2020–2021 New York Power Authority Environmental Justice Program Highlights

Being a Good Neighbor Bringing More to Our Communities

Environmental Justice
At the New York Power Authority (NYPA), we sincerely believe in our public power mission and live and work by our values stated in our strategic plan—such as working for the greater good and a stronger, sustainable New York. When Governor Franklin Roosevelt signed the legislation in 1931 creating the Authority, he wanted the people of New York to be deeply involved in the electricity and energy decision-making process, especially when and where it directly affected them. Our Environmental Justice (EJ) program honors and builds on our impressive legacy by leveraging our expertise and resources to assist the communities where we live and work and serving the vulnerable and underserved populations across New York State.

Our commitment involves more than good stewardship. It is expansive, by necessity, and addresses a range of fundamental issues and problems, many of them too long neglected. As you will read in this booklet, our EJ team, collaborating with our entire NYPA workforce, focus on the current and future needs of many different populations. These activities include a broad portfolio that includes energy literacy/weatherization workshops, climate change, indoor food production, electric transportation, and STEM education. These initiatives constantly evolve and expand as our community engagement grows. Consequently, we learn more, and we are better able to respond to the many different requests for support from communities throughout the state. We are proud of what we have accomplished so far, but there is so much more to do. This booklet includes numerous examples of what has already been achieved over the past few years, as well as providing an overview of what we are planning to achieve in the months and years to come.
As we all remember, Spring 2020 and the ensuing months were an understandably frightening time. While the pandemic proved to be an enemy that preyed on everyone, it had a particularly devastating effect on the most vulnerable members of our communities.

The Environmental Justice (EJ) team, recognizing the task at hand, went to work immediately following stay-at-home orders. We reached out to our community partners and assured them that we were committed more than ever to providing meaningful programs for the children, parents, educators, and adults who rely on us as a community resource.

Being flexible and innovative was key to our ability to quickly respond to the needs of our communities. An important example of this dynamic approach is how our EJ team continued to teach STEM classes online to elementary, middle, and high school students. We shipped supplies to educators so they could conduct hands-on experiments in real time to enhance the students’ learning experience.

We also launched a Virtual Learning Center that featured STEM videos and activities for the entire family. NYPA colleagues continued to share STEM career guidance in virtual forums for high school and community college students. We engaged low-income homeowners and renters in online weatherization workshops and sent weatherization starter kits to all participants. We did not, however, stop there.

In 2021, we expanded our programs to include the impacts of climate change, indoor food production and electric transportation, as well as initiatives promoting equitable access to education and enhanced self-determination for young people.

Finally, I am sure like many of you, the murder of George Floyd affected me deeply. I am proud that NYPA immediately moved to stand with our communities and sent a strong message with the creation of NYPA’s 10-Point Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Plan. Our $25 million commitment to DEI over the next five years includes two new EJ initiatives to address educational inequality and barriers to higher education: the P-TECH Program and the Future Energy Leaders Scholarship Program. We will also provide numerous opportunities for our employees to become more involved with our neighbors through service projects sponsored by the NYPA Environmental Justice Community Volunteer Corps.

While 2020–2021 was a truly changing period and the pandemic remains a problem for all of us, EJ team and I are continually moved and inspired by the efforts of so many community heroes.

We thank you.

Lisa Payne Wansley
Vice President, Environmental Justice
2020 – 2021 Highlights

**STEM**
- **4,000**
  - Students and educators participated in STEM programs virtually and in person

**Green Classrooms**
- **13,500**
  - New York City students received educational material developed by NYPA and New York Sun Works to support green classrooms/hydroponic food production education during the pandemic
- **4,500**
  - Students are growing healthy fruits and vegetables in NYPA-sponsored Green Classrooms

**Energy Efficiency**
- **1,000**
  - Residents of Niagara Falls Housing Authority are enjoying the benefits of energy-efficient lighting provided by NYPA

**Future Energy Leader Scholarship Program**
- **$100,000**
  - Dedicated for 10 scholarships

**Indoor Food Production**
- **12,000**
  - Kale plants
- **700 lbs.**
  - Organic produce

**Adult Energy Literacy – Weatherization Workshops**
- **800**
  - Homeowners and renters across the state participated in NYPA Weatherization Workshops virtually and in-person

**Total Touchpoints with our EJ Communities and Neighbors**
- **25,000**

**Community Partners engaged with NYPA’s EJ program**
- **250**

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Science, Technology, Engineering, Math STEM Education

NYPA brings supplemental, energy-related STEM learning and STEM Career Workshops into our communities. Our goal is to improve academic performance for students attending under-resourced schools and to help increase educational equity.

The age-appropriate curriculum is geared to students in grades 3–12. We want to spark an interest in STEM and increase our students’ academic confidence outside of the traditional classroom setting. A strong STEM foundation helps to level the playing field and increase access to college and career opportunities in the energy industry for underrepresented students.

To learn more about our STEM Program, contact Alexandra.DeRosa@nypa.gov

NYPA’s portfolio of STEM programs include: the basics of electricity, energy technology, renewable energy resources, climate change, environmental stewardship, and electric transportation.

NYPA will continue to offer online learning while there is still a need and will respond to in-person learning requests (e.g., in-classroom instruction, afterschool programs, or summer and holiday camps).
Students are Driving the Transition to Electric Transportation

Electric vehicles (EV) are an important tool in the fight against climate change and there is an increasing demand for technicians who can service these vehicles. To help fill the workforce development pipeline with career-ready employees, an innovative idea from a NYPA employee in an internal innovation initiative, helped to launch the EV Donation Program.

This program utilizes retired electric vehicles from NYPA’s fleet and donates them to educational institutions in EJ communities offering automotive repair programs. These vehicles will be used exclusively as training tools for future EV technicians and ensures participation by youth in underserved communities.

The Capital Region BOCES, St. Lawrence BOCES and Orleans–Niagara BOCES were the first schools to receive the donation of a 2012 Ford Fusion Hybrid, 2012 all-electric Nissan Leaf and 2013 Ford Fusion hybrid.

Along with the EV donations, funding was secured for lab equipment, safety tools, Level 2 chargers and EV curriculum development so students can pursue specialized certificates required by the industry. Having the chance to learn valuable technical skills while working on the cars will empower the students to be career-ready when they enter the workforce.

To learn more about our Electric Vehicle Donation Program, contact Alexandra.DeRosa@nypa.gov
In 2020, EJ launched the Virtual Learning Center (VLC) to provide fun, informative, and easily accessible online STEM education and energy literacy for our communities. Original videos and games were developed by the EJ team covering an array of energy related learning. Students and parents can learn how plants generate electricity, how electric vehicles work, how to build an at-home hydroponic garden and more. Many of the videos include simple experiments using materials found in a house or apartment. Everyone can learn simple ways to decrease energy usage and increase savings on their utility bills.

In 2021, a Comprehensive Energy Curriculum Toolbox for elementary, middle, and high school educators was added to our webpage. Teachers can download energy curriculum learning modules that include PowerPoint presentations, teacher guides and experiments for online or in classroom use.

**Green Classrooms**

NYPA’s Green Classrooms initiative helps students across New York City become urban farmers. In classrooms and on school rooftops, we are converting unused space into lush gardens yielding healthy, organic vegetables and herbs. Students plant and harvest what they grow and distribute it to the school community and their neighbors.

In this learn-by-doing model, students gain knowledge about the health benefits of organic food, water technology, sustainable agriculture, hydroponic systems and the effects of climate change on food production.

NYPA, in collaboration with New York Sun Works, has provided funding to build and support 18 Green Classrooms and two green community laboratories in New York City. We also provide STEM education to green classroom schools in conjunction with these projects.
Hydroponic farming technology makes it possible to increase the availability and affordability of fresh fruits and vegetables year-round. By growing indoors in a controlled, pesticide-free, ‘sunless’ environment, indoor farming uses far less water and land than conventional farming. Farms can be built anywhere, reducing costs, emissions, and food insecurity.

NYPA partnered with Feed More WNY, located in Buffalo, to build a robust indoor food production system in a recycled shipping container. Kale was chosen as the initial crop because of its high nutrient value and short harvest cycle. In 2022, Feed More will grow a variety of produce to benefit its food insecure community members.
A Garden Grows in Brooklyn

UPROSE, a Brooklyn community-based organization, was the perfect partner for our first green classroom in a community center setting. Funded by NYPA, the new lab was conceptualized and developed by New York Sun Works and UPROSE.

The project builds on our Green Classroom initiative, a program which provides the unique opportunity for a hands-on learning experience in an urban farm science lab setting. In addition to the indoor community center garden, NYPA educators provide STEM classes for youth and bi-lingual Weatherization Workshops for adults at the UPROSE community center.

Founded in 1966, UPROSE is Brooklyn’s oldest Latino community-based organization. An intergenerational, multi-racial, nationally recognized community organization, UPROSE promotes sustainability and resiliency through community organizing, education, indigenous and youth leadership development, and cultural/artistic expression.

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Spotlight On Our Community Partners

UPROSE is tireless in its pursuit of new and innovative solutions to offset the effects of climate change on communities of color. For NYPA and UPROSE, building a hydroponic food production system at their headquarters in Sunset Park was a unique opportunity.

To learn more about UPROSE visit: www.uprose.org
Empowering Low-Income Homeowners and Renters

According to the U.S. Department of Energy*, low-income households in New York State spend 8%–10% on their budget on energy—three times higher than middle or high-income families. Our Adult Energy Literacy and Weatherization Workshops help alleviate some of this burden by teaching low-income homeowners and renters simple and no-cost ways they can conserve energy and lower utility bills—without compromising comfort or safety.

This hands-on workshop teaches participants how to properly install window film, low flow shower heads, door sweeps and more. We also provide strategies to optimize heating and cooling in the home or apartment—no matter the season.

Free weatherization kits are distributed to participants at the end of the workshop, which include:

- Squeeze Tube Caulk
- Deluxe Shrink Wrap Window Kit
- Self-Adhesive Weather-strip Foam Tape
- LED Night Lights with Photocell
- Self-Adhesive Door Sweep
- Hot Water Gauge
- LED Light Bulb
- Bi Metal Refrigerator Freezer Thermometer

*Source: https://www.energy.gov/eere/slsc/low-income-community-energy-solutions

Adult Energy Literacy

To learn more about Energy Education and Weatherization Workshops, contact Matthew.Caruso@nypa.gov
The Center: Finding a Warm Welcome in the Mohawk Valley

All new immigrants and refugees face seemingly insurmountable challenges. But at The Center, (formerly The Resource Center for Refugees in the Mohawk Valley), located in Utica, they find a warm welcome and resources to help them adjust to their new home. Above all, The Center provides a ready-made community and sense of belonging to people seeking a better life and a haven in the U.S. Since their founding in 1981, the organization has helped over 16,500 individuals settle in Utica and its surrounding communities. Each year approximately 800 people receive assistance navigating the naturalization process, ultimately resulting in citizenship. More than half of the staff at The Center are former refugees.

As winters can be especially harsh in the Mohawk Valley, our Weatherization team worked with The Center to provide minimal and no-cost ways to reduce utility bills with an interactive workshop designed for moderate to low-income homeowners and renters.
In 2021, NYPA installed 970 energy-efficient, interior and exterior lighting fixtures at four properties. Common area, street lighting and building lighting retrofits were included in the project. Additionally, NYPA conducted a comprehensive commercial building audit and identified other ways in which the Authority could reduce energy costs and redirect the savings to help fund critical social services for residents.

NFHA operates the affordable housing program in the City of Niagara Falls. In existence for more than 70 years, NFHA serves the low to very-low-income population and is responsible for over 900 affordable housing units.

Keeping Costs Down and Our Neighbors Safe with Energy Efficient Technology

EJ communities often lack funding to install energy efficient technology in public spaces. NYPA works with our partners to identify opportunities to help. We bridge the gap by installing energy efficient upgrades at no cost to the EJ communities located near our facilities. These projects significantly improve quality of life for our neighbors.

Keeping our neighbors safe while saving them money was the motivation behind the retrofit of Niagara Falls Housing Authority’s (NFHA) public lighting system.

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Energy Services Projects

To learn more about our Energy Efficiency Projects contact Kaela.Mainsah@nypa.gov
An Outward and Inward Focus

Family Energy Education Day
In August 2021, the EJ team was happy to be reunited with our friends and their families in Massena. With our partners at the Massena Housing Authority, we hosted the Second Annual Family Energy Education Day which was packed with fun-filled, child-friendly, STEM activities and other energy related exhibits. Our friends from NYPA’s Eugene L. Nicandri Nature Center provided a nature show and a local clown entertained families with a magic show and face painting. Our team joined in the fun by volunteering to sit in the splash tower dunking chair. The Massena Volunteer Fire department also stopped by to talk about fire safety, and everyone was treated to a barbecue meal topped off by ice cream for dessert.

Applying an EJ Lens to NYPA’s Strategic Programs

NYPA’s Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act (CLCPA) Task Force
The CLCPA is groundbreaking legislation that is at the forefront of New York State’s fight against climate change. The CLCPA mandates that by 2040, 100% of the State’s electric supply will be generated using zero-emissions renewable energy resources such as wind and solar power.

The law also stipulates that underserved communities will receive 35% of the overall benefits that derive from CLCPA, including placement of renewable energy systems and green job training in their neighborhoods. NYPA’s EJ team participates on the Just Transition Staff working group and coordinates compliance with the legislation. We serve internally as the voice of our historically marginalized communities to make sure their concerns are front and center throughout this process.

NYPA’s PEAK Coalition Task Force
We also serve as an adviser to NYPA’s PEAK Coalition Task Force. The PEAK Coalition is a group of five leading environmental justice and clean energy interests, that have partnered with NYPA to assess how NYPA’s natural gas-fired “Peaker” plants, can be replaced in the future with renewable energy power and technology options. The transition to clean energy technologies and renewables while continuing to provide reliable power to vulnerable communities is at the center of NYPA’s collaboration with the PEAK Coalition.
The pandemic laid bare the inequities that have existed for centuries in our nation. That reality, together with George Floyd's murder, and the activism around racial justice, compelled NYPA to act on behalf of our traditionally marginalized and communities of color.

In 2020, NYPA convened a Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Task Force which resulted in 10-Point Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Plan. The plan includes three initiatives spearheaded by the Environmental Justice team which launched in 2021: Pathways in Technology and Early College High School Program, (P-TECH), the Future Energy Leaders Scholarship, and the NYPA Environmental Justice Community Volunteer Corp.
Creating Pathways to Careers in Energy

Serving as an industry partner in the internationally respected Pathways in Technology Early College High School program (P-TECH) affirms NYPA’s industry-leading commitment to encourage, create, and maintain a diverse, equitable and inclusive workforce.

P-TECH combines rigorous coursework with real-life workplace experiences that helps high school students who are interested in STEM careers in the energy sector, obtain both a high school diploma and a two-year associates degree, at no cost.

2021 was the inaugural year of NYPA’s P-TECH program. 15 high school students from underserved communities in New York City, the Mohawk Valley and Western New York completed six-week paid internships to learn professional skills that will help prepare them to compete for good paying jobs in New York State’s growing clean energy sector.

During their internship, students worked collaboratively on real-world engineering projects and met with NYPA professionals from many areas of our operation, giving them an in depth understanding of the numerous career paths available to them.

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Future Energy Leader Scholarship

Increasing Access to College for Diverse and Traditionally Underrepresented Students

Diversity in the workplace has the power to influence learning and allow businesses to remain globally competitive. NYPA recognizes that a diverse and well-educated workforce is the best way to foster innovation and the success of our organization and our employees. This means increasing the number of traditionally underrepresented students in higher education in preparation for future career opportunities in our industry.

One of the greatest barriers to attending college for students living in EJ communities is affordability. This was the catalyst for the creation of the Future Energy Leader Scholarship Program in 2021. Through five administrative partners, 10 academically accomplished and economically challenged high school seniors received a $10,000 scholarship based on financial need, academic success, community service and the pursuit of a STEM related major in college.

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These scholarships were awarded to 10 academically accomplished & under-represented high school seniors from #NewYork to help them pursue a career in the #energy industry.

Learn more:
nypa.info/3gsy107 #DEI

To learn more about the Future Energy Leader Scholarship, contact Julieanne.Sullivan@nypa.gov

2021 Scholarship Recipients

Andralyn Coleman
Malik Robinson
Fatoumata Dabo
Sunil Sharma
Victor Adegoke
Peter Thais
Emmanuel Enok
Savar Handy
Andralyn Coleman
Malik Robinson
Fatoumata Dabo
Sunil Sharma
Victor Adegoke
Peter Thais
Emmanuel Enok
Savar Handy
Harnesses the Talent of Colleagues to Help Our Communities

An enterprise-wide employee service program, the NYPA Environmental Justice Community Volunteer Corps was established under the 10-Point Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Plan. The program encourages employees to engage in community service projects and to foster a deeper understanding of the needs and challenges of underserved communities.

Meet NYPA’s Environmental Justice Team

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To learn more about the Employee Volunteer Corps contact Matthew.Caruso@nypa.gov

To learn more about NYPA’s Environmental Justice Program, please visit our website: EnvironmentalJustice@nypa.gov 914-287-3084
Environmental Justice

Contact Information

To learn more about NYPA's Environmental Justice Program, please visit our website:

For more information about NYPA, careers and our internship program, please visit:

NYPA.gov
nypa.gov/careers/