



KEY IDENTIFY WHO AND WHERE TO TARGET INVESTMENTS

Before we can address disparities through investments, we must identify who and where these investments will be targeted. The “Making Justice40 a Reality” report includes examples of screening tools already used in several states. From these, we can apply best practices and lessons learned that will help agencies define and identify which communities to prioritize for investments.

A strategy that defines and identifies “disadvantaged communities” is essential to equitably guiding Justice40 investments. These include: 1) pollution exposures, 2) proximity to pollution sources (“environmental effects”), 3) health vulnerabilities (“sensitive populations”), and 4) socioeconomic disadvantages.

HOW AND WHERE TO TARGET INVESTMENTS:



DEFINE AND IDENTIFY “FRONTLINE COMMUNITIES”

to invest in those most under-resourced and affected by disparities and injustices.



UTILIZE MULTIPLE TOOLS AND METHODS

as needed to target disparities that agencies seek to address, in a fit-for-purpose fashion to the specific situation.



DEVELOP NEXT-GENERATION TOOLS

that identify and track the extent of disparities in communities over time and that support robust evaluation and accountability.



THE CHALLENGE: We must not rely on one screening tool to adequately identify disadvantaged communities.

TRIED-AND-TRUE SCREENING STRATEGIES:

The screening tools developed in states across the country are at different stages of development and implementation. From them, we can identify lessons learned, enabling us to design an effective, comprehensive approach to directing equitable investments.



SCREENING FOR POLLUTION BURDEN AND COMMUNITY VULNERABILITY

Lessons can be learned from several states that are considering or already using screening tools to identify disadvantaged communities. The most popular type of tool screens geographical areas using an index that measures pollution exposure and health and socioeconomic vulnerability. Two examples of those tools are Maryland's EJ Screen Tool and the California Communities Environmental Health Screening Tool (CalEnviro-Screen, or CES). CES, the longest-running tool of its kind in the country, is used to identify disadvantaged communities eligible for California Climate Investments.

Strength: Identifies communities both disproportionately affected by pollution and exhibiting health and socioeconomic vulnerabilities, incorporating multiple data types.

Shortcoming: Even these most sophisticated tools focus on pollution exposure and/or basic socioeconomic indicators, rather than identifying and tracking many types of disparities, such as those created by climate change.



SCREENING FOR ECONOMIC VULNERABILITY

Disparities disproportionately affect low-income communities that are under-resourced by local governments, face financial barriers to accessing clean technology, and more.

Strength: Allows additional climate investment priorities for communities based on household income, particularly in rural communities.

Shortcoming: Does not measure or target other categories of disproportionate impact, such as climate hazards and lack of access to clean technology policies. This type of screening has historically relied on simplistic measures of economic well-being such as household income.



THE OPPORTUNITY / RECOMMENDATIONS:

- The next generation of screening tools should be able to **incorporate a large array of indicators, including race**, to identify under-resourced and low-income communities and households that would be eligible for targeted funding programs.
- Screening tools should not only identify affected areas but also **track progress, measure specific outcomes, make data publicly available** to support evaluation and accountability processes, and **include robust, disaggregated metrics**.
- The root causes and effects of community inequities vary widely by region or issue area. Environmental justice screening tools need to be **tailored to specific policy areas and agencies**.
- Not everything can be captured by numbers. Justice40 should **implement collaborative and community engagement practices to identify an area's specific needs** in order to align investments with on-the-ground conditions.