

# DEEP SOUTH CENTER FOR ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE: THE WORK. THE IMPACT. THE OPPORTUNITY.



# WHO WE ARE

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# THE BEGINNING

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- The Deep South Center for Environmental Justice (DSCEJ) was founded by Dr. Beverly Wright in 1992 in collaboration with community environmental groups and universities to address issues of environmental justice.
- The DSCEJ has developed and embraces a model for community partnership called “Communiversality.” This model emphasizes a collaborative management of partnership between universities and communities.
- Our goal is to build the capacity of communities to respond to environmental threats and to challenge the decision making process that excludes their voice.



# OUR MISSION

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The DSCEJ provides opportunities for communities, decision makers and scientific researchers, to collaborate on programs and projects that promote the rights of all people to be free from environmental harm as it impacts health, jobs, housing, education, and a general quality of life.



## COMMUNIVERSITY MODEL

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Created by Dr. Beverly Wright, the “communiversity model” is an acknowledgement that for effective research and policy-making, valuable community life experiences regarding environmental insult must be integrated with the theoretical knowledge of academic educators and researchers.



# FORMALIZED AGREEMENT

**DEEP SOUTH CENTER FOR  
ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE  
XAVIER UNIVERSITY OF LOUISIANA**

**MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING**

**WITH THE  
MISSISSIPPI RIVER AVATAR COMMUNITY ADVISORY BOARD**

The purpose of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is to formalize and strengthen the ties between the Deep South Center for Environmental Justice and the Mississippi River Avatar Community Advisory Board to enhance the understanding of environmental issues. Within the limitation of the funding for these activities, the Deep South Center for Environmental Justice, through a collaborative partnership, will provide:

(1) workshops/seminars within the community in the areas of pollution prevention and health related environmental hazards; (2) access to environmental data and other related analytical tools available at the Center; (3) access to the Center's technical personnel to answer questions related to environmental justice issues; (4) liaison with local and state health departments for lead screening, lead analysis and testing in the homes; (5) workshops on Toxic Release Inventory; and (6) workshops related to asthma prevention; (7) workshops in addressing and negotiating community relocation issues; (8) workshops in Clean Production; (9) workshops to educate community residents in Climate Justice and Workshops in Ethical Challenges in Environmental Health. The goal of these cooperative activities is to help the communities characterize their current environment and improve management skills of community leaders.

The Mississippi River Community Advisory Board agrees to assist in the characterization of the community, identify community leaders whose involvement and management skills will help this project; recommend individuals for training to return to the community to teach and act as community liaison representatives to attend meetings, as required, and provide access to facilities and technology to conduct neighborhood training as necessary.

The undersigned agree, on this 21<sup>st</sup> day of March, 2002 to the cooperative agreement described in this Memorandum of Understanding which will be in effect for a period of two years and renewable on the 31<sup>st</sup> day of March 31, 2004. We further agree that either party shall retain the right to withdraw from this program upon timely notification to the other members and/or on the completion of the current obligations.

*Beverly H. Wright, Director  
Deep South Center for Environ. Justice  
New Orleans, LA*

*Eloisa Blanco  
Concerned Citizens of Agriculture St. Landfill  
New Orleans, LA*

*Priscilla Edwards  
Central City Economic Opportunity  
New Orleans, LA*

*Edward Jackson  
Ascension Parish Citizens Against Toxins  
Gekmar, LA*

*Margie Richard  
Concerned Citizens of Norco  
Norco, LA*

*Juanita Stewart  
North Baton Rouge Envir. Assoc.  
Baton Rouge, LA*

*Emelda West  
St. James Citizens for Jobs and Environment  
Convent, LA*

*Mary Baker  
Parent's Outreach for Youth  
Destrehan, LA*

*Jim Hayes  
People's Institute  
New Orleans, LA*

*Gloria Roberts  
St. James Citizens for Jobs and Environment  
Convent, LA*

*Phyllis Smith  
Concerned Citizens of Agri. St. Landfill  
New Orleans, LA*

*King Wells  
Central City Economic Opportunity  
New Orleans, LA*

*Eloise Williams  
Concerned Citizens of Algiers  
New Orleans, LA*



# WHY WE DO THIS WORK

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# MISSISSIPPI RIVER CHEMICAL CORRIDOR

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- An 85-mile tract of land along the Mississippi River located between New Orleans and Baton Rouge, Louisiana.
- Lined with 136 petrochemical plants (Now 152) and 7 oil refineries.
- It produces approximately 1/4 of the nations petrochemicals.





# CHEMICALS PRODUCED IN THE MRCC



Photo from

Kate Off, "Ecological Atlas to 'Petrochemical America'" depicting the kinds of toxic emissions emanating from petrochemical plants along the MRCC.

<http://dabrownstein.wordpress.com/2013/12/04/mapping-the-cancer-corridor-along-louisianas-gulf-coast/>



# MRCC

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- Industry leaders call it the Chemical Corridor...
  - Responsible for turning small rural towns into urban communities of brick homes and shopping centers
    - In other words, **prosperity**.
- Locals call it “**Cancer Alley**”
  - Seeing themselves as a vast human experiment...
  - Blaming the millions of pounds of toxic chemicals pouring out of smoke stacks for:
    - Miscarriages.
    - Cancer.
    - Respiratory ailments.
    - Other serious diseases.



# CANCER ALLEY

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## Concerns of the Residents...

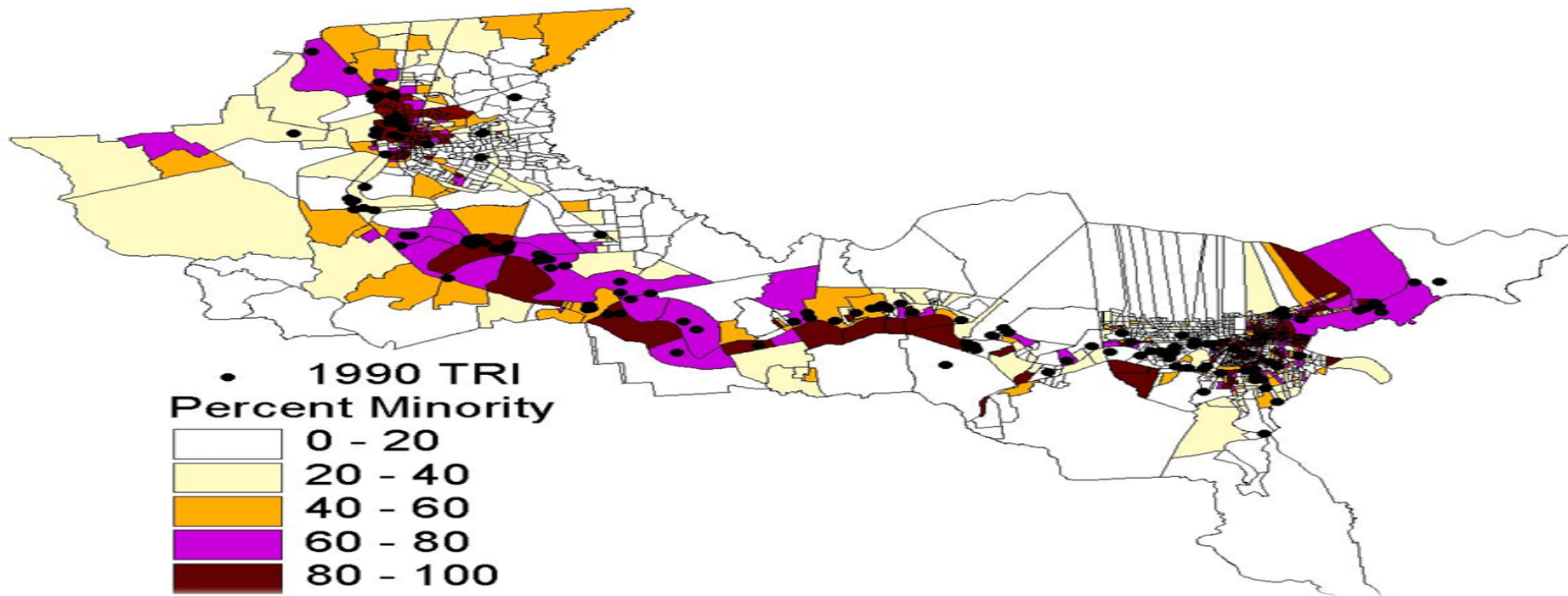
- People living closest to these plants in **Cancer Alley**.
- wondered if their health was being **compromised by the chemical emissions**.
- **but had no way of determining what was being released or how much.**



# DISPARATE IMPACTS

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A spatial distribution analysis conducted by the DSCEJ showed a disparate impact on minority communities in the Mississippi River Chemical Corridor.



# RACE MATTERS

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**80% of African Americans living in the Mississippi River Chemical Corridor live within 5 kilometers or 3 miles of a polluting facility.**



# ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT TRUMPS HUMAN HEALTH

- In Louisiana, facilities were heavily recruited by state and local governments as a means to stimulate economic development.
- Cooperative agreements were written to support the growth of the oil and gas industry.
- Guaranteeing low taxes, low wages, a non-union labor force and a lack of industry regulation.
- The MRCC flourished while communities perished.



## DISPROPORTIONATE ENFORCEMENT

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- Disproportionate enforcement of:
  - Siting
  - Permitting
  - Licensing
- Were a way to get around the new environmental regulations.



# LOUISIANA'S LEGACY OF RACIAL DISCRIMINATION

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- Louisiana's social structure and history undergirded the practice of discrimination leading to disproportionate exposure to toxins and community poisoning with no redress.
- The disenfranchisement of mostly African Americans and poor whites created an unequal pattern of toxic facility siting reflecting the harsh realities of racism and classism endemic to the South.





# ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

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The total abdication of responsibility for environmental protection by a social structure that favored the oil and gas industry produced numerous environmental justice communities.



# ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

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New environmental laws did not protect minority and poor communities.

People of color organized to fight for equal protection.



## STATE OF IMPACTED COMMUNITIES

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### The Early Struggle:

- Louisiana was not alone in the communities' fight against pollution.
- People of Color and low income communities were inundated with dangerous and noxious polluting facilities.



# STATE OF IMPACTED COMMUNITIES

California



Texas



Alabama



Florida



Louisiana



# LOUISIANA TOXIC RELEASES & TRANSFERS

Louisiana is going  
backwards.

Year	Pounds
1985	700,000,000
1995	185,000,000
1998	186,000,000
2002	121,000,000
2008	140,000,000
2012	102,400,000
2018	136,900,000
2019	129,300,000



# WHAT WE DO

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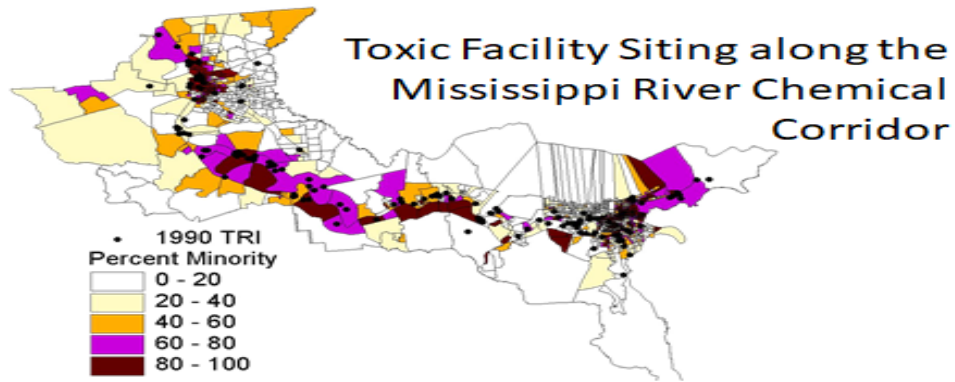
**Research and Policy Studies**

**Community Education & Training  
Initiatives**

**Primary, Secondary and Higher  
Education Initiatives**



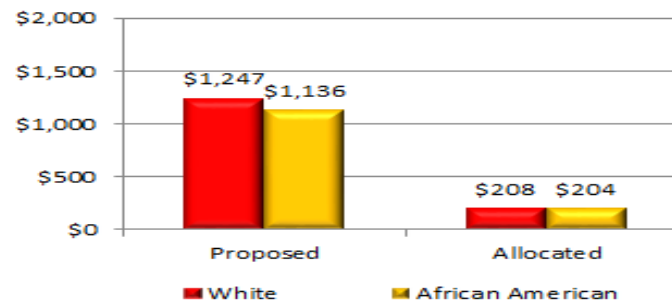
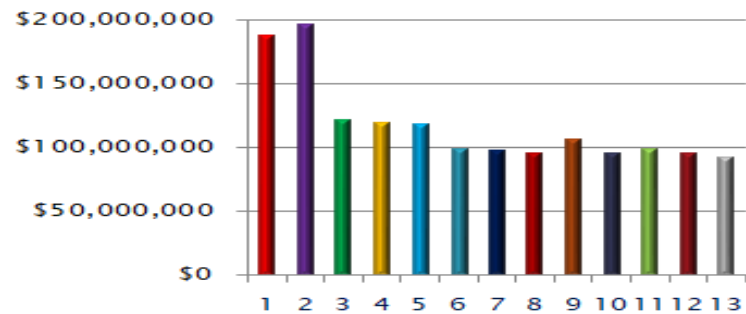
# RESEARCH AND POLICY STUDIES EQUITY ANALYSES & GIS MAPPING



### Air Quality after the BP Oil Spill



### Distribution of Recovery Monies Post-Katrina



Each study was undertaken via partnerships among communities and universities





## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

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- Oil and Gas companies (1990's)
- Katrina - Safe Way Back Home Project
- BP Oil Spill







## CREATING THE NEXT GENERATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE LEADERS

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- HBCU Climate Change Consortium
- Students for Environmental Justice Clubs
- Environmental Justice Internships
- HBCU Climate Change Conference



## HBCU CLIMATE CHANGE CONSORTIUM PURPOSE

Founded in 2011 by Dr. Beverly Wright of the DSCEJ and Dr. Robert Bullard of Texas Southern University to raise awareness about the disproportionate impact of climate change on marginalized communities.

## HBCU CLIMATE CHANGE CONSORTIUM GOALS & OBJECTIVES

The goal is to develop and train HBCU students on issues related to environmental and climate justice policies and community resilience.

## HBCU CLIMATE CHANGE CONSORTIUM STUDENT CENTERED ACTIVITIES

Organize Student Climate Actions  
Conference of the Parties (COP) Participation  
Annual HBCU Climate Change Conferences

# HBCU CLIMATE CHANGE CONSORTIUM



# COP21



# POSTER SESSION HBCU CLIMATE CHANGE CONFERENCE

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# STUDENT SURVEY

## Post Conference Student Participation Survey

Question	Percentage
Summer Internship	60%
Research After Conference	35%
Community Action Participation	50%
Post-Graduate Work - Graduate School	71%



# WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

## Luke Williams

- Bachelor of Science in Sociology, **Southern University A & M Baton Rouge**
- Currently pursuing a law degree from Southern University Law School and works as a law clerk at Baton Rouge City Court.

## Shaciarra Hamilton

- Bachelor of Science, 2017
- **Grambling State University**
- Currently pursuing a PhD. in Clinical Psychology from The Chicago School of Professional Psychology.

## Joy Semien

- Bachelor of Science, Biology, 2015
- **Dillard University**
- Received a masters degree in Urban Planning & Environ. Policy from Texas Southern University.
- Currently working on a PhD in Urban & Regional Sciences from Texas A & M University



# HBCU CLIMATE CHANGE CONFERENCE STUDENTS, MENTORS AND COMMUNITY LEADERS



# HBCU CLIMATE CHANGE CONSORTIUM 8TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE



**October 6 –10, 2021**

Marriott New Orleans, 555 Canal Street, New Orleans, LA

Contact: [maryw@dscej.org](mailto:maryw@dscej.org)

For more information visit [www.dscej.org/events](http://www.dscej.org/events)

Co-conveners:







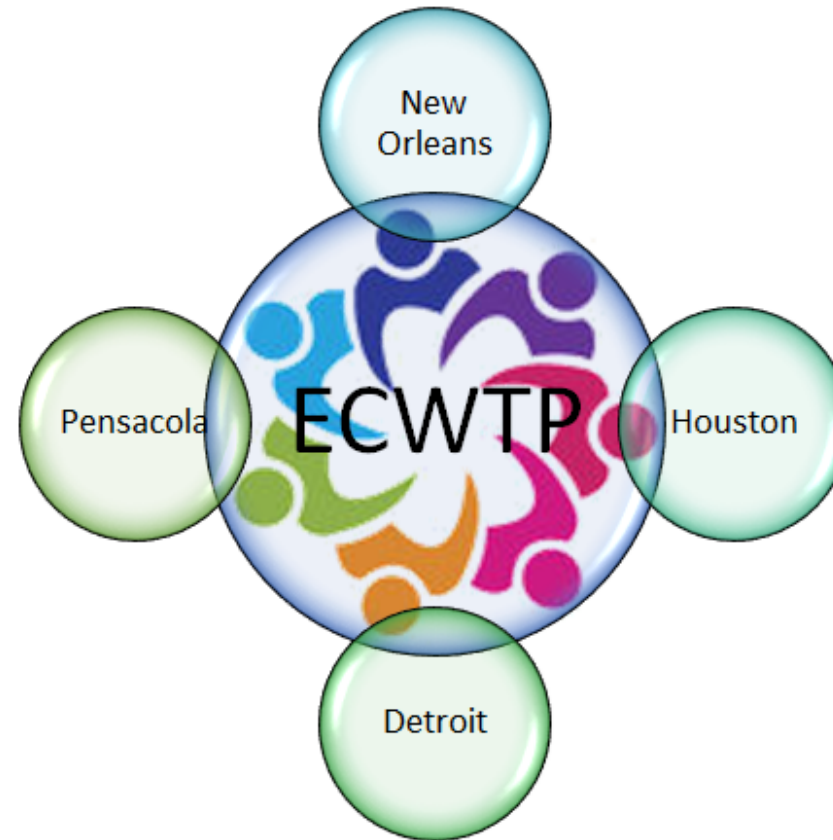
## WORKER TRAINING

- NIEHS Hazardous Waste Worker Training Program.
- Environmental Career Worker Training Program.



## Previous Training Sites

Ft. Lauderdale, Florida
Baton Rouge, Louisiana
West Dallas and Houston, Texas
Hattiesburg, Mississippi
Shreveport, Louisiana
Biloxi/Gulfport, Mississippi
Atlanta, Georgia
Savannah, Georgia
Pensacola, FL
Detroit, MI

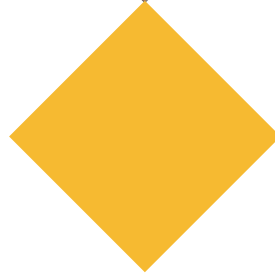


## Current Training Sites

The Center's ECWTP, formerly known as the Minority Worker Training Program, has engaged universities and communities successfully over the last 25 years.

**DSCEJ ENVIRONMENTAL CAREER WORKER TRAINING PROGRAMS  
1994 THROUGH 2021**





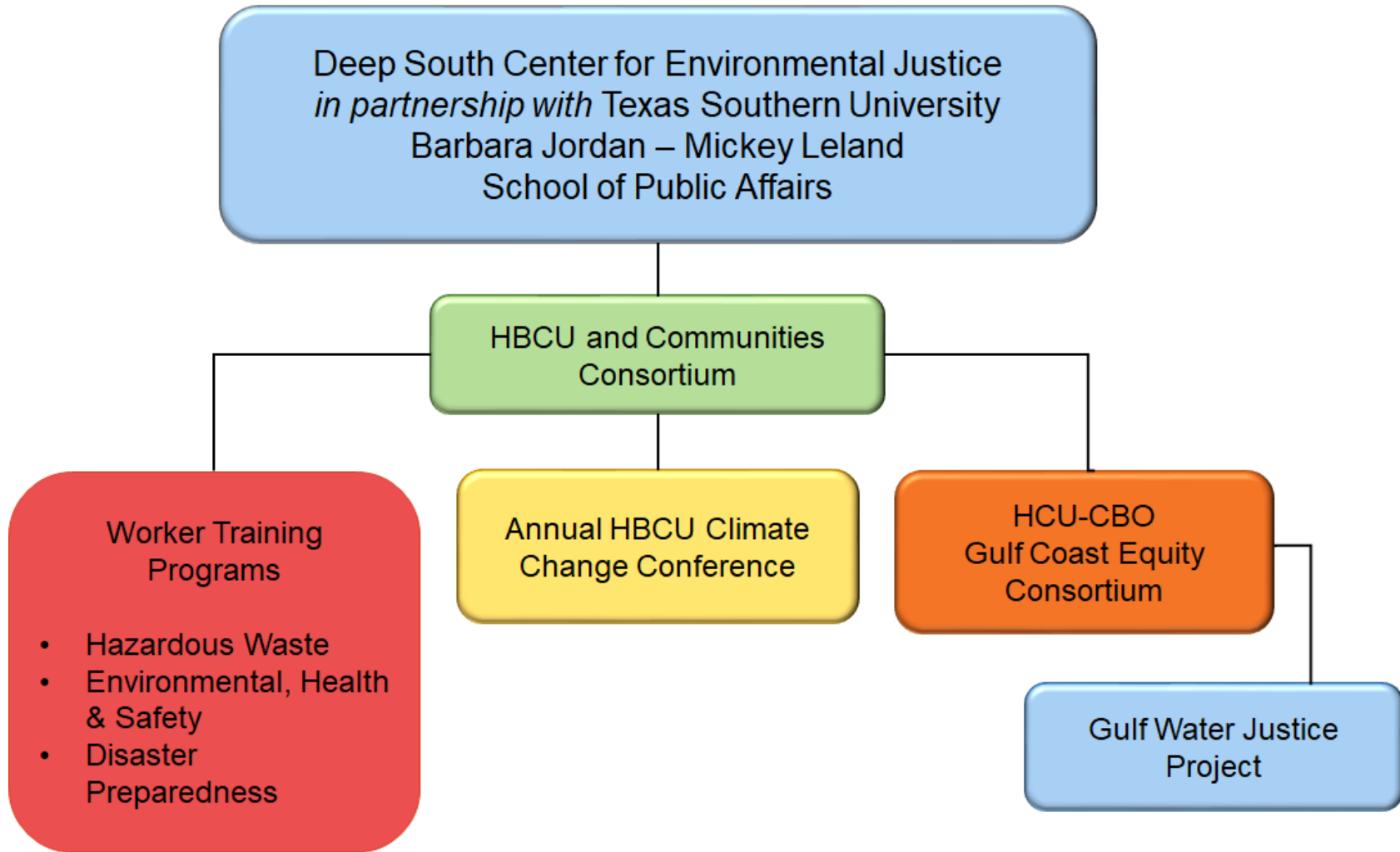
# NAVIGATE NOLA

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Navigate NOLA is a social-emotional and community wellness organization committed to enhancing the well being of the New Orleans citizenry, across the lifespan. The organization accomplishes this through:

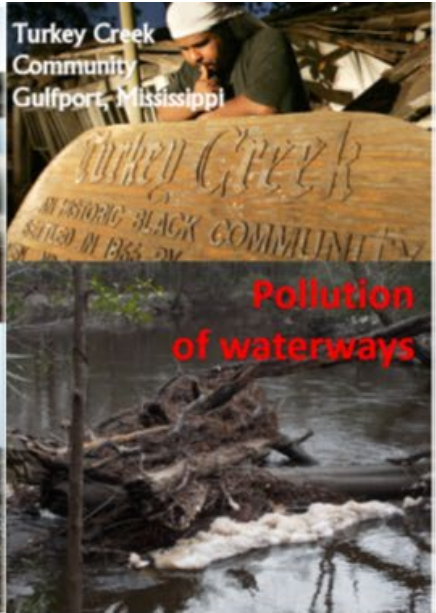
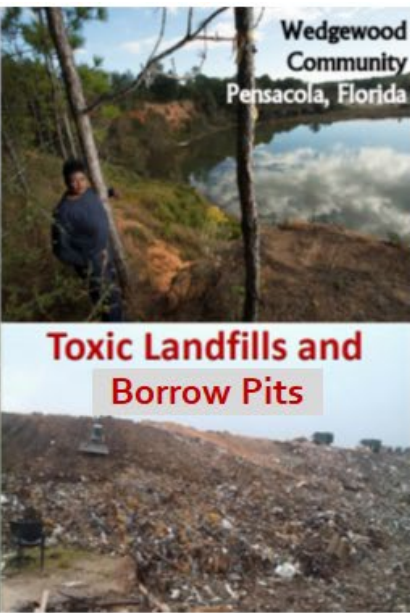
- social and emotional learning programs in Early Childhood Learning Centers and elementary schools.
- gender based positive youth development and leadership programs for African-American adolescent girls
- training, education and professional development for educators and school based mental health professionals
- wellness groups for African-American women that promote self-care practices
- data collection and advocacy that seek to advance policies that combat inequities in education that exacerbate the vulnerability of children of color





## HBCU CLIMATE CHANGE CONSORTIUM





Clean, Healthy, Educated, Safe and Sustainable (CHESS) Community

Center for Sustainable Engagement and Development (CSED)

Achieving Community Tasks Successfully (ACTS)

Unity in the Family Ministry (UFM)

Education, Economics, Environmental, Climate and Health Organization (EEECHO)

## HBCU-CBO GULF COAST EQUITY CONSORTIUM



The image features a map of the Gulf Coast region, including Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, and Florida. Various colored stars are placed on the map to indicate the locations of consortium members. Surrounding the map are several boxes, each containing a group of portrait photos and the names and affiliations of the individuals. The members are categorized into Co-Directors and Program Managers.

**Co-Directors**

- Ruth Story and Kathy Egland (EEECHO)
- Joe Womack (CHESS)
- Dr. Beverly Wright (Deep South Center for Environmental Justice (DSCEJ))
- Dr. Robert Bullard (Texas Southern University (TSU))

**Program Managers**

- Dr. Joan Wesley (Jackson State Univ.)
- Dr. Elicia Moss (Alabama A&M Univ.)
- Monique Harden (Community Engagement DSCEJ)
- Dr. Denae King (Interdisciplinary Research TSU)
- Bridgette Murray (ACTS)
- Arthur Johnson (CSED)
- Rev. Calvin Avant (UFM)
- Dr. John Warford & Dr. Richard Gragg (Florida A&M Univ.)
- Dr. Glenn Johnson (Texas Southern Univ.)
- Dr. Bernard Singleton (Dillard Univ.)
- Dr. David Padgett (GIS Research & Training Tennessee State Univ.)

## HBCU-CBO GULF COAST EQUITY CONSORTIUM



Research-to-Action Agendas	CBO	ISSUES	IMPACTS	CHANGES
	ACTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Poor Air Quality</li> <li>- Truck Traffic/Railroad Concerns</li> <li>- Illegal Dumping</li> <li>- Emergency Management Response</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Health Problems (Cancer, Asthma Respiratory Disease, Digestive Concerns, Allergies and Terminal Illness)</li> <li>- Flooding</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Reduce Air Emissions</li> <li>- Monitoring Air /Water Quality</li> <li>- Soil Testing</li> <li>- Code Enforcement</li> <li>- Community Preparedness Plan/Better Drainage/Emergency Alert System</li> <li>- Community Clean Up</li> </ul>
	CHESS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Air Pollution</li> <li>- Water Quality</li> <li>- Toxic Waste</li> <li>- Quality of Life (No Grocery Stores or Hospitals)</li> <li>- Quality of Education</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Health Issues (Asthma, Sinus, Cancer, Body Aches and Pains, Stress)</li> <li>- Property Values Decrease</li> <li>- Lack of Business</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Decrease Air Pollution</li> <li>- Youth Leadership</li> <li>- Health Clinics</li> </ul>
	CSED	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Lock Expansion</li> <li>- Access to Healthy Food</li> <li>- Wetland Loss</li> <li>- Water Pollution</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Storm Risks</li> <li>- Flooding</li> <li>- Health Issues (Cancer)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Wetland Restoration</li> <li>- Air Pollution (Education)</li> <li>- Water Utility &amp; Drainage Management</li> <li>- Transportation (Clean Vehicles, Goods Movement/Ships, Public Buses)</li> </ul>
	EEECHO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Expensive Insurance Rates</li> <li>- Drainage/Flooding</li> <li>- Lack of Youth Programs</li> <li>- Roadwork/Construction</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Poverty</li> <li>- Quality of Life (Health And Well-Being)</li> <li>- Physical and Mental Health Issues</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Improve Drainage, Ditches, Levees</li> <li>- Better Access to Mental/Physical Healthcare</li> <li>- Lower Flood Insurance</li> </ul>
	UFM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Landfills</li> <li>- Burrow Pits</li> <li>- Holding Ponds</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Health/Quality of Life</li> <li>- Air Quality</li> <li>- Property Values</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Better Communication/Information</li> <li>- Legal Strategy</li> <li>- Cleanup/Burrow Pit Closures</li> <li>- Relocation</li> <li>- Solar Energy</li> <li>- Health Clinic</li> <li>- Funding to Repair Homes</li> <li>- Identify Pits with Signage</li> <li>- Septic Tank Upgrade Subsidies</li> </ul>

## HBCU-CBO GULF COAST EQUITY CONSORTIUM



Advance racial equity in stormwater management and flood mitigation policies through effective and sustained participation of Black climate-vulnerable communities



Hurricane Harvey – Houston, 2017



Street flooding – New Orleans, 2017



Monitoring the Escatawpa River – Mobile, AL



Flash Flood – North Gulfport, 2016

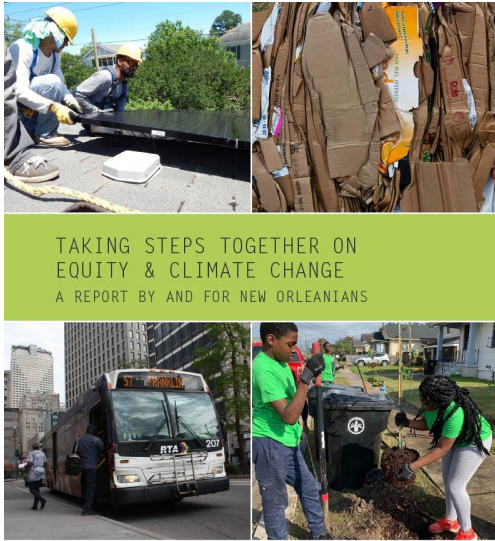


Flood damaged home – Wedgwood, 2014

## GULF WATER JUSTICE PROJECT







TAKING STEPS TOGETHER ON  
EQUITY & CLIMATE CHANGE  
A REPORT BY AND FOR NEW ORLEANIANS



A Climate Action Equity Project



# NO DIRTY ENERGY: 2050

- Clean Energy Standard - Passed!
- Oil & Gas Operations: FERC - Fighting Entergy NOLA.
- Centering Equity: NOLA Climate Equity Plan.

## Entergy would need to be carbon-free by 2050 in New Orleans under these City Council rules

BY JESSICA WILLIAMS | STAFF WRITER MAY 19, 2021 - 1:12 PM 3 min to read

GOVERNMENT & POLITICS

**New Orleans City Council joins \$1 billion complaint against Entergy over mismanagement of Grand Gulf Nuclear Station**





## WHEJAC \* JUSTICE40

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- Working to ensure strong accountability and oversight of Justice40.
- Asked to represent Florida on advisory council.



# THE OPPORTUNITY

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# TOWARD AN EQUITABLE ENERGY FUTURE

- Address policy gaps and inaction on air pollution reduction and flood protection;
- Re-launch our environmental justice campaign targeting the oil and gas industry in the Gulf Coast Region; and
- Advocate for an equitable energy transition that is focused on the efficient use of renewables, environmental remediation and community restoration.
- Launch a policy institute that educates community-based organizations.
- Expanding the worker training program
- Continue to feed the pipeline of African American students in the climate, environmental, social sciences, and legal fields.





## TOWARD AN EQUITABLE ENERGY FUTURE

- Be forward thinking in our energy investments and education:
  - Does the production or use of the energy harm communities? Perpetuate racially disproportionate pollution burdens? Contribute to the climate crisis?
- Determine our priorities going forward through the lens of building momentum for land, air, water protections
- Center environmental justice and equity in our laws, protections, funding, implementation
  - “False solutions” education
  - EJ analysis of clean energy in way that promotes wellness and health
    - Clean Energy Standard /CAA edited volume of work
    - Teach-in for CCS/CCUS





## NATIONAL BLACK ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE NETWORK

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- The National Black Environmental Justice Network (NBEJN) is a national coalition of environmental justice organizations and activists of African descent.
- NBEJN is dedicated to improving the lives of Black people and addressing the systemic racism that harms and denies Black people equal access to environmental, climate, racial and economic justice, health equity, political power, civil rights and human rights.
- Our theory of change encourages active participation by individuals and organizations across spatial location (urban, suburban, and rural), disciplines, economic strata, and generations with the goal of promoting a healthy, just, and sustainable future. NBEJN seeks to raise awareness of environmental issues among African Americans and African descent populations around the world that are impacted by environmental racism.
- NBEJN has undertaken a four-point strategy to combat environmental racism that focuses on (1) safe and healthy communities; (2) sustainable development, climate justice, and clean production; (3) civil rights and equal protection laws and policies; and (4) international human rights protection.



# WE DO BIG THINGS

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RESEARCH AND  
POLICY STUDIES



COMMUNITY AND  
STUDENT EDUCATION,  
TRAINING, AND  
ENGAGEMENT



ENVIRONMENTAL, HEALTH  
AND SAFETY  
WORKER TRAINING