# California Environmental Justice Alliance (CEJA) Memo on Energy Equity Objectives & Metrics

Members of CEJA’s Energy Equity Committee prepared this document to demonstrate the ways in which agencies, such as the CPUC and the CEC, should be thinking about energy equity objectives and tracking their success.

Composed of staff that organize in some of the most polluted and under-resourced communities in California, CEJA’s Energy Equity Committee is uniquely positioned to provide these suggested objectives and indicators. CEJA wants to encourage tracking energy equity in a way that deeply reflects what is being experienced on the ground in primarily low-income and disadvantaged communities.

Energy Equity Objectives and Indicators:

Indicators need to be developed and tracked to systematically assess how well programs are reaching and benefiting low income and disadvantaged communities. These indicators should be standardized to ensure that these communities are being served well. Metrics can be developed to set a baseline and track performance over time. These standardized equity metrics should track all aspects of the decarbonization transition, including employment, job quality, health and safety, and resilience.

To ensure equity, four steps must be taken: (1) equity must be embedded in the mission, vision and values; (2) equity must be built into the process; (3) energy equity outcomes must be ensured; and (4) policies and programs must be measured and analyzed for success in achieving equity.

The CEC divides its energy equity indicators into three separate categories: access, investment, and resilience.[[1]](#footnote-1) Our recommendations for this purpose will utilize the same general categorization.

Access to Benefits and Technologies:

1. Overall Question: Are the benefits of the programs or policies accessible to households throughout the community, particularly communities of color, low-income populations, tribal and indigenous communities, and immigrant communities? Are the programs as or more accessible to these communities than they are to the rest of the state?
2. Engagement: Has the program been designed with a process that engages the community, provides community decision-making, and empowers the community in a meaningful, authentic and culturally appropriate manner?
3. Economic Feasibility: Are low-income and disadvantaged communities being provided access to economically feasible technologies to decarbonize and upgrade their homes and buildings? Are these services being offered in a holistic and comprehensive way?

* To assess economic feasibility, the following should be evaluated:
* Direct financial and energy specific costs and benefits of the individual program, including the implementation costs of the program to utilities, ratepayers, and the participating households. Quantifiable benefits including lowered energy costs and increased energy efficiency.
* Direct health, comfort, and safety impacts of the option on participating households.
* Indirect costs and benefits to society and the environment, including improved air quality in the community, reduced GHGs, and increased diversity in energy sources.[[2]](#footnote-2)

1. Benefits, Jobs and Economic Development: Has the program been designed to provide access to high-quality jobs and economic opportunities for low-income and disadvantaged communities? Are there mechanisms used to assure particular benefits such as financial resources or technical assistance to low-income and disadvantaged communities?

Investment:

1. Overall Economic Investment: Does the program include targeted investments in low-income and disadvantaged communities, including technology development and demonstration funding? Does the program include infrastructure investments, emergency preparedness, technical assistance and capacity building? How does the investment and development of technologies reduce the disparities these communities face?
2. Capacity Building Investment: Does the program include education and outreach for low-income and disadvantaged communities?
3. Finance Programs: Have programs and policies been developed to ensure that decarbonization technology is affordable and economically feasible?
4. Research and Development: Has research and development been funded to enable targeted benefits for low-income customers and disadvantaged communities, and the tracking of these benefits in addition to barriers faced to receiving them?
5. Investment in Economic Opportunities: Has there been investment in economic opportunities, including high-quality jobs, for low-income and disadvantaged communities?

Resilience:

1. Reliability: Have programs been developed to protect communities from potential grid outages?
2. Displacement Protection: Have programs been developed to prevent displacement of low-income and disadvantaged communities?
3. Affordable Energy: Have programs been developed to ensure that energy is affordable in the immediate, mid, and long-term?
4. Health and Safety: Have programs been developed to ensure that health and safety is protected?
5. Adaptation Consideration: Have the programs been developed to respond to the changing climate?

References:

California Energy Commission SB 350 Low-Income Barriers Study, http://www.energy.ca.gov/sb350/barriers\_report/.

California Clean Energy Equity Framework and Indicators, staff draft. May 2017 o http://docketpublic.energy.ca.gov/PublicDocuments/17-IEPR-08/

California Energy Commission, Energy Equity Indicators, Tracking Progress, June 2018, <https://www.energy.ca.gov/sites/default/files/2019-12/energy_equity_indicators_ada.pdf>

Greenlining Institute, Making Equity Real in Climate Adaptation and Community Resilience Policies and Programs, A Guidebook, August 2019, <https://greenlining.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/Making-Equity-Real-in-Climate-Adaption-and-Community-Resilience-Policies-and-Programs-A-Guidebook-1.pdf>

1. <https://www.energy.ca.gov/sites/default/files/2019-12/energy_equity_indicators_ada.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. See D.17-05-014, p. 34. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)