What is a "Community of Focus"?

Projects must benefit a "community of focus" as defined by the Inflation Reduction Act Disadvantaged Communities Map. We use the terms "community of focus" and "disadvantaged" interchangeably for this program. Disadvantaged communities are defined as:

"Population or geographic location in the United States that experiences disproportionate environmental and climatic harms and risks. This disproportionality can be a result of greater vulnerability to environmental hazards, lack of opportunity for public participation or other factors. Increased vulnerability may be attributable to an accumulation of negative or lack of positive environmental, health, economic or social conditions within these populations or places. The term describes situations where multiple factors, including both environmental and socioeconomic stressors, may act cumulatively to affect health and the environment and contribute to persistent environmental health disparities."

To demonstrate that the proposed project benefits a community of focus, applicants are required to include a screenshot of the project's geographic focus area using the <u>EJ Screen</u>.¹

Note: If the physical project location is not located in an identified disadvantaged community on the IRA Disadvantaged Community Map, the applicant will still need to submit a map, and will also need to demonstrate how the project benefits those in an identified disadvantaged community in the written application.

¹ The EPA EJ Screen is currently offline and we are using a different platform to display the same data in its absence.



How to Use EJ Screen

Click<u>here</u> for video instructions. Please note, public access to EPA's EJ Screen was discontinued on February 5, 2025. We are using an alternative platform in the meantime that utilizes the same data and functions nearly identically to EPA's EJ Screen. If you have an eligible map from Cycle 1 that you would like to reuse for Cycle 2, you can simply attach that map to your Cycle 2 application instead of creating a new one.

You can access the tool here: EJScreen

1. This will be the first screen.





2. Click on the "places" tab.



3. Under Designated Disadvantaged Communities, click "EPA IRA Disadvantaged Communities." The green represents census tracts that are considered a disadvantaged community.





4. You can search for an area by typing in the place name or zip code in the top search bar. Use the zoom-in or zoom-out feature on the bottom right-hand side to view your entire area of focus.



5. This data is divided by census tract. For application submission, applicants must draw the project area. Do this by clicking "reports" -> "draw an area." You can also draw multiple areas on the map, for instance, if your program operates in multiple towns. You do not need to download a community report, just the map.







6. To download this map click on the "Tools" tab, then "Print". Name your map if you would like and export to PDF. You can also take a screenshot of your map and attach it as a PNG or JPEG. Here are the instructions for <u>Mac</u> and <u>Windows</u> users.





