



**Case Study: Technical
assistance in our
watersheds through an
environmental justice lens**

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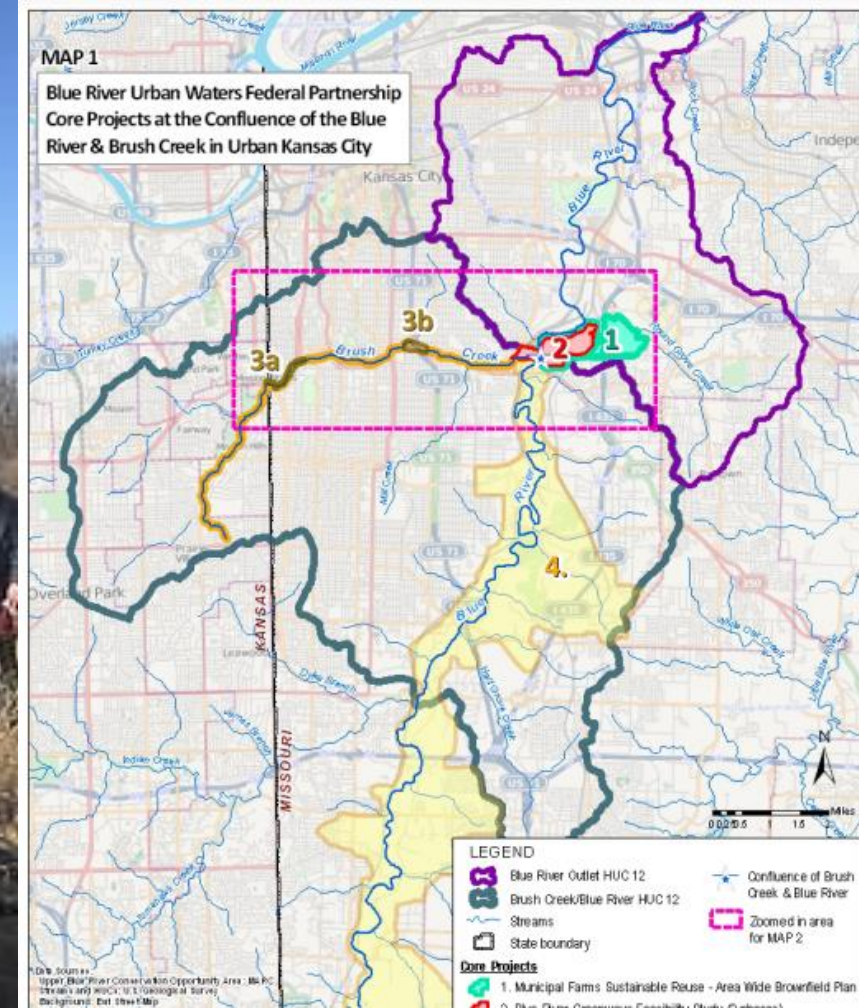
Definitions:



Environmental justice: just treatment and meaningful involvement of all people, regardless of income, race, color, national origin, Tribal affiliation, or disability, in agency decision-making and other Federal activities that affect human health and the environment (U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, 2024).

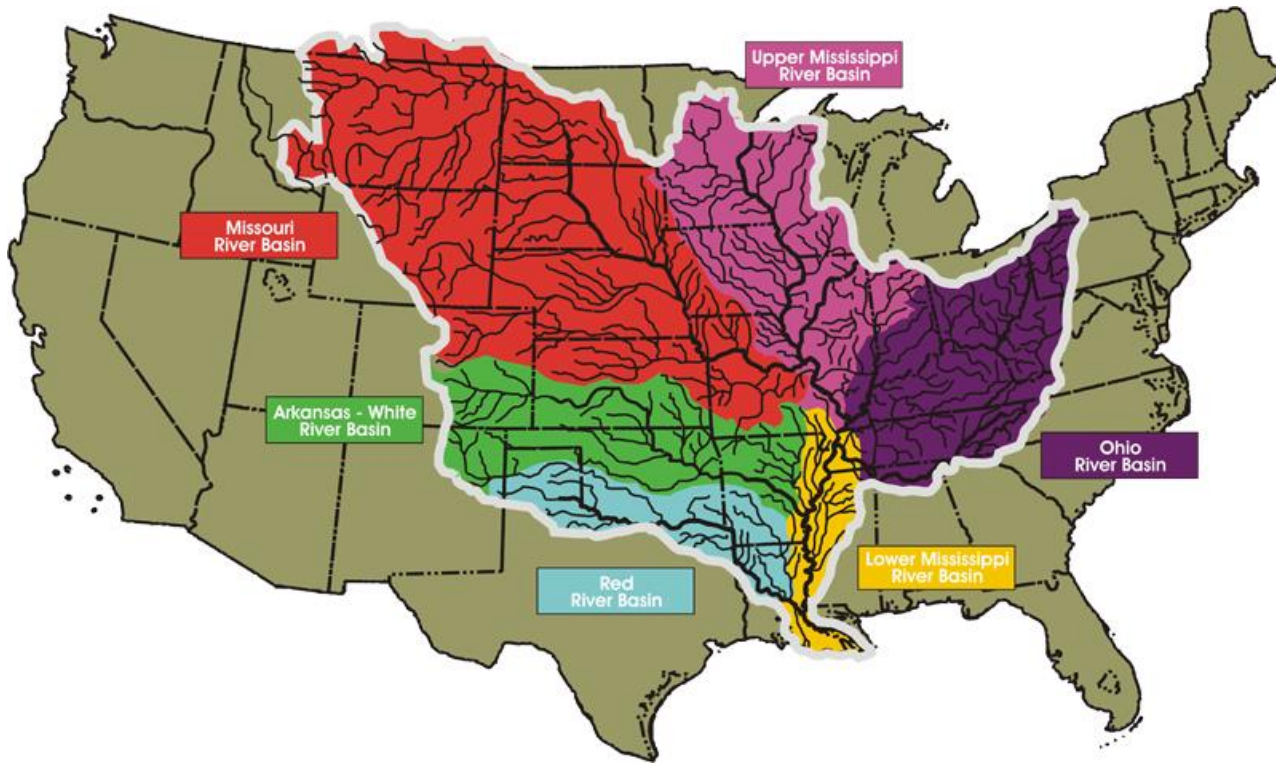
Energy Justice: "the goal of achieving equity in both the social and economic participation in the energy system, while also remediating social, economic, and health burdens on those disproportionately harmed by the energy system" (Initiative for Energy Justice, 2019).

Thriving Communities Technical Assistance Centers (TCTACs) Program: These centers will provide training and other assistance to build capacity for navigating federal grant application systems, developing strong grant proposals, and effectively managing grant funding. EPA has selected 16 EJ TCTACs in partnership with the U.S. Department of Energy (U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, 2024).



The Blue River Watershed in Kansas City

The Mississippi River



Flow contribution to the Mississippi River Basin watershed. Source: U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Mississippi Valley Division.

The Mississippi River Basin covers about 40% of the continental United States.

90% of the flow on the Lower Mississippi comes from the Missouri, Ohio, and Upper Mississippi basins, with 60% of the flow at Cairo, IL, coming from the Ohio River Basin.

Short-term drought across the basin since June has reduced flows on the Upper Mississippi and exacerbated ongoing low flows on the Missouri.

Latino Voices

The 2024 Mississippi River Public Opinion Poll, commissioned by Hispanic Access in partnership with FM3 and New Bridge Strategy, has for the first time ever captured Latino perspectives on the challenges confronting the Mississippi River watershed.

WATER CONCERNS



OF LATINOS BELIEVE THAT TRASH DUMPED IN RIVERS AND STREAMS IS A MAJOR THREAT TO THE MISSISSIPPI RIVER.



OF LATINOS THINK THAT PFAS, OR “FOREVER CHEMICALS,” ARE A MAJOR THREAT TO THE MISSISSIPPI RIVER.



OF THE GENERAL POPULATION IN THE POLLED STATES AND LATINOS THINK THAT CHEMICALS AND WASTE FROM INDUSTRY ARE A MAJOR THREAT TO THE MISSISSIPPI RIVER.



OF LATINOS CONSIDER PLASTIC POLLUTION IN THE OCEAN A VERY OR EXTREMELY SERIOUS PROBLEM.

CONSERVATION



74%

OF LATINOS CONSIDER POLLUTION OF RIVERS, LAKES, AND STREAMS A VERY OR EXTREMELY SERIOUS PROBLEM.

PROTECTING 30X30



87%

OF LATINOS SUPPORT THE 30X30 GOAL OF CONSERVING 30% OF AMERICA’S LANDS, FRESHWATER, AND OCEAN BY THE YEAR 2030.



91%

OF LATINOS SUPPORT POTENTIAL POLICIES THAT COULD BE PROPOSED IN CONGRESS THAT CREATE NEW NATIONAL PARKS, MONUMENTS, OR WILDLIFE REFUGES TO PROTECT AREAS FOR OUTDOOR RECREATION.

59%



OF LATINOS FEEL THAT TAKING ACTION TO RESTORE THE MISSISSIPPI RIVER SHOULD BE A VERY OR EXTREMELY HIGH PRIORITY FOR THE STATE.



Common Threats to Watersheds:



Invasive plant species



Illegal Dumping



Agriculture Polluters



Lack of Tree canopy



Polluted runoff



Grassroot Work in Kansas City



Technical Assistance - Environmental Services

The Heartland Environmental Justice Center - supports individuals and organizations who serve in communities experiencing environmental injustice across Iowa, Kansas, Missouri, Nebraska, and adjoining Indigenous Nations. It provides resources to communities seeking help on pressing environmental and energy equity challenges.

How we help:

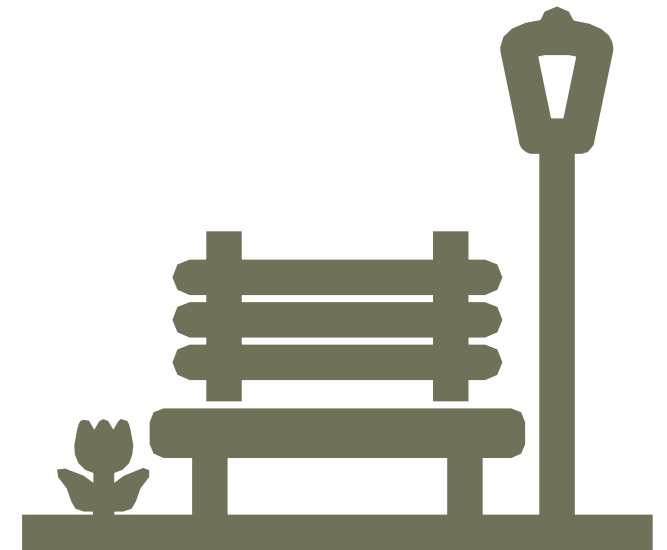
By listening and engaging in ways that are tailored to the communities we serve. We work alongside communities to identify community needs, think strategically about planning, solutions, and funding, and link communities with appropriate resources.

Our support varies in scope:

- Light-touch guidance, like navigating communities to existing training resources.
- Medium-touch support, such as preparation for grant applications, facilitating a community needs assessment, or building a project budget
- Intensive assistance, like policy analysis or technical and engineering expertise

How we do it?

- We have program managers, community program coordinators, community engagement coordinators, and partners that can support these needs by providing resources, training, and connections.



Challenges TCTACs & Communities Face:

They are limited in the scope of service that they can offer. (Ex: can offer grant writing training but cannot write grants for communities.)

Technical assistance centers do not have any funds to disperse to communities in need.

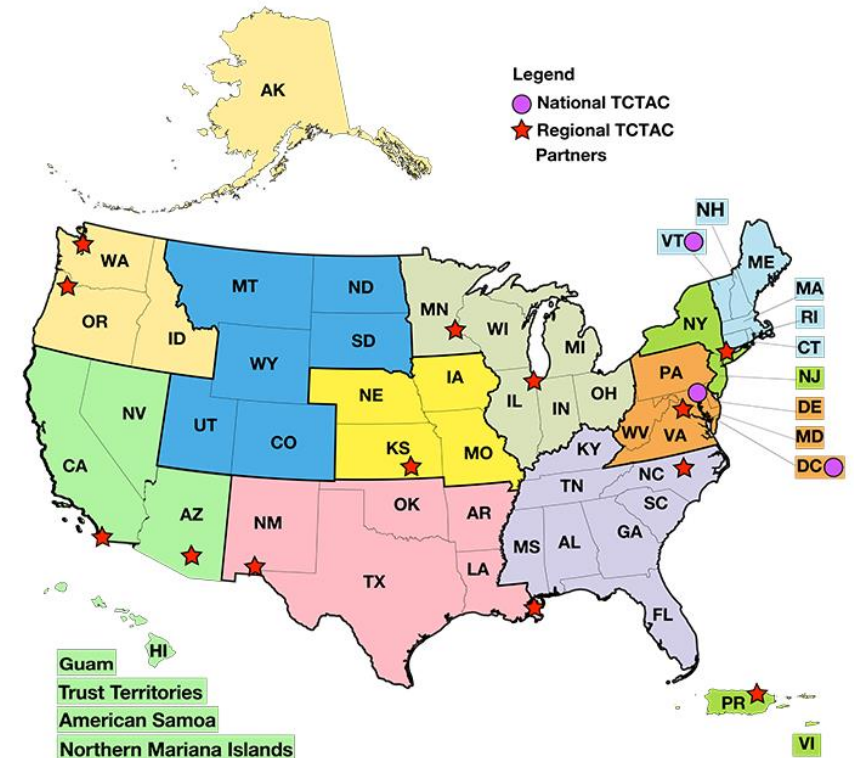
The range of partner services are so extensive that it is challenging to communicate exactly what we can provide.

There is a lot of political tension in environmental justice topics - remaining neutral can be challenging. Ignoring political tension can appear ignorant.

Environmental justice is a sensitive topic with many ties to social justice

Some audience segments might experience barriers to accessing technology that allows virtual event participation.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has many burdensome requirements.



Key Takeaways:

Approach watershed issues through a holistic lens

Latinos care about protecting our natural resources and their voices need to be heard

Grassroot organizations need direct funding with less stringent limitations

TCTACs need to be held accountable and supported by federal agencies such as the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency & The Department of Energy

Questions?



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