



## Environmental Justice Background Information

Environmental justice is a big topic, and the resources listed on the *Learning to Give* website are representative but not comprehensive. Here are some background notes and sources that we hope will help as you work with your students.

### How Is environmental justice defined?

At the National People of Color Environmental Leadership Summit in 1991, [17 Principles of Environmental Justice](#) were adopted and have served to guide the movement for environmental justice. Shortly thereafter, [an article](#) posited that an environmental justice perspective was “needed for understanding America's urban crisis and what should be done about it.”

In 2012, Environmental Justice: Peggy Shepard [defined the “sacrifice zones”](#)—the targeted outcomes of pollution behavior—and community action during an 8 minute TedX Harlem talk

Check out a 2010 13 minute [TedX talk by Van Jones](#) about how plastic pollution affects poor people.

### Detroit-focused studies and proposals

**Understanding the Impact of Climate Change in Detroit;** 3 studies commissioned by Detroiters Working for Environmental Justice:

- [Detroit’s vulnerability](#) to extreme heat and flooding
- Graphs and charts illustrating [changes in Detroit’s climatology](#)
- Text and illustrations of [Detroit’s Greenhouse Gas Inventory](#)

A 2017 public health [plan focuses on air quality](#) to improve health in Detroit.

### Regarding the EPA....

A February 2018 [study](#) conducted by Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) scientists found that minority, in particular Black communities, and poorer communities are disproportionately affected by air pollution. The [Sierra Club blasted the results](#):

*This report illustrates how people of color and people with limited means have been grossly taken advantage of by polluters who don’t care about the misery they cause,” ( Sierra Club’s environmental justice program director Leslie) Fields said in a statement. “Locating polluting facilities in low-income neighborhoods and communities of color means that people with marginalized identities experience more asthma, a greater likelihood of heart attacks, even premature death.”*

The EPA’s [homepage/portal for environmental justice](#)

Track the EPA’s [Air Quality Index](#) in your neighborhood on a real-time basis

## Recent Michigan media

Lead levels among Detroit children are [rising again](#)

Energy efficiency programs [disproportionately benefit](#) wealthier ratepayers.

[Solar power](#) as a community resource

[Involving low income communities in climate resilience](#)

## Not sure where to start on teaching about climate change?

[Check out The Teacher-Friendly Guide to Climate Change](#)

## More about the Great Lakes from The Alliance for the Great Lakes

[Federal priorities for the Great Lakes region](#)

Runoff and a phosphorus reduction goal [to protect Lake Erie and local waterways](#)

[Great Lakes in My World Curriculum](#)

[Lesson plans related to Adopt-a-Beach](#)

