“Disadvantaged Communities” Definitions of the Delaware Estuary

Federal Definitions

EPA

“Disadvantaged communities”

Criteria: In the 80th or higher percentile when you average low income, unemployment, less than high school education, limited English speaking, and low life expectancy.

Mapping tools:

- EJSCREEN https://ejscreen.epa.gov/mapper/
- White House / Justice40
  - Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool BETA https://screeningtool.geoplatform.gov/en/#3/33.47/-97.5
  - This tool identifies communities that are marginalized, underserved, and overburdened by pollution. These communities are located in census tracts that are at or above the thresholds in one or more of eight categories of criteria. See here for methodology: https://screeningtool.geoplatform.gov/en/methodology
  - “Disadvantaged communities”
    - Census tract is above the threshold for one or more environmental or climate indicators AND the census tract is above the threshold for socioeconomic indicators.
State Definitions

Delaware

“Communities in Need”

Some low-income communities have unmet wastewater and drinking water needs. They may lack the managerial, technical, or financial resources to address these needs. This experience can be due to low-income levels, geographic isolation, or difficulty attracting septic system operators.

“Low-income communities” can be defined as those in which at least 51% of households have incomes at or below the federal low-income limit. That limit is 80% of the median family income for the county.

The state has developed a list of communities in need using this definition and information from partners including funders, social services agencies, and local governments.

Note: This was strictly in terms of wastewater needs and identifies mostly more rural communities. Most of them are outside of the Delaware Estuary.

New Jersey

“Overburdened Communities”

Criteria: An Overburdened Community (OBC), as defined by the law, is any census block group, as determined in accordance with the most recent United States Census, in which:

1. at least 35 percent of the households qualify as low-income households (at or below twice the poverty threshold as determined by the United States Census Bureau);
2. at least 40 percent of the residents identify as minority or as members of a State recognized tribal community; or
3. at least 40 percent of the households have limited English proficiency (without an adult that speaks English “very well” according to the United States Census Bureau).

Mapping tool: EJMAP https://experience.arcgis.com/experience/548632a2351b41b8a0443cfc3a9f4ef6
Pennsylvania
“EJ Areas”

Criteria: DEP defines an EJ Area as any census tract where 20 percent or more individuals live at or below the federal poverty line, and/or 30 percent or more of the population identifies as a non-white minority, based on data from the U.S. Census Bureau and the federal guidelines for poverty. EJ Areas are mapped on DEP’s EJ Areas Viewer at dep.pa.gov/EJViewer.
Other Definitions

City of Philadelphia

Environmental Justice mapping should be forthcoming as part of the Department of Public Health, City Bill 22007800 (Community Health Act). As well as the creation of the Environmental Justice Advisory Commission which was formed in February 2022. Other mapping exists such as canopy cover maps and redlining maps.

Below is a map outlining present day disadvantaged communities based off of structural racism (Source: https://controller.phila.gov/philadelphia-audits/mapping-the-legacy-of-structural-racism-in-philadelphia/), which manifests as the following Census-based indicators:

- Public assistance usage
- Poverty rate
- the number of female-headed households
- Population under 18 years old
DVRPC – Equity Analysis of the Greater Philadelphia Region

The Indicators of Potential Disadvantage (IPD) analysis identifies populations of interest under Title VI and EJ using U.S. Census American Community Survey (ACS) 2016-2020 five-year estimates data and maps these populations in each of the Census tracts in the region via GIS. Each population group is an “indicator” in the analysis and includes the following:

- Youth
- Older Adults
- Female
- Racial Minority
- Ethnic Minority
- Foreign-Born
- Limited English Proficiency
- Disabled
- Low-Income

This data includes parts of the Greater Philadelphia Area in Pennsylvania and New Jersey. The nine indicators were mapped by concentration for each Census tract in the region.

https://www.dvrpc.org/webmaps/ipd/

WILMAPCO – Transportation Equity Analysis in the Wilmington DE Region

Block groups (the smallest geographic unit for these data) where the percentage of low-income or minority residents exceeds the regional average receive three and one points, respectively. Those where the percentage is more than double the regional average receive six and two, respectively. If a block
group shows a percentage less than the regional average it receives no points. Low-income areas are weighted more heavily in this system to provide balance against the three minority groups.

Using this system, each of our region’s 404 block groups were given points based on the percentage of low-income, black, Hispanic, and Asian groups found within them. Once completed, the scores were tallied. Block groups which scored 6-9 points were determined to be a “moderate” concentration. Those with 10 or more points displayed a “significant” concentration. Several block groups within the City of Newark were originally flagged as EJ areas. It was felt by the WILMAPCO Council that the presence of University students (mostly non-Hispanic whites) drove up poverty levels. Ultimately, these block groups were excluded from the analysis. EJ areas were found primarily within the City of Wilmington. A scattering of suburban block groups were also identified throughout the region. A map of EJ neighborhoods follows.


![Map of Significant Environmental Justice Areas](image)

### Criteria Comparisons

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<th>DE</th>
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What indicators should we as PDE/DELEP/UWFP use? Are there additional environmental or other indicators we would like to consider adding when we think about prioritizing disadvantaged and vulnerable communities in our work? [https://www.epa.gov/wsio/wsio-indicator-data-library](https://www.epa.gov/wsio/wsio-indicator-data-library)