

ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE AGENCY GOALS

North Carolina
Department of Adult Correction
2024

INTRODUCTION

The mission of this Executive Order and its task to state agencies, is to incorporate environmental justice into policies and programming, to provide clarity and consistency to the agencies approach on environmental justice, and to collaborate on, develop, and enhance state strategies to advance environmental justice.

DAC is tasked with developing at least three draft Environmental Justice goals with measurable outcomes. These goals were developed in alignment with North Carolina Executive Orders 303, 246, 292, and 80, the Department of Adult Correction Strategic Plan, and the NCDAC Climate Strategy Report.

In the context of adult corrections, environmental justice is important for several reasons: Health Impacts, Community Relations, Equitable Treatment, Human Rights, and Legal Compliance. Ensuring a healthy environment supports the physical and mental well-being of offenders, which is crucial for their rehabilitation and successful reintegration into society.

These goals are essential for promoting the well-being of our staff, and offender population. Our mission is to foster positive community relations, uphold human rights, and advance our efforts in rehabilitation and public safety. This is part of a broader commitment to creating a fair and equitable agency that considers the environmental impacts of correctional practices.

"Environmental Justice" means the just treatment and meaningful involvement of all people, regardless of income, race, color, national origin, or Tribal affiliation, in agency policies and programming that affect human health, well-being, quality of life, and the environment so that people:

are protected from disproportionate and adverse human health effects and environmental hazards, including those related to climate change, the cumulative impacts of environmental and other burdens, and the legacy of racism or other structural or systemic barriers; and have equitable access to a healthy, sustainable, and resilient environment in which to live, play, work, learn, grow, worship, and engage in cultural and subsistence practices.

Note: Underlined verbiage was incorporated from internal and community, recommendations and feedback

1. Implement a Department of Adult Correction (DAC) Environmental Justice and Equity Plan by January 2026 to address disparities among communities disproportionately impacted by environmental hazards and implement targeted mitigation and adaptation measures to address environmental injustices at correctional institutions and in surrounding communities
2. Improve the environmental health for offenders and employees through the Air Conditioning (A/C) state-wide project, vulnerability assessments, and mitigating the impacts of extreme weather due to climate change
3. Transition prison facilities to a more human centric focus by reducing greenhouse gas and other air pollution emissions; creating more natural environments and lighting; and increasing offender environmental, sustainable, and renewable vocation.
4. Land dedications and ecological, best management practices for land use. Partner with the NC Department of Natural and Cultural Resources, Natural Heritage Program to evaluate acreage owned and managed by DAC, and determine the viability of additional Nature Preserve dedications, and Tribal land dedications.

1. Implement a Department of Adult Correction (DAC) Environmental Justice and Equity Plan by January 2026 to address disparities among communities disproportionately impacted by environmental hazards and implement targeted mitigation and adaptation measures to address environmental injustices at correctional institutions and in surrounding communities.

Status: In progress

Expected Completion Date: Ongoing

- Utilize existing agency data, NC Department of Environmental Quality/Department of Information Technology's (DEQ/DIT) Environmental Justice Mapping Tool, Geographic Information System (GIS) technology and the Environmental Justice Hub to analyze the intersection of DAC prison facilities, known communities disproportionately impacted by environmental hazards (e.g., pollution, hazardous waste sites), and populations under correctional supervision (both incarcerated individuals and those under community supervision). Collect and analyze demographic and environmental data to identify intersections and disparities including factors such as race, income, health outcomes, and environmental quality indicators by January 2025.
- Develop a comprehensive Environmental Justice and Equity Plan by July 2025 that outlines strategies to address environmental disparities, promote resilience, and enhance the well-being of incarcerated individuals, staff, and surrounding communities. Identify priority areas for intervention based on mapping and data analysis, considering factors such as vulnerability, historical inequities, and potential for positive impact. Once the development of the plan is complete, DAC will solicit public feedback on the plan's goals and targeted mitigation strategies.
- Implement targeted mitigation and adaptation measures by January 2026 to address environmental injustices and enhance climate resilience within correctional institutions and surrounding communities. Examples of mitigation strategies include implementing green infrastructure projects, improving indoor air quality, enhancing disaster preparedness and response, and promoting renewable energy and energy efficiency initiatives.

2. Improve the environmental health for offenders and employees through the Air Conditioning (A/C) state-wide project, vulnerability assessments, and mitigating the impacts of extreme weather due to climate change.

Status: In progress

Expected Completion Date: July 2026

- Improve the air quality and living conditions for offenders through the design and installation of air-conditioning in uncooled offender bed areas.
- Conduct vulnerability assessments within our prison facilities. Phase I will include vulnerability assessments to review the condition of as many prisons possible. Phase II of the total work will include load calculations, assessments of air quality, and testing for moisture and fungal spores. The vulnerability assessments will be coupled with operational data to determine the most efficient use of resources for the custody management of offenders. The findings and plan for these assessments will be published in DAC's Environmental Justice and Equity Plan.
- Mitigate the impacts of climate change by identifying and maintaining site capacity to handle extreme weather events. Identify energy and water efficiency efforts that can mitigate extreme weather challenges while reducing energy/water intensity. Identify NCDAC facilities and work locations vulnerable to flooding due to impacts such as (but not limited to) riverine or coastal flooding, stormwater and sewer flooding, and dam breaches. Determine the most cost-effective strategies to implement flood mitigation and improve offender safety (such as relocating equipment above flood plain areas, etc.). Address potential impacts to our farmlands including flooding and droughts.
- Improve air quality by developing standards for the following areas by FY 25-26 to include:
 - Low VOC paints, glues, and adhesives
 - Integrated Pest Management plans
 - Having all facilities air conditioned
- Maintain offender and employee safety by assessing plans for hurricane evacuation routing for offender and staff populations and identifying the potential for heat stroke and other potential physical and mental health issues related to increased threats of severe weather due to climate change.

3. Transition prison facilities to a more human centric focus by reducing greenhouse gas and other air pollution emissions; creating more natural environments and lighting; and increasing offender environmental, sustainable, and renewable vocation.

Status: In progress

Expected Completion Date: Fiscal Year (FY) 2030-2031

- Create standards for more human-centric lighting focus through:
 - Introducing or improving natural light to single cell confinement areas including dayrooms by FY 30-31

- Create more livable environments by introducing quieter more calming and lighter paint color schemes in our correctional settings by FY 24-25 end.
- Implement five pilot projects for color tuning of lights in dayroom, dormitory and individual cell areas and design guidelines for all future renovations and upfits by FY 25-26 end.
- Implement pilot projects to determine and finalize the use of red, amber or 2700k lamps and lumen levels for night lights by FY 24-25 and design guidelines for all future renovations and upfits by FY 25-26.
- Develop a policy for night light locations to minimize sleep impact and implement statewide by FY 26-27
- Create more natural environments by:
 - Develop standards for restoring wetlands and forest lands views from correctional facilities while still maintaining line of site security standards and eliminating contraband throwovers. Have three pilot projects completed by FY 27-28
 - Develop standards for integrating permaculture and native plantings in and around our correctional and administrative buildings by FY 26-27 while still preserving line of site and other security concerns.
- Increase vocation to match industry demand, assist this effort using grants, and (ES) Environmental and Sustainable partnerships
- Create a Performance Drive Maintenance offenders job training program focused on HVAC, Building Automation and Life and Safety Systems including commissioning and retro commissioning and energy audits by FY 25-26.
- Consider greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions evaluation
- Completely retrofit all DAC facilities with LED lighting in 2024
- Use performance contracting to reduce on-site energy use.
- Fix in 26 - Building and Water Management Initiative
 - "Upfit" 15 of our largest facilities with improved water management systems by June 2027. These water management systems limit the number of toilet flushes and water usage in offender housing units to prevent abuse of water usage.
 - "Upfit" our existing BAS/BMS (Building Automation/Management) systems to the latest standards to simplify ease of use, identify issues, and ensure their proper operation. These sophisticated programmable thermostats will replace our current controls, many of which are obsolete.
- Install solar power at select NCDAC facilities.

- Groundbreaking for Tabor Correctional Institution October 2024
- Convert vehicles to clean diesel
 - Purchase at least 32 shuttle buses, 26 heavy duty class 4-8 trucks and decommission all vehicles involved in VW grant.
- Convert vehicles to ZEVs.
 - Install charging stations at four 1000-cell facilities as part of our Guaranteed Energy Savings Performance Contract;
 - Deploy 19 Beam Solar Charging stations that have already been purchased.
 - Order and Deploy 15 more Beam Solar charging stations, grant permitting.
 - Work with DOA to get Beam Solar on a State Term Contract.
 - Convert 25% of our internal combustion engines (ICE) units to hybrids.

4. Land dedications and ecological, best management practices for land use. Partner with the NC Department of Natural and Cultural Resources, Natural Heritage Program to evaluate acreage owned and managed by DAC, and determine the viability of additional Nature Preserve dedications, and Tribal land dedications.

Status: In progress

Expected Completion Date: Ongoing

- Partner with the NC Department of Natural and Cultural Resources for dedications
- Talent Acquisition: Biologist/Ecologist/Environmental Scientist.
 - Land use management through the acquisition of professional staff in the above discipline.
- Promote conservation, and biodiversity.
 - The Biologist/Ecologist/Environmental Scientist acquired will promote conservation and biodiversity through the deployment of best management practices for land use.
- Publicize the current success stories across the agency footprint.