

## NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE ADVISORY COUNCIL Membership Solicitation: 2013

FAQ (January 16, 2013)

### **What positions are vacant?**

For 2013, EPA is seeking nominations from five stakeholder workforce sectors, including communities; academia; nongovernmental environmental organizations; state and local governments; and tribal governments and indigenous organizations. Nominees will be considered according to the mandates of FACA, which requires committees to maintain diversity across a broad range of constituencies, sectors, and groups. Please be aware that EPA's policy is that, unless otherwise prescribed by statute, members generally are appointed to two- or three-year terms.

### **Who CAN NOT serve on the NEJAC:**

The following individuals are ineligible to serve on the NEJAC:

- Lobbyists registered with the U.S. Congress, including the U.S. House of Representatives and the U.S. Senate
- Federal Employees – the NEJAC charter stipulates that members are non-federal

In addition, alternates or proxies CAN NOT participate on behalf of members because individual members are nominated by the Administrator. As such, if someone from your agency also is interested in serving, a separate nomination package must be submitted. All nominations are considered individually.

### **How often does the NEJAC meet? What is the time commitment for members? What activities are required of members?**

The NEJAC conducts its business through a combination of face-to-face meetings, as well as teleconference calls. The Council usually meets face-to-face twice annually, supplemented by 2 to 3 public teleconference calls. The average workload for the members is approximately 5 to 8 hours per month, which represents a rough estimate of the time members spend in teleconference calls, reviewing relevant documents, or meeting face-to-face. Between meetings, some members may participate on a work group that meets twice a month via teleconference call. Throughout the year, members of the Council may circulate material for members to review. We are exploring the use of webinars as well. As a federal advisory committee whose primary mission is to provide independent consensus advice to the Administrator, the NEJAC is required by law to conduct its deliberations in a public forum. As such, Council deliberations are not conducted via e-mail.

### **What issues will the NEJAC be working on for 2013:**

During 2013, the NEJAC is exploring several issues:

- NEJAC has been asked to provide advice and recommendations about a set of questions to assist the Agency in developing processes and/or a policy for addressing tribal and indigenous peoples' environmental justice issues and concerns. A work group has been convened to develop draft findings and recommendations.
- NEJAC has been asked to provide advice related to EPA's Office of Research and Development's research programs and the science needed to address and prevent environmental inequities. A work group has been convened to develop draft findings and recommendations.
- NEJAC continues to collaborate with EPA about incorporating environmental justice into permitting
- NEJAC is taking steps to collaborate with EPA about a charge related to addressing storm surge issues arising in environmental justice communities living near maritime industrial facilities

Other issues that may be placed on the NEJAC agenda during the year.

**Is travel involved? If so, how frequent, for how long, and to where? Who pays for travel?**

Members serve on the Council in a voluntary capacity. When travel is required, EPA reimburses invitational travelers for all relevant travel expenses associated with official government business. Currently, EPA pays for lodging and transportation (air/rail) and reimburses travelers for other relevant and appropriate out-of-pocket incidental travel expenses, such as mileage reimbursement, taxis to and from the airport, etc. Members also receive a meal per diem reimbursement in accordance with the Federal Travel per diems established by the U.S. General Services Administration. Travel for a 2-day face-to-face meeting typically involves 3 days of travel, with members traveling the day before the meeting and returning the evening of the second day or the morning of the third day. Meetings are held throughout the continental United States, in locations such as Washington, DC; Albuquerque, NM; Kansas City, MO, and Brooklyn, NY.

**How many recommendations are typical for an applicant? (Or, said another way, how many is too many and how few is too few?)**

Nominees are required to have at least one letter of recommendation, although several nominees have submitted two recommendations. Some have submitted three or more.

**Would you suggest more or fewer applicants from an EPA Region?**

The NEJAC, as a federal advisory committee, is comprised of a wide range of stakeholders who represent diverse points of view; they do not represent EPA regions. However, every attempt is made to appoint individuals from each of the EPA regions. Geographic diversity is just one factor in the selection of the final slate of applicants proposed for membership; as such, there are no limits to the number of applicants from a region. Members are appointed by the EPA Administrator. Anyone can nominate a person for consideration. Self-nominations are encouraged.

**Is it appropriate for EPA staff to provide a letter of recommendation?**

Anyone, including federal employees, can nominate individuals for membership on federal advisory committees. In addition, federal employees can submit letters of recommendation supporting the nomination of an individual for membership on a federal advisory committee. Such letters can be drafted in their capacity as a private citizen or in their capacity as a federal employee if they have the authority to represent their Agency in such matters.