educational levels with respect to the development and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies. Fair treatment implies that no population should be forced to shoulder a disproportionate share of exposure to the negative effects of pollution due to lack of political or economic strength. We are asking for General Support funding for the following programs:

- **The Citizen Participation Project**—*Community Organizing, Meaningful Involvement, Government Accountability*
- **The Environmental Justice Law Center**—*Public Interest Law, Knowing Your Rights, Proactive Litigation*
- **Community Livability Project**—*Land-Use, Brownfield Redevelopment, Built Environment Issues*
- **Public Health Center**—*Human Health Issues And Resources, Community-Based Participatory Research*
- **Communications Capacity Project**—*Multimedia Platforms, "Virtual PACER", EJ BLOG, Newsletter*

## Mission and Goals of PACE:

- Create and strengthen relationships among individuals and organizations concerned about environmental justice and diverse civic participation in Portland Metro
- Activate and mobilize people of color/affected communities to take an active role in setting an environmental justice agenda locally.
- Work with political leaders and public officials on government accountability and meaningful community involvement
- Integrate data-driven assessments of environmental justice concerns with the values and perceptions of communities.
- Promote leadership among environmental justice advocates and disenfranchised communities.

PACE is the 501-c3 spin-off of a Multnomah County Health Department (MCHD) project called *The PACE-EH (Protocol for Assessing Community Excellence in Environmental Health) Community Coalition*. The Coalition and MCHD planned and approved the formation of a non-profit 501-c3 community-based organization to carry-on and expand the grassroots organizing and social change work that is better implemented outside the purview of local government and more capable of addressing issues around social change and government accountability. To better understand the issues and communities most threatened by environmental injustice and health hazards, the coalition created data specific to the most populous county in Metro, Multnomah County, and came up with 5 communities most impacted by human health and political access issues. The Coalition organized and completed a community-based assessment of environmental justice issues in the affordable housing community of North and Northeast Portland and led an ambitious organizing and outreach campaign around the prioritized environmental health issues with a strong incentive for inclusion and participation of the affected community in problem-solving and decision-making processes and outcomes.

## Environmental Justice Issues identified by the community:

- *Community Organizing and Grassroots Mobilization of Citizens and Community Members*
- *Community Empowerment, Community Leadership And Strategies To Overall Accountability Of Existing Leadership And Government Agencies,*
- *Indoor/Outdoor Air Quality Issues Specific To Elevated Asthma Rates,*
- *Brownfield's And Residential Zoning In And Around Hazardous Landfills, Highways, And Superfund Sites*
- *Gentrification And Displacement*
- *Lead-Poisoning And Lead-Blood Testing Of Children And Infants,*
- *Mold, Trash, Lead And Substandard Housing Issues In Present Affordable Housing,*
- *Transportation Equity, Specific To Mass Transit Access And Traffic Displacement*

## Environmental Justice Issues in the Portland Metro Region comprising the focus of PACE work in 2005-2006:

- *Accountability of Existing Leadership and Government Agencies to Community Needs*
- *Built Environment and Community Design/Land-Use issues (Gentrification and Displacement)*
- *Development and creation of pro bono Law And Public Health Community Clinics to address Environmental Justice issues*

The work of PACE is specific to social change and grassroots community organizing. Our long-term goal is to empower communities of color to have a clear and collected voice in decisions that impact their health and rights. PACE recognizes the need to create leaders

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from the underserved communities of color to make the government infrastructure more accountable while also diversifying local leadership. PACE will ensure the theme of Community Organizing and Meaningful Involvement by hiring and training people from the Impacted community and empowering existing citizens, community groups, and public agencies to follow suit and work collaboratively on future projects. We are committed to continuing to work for justice for low-income people of color in the Portland Metro area. We relish the opportunity to submit a full proposal so you may see a complete vision of what we see for community empowerment and environmental justice issues in Oregon for the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

## Accomplishments as of 1/05:

Date	Activity/Event
1/03	Coalition forms and organizes first of 10 Community Meetings in Multnomah County
4/03	EJ Data created to determine community of interest; Community prioritizes N/NE Portland as community of interest to begin broad-based environmental justice assessment
10/03	Coalition creates community newsletter and Virtual Action Alert List/List Serve to update members of the coalition on happenings, meetings, and future events of coalition members and environmental justice advocates. Over 500 individuals receive both <i>"The Community PACE-Setter"</i> and <i>"Virtual PACER"</i> in hard copy and email.
10/03-3/04	Community-Based Assessment Begins. Organizers and citizens from affordable housing conduct door-to-door surveying in 8 multifamily housing complexes in N/NE Portland, perform a Photo Voice training of health hazards, and organize 5 focus groups to further discuss EJ issues
06/04	Portland Development Commission agrees to include green building principles in future building and rehab contracts. City of Portland (BHCD) and Housing Authority of Portland (HAP) later agree to work with Multnomah County Health Department to create database of substandard housing issues and resource link to community-based organizations in N/NE Portland concerned with environmental justice issues and sub-standard housing and empowerment issues.
07/04	BHCD, Albina CDC and staff from Cascade and Infinity Property Management companies discuss communication issues between residents, property managers, and property owners and the need to create a more sustainable process for communication that generates positive outcomes.
09/04	Coalition co- sponsors with Cascade Resource Advocacy Group (CRAG) to organize and conduct 4 Environmental Justice trainings for community members as well as housing and local agency staff on EJ issues and community concerns.
11.04-1/05	Coalition applies for 501-c3 non-profit status and secures fiscal sponsorship agreement with Cascade Resource Advocacy Group (CRAG) to further their organizing and relationship-building work for 2005-2006.

As stated in the introduction section, the Coalition and MCHD approved creation of a separate 501-c3 group to broaden the scope and grassroots organizing/social change work better suited for an autonomous grassroots community-based organization with a goal of expanding the environmental justice network and raise foundation funds for community empowerment and social change projects.

## PACE Coalition Partners (as of 3/05)

Environmental Justice Action Group (EJAG), Physicians for Social Responsibility (PSR), Portland State University (PSU), Environmental Justice Advocates at Lewis and Clark Law School, MCHD, Northeast Coalition of Neighborhoods, Humboldt Neighborhood Association, City of Portland-Brownfield Program, Community Alliance of Tenants (CAT), CRAG, Center for Social and Environmental Justice-Washington State-Vancouver (Wa), DEQ of Oregon, EPA Region 10, Housing Authority of Portland, Josiah Hill Lead Clinic, Community Energy Project, ROOTS!, Tri-Met, SOLV, Albina Ministerial Alliance, Coalition for a Livable Future, and many more.

## PACE Future Contacts for 2005-2006

Democratic Party of Oregon, Pacific Green Party of Oregon, Metropolitan Alliance for Common Good (Local IAF group) Alliance for Sustainable Jobs and the Environment (ASJE), America Coming Together-MOVE-ON.ORG; Portland Jobs with Justice; Oregon Chapter of the Rainbow Coalition; The Oregon Chapter of the New Party; ACLU; Oregon Center for Public Policy; MRG Foundation; A Territory Resource Foundation; Northwest Environmental Justice Network; Rural Organizing Project; PCUN; Latino Network; Oregon Students of Color Association; Oregon Action; NAACP (Portland and Vancouver, WA Chapters); Immigration and Refugee Community Organization (IRCO); Oromo Community Center; Asian Family Services/APANO; Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon (EMO)