

From Appendix C of EJ Enhanced Public Participation Policy Community Involvement Checklist

The goal of this community involvement checklist is to ensure that the proper steps are taken to provide the community with opportunities to provide input to the decision-making process. Keep in mind that this checklist is designed to increase community awareness of a proposed permit. If all of the steps outlined below are followed, the community should be aware of the permit review process and have ample opportunities to engage in meaningful public participation.

- ☐ **Encourage a pre-application meeting.** This meeting should be between the applicant and community stakeholders prior to the submission of the application. This will provide the public with advanced notification regarding a proposed activity and provide them with a chance to have questions answered by the potential applicant. The meeting would also serve as a precursor to possible impacts, mitigation and monitoring techniques for the proposed activity. This will also give the community a chance to compare the benefits and harms.
- ☐ **Determine if the proposed permit is a Trigger Permit.** By definition trigger permits are those DEP regulated activities that may lead to significant public concern due to potential impacts on human health and the environment. DEP can include renewals of the Trigger Permits as well as other proposed permits that may warrant heightened scrutiny due to unique local circumstances. See Appendix A for a list of Trigger Permits.
- ☐ **Determine whether the trigger permit is in an Environmental Justice Area.** . The area of concern associated with the trigger permit must be defined, and census tracts entirely or partially within that area of concern must be identified. If any of those census tracts meet certain demographic criteria, it is considered an Environmental Justice Area. See Environmental Justice Public Participation Policy for guidance on defining the area of concern, identifying the demographics of census tracts, and determining whether the trigger permit is in an Environmental Justice Area.
- ☐ **Encourage applicant to schedule timely meetings with the community.**
- ☐ **Develop a community relations plan for the Environmental Justice Area.** The plan should include methods to encourage effective communication, a schedule of community involvement activities, a brief description of the site as well as locations and times of public meetings. The community relations plan should ensure that a central and accessible location for the meeting has been chosen and that the scheduled time and day are convenient for a majority of the affected community. Finding co-sponsors for the meeting such as religious, civic, or community leaders should also be a topic within the community relations plan.
- ☐ **Provide the public with information regarding the proposed permit.** Public notices should be placed in widely read publications. These notices should be easy to understand by the general public. This information should also be published in other languages if a sufficient amount of the local community

has limited English proficiency. In fact, there are over 300,000 Spanish-speaking households in Pennsylvania. According to Federal Executive Order 13166, services shall be provided for those with limited English proficiency. In addition to the notices within local publications, notice should also be sent electronically to subscribers of eNotice within the community. Attempts should be made to publicize the availability of eNotice within local communities.

- ☐ **Provide a summary of the permit application to the public.** The summary should include the location of the activity, as well as anticipated impacts.
- ☐ **Determine the availability of pertinent documents.** DEP should recognize that regional and district offices are not easily accessible by all communities. With this in mind, DEP should ensure that documents are available in more convenient locations such as local libraries and municipal offices. When necessary, DEP should consider extending office hours for file reviews. The files should also be updated by DEP on a regular basis.
- ☐ **Implement steps to deal with conflict management.** If conflicts arise within a community during the application review process, DEP should encourage the use of both formal and informal voluntary dispute resolution. This would include mediation proceedings, in which DEP would offer assistance to the parties involved in the conflict. It is important, however, that the parties understand the correct administrative and legal procedures for engaging in conflict resolution during the permitting process.
- ☐ **Ensure that the public has been given a chance to express their concerns on the proposed permit.** This can be done through public meetings and by increasing awareness through the use of community forums and numerous publications such as flyers, fact sheets, and brochures. Publications should be carefully selected in order to reach the maximum number of community members. In some cases this may include publishing in alternative languages, publishing more visually stimulating documents and revising the message so it is culturally sensitive and appropriate.
- ☐ **Provide a comment response document to members of the community.** The document should describe the community involvement and summarize the comments received during the permit review process. This document should also provide information about actions taken as a direct result of community comments.