



## **Laura Johnson**

Office Director, Environmental Public Health Sciences, Washington State Department of Health

Laura Johnson is the Director of the Office of Environmental Public Health Sciences within the Division of Environmental Public Health at the Washington State Department of Health. Laura represents the Department of Health on the state's Environmental Justice Task Force and co-chaired the Mapping Subcommittee of the Task Force with Millie Piazza. The Office of Environmental Public Health Sciences includes the Washington Tracking Network program, which is focused on making public health data more accessible and includes the Environmental Health Disparities Map. Laura has worked in a variety of roles at the Department of Health since 2012. Prior to working in Washington, she served as the Operations Manager for a USAID-funded behavior change communication project for avian influenza prevention and control. In this role she was based in Washington, D.C. but worked globally, mainly focused on South and Southeast Asia. She has a bachelor's degree in Environmental Studies, Peace and Conflict Studies, and Religious Studies from Guilford College in North Carolina and a master's degree in Marine Affairs from the University of Washington.

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Millie Piazza

**Millie Piazza, Ph.D.** Environmental Justice & Title VI Senior Advisor  
Washington State Department of Ecology

Millie Piazza is the Environmental Justice & Title VI Senior Advisor at the Washington State Department of Ecology. In this role, she works to integrate environmental justice (EJ) priorities into agency programs, provide guidance on addressing EJ challenges in Washington, and elevate awareness and promote best practices on Civil Rights compliance. She has broad experience in the field of national and international environmental justice, with formal training in environmental sociology and policy. Millie currently serves on the National Environmental Justice Advisory Council to EPA, WA Governor's Interagency Council on Health Disparities, and WA State Environmental Justice Task Force.



Esther Min

Ph.D. candidate at the University of Washington

Now working toward her Ph.D. at the University of Washington (UW), Min fosters partnerships between academic researchers and communities through two community-driven environmental justice projects – the **Home Air in Agriculture: Pediatric Intervention Trial (HAPI)** and the **Washington Environmental Health Disparities Map Project**. Unlike traditional scientific research, the community identifies research questions and priorities that will address their specific needs.

Min is part of a research team led by Catherine Karr, M.D., Ph.D., that works with El Proyecto Bienestar to improve the health of children living in the Yakima Valley of Washington State, where intense agricultural production impacts air quality in the region. The team is investigating how air quality in the home influences respiratory symptoms in Latino children with asthma.

Min is particularly passionate about is the **Washington Environmental Health Disparities Map Project**. This interactive tool ranks environmental health risks for communities throughout Washington state based on exposure to diesel emissions, proximity to hazardous waste facilities, and lead risk in housing, for example. The combined risk factor scores help to highlight health inequities between communities.

Min explained that the project began when Front and Centered, a statewide environmental justice group, approached UW researchers with the idea of developing the map. The partnership grew to include various government agencies and regional air quality management groups and included input from communities gathered through listening sessions.

“I’m really proud of our successful partnership,” Min said. “We started without a stable funding resource, but we had a lot of passionate people coming together to address a need. We hope this map will provide information on environmental health disparities in Washington that decision makers can use to address them.”