

Definitions

*This document aims to support effective communication and dialogue within the Equity Advisory Group (EAG). Understanding that you will come to this forum with different views from other EAG members on how to define the terms below, we'd like to agree on shared language that works within the context of the EAG meetings, as much as possible. We do NOT intend to establish broadly applicable definitions or make any representation that these definitions are "right", but rather we intend to use these as a starting point for discussion. **During meeting 1, EAG members discuss the definitions below to build a shared understanding among the group and identify how they need to be revised to ensure you are comfortable using them in the context of the EAG meetings.***

Diversity, equity and inclusion

- **Diversity:** Includes all the ways in which individuals and groups differ through personal, cultural and social identities. This includes but is not limited to age, gender, race, ethnicity, national origin or ancestry, physical or mental disability, sexual orientation, gender expression/identity, religion, language, socioeconomic class, educational attainment, political ideology, and servicemember/veteran, marital, and citizenship status.
- **Equity:** Is the fair and just treatment of all people, with the recognition that individuals and communities have vastly different access to opportunity and advancement. Achieving equity may require providing individuals with different resources, systems, processes, and support to ensure they have equal opportunities to be successful.
- **Inclusion:** Enables people who carry different identities to contribute and succeed in unique and authentic ways. Inclusion creates a culture of acceptance and belonging by treating others with dignity, respect and appreciation, so all feel welcomed, supported and valued.

Diversity, equity and inclusion in context

- **Climate Justice:** [Pacific Institute](#) defines climate justice as “the concept that no group of people should disproportionately bear the burden of climate impacts or the costs of mitigation and adaptation.
- **Social Justice:** From [Readings for Diversity and Social Justice](#), “Social justice is both a process and a goal. The goal of social justice is full and equal participation of all groups in a society that is mutually shaped to meet their needs. Social justice includes a vision of society in which the distribution of resources is equitable and all members are psychologically and physically safe and secure.”
- **Environmental Justice:** Adapted from the [NAACP](#), the fair and equitable treatment of all people regardless of race, color, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, or income level, etc. in the development, implementation, and enforcement of

environmental laws, regulations, and policies. Environmental justice focuses on natural resources, air quality, waste management, etc.

- **Energy Justice:** Per the [Initiative for Energy Justice](#), energy justice refers to: “the goal of achieving equity in both the social and economic participation in the energy system, while also remediating social, economic, and health burdens on those historically harmed by the energy system (‘frontline communities’).”

Energy and climate terminology

- **Energy Burden:** The Clean Energy Transformation Act (CETA) defines Energy Burden as “the share of annual household income used to pay annual home energy bills.” Per the [Initiative for Energy Justice](#), energy burden refers to: “the expense of energy expenditures relative to overall household income.” While there are no universally accepted thresholds for what constitutes a high energy burden, [some papers have proposed thresholds such as 6-11% of household income or suggested relative measures](#) (e.g., households with high energy burden are those with values above the median for the local community).
- **Energy Security:** Per the [IEA](#), energy security is: “the uninterrupted availability of energy sources at an affordable price.”
- **Energy Poverty:** Per [The World Bank](#), energy poverty is: “the state of being deprived of certain energy services or not being able to use them in a healthy, convenient, and efficient manner, resulting in a level of energy consumption that is insufficient to support social and economic development.”
- **Just Transition:** Per the [Climate Justice Alliance](#), this term can cause some confusion in that it often has two meanings, one in reference to navigating the transition to a positive climate future with climate justice in general, and the other focused specifically on the workforce and labor aspects of climate justice.
 - An example of the broader definition, from the Climate Justice Alliance: “Just Transition is a vision-led, unifying and place-based set of principles, processes, and practices that build economic and political power to shift from an extractive economy to a regenerative economy. This means approaching production and consumption cycles holistically and waste-free. The transition itself must be just and equitable; redressing past harms and creating new relationships of power for the future through reparations. If the process of transition is not just, the outcome will never be. Just Transition describes both where we are going and how we get there.”
 - An example of a Just Transition definition more focused on labor has been used by the American labor movement for decades. For example, the [International Trade Union Confederation](#) states “Through socially responsible and green investment, low-carbon development strategies, and by providing decent work and social protection for those whose livelihoods, incomes and employment are

affected by the need to adapt to climate change and by the need to reduce emissions to levels that avert dangerous climate change.”

Clean Energy Transformation Act (CETA) Definitions

- **Vulnerable Populations:** Communities that experience a disproportionate cumulative risk from environmental burdens due to: Adverse socioeconomic factors, including unemployment, high housing and transportation costs relative to income, access to food and health care, and linguistic isolation; and (b) Sensitivity factors, such as low birth weight and higher rates of hospitalization.
- **Highly Impacted Community:** A community designated with a score of 9 or 10 based on the Washington Department of Health’s cumulative impact analyses or a census tract that is fully or partially on sovereign tribal territory. Scores are assigned based on several indicators that express: 1) Environmental exposures, 2) Environmental Effects, 3) Sensitive Populations, and 4) Socioeconomic Factors. This information is available on the [Washington Department of Health’s Information by Location Environmental Health Disparities \(EHD\) map.](#)