



Environmental Justice
for New England

All things QAPP

What you need to know *now* about
Quality Assurance Project Plans

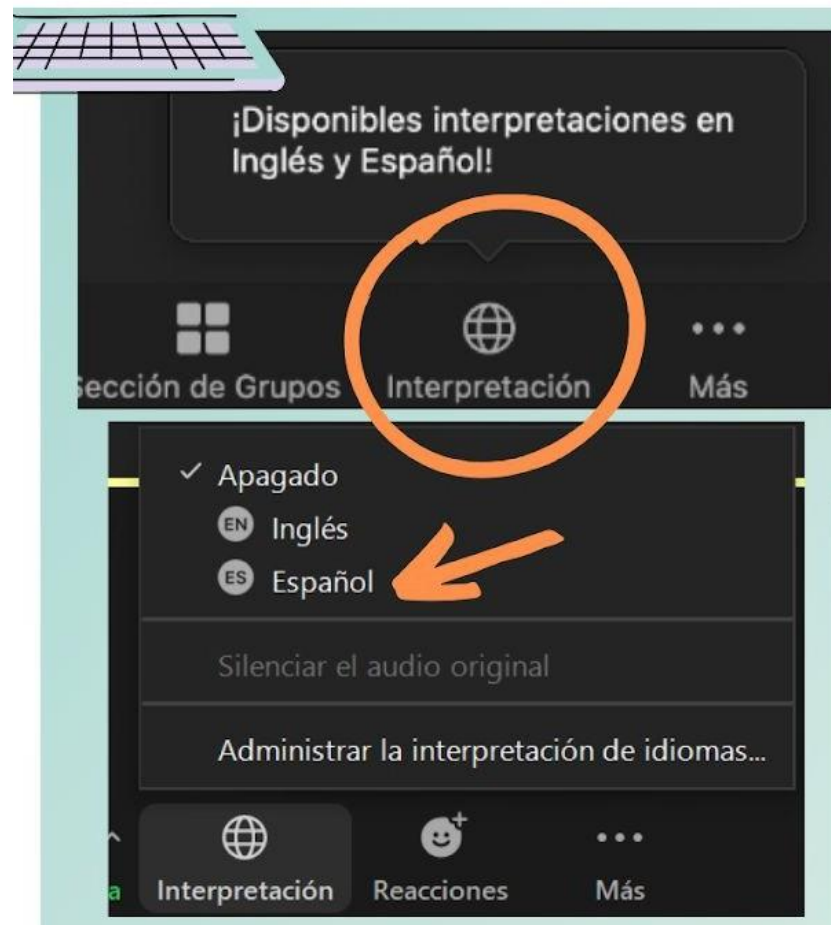
January 13, 2025





Para Acceder la Interpretación

Por computadora



Por teléfono



Chatear

Configuración de reunión

Minimizar la reunión

Interpretación de lenguaje



To Access Interpretation



TO ACCESS INTERPRETATION



Via computer

English and Spanish interpretation available!

Q&A Interpretation

Off
✓ English
Spanish
Mute Original Audio

EN
English

Detailed description: This screenshot shows a computer interface for a meeting. At the top, a black banner with white text reads "English and Spanish interpretation available!". Below this, there are two icons: "Q&A" and "Interpretation". The "Interpretation" icon, which is a globe, is circled in orange. Below the icons is a dark menu with several options: "Off", "English" (which has a checkmark and an orange arrow pointing to it), "Spanish", and "Mute Original Audio". At the bottom of the menu, there is a button with "EN" and "English" below it.



Via smartphone

Spanish and English interpretation available!

Chat Q&A More

Language Interpretation Done

Original Audio

English

Spanish

Mute Original Audio

Chat (12)

Meeting Settings

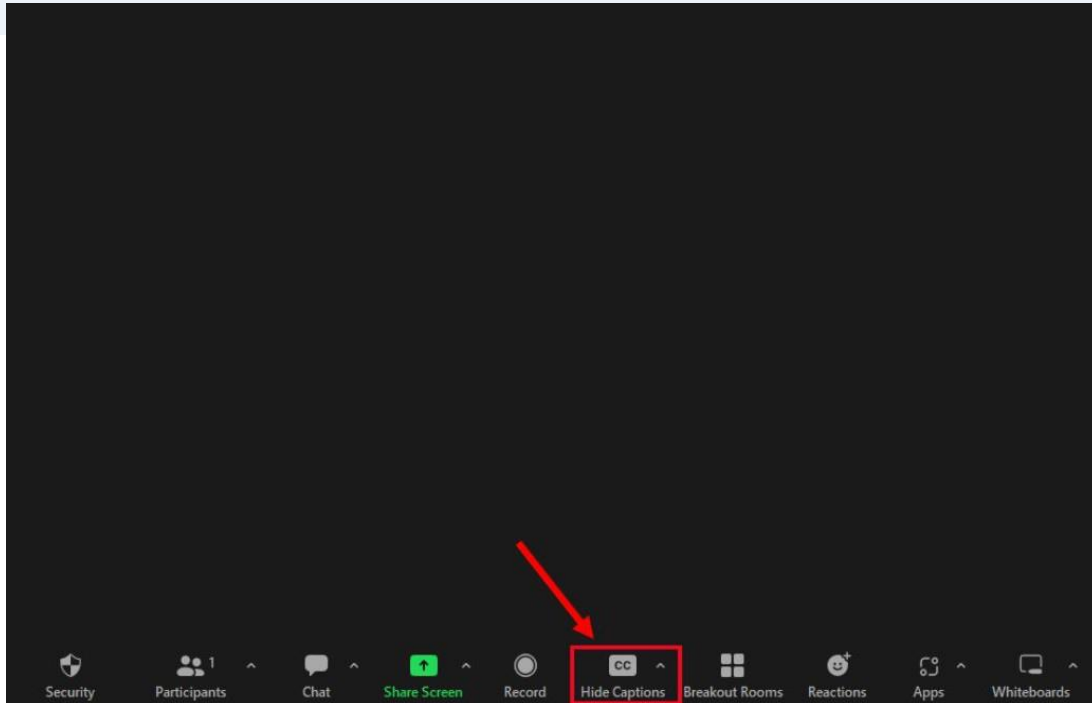
Minimize Meeting

Language Interpretation

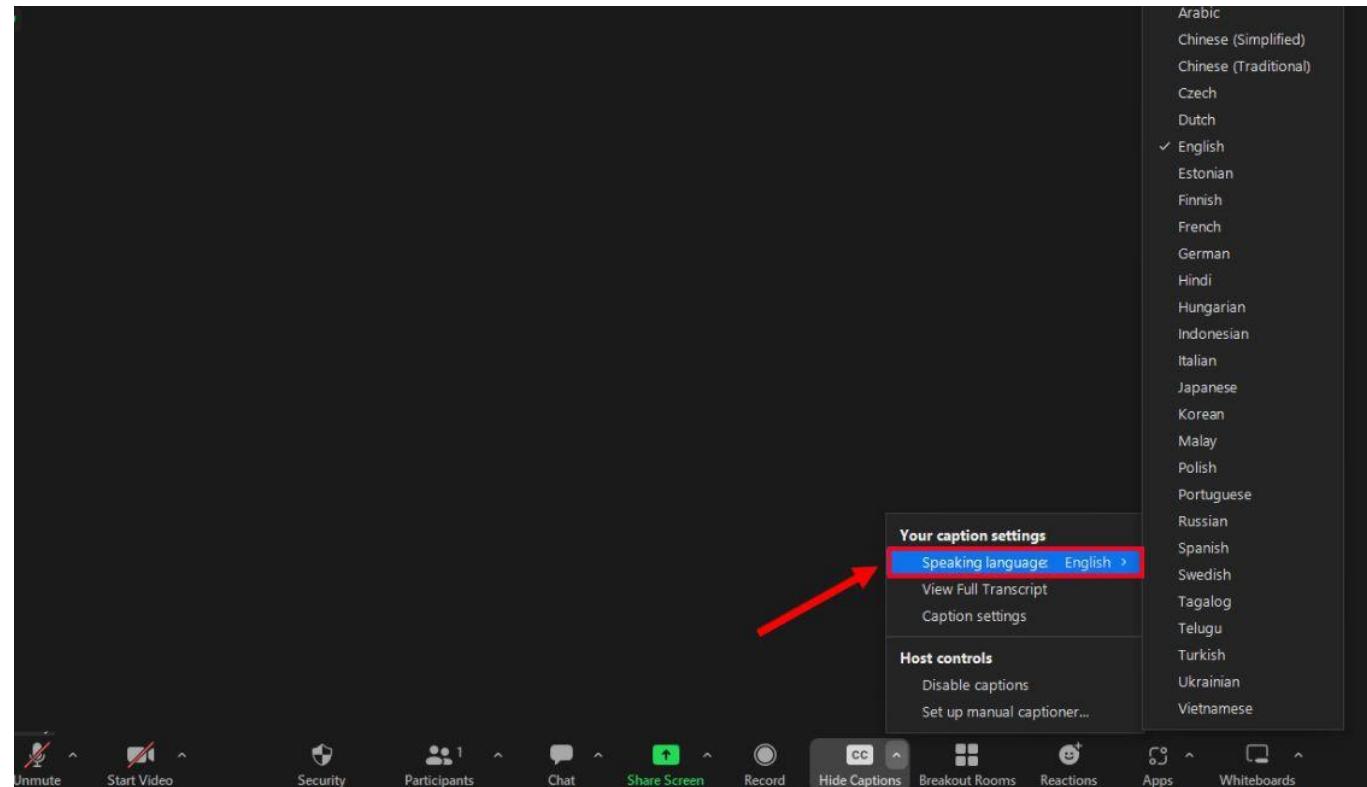
Detailed description: This screenshot shows a smartphone interface. At the top, a black banner with white text reads "Spanish and English interpretation available!". Below this, there are three icons: "Chat", "Q&A", and "More". The "More" icon, which is three dots, is circled in orange. Below the icons is a white menu with several options: "Language Interpretation Done" (with "Done" circled in orange), "Original Audio", "English" (with a checkmark and an orange arrow pointing to it), "Spanish", and "Mute Original Audio" (with a toggle switch). Below this menu, there are four more options: "Chat (12)", "Meeting Settings", "Minimize Meeting", and "Language Interpretation" (with an orange arrow pointing to it).



Enabling Closed Captions



Once you have pressed the Closed Caption button, you will see a menu of options. Please choose your preferred language settings.



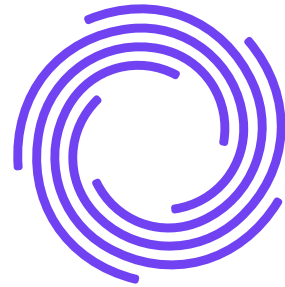
In order to enable captions, find the Closed Caption button at the bottom of your screen and press it.



CORE PARTNERS



Building Power for Environmental Justice



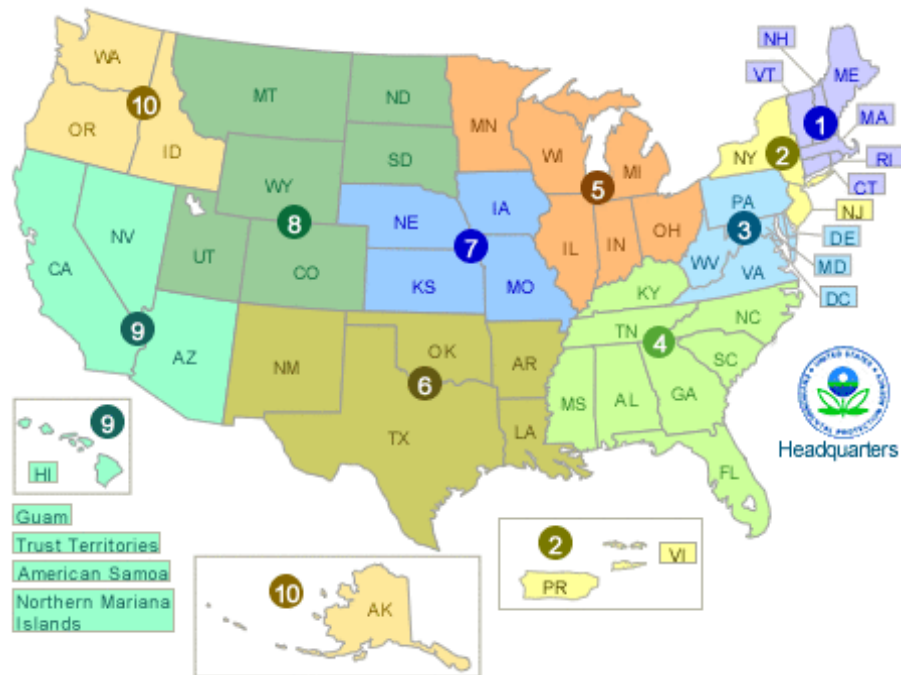
HEALTH
RESOURCES
IN ACTION

GRASS
ROOTS
FUND



Background

EPA Environmental Justice (EJ) Thriving Communities Grantmaking (TCGM) Program has selected grantmakers across the U.S, as part of the Justice 40 Initiative, to provide \$48M/each in grants within their respective regions over three years.



Goal of TCGM Program: support community-based organizations, EJ organizations, nonprofit organizations, and other entities representing underserved, urban, rural, Indigenous, remote, and capacity constrained communities in implementing projects to **address local environmental and/or public health challenges**

Region 1 New England includes:

Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, Vermont, and 10 Tribal Nations



Examples of Climate & Environmental Justice Issues projects can address, but not limited to:

- Environmental health
- Air, soil, and water quality
- Healthy homes
- Access to healthy food
- Stormwater and green infrastructure
- Clean-up projects
- Emergency Preparedness
- Environmental job training





Two Grant Categories

SEED FUND

TIERS 1-3

Different:

- Organizational Eligibility
 - Project Eligibility
 - Funding Periods
 - Funding Amounts
- Length of Application
 - Application Links
- Request for Proposals (1x for Seed Fund, 1x for Tiers 1-3 Grants)

Share:

- Application Format Options (Written, Slide Deck, Video)
 - Core Application Components



Key Application Dates

Round 1 Applications

February 14, 2025 5PM EST

Deadline for Round 1 Applications (all grant categories)
*Late applications will **NOT** be reviewed or considered.*

February-April 2025

Grant Readers & Grantmaking Committee
Review of Applications

April/May 2025

Notice of Awards/Contracts

Round 2 Applications

May 16, 2025 5PM EST

Deadline for Round 2 Applications (all grant categories)
*Late applications will **NOT** be reviewed or considered.*

May-July 2025

Grant Readers & Grantmaking Committee
Review of Applications

July/August 2025

Notice of Awards/Contracts

Future funding rounds anticipated in August 2025, November 2025, January 2026, and April 2026
and/or until all funding is allocated, whichever is earlier.



QAPP MEETING OBJECTIVES

- Increased understanding of activities that trigger Quality Assurance requirements
- Increased understanding of EPA approval process if a Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP) is required
- Increased understanding of technical assistance resources to applicants and future awardees.
- Provide space for Questions and Answers

What we will NOT cover today (but is covered on other webinars):

- How to apply to the Thriving Community Grantmaker program
- What types of projects are eligible for funding





TODAY'S SPEAKERS



Cynthia Espinosa Marrero
Senior Manager, HRiA



Ben Wood
Senior Director, HRiA



Nora Conlon
*Senior QA Chemist, US EPA
Region 1*



Jenny K. Phillips
Senior Vice President, TRC



What is Quality Assurance

Thank you to the Climate Justice Alliance and the UNITE-EJ Grantmaking program for the inspiration and content for these slides



OVERVIEW

- Environmental Justice for New England grantees may need to collect environmental information to achieve project goals.
- Ensuring quality in the collection and use of environmental information is essential to support sound decision-making and protect public health and the environment.
- High-quality data and information needs to be a foundation of our environmental justice grantmaking activities, ensuring that the outcomes are **credible** and **actionable** and **advance environmental** justice.
- Not all projects will be collecting environmental information that then requires the development of a Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP)





OVERVIEW

Environmental Justice for New England's approach to quality assurance for sub-awardees

1

Multiple ways of knowing and making community data count

2

Growing technical capacity to build organizational capacity

3

Strengthening communities by meeting them where they are today



What is a QAPP?
Will I need one?



What is a Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP)

A QAPP (kwapp) provides guidance defining:

- WHAT do researchers want to know (what question is being asked)
- WHAT is the ultimate project objective?
- HOW data will be collected
- HOW data will be analyzed
- HOW data will be determined to be “of sufficient quality” (i.e. “good enough”) to answer the original question
- WHO is responsible for each task
- WHAT IF things don’t go according to plan?



What does the QAPP do?

It is a formal planning document which describes how environmental information operations are:

- planned,
- implemented,
- documented, and
- assessed during the life cycle of a project.

A QAPP describes in detail what must be implemented to ensure the results of the environmental information operations performed are of sufficient quantity and quality to support the intended use.



Do QAPPs benefit us?

“The process of developing the QAPP is vital to the success of the project & often just as important as the final written QAPP document.

The QAPP gives structure to the development of a project & helps when writing the conclusions reached at the end of the project.”

-Handbook for Citizen Science, Quality Assurance and Documentation, US EPA






How do QAPPs benefit us?

A QAPP aims to ensure the credibility of information collected, produced, or used.

- Scientific Data Integrity
- Reliable & Defensible Decisions
- Transparent & Effective Management of Internal & External Activities
- Reduced &/or Justifiable Resource Expenditures
- Documents expectations for all tasks and entities involved in the project

A QAPP is especially important if you want others to consider using your organization's information to implement change.





When are QAPPs Required?



EPA'S QUALITY ASSURANCE APPROACH



EPA's Quality Program

- Supports EPA's mission to protect human health and the environment.
- Program ensures environmental information operations products and services are of known and documented quality for their intended use(s).

All EPA organizations and non-EPA organizations

- Collecting, producing, and/or using environmental information operations on behalf of EPA required to participate in the EPA Agency-wide Quality Program

Extramural Agreements

- All work performed involving environmental information operations shall be implemented in accordance with an approved Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP)





When are QAPPs Required?

A QAPP is required by the EPA when **environmental information operations** are conducted by & for EPA.



Environmental information operations is a “collective term for work performed to *collect, produce, evaluate, or use environmental information & the design, construction, operation or application of environmental technology*”





When are QAPPs Required (continued)

Examples of environmental information operations include but are not limited to:

- Direct measurements of environmental parameters or processes.
- Analytical testing results of environmental conditions information on physical parameters or processes collected using environmental technologies.
- Calculations or analyses of environmental information.
- Information provided by models.
- Information compiled or obtained from databases, software applications, decision support tools, websites, existing literature, & other sources.
- Development of environmental software, tools, models, methods, applications; &
- Design, construction, & operation or application of environmental technology.





EPA uses a Graded Approach for QAPPs

What is a **Graded Approach**?

- It is the process of basing the level of details & comprehensiveness of quality documentation applied to environmental operations/programs according to the intended use of the results & the degree of confidence needed in the quality of results
- Graded approach establishes the Quality Assurance & Quality Control requirements appropriate to:
 - Complexity & type of work,
 - How results will be used,
 - Available resources, &
 - Unique needs of the organization or the customer (for contracts).
- Graded Approach is not a mechanism to waive requirements. If an element is not applicable, an explanation as to why it is not applicable shall be provided in the QAPP.

*Implementation of the Quality Policy & Procedure allows for the **graded approach** to be applied to the systematic planning, development, & approval of QAPPs.*



“Real World” Examples *QAPP or Not?*

Scenario	QAPP Needed?	Rationale
1. Using air quality sensors (e.g., PurpleAir) to investigate potential air quality “hot spots” in a community	Yes	<i>Primary</i> data collection (i.e., direct monitoring or sampling of environmental media)
2. Utilizing multiple data sources and types, such as land use, topography, hydrology, and water quality data, to develop a map highlighting areas of a community at-risk to flooding or other environmental hazards	Yes	<i>Secondary</i> data collection (i.e., environmental data/information being used for purposes other than which they were originally collected)





“Real World” Examples *QAPP or Not?*

Scenario	QAPP Needed?	Rationale
3. Developing and distributing environmental education material to inform the public on the risk of asthma due to poor air quality	No	No environmental data being collected and no environmental decisions being made
4. Surveying population to gauge their awareness of healthy home incentives & resources available to them	No	No <i>environmental</i> data collection and no environmental decisions being made





“Real World” Examples *QAPP or Not?*

Scenario	QAPP Needed?	Rationale
5. Developing and distributing environmental education material to inform the public on the risk of asthma due to poor air quality, <i>and</i> asking residents for input on optimal placement of stationary air monitors	Maybe...	Development and distribution of education materials likely does not need a QAPP; however, if survey results are used to inform environmental decisions (i.e., placement of air quality monitors), then a QAPP is required.
6. Surveying population to gauge their awareness of healthy home incentives & resources available to them, <i>and</i> having residents perform scratch and magnet tests to test for lead pipes and report results	Maybe...	Survey results of awareness of incentives & resources are not likely to be considered <i>environmental</i> data; however, testing for the presence of lead pipes is environmental data collection and a QAPP is needed.





Take-Home Points and Technical Assistance



QAPP technical assistance (application phase)

- A QAPP subject matter expert will be at the January 21st (2:00-3:00) office hours, and otherwise email **bwood@hria.org** with questions
- Applicants can put QAPP subject matter expert contractual funds in their proposed budgets if desired
- A QAPP Questionnaire (to help you understand if a QAPP may be required based on your project idea), FAQ and a recording of this webinar will be available on our website on Wednesday 1/15.





QAPP Development and Review Process (post-award)

1. The Grantmaker's Project Officer completes a checklist to determine if a QAPP is needed (happens post-award)
2. The Project Officer will set-up a consultation between the awardee and a QAPP consultant (a QAPP template will be provided)
3. Awardee works on QAPP
4. Awardee has 2nd meeting with QAPP consultant
5. Awardee completes draft of the QAPP
6. Awardee submits the QAPP to the Project Officer for review
7. Project Officer submits QAPP to EPA for approval
8. Overall timeline expectations: **At least 3 months**

****No environmental information can be collected until QAPP approved****





It's time for Questions!

Email
bwood@hria.org



**Environmental Justice
for New England**
Investing in community-driven change