RCW 70A.65.030 Environmental justice assessment. (1) Each year or biennium, as appropriate, when allocating funds from the carbon emissions reduction account created in RCW 70A.65.240, the climate commitment account created in RCW 70A.65.260, the natural climate solutions account created in RCW 70A.65.270, the climate investment account created in RCW 70A.65.250, the air quality and health disparities improvement account created in RCW 70A.65.280, the climate transit programs account created in RCW 46.68.500, or the climate active transportation account created in RCW 46.68.490, or administering grants or programs funded by the accounts, agencies shall conduct an environmental justice assessment consistent with the requirements of RCW 70A.02.060 and establish a minimum of not less than 35 percent and a goal of 40 percent of total investments that provide direct and meaningful benefits to vulnerable populations within the boundaries of overburdened communities through: (a) The direct reduction of environmental burdens in overburdened communities; (b) the reduction of disproportionately, cumulative risk from environmental burdens, including those associated with climate change; (c) the support of community led project development, planning, and participation costs; or (d) meeting a community need identified by the community that is consistent with the intent of this chapter or RCW 70A.02.010.

(2) The allocation of funding under subsection (1) of this section must adhere to the following principles, additional to the requirements of RCW 70A.02.080: (a) Benefits and programs should be directed to areas and targeted to vulnerable populations and overburdened communities to reduce statewide disparities; (b) investments and benefits should be made roughly proportional to the health disparities that a specific community experiences, with a goal of eliminating the disparities; (c) investments and programs should focus on creating environmental benefits, including eliminating health burdens, creating community and population resilience, and raising the quality of life of those in the community; and (d) efforts should be made to balance investments and benefits across the state and within counties, local jurisdictions, and unincorporated areas as appropriate to reduce disparities by location and to ensure efforts contribute to a reduction in disparities that exist based on race or ethnicity, socioeconomic status, or other factors.

(3) State agencies allocating funds or administering grants or programs from the carbon emissions reduction account created in RCW 70A.65.240, the climate commitment account created in RCW 70A.65.260, the natural climate solutions account created in RCW 70A.65.270, the climate investment account created in RCW 70A.65.250, the air quality and health disparities improvement account created in RCW 70A.65.280, the climate transit programs account created in RCW 46.68.500, or the climate active transportation account created in RCW 46.68.490, must:
(a) Report annually to the environmental justice council created in RCW 70A.02.110 regarding progress toward meeting environmental justice and environmental health goals;
(b) Consider recommendations by the environmental justice council; and
(c)(i) If the agency is not a covered agency subject to the requirements of chapter 70A.02 RCW, create and adopt a community engagement plan to describe how it will engage with overburdened communities and vulnerable populations in allocating funds or administering grants or programs from the climate investment account.
(ii) The plan must include methods for outreach and communication with those who face barriers, language or otherwise, to participation. [2022 c 182 § 104; 2022 c 181 § 13; 2021 c 316 § 4.]

Reviser's note: This section was amended by 2022 c 181 § 13 and by 2022 c 182 § 104, each without reference to the other. Both amendments are incorporated in the publication of this section under RCW 1.12.025(2). For rule of construction, see RCW 1.12.025(1).

Intent—Effective date—2022 c 182: See notes following RCW 70A.65.240.