



Key Environmental Consulting

The "Key" to EJ



2024

ANNUAL REPORT

This report reflects the achievements in the year of 2024 by the Key Environmental team.



As we reflect on the past year at Key Environmental Consulting, our efforts and achievements exemplify our deep commitment to community empowerment and environmental justice. We have not only continued to expand our reach but have also deepened our impact, offering targeted, effective solutions across diverse communities.

In 2024, we focused on projects that addressed urgent environmental and social challenges. From providing essential technical assistance for EPA-funded initiatives to empowering underserved farmers through the KEEP-NC Project, our work has been both varied and impactful. We engaged with a broad range of clients and partners, offering them not only our expertise but also our unwavering support and commitment to their goals.

Kibri Everett

Table Of Content

About Us	03
Our Services	04
Our Milestones	05
Projects Map	07
Project Summaries	08
Our Mission	13
Our Promise	14

About Us

Key Environmental Consulting works with public, private, community-based organizations, and government agencies to deliver equity, justice, and restoration. We also have lived experiences in communities with energy and environmental justice concerns that we draw on to support those on the frontlines.



Knowledge, Education, and Elevation for Producers in NC Blueberry Planting

Our Services

Grant Writing

We specialize in crafting compelling proposals that secure financial support from federal, state, and philanthropic sources. Let us navigate the intricacies of grant applications, ensuring your environmental justice initiatives receive the funding they deserve.

Administrative Support

We collaborate closely with your team, providing invaluable support in project development, planning, and execution. From community engagement strategies to comprehensive project timelines, we ensure every aspect aligns with your organization's goals, empowering you to make a lasting impact.

Environmental Technical Assistance

We conduct thorough research, collect and analyze environmental data, and develop comprehensive reports to inform your decision-making processes. Our commitment to evidence-based solutions ensures that your initiatives are grounded in the latest research, fostering impactful and sustainable outcomes.

Technical Support and Analyses

Our team leverages spatial data to create insightful maps that highlight environmental disparities, identify vulnerabilities, and guide strategic decision-making. Whether visualizing community assets or analyzing environmental risks, our GIS solutions bring clarity to complex challenges and provide you with tools needed to lobby for changes.



Unlocking Progress

Our 2024 Milestones

Securing Community Change Grants for Impact

The EPA's Environmental and Climate Justice Community Change Grants program was a game-changer in 2024, making approximately \$2 billion dollars in Inflation Reduction Act funds available for environmental projects in disinvested communities throughout the country. As a result, we spent much of last year doing what we do best – providing technical assistance to communities across the United States to support them with securing these grants.

Our technical assistance workshops focused on helping communities with their project's development and management, including identifying necessary activities and resources, setting measurable goals, and determining timelines. Together, we were able to develop the building blocks needed for successful Community Change Grant proposals. We are proud to have worked with 48 different communities, everywhere from North Carolina to South Dakota to the U.S. Virgin Islands, and to have assisted the proposals of two grant recipients, securing over \$23 million in funding.

\$3 Million Grant

Secured for a disaster resiliency initiative

\$20 Million Grant

Secured for a large-scale community sustainability project

Supporting Sustainable Agriculture for Underserved Farmers with KEEP-NC

With the integral role it plays in our society, it is important that we prioritize sustainable agriculture among producers; however, climate changes and societal pressures have resulted in the steady decline of small, private sector farmers. Thanks to a long history of environmental injustices and current climate trends, black farmers especially have seen a dramatic decline in population. The Knowledge, Education, and Elevation for Producers (KEEP-NC) project is a partnership between our team and Southeast Raleigh Vicinity Emerging (S.E.R.V.E.) that is focused on finding ways to mitigate inequities and ensure resources for black producers.

Through this partnership, KEEP-NC has held 12 different events, each exploring ways to bolster the capacity of black farmers and enhance their knowledge of available USDA resources and programs. Data compiled by the KEEP-NC team highlighted that a lack of financial resources and a lack of educational information were the two largest barriers for black farmers in North Carolina. Working diligently over the past year, the team engaged with individuals in **15 different counties** across North Carolina through events focused

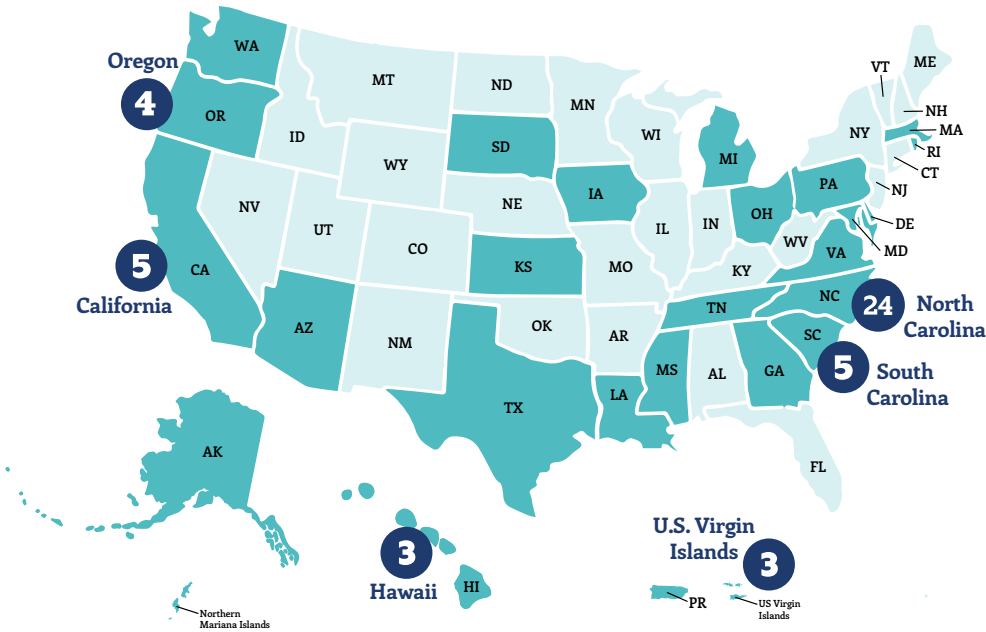
on growing practices and education, technical assistance and networking, providing opportunities for at-risk youth, and much more.

We are excited for the future of this project, which, over the next two years, will continue to address these barriers while also developing specialized training to build a resilient collective of marginalized farmers. KEEP-NC provides a unique combination of farming experience, grant writing, and community engagement that is pivotal for our mission to address the needs and social problems of the agricultural sector.



Our 2024 Reach

The map below shows where we have provided technical assistance in the U.S. this past year, highlighting the number of organizations assisted in our areas of highest activity.



The graphic below shows the number of organizations we aided in the remaining areas.



Building Momentum

Our 2024 Activities

February

Knowledge, Education, and Elevation for Producers in NC Blueberry Planting

On February 24th, our team delivered a hands-on urban farming workshop that involved planting three different varieties of blueberry shrubs at Millbank Urban Farm in Raleigh, NC. Under the leadership of Demetrius Hunter and with the technical expertise of Shaw University professor Dr. Derrick Sauls, the workshop provided youth, aged 3-14, an opportunity to engage in agriculture and understand the value of self-sustenance. Funded by the USDA, the project emphasizes food sovereignty and addresses the challenges associated with the food swamp that surrounds this neighborhood in Raleigh.



March

"Comprehensive Environmental Analysis Unit (EAU) Services" Contract

Led by Michael Baker International as the prime contractor, our team secured a contract with the North Carolina Department of Transportation in March of 2024. The "Comprehensive Environmental Analysis Unit (EAU) Services" contract focuses on public involvement, community studies, environmental justice, and statewide natural environment studies. Through open dialogue and collaboration, we not only will enhance project outcomes, but also cultivate a sense of ownership and inclusivity.

April

2024 Clean Energy High School Career Fair

On April 19th, our team attended The Center for Energy Education's 2024 Clean Energy High School Career Fair, where students were able to connect with over 25 leading industry partners. We had the opportunity to speak with students about the importance of a sustainable future and how they can get involved by pursuing environmentally focused careers. While STEM degrees are very common and necessary for some clean energy jobs, we reminded students that everyone can find their place within the environmental field.

2024 Black in Environment Conference

We proudly were a sponsor for the 2024 Black in Environment Conference, held by the Black in Environment non-profit. This event happened virtually on April 21st-24th and in-person at the Howard University Campus in Washington, DC on April 25th-27th. The conference exists to form and enhance connection among Black environmentalists of all backgrounds, as well as share and highlight Black scholarship and activism in the environmental field. Our team enjoyed celebrating Black contributions to the environmental movement and hearing from community leaders, scientists, creatives, and more from across the globe.



Historically Underutilized Business (HUB) Certification

We received our certification as Historically Underutilized Business (HUB) by the North Carolina Department of Administration. As a certified HUB firm, we will receive increased assistance in identifying local and state government contract opportunities, as well as business development opportunities.

June

Technical Assistance in the Virgin Islands

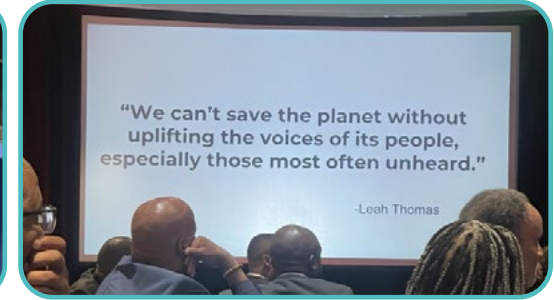
We had the incredible opportunity to visit the U.S. Virgin Islands in June to provide technical assistance. We held a two-day workshop surrounding logic model development, project development and management, and proposal guidance. The workshop was very productive, and our efforts help this group secure a Community Change Grant.



"The Power of Us" Conference

From June 12th-14th, we attended the African American Alliance's "The Power of Us" Conference in Chicago, IL, as one of 15 vendors. Community members from all over came together to discuss community capacity building, funding updates on green lending to underserved and minority, and the power of collective action in creating change. The African American Alliance of CDFI CEOs exists to advocate for institutional and public policies, empower Black-led CDFIs (Community Development Financial Institutions), break barriers to economic development, and advance racial equity and Black wealth.

Also discussed was The Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund (GGRF), a \$27 billion investment from the Inflation Reduction Act that was created to mobilize financing and private capital to address the climate crisis, advance economic equity, and promote energy independence. The funding also strives to deliver justice and economic revitalization to historically marginalized and underinvested communities.



July

Southeast Environmental Justice Summit

At the beginning of July, we attended the Southeast Environmental Justice Summit in Atlanta, GA. Organized by The Harambee House/Citizens for Environmental Justice, this Afrikan-centered event was filled with cultural empowerment and exceptional performances. We had the chance to provide onsite technical assistance to community groups who are applying for EPA grants and network with our fellow colleagues and collaborators.



August

NC Museum of History Listening Session

On August 26, the NC Museum of History partnered with the Raleigh Black Farmers Hub and Brocade Studio to host a small group gathering to discuss and inform museums new exhibits. We were pleased to be a part of this discussion around North Carolina's layered history and its influence on today and the future of the state, along with sharing in the rich African American community and food.

September

2024 Systems Change Conference

Our team member, Catherine Chapman, headed out to a farm in Hickory, NC on September 9th and 10th as part of the Carolina Farm Trust's Systems Change Conference. This conference featured expert speakers, discussing how stakeholders across philanthropic, corporate, governmental, and community groups can work together to create meaningful change for our agricultural and food systems. Discussion topics included capturing digital data for farm management and climate initiatives, government role in systems change, and navigating positive and collaborative change in decarbonization efforts.

October

2024 NC BREATHE Conference

On October 1st and 2nd, we attended the 2024 NC BREATHE Conference, North Carolina's premier climate change and health conference, organized by CleanAIRE NC. The conference, located in Durham, NC, consisted of two days of presentations, panel discussions, keynote, speakers, and collaborative learning around PFAs, climate change and health, and meaningful change. We had a table set up on Day 2 of the event, where attendees could learn more about how we can connect science to practice.

Economically Disadvantaged Women-Owned Small Business Certification

We received our certification as an Economically Disadvantaged Women-Owned Small Business (ED-WOSB) through the U.S. Small Business Administration. The Women-Owned Small Business Program was created to help provide a level playing field for women business owners in the federal contract system.

This allows Key Environmental Consulting to have more opportunities for federal contracts, as the federal government's goal is to award at least 5% of all federal contracting dollars to women-owned small businesses each year.

Solar Fest 2024

On October 3rd, we attended the Center for Energy Education's Solar Fest, where participants could learn more about how solar energy and agriculture intersect during a day of live music, food, and captivating discussions around renewable energy. We had a great time connecting with the community and students of all ages from surrounding local schools.



November:

Leading Inclusive Transformation in the Geosciences (LIT GEO) Intercultural Summit

Our founder, Kibri Everett, presented at the Leading Inclusive Transformation in the Geosciences (LIT GEO) Intercultural Summit. Hosted by North Carolina Central University, this summit brought together geospatial teams from NCCU (HBCU), University of Puerto Rico-Arecibo (HSI), and East Carolina University (PWI), creating a learning ecosystem centered around diversity, community engagement, and environmental justice.

Ms. Everett shared insights from a community science project aimed at addressing environmental injustices in Cook County, Georgia, where pollution disproportionately impacts vulnerable, lower-income populations. The project leveraged GIS technology and community forums to highlight the cumulative environmental risks faced by residents and inform potential advocacy and policy interventions. We were thrilled to be part of such important conversations and initiatives that build capacity and drive justice and change in underserved communities.

National GIS Day Celebration

On November 20th, we celebrated National GIS Day at Not Just Coffee in Charlotte, where attendees were able to learn and participate in conversations about the latest advancements in Geographic Information Systems and how they are being used to tackle environmental challenges and solve global issues.

Our event featured Keynote speaker Michelle Eichinger, Ph.D., who presented her research: "Intelligent Mapping: Harnessing AI for Geospatial Insights and Innovation." Dr. Eichinger is the owner of Planning4Health Solutions, with over 20 years of experience as a subject matter expert in community health and development. We also had the chance to hear from Brian Magi, Ph. D., with his presentation on "Centering Community in the Development of an Air Quality Dashboard."



December:

Farmer's Night Out Event

We helped plan the Farmer's Night Out event on December 14th in Jacksonville, NC. This informal event was meant to celebrate farmers, with opportunities for networking, collaboration, and guidance for working with the USDA. We were able to hear about Knowledge, Education, and Elevation for Producers in NC (KEEP-NC) success stories throughout 2024, complete a year in review of the KEEP-NC program, and hear from USDA staff about NRCS programs. We also spent time looking ahead to 2025 and highlighting everything the new year has in store for the program.



Our mission is to provide high-quality scientific, technical, and administrative services to support sustainable solutions and informed decision-making in environmental and resource management.



Looking ahead to 2025, Key Environmental Consulting promises to intensify our efforts in innovative, impactful projects. Our commitment extends beyond delivering projects; we plan to set new standards in environmental practice, emphasizing resilience and adaptability. We pledge to keep community needs and sustainability at the core of our actions, ensuring that our solutions are not only effective but also inclusive. Through diligent work and persistent advocacy, we will continue to support our communities in facing environmental challenges.

Key Environmental Team

2025 PROMISE



Let's open the doors to a
brighter future **together**

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