

Partners in Energy: Higher Emissions Communities (HECs) Designation

Si necesita asistencia en español, por favor envíe un e-mail al Energy Outreach Colorado al EV@energyoutreach.org.

HEC Designation Application and Resources

Communities, neighborhoods organizations and businesses may apply for HEC designation using [this application form](#). Applicants do not need to have a specific project identified to apply but must demonstrate both environmental burden and the presence of disproportionately impacted populations at the area they are seeking to designate.

Applicants may use any combination of publicly available or locally specific data, anecdotal evidence, photographs, and other visuals to demonstrate the presence of environmental burden and disproportionately impacted populations. The resources on the following pages may be helpful to applicants in preparing an application.

Application support is available through Partners in Energy for English speaking applicants and through Energy Outreach Colorado for Spanish speaking applicants. For those needing support with other languages please reach out to Partners in Energy.

How can communities find out more about HEC designation and benefits?

Communities can find out more about the support and benefits available to HECs or learn more about the application process for HEC designation in the following ways:

- Visit the [Partners in Energy web portal](#)
- Visit the [Xcel Energy website](#)
- Email PartnersinEnergy@xcelenergy.com or call 800.369.4362

Higher Emissions Community (HEC) Designation Process and Timeline

Applications for HEC designation are accepted and reviewed on an ongoing basis. They should be submitted to EVapplications@xcelenergy.com. There are quarterly application cut-off dates for inclusion in each 60-day notice issued by Xcel Energy for consideration of new HEC designations.

Application Cutoff Dates

- March 31, 2022 (closed)
- June 30, 2022
- September 30, 2022
- December 30, 2022

Application Question 3: Description of environmental burden(s) that affect the population in or around the location described in application Question 1.

Resource	Environmental Burden(s) Described	Example
<p><u>CDPHE Climate Equity Data Viewer</u></p> <p>The Climate Equity Data Viewer is a mapping tool that creates a visual representation of certain demographic data along with cumulative environmental burdens across Colorado.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environmental Burden Score (0-100) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Weighted average of environmental exposure, environmental effects and climate results relative to the rest of the state. • Environmental Exposures Score (0-100) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Exposure to harmful environmental pollutants such as diesel particulate matter, traffic proximity, ozone, PM 2.5 and lead paint compared to the rest of the state. • Environmental Effects Score (0-100) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Number of hazardous or toxic sites in a community relative to the rest of the state. • Future Climate Hazards Score (0-100) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Potential future economic burden related to drought, flood and wildfire, relative to the rest of the state. • Presence of oil and gas or coal power plant • Sensitive Populations Score (0-100) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Community sensitivity to environmental exposures and climate impacts, as it relates to health 	<p>Applicants may reference the overall environmental burden score or any of the other scores listed here to demonstrate a high level of one or several burden(s) for the identified location, compared to the rest of the state.</p>
<p><u>EPA EJScreen</u></p> <p>The EPA's Environmental Justice Screening and Mapping Tool includes specific datasets used to develop the CDPHE Climate Equity Data Viewer.</p>	<p>The following can be viewed and reported using EJScreen:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pollution Indicators (state percentiles): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Particulate Matter 2.5 ○ Ozone ○ Diesel particulate matter ○ Air toxins cancer risk ○ Air toxins respiratory hazard index ○ Traffic proximity ○ Lead paint 	<p>Applicants may reference a combination of data EJ Screen pollution indicators and climate change data points listed here to demonstrate environmental burden(s) present in the identified location, relative to the rest of the US.</p>

Resource	Environmental Burden(s) Described	Example
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Superfund proximity ○ RMP facility proximity ○ Hazardous waste proximity ○ Underground storage tanks ○ Wastewater discharge ● Climate Change Data: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Wildfire hazard potential (very low – very high) ○ Drought (average change in drought conditions 1900 – 2020) ○ Estimated 100-year floodplains for 2016 	
<p><u>Mapping for Environmental Justice (MEJ)</u></p> <p>Developed by policy, data science and community outreach experts at UC Berkeley, MEJ aims to make environmental justice data accessible, understandable and actionable.</p>	<p>MEJ provides an overall pollution burden score and data for each census tract in Colorado as a percentile of all tracts in the state.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Pollution Burden Score <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ozone ○ Diesel PM ○ Lead paint ○ Air toxics ○ PM 2.5 ○ Oil and gas ○ Hazardous waste facilities ○ High-risk chemical facilities ○ Wastewater releases ○ Federal cleanup sites ● Specific population characteristics: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Asthma ○ Low birthweight infants ○ Heart disease 	<p>Applicants may reference the MEJ pollution burden score or a combination of specific pollutant scores to demonstrate environmental burden(s) present in the identified location, relative to the rest of Colorado. Applicants may also use specific population characteristics to demonstrate sensitivity to environmental burden(s).</p>

Resource	Environmental Burden(s) Described	Example
<p><u>Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool</u></p> <p>Developed by the Council on Environmental Quality to identify census tracts that are disadvantaged for the purposes of the Justice40 Initiative.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disadvantaged community (Yes/No) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Indicates census tracts that area above one or more environmental or climate indicators and exceed the threshold for socioeconomic indicators. • Environmental, Climate and Sensitivity Indicators (0-100 percentile) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Expected agriculture loss rate from natural hazards ○ Expected building loss rate from natural hazards ○ Expected population loss rate from natural hazards ○ PM2.5 ○ Diesel particulate matter exposure ○ Traffic proximity and volume ○ Lead paint ○ Proximity to hazardous waste facilities ○ Proximity to superfund sites ○ Proximity to RMP sites ○ Wastewater discharge ○ Asthma ○ Diabetes ○ Heart disease ○ Low life expectancy 	<p>Applicants may reference the community's identification as "disadvantaged" and/or a combination of environmental, climate and population sensitivity indicators to demonstrate that the identified location faces environmental burden(s).</p>

Application Question 4: Identification of population(s) that bear(s) a disproportionate environmental impact in the community identified in application Question 1. Applicants should report socioeconomic data on an aggregated community, rather than individual customer, level.

Resource	Disproportionately Impacted Population Indicator	Example
CDPHE Climate Equity Data Viewer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disproportionately Impacted Community (Yes/No) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Indicates Colorado communities identified as Disproportionately Impacted per the Environmental Justice Act (HB21-1266) where: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ >40% households are low income, or ▪ >40% households identify as minority, or ▪ >40% households are housing cost-burdened. • Socioeconomic Score (0-100) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Community social and economic status based on education levels, linguistic isolation, income, and race/ethnicity. 	<p>Applicants may reference the community's identification as "Disproportionately Impacted" and/or the socioeconomic score to demonstrate that the identified location is home to disproportionately impacted population(s).</p>
Data Viewer for Disproportionately Impacted Communities in Colorado A data viewer developed by CDPHE that identifies disproportionately impacted communities as defined by the Environmental Justice Act (HB21-1266)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low income <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ >40% households are low income • People of Color <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ >40% households identify as minority • Housing burden <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ >40% households are housing cost-burdened 	<p>Applicants may reference the indicators listed to demonstrate that the identified location is home to disproportionately impacted population(s).</p>
EPA EJScreen	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Socioeconomic indicators <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Demographic Index <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Combination of percent low-income and percent minority. ○ Percent people of color 	<p>Applicants may reference the Demographic Index or any combination of the socioeconomic indicators listed here to identify the presence of disproportionately impacted populations(s) in the identified location.</p>

Resource	Disproportionately Impacted Population Indicator	Example
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Percent low-income (% individuals whose ratio of household income to poverty level in the past 12 months was less than 2) ○ Percent in linguistic isolation 	
Mapping for Environmental Justice (MEJ)	<p>MEJ provides an overall population characteristics score and data for each census tract in Colorado as a percentile of all tracts in the state.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Specific population characteristics <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ People of Color ○ Poverty ○ Linguistic isolation 	Applicants may reference specific population characteristics to demonstrate that the identified location is home to disproportionately impacted population(s).
Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Socio-economic indicators (0-100 percentile) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Low income (household income less than or equal to twice the federal poverty level) ○ Energy burden (energy cost divided by household income) ○ Housing cost burden (households spending more than 30% of income on housing) ○ Linguistic isolation ○ Low median income (compared to area median) ○ Poverty (% at or below 100% of federal poverty level) 	Applicants may reference a combination of socioeconomic indicators to demonstrate that the identified location is home to disproportionately impacted population(s).
Mapping Inequality Mapping of historical redlining policies in Denver and Pueblo by the University of Richmond.	Presence of historical redlining.	Applicants in Denver or Pueblo may reference this resource to demonstrate a history of racism through redlining in the location identified.
Local income data Census Data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Household income is available at the census tract level <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Find the census tract for a specific location using this Geocoding tool 	Applicants may report community income data relative to identified local, state and national thresholds, including those defined below.

Resource	Disproportionately Impacted Population Indicator	Example
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Using the Census Data Viewer, search for Table B19001 (household income) and filter by geography to the relevant community area/census tract. 	
Energy Outreach Colorado Income Qualification Thresholds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Income qualification thresholds by county and household size <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Threshold: 80% of area median Used by Energy Outreach Colorado as a threshold for bill payment assistance qualification 	Applicants may use community income data to demonstrate income-qualification relative to these thresholds.
Colorado Low-income Energy Assistance Program (LEAP) Thresholds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Income qualification by household size <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Threshold: 60% state median Used for LEAP eligibility 	Applicants may use community income data to demonstrate income-qualification relative to these thresholds.
Federal Poverty Guidelines State of Colorado Federal Poverty Line Calculator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Federal Poverty guidelines by household size <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Threshold: 185 - 250% federal poverty level Used by US Government and State of Colorado to determine eligibility for certain programs 	Applicants may use community income data to demonstrate income-qualification relative to these thresholds.