

# Balancing Your Equity Framework

## Procedural Equity

**Inclusive, fair, and respectful processes, systems, and decision-making**

**How** .....

- Include priority populations in planning and decision-making processes
- Treat people with respect, including in planning and decision-making processes
- Integrate Environmental Justice (EJ) principles into planning and decisions
- Consider cumulative burdens and legalities of discrimination when siting facilities
- Employ and train a diverse workforce
- Build capacity for disadvantaged or vulnerable communities to take advantage of programs
- Require hiring or training among target populations in RFP processes
- Engage in due process and transparency — explain the process and decisions
- Communicate progress against equity goals

**Jemez Principles for Democratic Organizing**

- Be Inclusive
- Emphasize Bottom-Up Organizing
- Let People Speak for Themselves
- Work Together in Solidarity and Mutuality
- Build Just Relationships Among Ourselves
- Commitment to Self-Transformation

You may have seen equity/justice frameworks with additional dimensions. The lines can get blurry so we’re keeping it simple with two. These dimensions could encompass other considerations like Interactional, Interpersonal, Informational, Restorative, Recognition-based, or Structural Equity and Justice.

Some policies legislate one equity dimension, and another may follow naturally from the first. Many states or organizations who start with one dimension end up building out the second for a stronger process and results.

**What We’re Hearing on the Ground:**

*At a minimum do no harm but aim for restorative justice. Just getting to fair processes or proportional spending is not enough. People expect restorative justice. Further injustice and inequity will not be tolerated.*

Many policies center Environmental Justice (EJ) communities or populations, Disadvantaged Communities (DACs), vulnerable communities, frontline communities, overburdened communities, low-to-moderate income (LMI) communities or households, and priority populations. We refer to these communities more generally as Disadvantaged Communities (DACs), and to individuals, households, and workers included in processes or policies as priority populations.

**A groundswell of energy equity and justice legislation contain guidelines for more equitable processes and outcomes. What are states considering in their equity frameworks?**

## Distributive Equity

**Assess and ensure a fair distribution of costs and benefits across populations**

**How** .....

- Deliver an equitable distribution of costs, risks, resources, and benefits
- Provide equitable access to information and services
- Serve more than a proportional share of disadvantaged, vulnerable, or underserved people or communities
- Measure benefits for these groups—for example, the extent to which groups receive a fair share of benefits
- Minimize adverse impacts on disadvantaged, vulnerable, or underserved people or communities
- Measure adverse impacts or unintended consequences—for example, higher energy costs
- Track who participates in planning and decision-making processes
- Track workforce from priority populations

**Policy Examples**

**CA SB 350:** Creates Disadvantaged Communities Advisory Group for program guidance. Directs CPUC to improve air quality and economic conditions, and barriers to clean energy.

**Colorado HB 21-1266:** Spreads EJ best practices throughout state government. Creates EJ Task Force to embed equity and cumulative impacts in environmental decision-making.

**CA SB 535:** Directs percentage of greenhouse gas funds to DACs and priority populations.

**CA AB 523:** Considers localized health impacts in siting EV projects.

**Maine LD 1682:** Incorporates equity into DEP and PUC decision-making; defines environmental justice and frontline communities.

**MA SB9:** Creates cumulative impact rule to protect EJ communities in environmental and clean energy project decisions.

**NY CLCPA:** Directs 40% of benefits of state agency energy investments to Disadvantaged Communities (Similar to **Justice 40**).

*“To cultivate leadership by those in whose interests equitable changes are being implemented, transformation of [state] structures for engagement must shift for meaningful power sharing.*

*In this context, our next set of discussions must include priority community members - who have a right to know, understand, and weigh in on old, new, and emerging energy options and possibilities. This is a threshold issue.*

*Traditional decision-makers must not continue to make decisions on life essential services for priority communities without us.”*

—Naomi Davis – Blacks in Green

1. “Jemez Principles for Democratic Organizing,” Southwest Network for Environmental and Economic Justice, 1996. <https://www.ejnet.org/ej/jemez.pdf>.