

# “Disadvantaged Communities” Definitions of the Delaware Estuary

## Federal Definitions

### EPA

“Disadvantaged communities”

Criteria: In the 80<sup>th</sup> 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/>
- CDC Social Vulnerability Index: <https://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/placeandhealth/svi/index.html>



### 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.

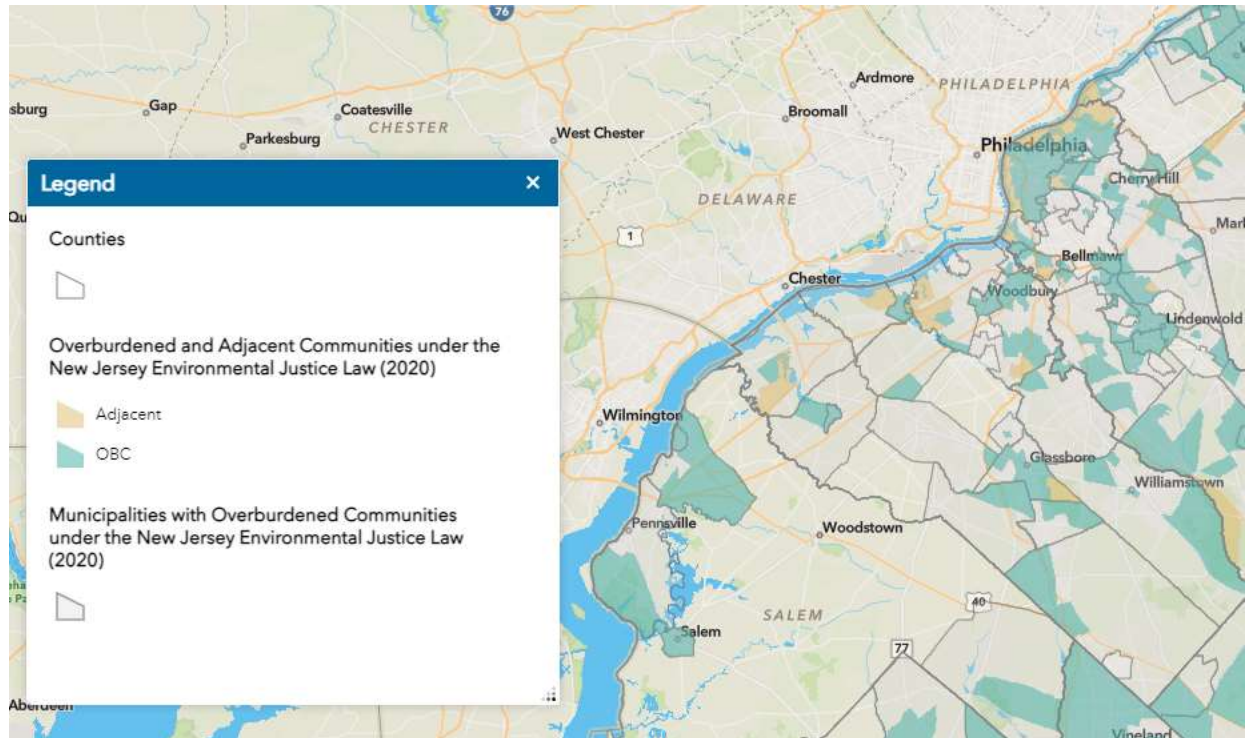
### New Jersey

#### “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).

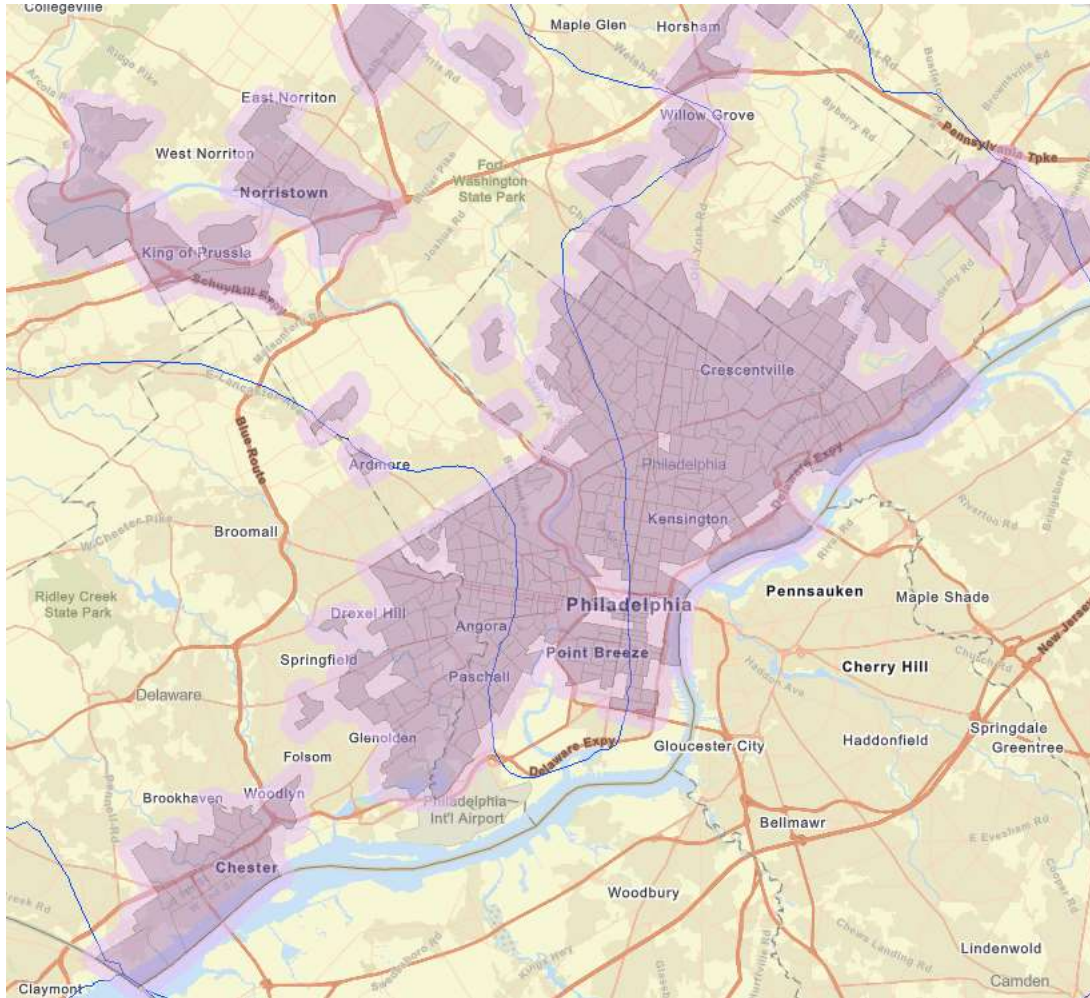
Mapping tool: EJMAP <https://experience.arcgis.com/experience/548632a2351b41b8a0443cfc3a9f4ef6>



## 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](https://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



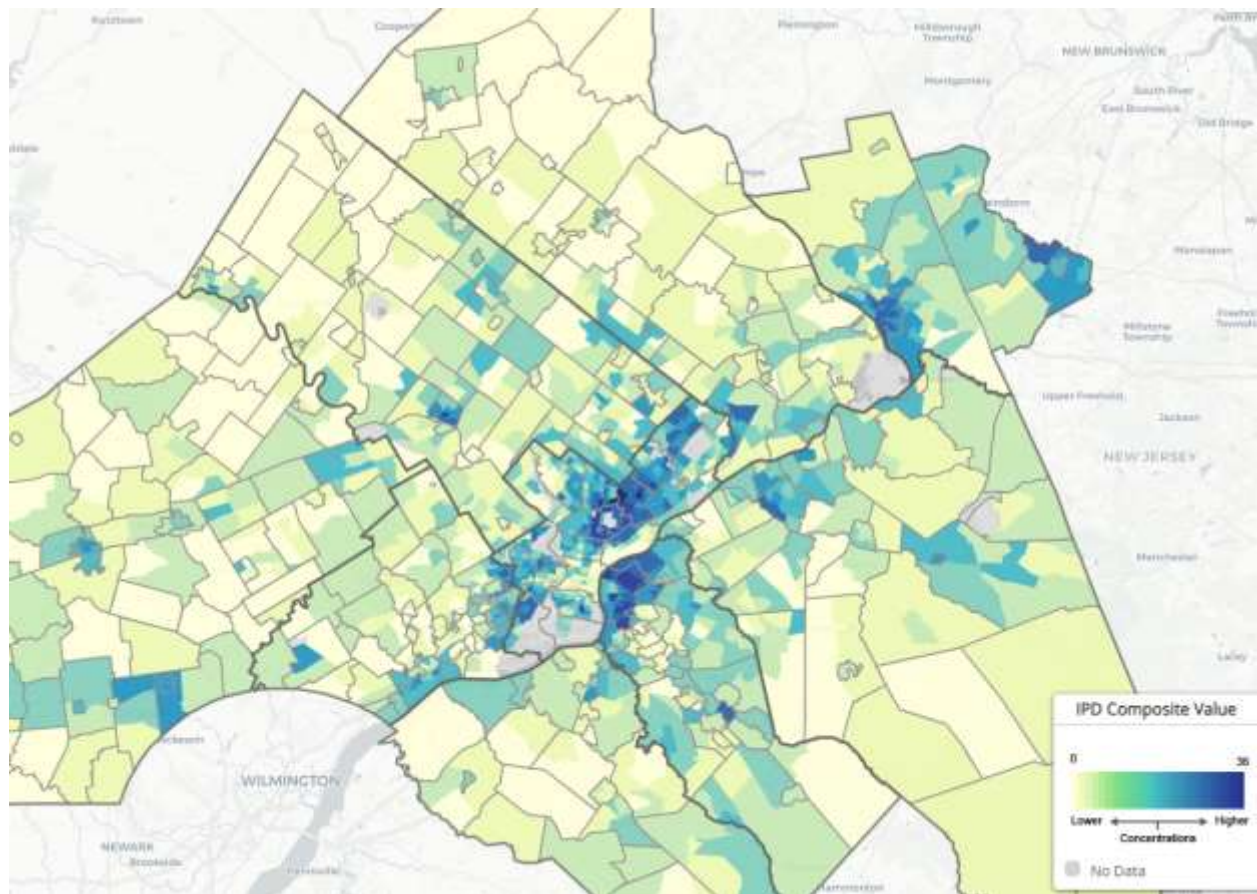
## DVRPC – Equity Analysis of the Greater Philadelphia Region

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/>



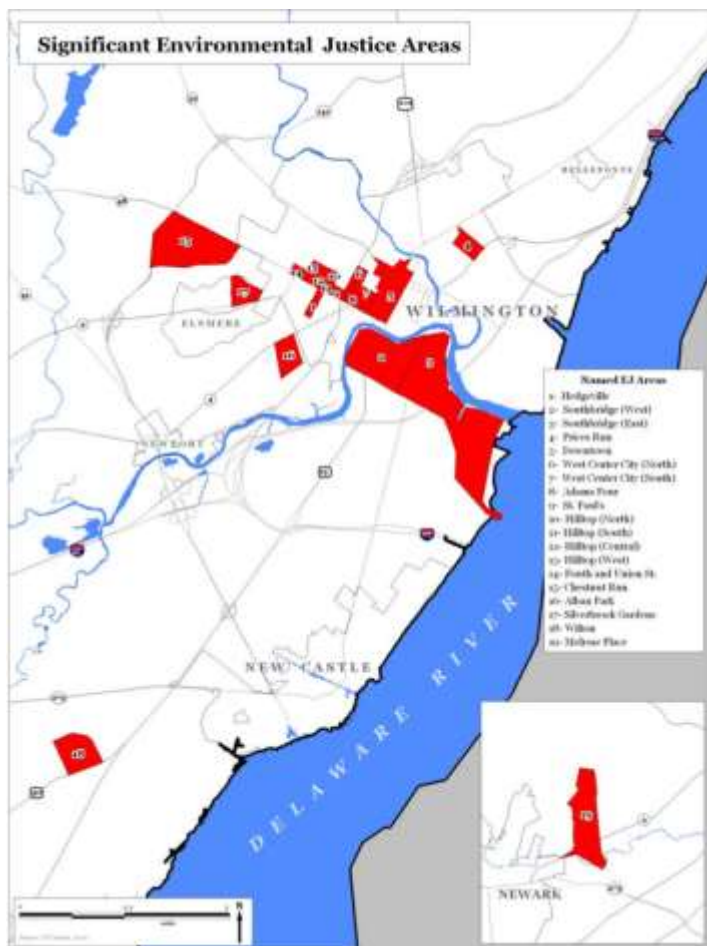
## WILMAPCO – Transportation Equity Analysis in the Wilmington DE Region

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.

See page 10 of their report for EJ identification and maps <http://www.wilmapco.org/EJ/2009%20-%20EJ.pdf>



## Criteria Comparisons

	Federal	DE	NJ	PA	Philly	DVRPC	WILMAPCO	Rank
Age below 18	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	2

Age above 65	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	1
Disabled	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	1
Environmental criteria	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	0
Female headed households	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	2
Foreign Born	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	1
Less than High School Education	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	1
Life Expectancy	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	1
Limited English Speaking	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	3
Low income / poverty	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	7
Public assistance usage	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	1
Racial and/or ethnic minority	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	4
Tribal Nation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	1
Unemployment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>			<input type="checkbox"/>	1

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>