

Economically Disadvantaged Communities Reference Sheet

San Francisco Bay Restoration Authority (SFBRA)

The purpose of this document is to provide guidance to grant applicants in locating 'economically disadvantaged communities' as defined in the SFBRA's adopted Grant Program Guidelines and access to resources explaining which EDCs are communities of particular concern.

Q: How do I determine if my project is in an economically disadvantaged community, as defined by the Restoration Authority in the Grant Program Guidelines?

A: The Grant Program Guidelines state *"An economically disadvantaged community (EDC) is defined as a community with a median household income less than 80% of the area median income (AMI)."*

The Restoration Authority has produced maps of 80% Area Median Income for the San Francisco Bay Area Region (PDF and interactive versions) to assist grant applicants in determining whether their project is located in an EDC. These maps can be found on the Restoration Authority's website, on the Grants page under Additional Resources.

Q: How do I determine whether my EDC is a community of particular concern?

A: The Grant Program Guidelines state *"Within this set of [EDCs], communities of particular concern include those that: are historically underrepresented in environmental policymaking and/or projects, bear a disproportionate environmental and health burden, are most vulnerable to climate change impacts due to lack of resources required for community resilience, or are severely burdened by housing costs, increasing the risk of displacement."*

a. **Historically underrepresented in environmental policymaking and/or projects:**

- i. The Restoration Authority is not currently aware of any one resource (map viewer, or data) that specifically and quantitatively represents this criterion. This criterion will be captured qualitatively.
- ii. **Rationale:** Environmental justice activists have long protested the marginalization of poor and minority communities and their inability to participate actively and effectively in environmental decision-making processes. In non-English-speaking communities, inability to comprehend notices or official documents prevents participation. And the technical nature of many environmental documents creates special barriers to understanding that even English-speaking individuals frequently cannot overcome. Ongoing discrimination, the lingering effects of past discrimination, and other reasons for marginalization within the political community present obstacles to participating in political processes in general. The result is that the poor and communities of color, unlike many other communities, do not have the wealth

and access to political decision-makers that can provide for adequate alternative channels and options to influence environmental concerns.¹

- iii. The EDC definition already includes explicit criteria to capture low-income communities. Although a map does not exist to represent other types of impacted communities, data exist to capture characteristics of and barriers faced by these communities. [BCDC's Community Indicators Map](#) as well as [CalEnviroScreen socioeconomic indicators](#) include many of these criteria. These include:
 - 1. **Linguistically-isolated households:** percent limited English-speaking households (Source: 2011-2015 American Community Survey)
 - 2. **Educational attainment:** population with less than a high school education (Source: 2011-2015 ACS)
 - 3. **Race and ethnicity:** Hispanic or Latino, African American, Asian American, and/or Native American origin (2011-2015 ACS)
- iv. Consistent with the criteria above, qualitative descriptions about how the project engages marginalized communities including, but not limited to, immigrant and/or refugee communities, individuals without high school education, and/or Tribes could work here.

b. Bear a disproportionate environmental and health burden.

- i. In the CalEnviroScreen viewer, clicking on a census tract generates the “score” for each pollution indicator:
<https://oehha.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=4560cfbce7c745c299b2d0cbb07044f5>
- ii. US EPA EJSCREEN displays individual environmental hazard indicators on the map: <https://ejscreen.epa.gov/mapper/>

c. Are most vulnerable to climate change impacts due to lack of resources required for community resilience.

- i. The Restoration Authority is not currently aware of any one resource (map viewer, or data) that specifically and quantitatively represents this criterion. This criterion will be captured qualitatively.
- ii. BCDC's Community Indicators Map provides relevant analysis:
 - 1. Map: http://www.adaptingtorisingtides.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/BCDC_ART_RegionalCommunityIndicators_20170918.png
 - 2. Guide: <http://www.adaptingtorisingtides.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/BCDC-Community-Indicators-for-Flood-Risk-User-Guide-2016.pdf>

¹ Tseming Yang, Environmental Regulation, Tort Law and Environmental Justice: What Could Have Been, 41 Washburn L.J. 612-613 (2002).

iii. **Indicators of climate change vulnerability (Environmental Justice Screening Methodology²):**

1. **Impervious surfaces:** percent of area covered by impervious surface (National Land Cover Dataset)
2. **Isolated elderly living alone:** percent elderly living alone (Source: ACS)
3. **Households with no vehicle:** percent of residents that own a car (Source ACS)
4. **Renter-occupied households:** percent not-owner occupied households (ACS)

d. **Are severely burdened by housing costs, increasing risk of displacement.**

- i. Housing Cost Burden³ can be described qualitatively or quantitatively:
 1. BCDC has data on Housing Cost Burden, that is included in their Community Indicators for Flood Risk dataset (9 indicators total).
 - a. BCDC's Community Indicators for Flood Risk User Guide assesses 9 indicators, including Housing Cost Burden: <http://www.adaptingtorisingtides.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/BCDC-Community-Indicators-for-Flood-Risk-User-Guide-2016.pdf>
 - b. BCDC's San Francisco Bay Region Map depicts the 9 indicators, including Housing Cost Burden⁴: http://www.adaptingtorisingtides.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/BCDC_ART_RegionalCommunityIndicators_20170918.png
 - c. Individual maps that call out Housing Cost Burden are currently available only for the following three jurisdictions⁵:
 - i. San Mateo County – Housing Cost Burden Map: http://www.adaptingtorisingtides.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/San_Mateo_Community_Indicators_Maps.pdf
 - ii. Contra Costa County – Housing Cost Burden Map: http://www.adaptingtorisingtides.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/Contra_Costa_People_Mapbook_Web.pdf

² See Table 4 (pg. 17) of Update and Statewide Expansion of the Environmental Justice Screening Method (EJSM) published by California Air Resources Board. May 2016. <https://www.arb.ca.gov/research/apr/past/11-336.pdf>

³ BCDC defines Housing Cost Burden as the “% of households spending greater than 50% of their income on housing.” The source of this data is the 2010-2014 American Community Survey.

⁴ Other indicators included in this map (in addition to Housing Cost Burden) are: Language, Access to a vehicle, Race and Ethnicity, Education, Housing Tenure, Transportation Cost Burden, Income, and Age, as outlined here: <http://www.adaptingtorisingtides.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/BCDC-Community-Indicators-for-Flood-Risk-User-Guide-2016.pdf>

⁵ BCDC plans to produce a SF Bay region-wide map for just the Housing Cost Burden later this Winter 2017/2018.

- iii. City of Oakland, Housing Cost Burden Map:
http://www.adaptingtorisingtides.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/Oakland_Community_Indicators.pdf
 2. CalEnviroScreen's approach to Housing Burden and associated indicator map also includes relevant data.⁶ This method more accurately measures housing costs by using data made available by U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. The data is available for both renter-occupied units as well as owner-occupied units and incorporates utility expenses into home costs.
 - a. Includes data on the percent of households in a census tract that are both low income (making less than 80% of the HUD Area Median Family Income) and severely burdened by housing costs (paying greater than 50% of their income to housing costs). (5-year estimates, 2009-2013).⁷
 3. Displacement Risk: <http://www.urbandisplacement.org/map/sf>

⁶ <https://oehha.ca.gov/calenviroscreen/indicator/housing-burden>

⁷ See pg. 128 of CalEnviroScreen 3.0 Report on Housing Burden.

<https://oehha.ca.gov/media/downloads/calenviroscreen/report/ces3report.pdf>