

# THE INTERSECTION OF ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE COMMUNITIES

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# WHAT ARE ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE COMMUNITIES?

Any community that bears a **disproportionate share** of the **negative consequences of energy regulation, policies or operations.**

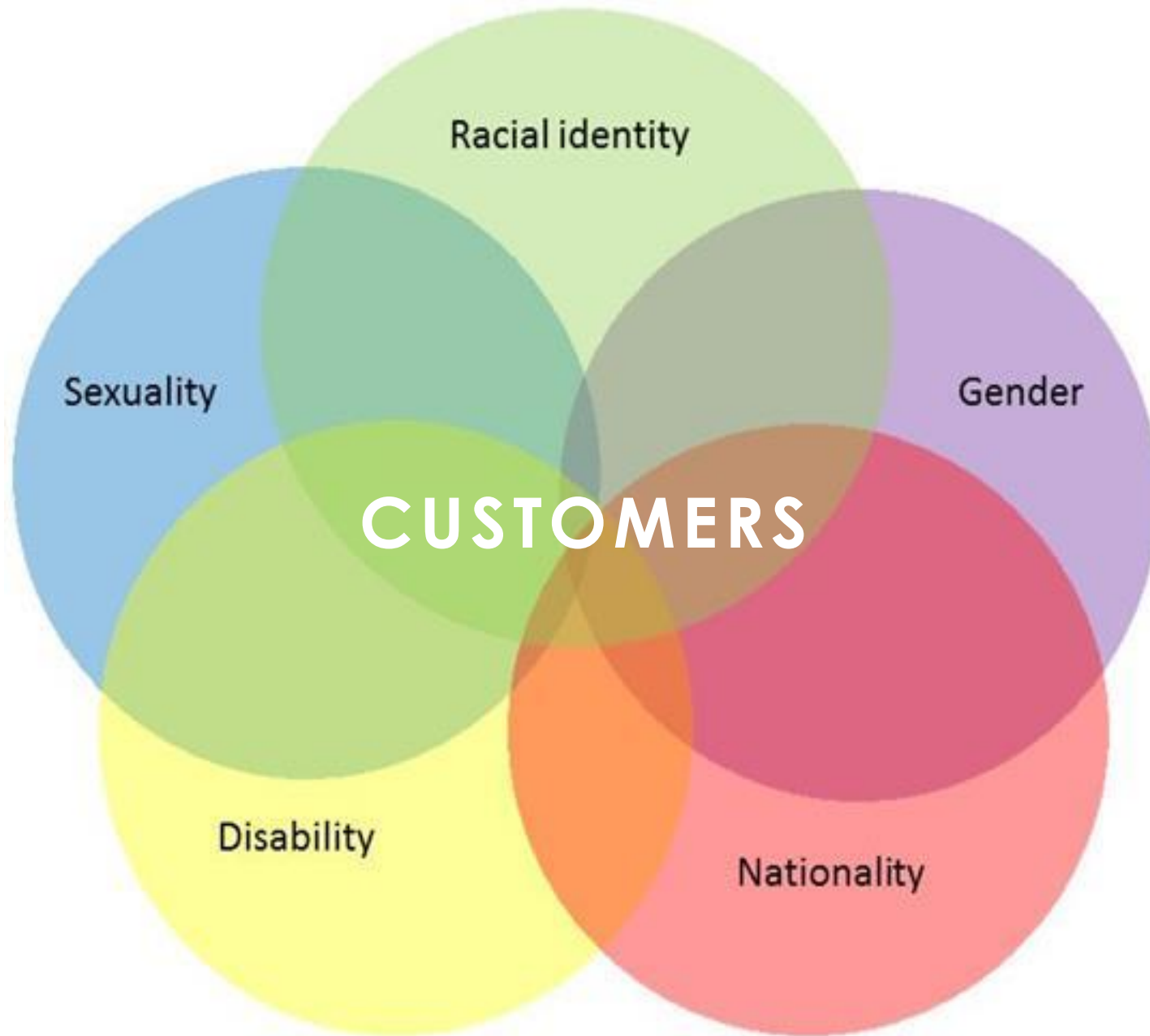


# WHAT ARE ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE COMMUNITIES?

Historically, the most impacted are **marginalized communities**, such as those on limited income, people of color, and people with disabilities.

Those with **multiple marginalized identities** sit at the **intersection**.





## These households are confronted with daily, difficult decisions, such as:

- High energy burdens as a result of utilizing energy services over other necessities, such as food or medicine
  - Potentially impacts **quality of life**
- Living with uncomfortable conditions to save money
  - Potentially impacts **health**
- Seeking cheaper alternatives for heating, cooling, and other utility services
  - Potentially impacts **safety**





Compared with white, non-Hispanic households...



**Black households** spend  
**43% more of their  
income**  
on energy costs



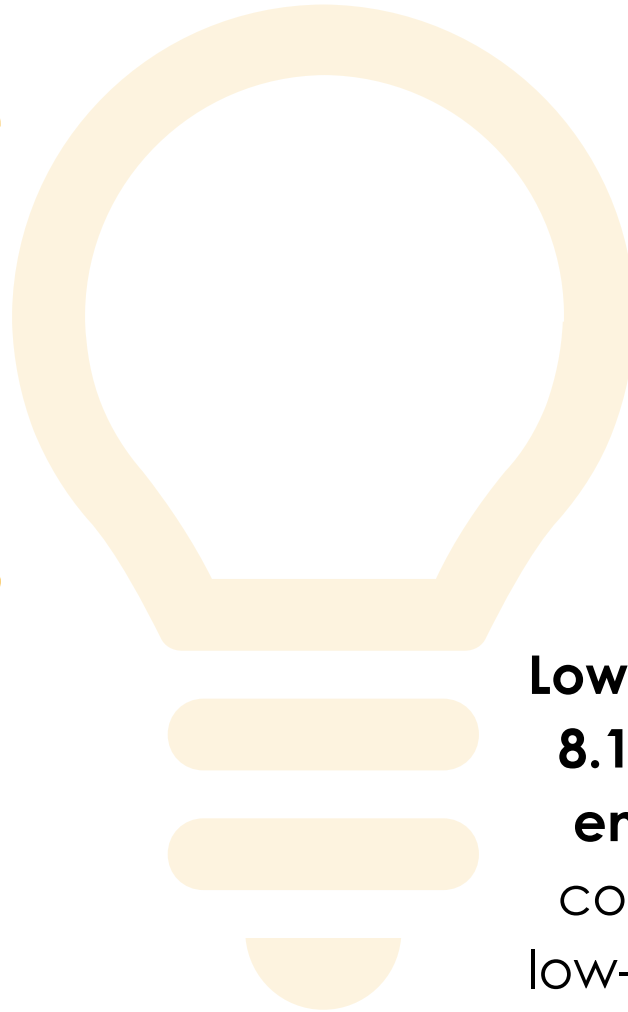
**Hispanic households**  
spend  
**20% more**



**Native American households**  
spend  
**45% more**



# Low-income households face disproportionately high energy burdens



**Low-income households** spend **8.1%** of their income on energy costs, on average, compared to **2.3%** for non-low-income households



## WHY IS IT COMPLICATED?

- **Structural racism** illustrated through disinvestment in communities of color
- Redlining and denial of mortgages resulting in **reduced homeownership**
- Lack of **economic** or **educational opportunities** for advancement
- Inferior condition of **housing stock** within the community
- **Lack of resources** to maintain or pay up-front costs for energy efficiency upgrades





# HOW CAN WE DO BETTER?

- ✓ Acknowledge that households of color, specifically Black and Latinx households, may have a higher energy burden than non-Hispanic, white households
- ✓ Collect information by racial categories to understand the impact of the intersection of race and income, specifically identifying what group(s) are in most need of support
- ✓ Increase funding and ensure it is going to the communities who need it most
- ✓ Bring the community into the conversation and consider co-design tactics to increase equity
- ✓ Understand that while addressing the needs of limited income communities, economics are just one of the factors that impact individuals and their relationship with energy.
- ✓ Develop metrics beyond energy saved that consider the complexities of energy insecurity

While approximately 27.5% of all U.S. households fall into the low-income category, utilities are only spending about 13% of their energy efficiency budgets on this demographic.



# STEPS TO GET STARTED:

Align your **definition of equity** with the **needs of the community**, identifying and acknowledging the regulatory, policy, and programmatic inequities that will be barriers to inclusive and equitable programs.

## 1 Research

Developing relevant and impactful metrics and targets requires a clear understanding of the program, available data, and what success looks like.

## 2 Build Capacity

Build capacity to interpret, analyze, and incorporate the results of measuring equity indicators.  
*Learn to use a lens other than your own.*

## 3 Be Intentional

Develop definitions and KPIs that are intentional, specific, and measurable, knowing they may change.  
*As you learn more, do better.*





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# THANK YOU!

Questions? Comments?  
Want to continue the conversation?

**Please get in touch:**

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