

Illinois DEA Case Study Work Group
Meeting #3: Identify Priority Populations
July 24, 2024
Meeting Notes

Attendee List

Michael Thuis, Advanced Energy Group (AEG)
Agnes Mrozowski, Ameren Illinois
Andy Parker, Ameren Illinois
Bill Reany, Ameren Illinois
Debra Perry, Ameren Illinois
Mark Minden, Ameren Illinois
Celia Johnson, Celia Johnson Consulting
Mary Ellen Guest, Chicago Historic Bungalow Association
Kyle Danko, ComEd
Cassidy Kraimer, Community Investment Corp (CIC) Chicago
Ken Parker, Community Investment Corp (CIC) Chicago
Chris Neme, Energy Futures Group (for NRDC)
Curt Stokes, Environmental Defense Fund (EDF)
Cheryl Watson, Equitable Resilience Sustainability
Neil Curtis, Guidehouse
Mark Mandolini, Honeywell
Cathy Lamadrid, Inova Energy Group
Jane Anderson, Inova Energy Group
Grey Staples, Mendota Group
Kit White, Midwest Energy Efficiency Alliance (MEEA)
Jonathan Skarzynski, Nicor Gas
Mike King, Nicor Gas
Trevor Worthy, Northwestern University
Shelby Smith, Office of the Illinois Attorney General
Susan Satter, Office of the Illinois Attorney General
Jayden Wilson, Opinion Dynamics
Julia Friedman, Oracle
Cheryl Johnson, People for Community Recovery
Kristen Kalaman, Resource Innovations
Boratha Tan, Vote Solar
Camille Bryant, Walker-Miller Energy Services
Dr. Stephanie Means, Walker-Miller Energy Services
Jordan Falby, Walker-Miller Energy Services

Meeting Recording

https://us06web.zoom.us/rec/play/w3UwQz-jYi6B6yZnOAHl1G_iL0AYkyYx2KEgMcIS29YMvCRcoFV9ba0q2559ER5o3Nrgj__PRg63626L.t4JGntwGjLTs9U5D?autoplay=true

Welcome, Introductions, Background (Slides 1-10)

The project team introduced themselves and the team provided a recap of the project background, goals and objectives that were presented in the previous meetings.

Summary of Meeting Sections (w/ Questions and Answers)

Stage 3 of the DEA: Identify Priority Populations (Slides 11-22)

Overview of existing definitions and maps (Slides 11-20)

The team went over Priority Populations.

- Reviewed existing state energy equity goals
- Reviewed existing state and utility definitions already in use
- Presented maps visualizing the locations of these priority populations across the state.

Several WG members offered resources to consider, including EPA's EJSCREEN tool (<https://ejscreen.epa.gov/mapper/>), the Climate Economic Justice Screening Tool (CEJST) <https://screeningtool.geoplatform.gov/en/#3/33.47/-97.5> and Argonne National Laboratory's Geospatial Energy Mapper (GEM) tool (<https://gem.anl.gov/>).

- WG member notes: CEJST has improved data. EJ Screen has been found to have gaps.
- Some discussion on the fact that EJSCREEN has been found to have gaps. It is important to understand the current gaps to ensure we capture all communities in need.
- Project Team: Maybe a side group conversation on tools with some of these people in the chat.

WG member asked: How accurate is the EJC's Block group without using racial and ethnic indicators? Most often the black and brown neighborhoods are the ones most affected.

- Project Team: This is a question that we can look into in our analysis. I don't think we are able to respond today. But please keep the questions coming.

WG member asked: Just a clarification question: the EJC definition provided earlier says that EJCs are using block groups. Here, the low-income and EIEC maps are shown as tracts. Wondering if we are using census tracts or block groups to identify target communities?

- Project Team: We will use both, based on the statutory definitions. We will use the finest level of resolution possible.

Urban vs Rural (Slide 21)

Urban vs rural: question to group on how suburban should be handled? Should it be included in urban areas? Or leave out suburban areas?

- One WG member noted: I would argue that suburban should be separate from urban and rural. They will have different concerns. Especially when it comes to beneficial electrification surrounding EVs.
- Project Team: Good point. But we are not looking at urban/rural for the BE case study. For Com Ed we are focusing on EE. However, urban areas might be dense with multi-family housing, housing quality issues, and the cost of performing EE retrofits might be different than in suburban areas with single family homes. Versus rural areas where they may be issues of travel times for contractors to serve
 - o One WG member noted: There might be fundamental differences in housing stock that would warrant keeping the suburban designation separated
- One WG member noted: In my experience, many Chicago suburbs don't have local contractors. Having that distinction between urban/rural/suburban might be important to tease that out. And when I say a suburb "doesn't have local contractors," that can mean up to a 3 hour wait to get technicians to fix a specific circuit fixed in some of the south and western Chicago suburbs.
 - o Project Team: That is really helpful context

Two Approaches to Defining Priority Populations (Slides 23-28)

Project Team: Big question for today is how to define priority populations. We considered a variety of issues when considering which priority populations to use for each case study.

- One WG member noted: **I vote for Approach 2** since comparing the case studies will make them more useful for demonstration/adapting the framework. There are also other ongoing initiatives working around similar issues in the ComEd grid that could lend manpower and capacity to this project if that would be useful. CMAP, the Illinois EPA, and CEJA office also have some unique datasets surrounding EIEC that are under internal use we could request if needed.
 - o Some other WG **members voiced/messaged support of Approach 2.**
- Other WG **members expressed support for Approach 1.**
- One WG member noted: **I support Approach 1** - if the utilities have to meet certain legislative goals, they will design programs to meet those goals. Creating a new metric or objective for them to meet will be in conflict with the legislation.
 - o WG member noted: The reason why we might want to choose **option one** is that the EE program with ComEd has different criteria and objectives than AIC (Ameren) BE programs.

Defining Priority Populations (Slide 29)

- Project Team: We propose Approach 1, and ideally there would be consistent definition between EE and BE.
- One WG member asked: Maybe I am not following, can you say a little more about why we want to compare the DEAs if they are two different programs and two different policy objectives, what is the benefit?

- Project Team: In my view, one could ask: “is the policy objective for BE any different than for EE?” I haven’t seen there is, other than statute. If one wanted to think through how BE and EE address equity issues and compare the two, it would be harder to compare. The statute sets a floor, doesn’t mean that utilities and others can’t go above that.
- WG member: I appreciate that. One reflection on why it is important to compare- I guess ultimately if we are asking the question of which plan better addresses equity, I would hate for us to be in a place to choose one over another.
 - WG member: Although if I look at slides 23 and 24, isn't Approach 2 comprehensive of Approach 1?
 - Project Team: Yes, it is fair to say that Approach 2 is comprehensive of Approach 1. I think it is more accurate to say that #2 is more comprehensive than #1.
- WG member: The purpose of these case studies is to try to bring to IL and stakeholders a resource and a set of tools to demonstrate how to conduct these types of analyses, and you can use what you have learned for other projects.
- Project Team: And we did hear some interest in some alignment between the definitions for ease of data collections.
 - WG member: I support keeping that recommendation (using a uniform definition for future legislation or regulation) as part of this work

Recommended Approach: Slide 30

- Project Team: I would like to synthesize the key tradeoffs with the two approaches. If we did Approach 2, it would require us to use information from both definitions. We might have utility data at the zip code level, and customer EIEC definitions at the census tract or block group level. This might lead to muddled or mixed results and conclusions. We call this data resolution/precision issues.
 - WG member asked: With changes for data collection would this group also be able to help provide the utilities a path to collect that data in a consistent way?
 - Project Team: I think we will talk about data collection and data collection recommendations going forward.
 - Project Team: Yes, thank you for that comment, based on conversations with you and others we would love to provide some high-level thoughts on data collection. I hope we can provide some of that.
- WG member noted: Note that both Ameren and ComEd are beginning to track participation in EE programs in Solar for All (I think) EJ communities as well, because starting this year they will be allowed to use an NTG of 1.0 for even small business customer participation in those areas. Would this be a better definition?

If you prefer to share your feedback after taking some time to consider the options, we'd love to hear from you after the meeting.

Poll: Do you support our recommended approach for defining priority populations?

Yes – 13 respondents

Unsure – 4 respondents

Stage 4 of the DEA: Preliminary discussion on DEA metrics (Slides 33-40)

The team presented an overview of DEA metrics and considerations for DEA metrics.

- WG member asked: Questions on metrics. First, what is the question you are intending to try to answer? Specifically, is it whether the EE or BE program portfolios are "equitable" in the abstract or being "equitably" designed and delivered within the construct/constraints of the enabling statutes. The answers might be different. Also, when assessing changes in bills and rates, will that include consideration of benefits from EE and/or BE that accrue to all households regardless of who the participants are?
 - o Project Team: I think the answer is more the former, but that is part of the reason we are having these stakeholder discussions. Certainly, there are requirements in statute that need to be met regarding equity. If there is more to it than that regarding program design, we can look into it too.
 - o WG member responded: The reason I asked is that I think in some way both answers are useful. In the near term the second answer is more useful. Utilities are constantly planning, like now, and when you design those portfolios, they consider minimum spending caps, etc. So hypothetically if they tried to do that in a way that is really equitable within those constraints but isn't as equitable as we would like within the nature of the constraints. And vice versa. As you were talking about it, it strikes me that thinking about it from both perspectives would be helpful.
 - o Project Team: We can address that slight difference in these things and in the report. Also mentioned rates/bills – my initial reaction is that if there is information available on those benefits, we can try to factor that in, otherwise it will be hard.
 - o WG member noted: Utilities have information on avoided capacity costs and T&D costs for all customers.

Other metrics mentioned by WG members. The DEA team can look into these suggestions:

- WG member noted: It might be nice to have a metric on the number of critical facilities (hospitals, schools, etc.) with improved access/affected by outages. Interruptions to these facilities are especially impactful to the EIEC communities we are discussing.
 - o WG member: You will likely need to include CAIFI, SAIFI, and CAIDI scores for the outages/reliability piece since ComEd currently collects different data for each circuit in the grid. This means that you may have a CAIDI score for one circuit and a CAIFI score for another.
 - o WG member: These circuits also have variable location data that can be included in a public report so it may be difficult to match data resolution.
 - o WG member: The causes for outages are also, usually, listed as "various" in these reports.
 - o Project Team: there are several comments in the chat about reliability – if we don't have a connection between efficiency improvements and reliability it is difficult to use as a metric – will DERs lead to some change to reliability?

- WG member: Potential source: Bill impacts/savings from time of use pilot (and potential impacts/savings from reports on future time of use rate designs - the pilot program expired June 2024, but ComEd has proposed a TOU distribution rate in a separate case). Source: <https://icc.illinois.gov/downloads/public/edocket/604924.PDF>
- WG member: The utilities report arrearages and disconnections by zip code, I believe, on a monthly basis, in the event we want to look at those metrics. Each utility has a set of commission approved performance incentive mechanisms (PIMs), some of which explicitly discuss equity. I don't have a full thought on this, but it feels like we should look at relevant PIMs.

Other WG members had some comments on air emissions as a metric. It is exciting that Illinois is starting to collect this type of detailed data, however we don't believe we will be able to use this in a DEA.

- WG member: Air emissions might be amazing or incredibly tricky. Illinois is installing a new sensor grid in Cook County to measure air quality at a neighborhood resolution and there is a new satellite going online to better measure air quality across the US. This should provide amazing data; the issue is that the methodology of this data might change rapidly over the period of the case study as these new systems come online over the next year. Details on the timeline of this can be found here: https://www.chicago.gov/city/en/depts/cdph/supp_info/Environment/cumulative-impact-assessment.html
- WG member: Environsuite is going to be putting together a specific dashboard for this air quality sensor net. <https://envirosuite.com/>

WG member asked: Will the metrics be the same for both Ameren and ComEd's DEAs? I could see value in using different metrics for each analysis.

- We expect that some metrics will be the same for both Ameren and ComEd's DEAs (i.e., participation, rates), but we agree that different metrics may be useful.

WG member asked: Could we look at things like customer satisfaction, safety, and how much time a customer has to spend resolving issues with their utility? Not sure if the latter two make sense for BE, but presumably EE could serve this purpose.

- Project Team: We will have to run through these considerations to see if they can fit. If you know of specific data sources, we can dig into those.

Project Schedule / Next Steps (Slides 41-44)