

Massachusetts Grid Modernization Advisory Council

Meeting Presentation

July 31, 2025



Agenda & Roll Call



Item	Time
Administrative Items <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Welcome, Roll Call, Agenda• Public Comment Period• Meeting Minutes Review and Approval• GMAC Building Electrification Industry Seat Update• GMAC Stakeholder Session Readout	1:00 – 1:20
Updates on ESMP Activities	1:20 – 1:30
GMAC 2026 Strategic Planning Update	1:30 – 1:40
Energy Equity Presentations <ul style="list-style-type: none">• GMAC consultant presentation (15 min)• CESAG presentation (20 min)• GMAC EWG presentation (10 min)	1:40 – 2:15
<i>Break</i>	<i>2:15 – 2:20</i>
Facilitated Discussion	2:20 – 2:55
Close	2:55 – 3:00

Public Comment



- 15-minute period for public comment
- Speakers will have up to **3 minutes** to speak on any topics of interest related to the GMAC. Once everyone who has pre-registered has provided comment, others may speak, as time allows.
- Please state your name and affiliation before delivering your comment.

GMAC Minutes Review and Voting



Meeting Minutes

- Calling for vote to finalize:
 - June 26, 2025 GMAC minutes
 - July 17, 2025 GMAC stakeholder event minutes

Are there any edits for either set of minutes?

On behalf of the Council, the Chair may approve the minutes as distributed/as amended.

GMAC Building Electrification Industry Seat Update



- **Thank you, JS Rancourt!**

- Building electrification industry representative, JS Rancourt, has stepped down from the GMAC.
- Thank you, JS, for your hard work and contributions to the GMAC since 2023!
- DOER interviewed potential candidates to fill this seat based on GMAC ExCom/DOER staff suggestions.
- Per our bylaws, the vacancy was be filled through an appointment by the Governor.

- **Welcome, Levi Reilly!**

- Levi is the Partner and Head of Development at Marcus Partners, leading \$1.5B+ in projects across 4M+ square feet and 2,200+ units.
- Levi brings 20+ years of experience in housing, life science, industrial, and commercial real estate.
- Levi has direct experience with building electrification challenges and previously served on the Governor's Unlocking Housing Production Commission.

The Future Grid from a Municipal Lens



- GMAC successfully hosted its first in-person stakeholder event on July 17th.
- We convened ~**100** in-person and online municipal stakeholders and community leaders interested in and/or taking steps to decarbonize and electrify their city or town.
- Thank you, GMAC members, for supporting the planning, panels, and facilitated discussions!
- *See next slide for initial takeaways from the event discussions and survey feedback.*



The Future Grid from a Municipal Lens



Grid Modernization Advisory Council

Initial Takeaways:

- The event was very well received, and there is interest in planning future events in other parts of the state.
- Participants especially enjoyed the panel with municipality staff and expressed an interest from hearing from other types of municipalities about their challenges and experiences.
- There is a need for more communication and coordination between all stakeholders, but there are questions about capacity for additional engagement – **is there a way GMAC could help?**
- There is interest in figuring out how utilities can share more localized data to support collaborative proactive planning, while maintaining customer privacy.
- There is a need for plain language resources about grid planning. There is also a need for executive summaries and other simplified communications about what municipalities need to know for their planning and what they need to communicate to residents right now.

Do GMAC members have any takeaways/feedback about the event?

ESMP Activities Updates

1. ESMP Phase II

1. Metrics/biannual reports
2. Long-term cost recovery

2. IEP Working Group

3. LTSP (DPU 25-20)

4. Other

Key Upcoming Dates

Additional EDC reply comments on metrics/reporting	7/30
IEP Public Listening Session #1	8/24
EDC comments on ESMP long-term cost recovery	9/10
IEP Stakeholder Working Group meeting	9/18
1 st ESMP biannual report published	9/30
Intervenor comments on ESMP long-term cost recovery	10/8

**Stay up to date on ESMP activities via the Activity Tracker!*

Are there any updates on these items?

2026 Strategic Plan Elements



GMAC Role

- Identify a feasible scope and role for the GMAC in 2026
- Discuss and align around a shared definition and scope for “grid modernization” and “distribution system planning” and GMAC’s role

Objectives

- GMAC identifies a limited set of overarching objectives it seeks to accomplish in 2026
- GMAC can also brainstorm potential objectives for 2027+
- Each objective clearly identifies success criteria (e.g. GMAC resolution, GMAC comments, stakeholder event, external materials)



Activities

- Each objective will be met by pursuing different activities.
- These could include establishing a subgroup, designating consultant tasks, hosting stakeholder events, etc.



Workplan

- The workplan for each objective will include a management plan that links together the objective, consultant and GMAC member activities, a timeline for 2026, to meet the success criteria.

Summary of Survey Results

GMAC Role (1 of 2): Areas of Alignment

The majority of GMAC members see the GMAC as a venue to bring siloed topics and processes under one umbrella but acknowledge the challenge of trying to do too much and the need to prioritize and use resources effectively.

Transparency and education of stakeholders and the public is important to GMAC members and is something the GMAC as well suited for.

GMAC members are supportive of monitoring and staying aware of other dockets/proceeding but are not very interested in engaging in other dockets.

- *One idea is to synthesize all ongoing activities related to grid modernization with a view to potentially bringing some or all of the disparate efforts under "one roof".*
- *"The GMAC is a good forum to help to understand how the various [distribution system planning and grid modernization] processes interact and ensure interested stakeholders are able to understand and stay informed of the big picture."*
- *GMAC should continue to be a location for public education on grid planning topics.*
- *Continuing to provide public education and ensuring transparency in the ESMP process*
- *"I think we should continue to track these processes. If there is a major decision point or opportunity for feedback in these other processes, I believe the GMAC should have a conversation at a meeting about this topic and provide feedback into those processes if appropriate (formally or informally)."*
- *"It should be aware of [related dockets], but we cannot necessarily participate in every one"*

GMAC Role (2 of 2): For Further Discussion

GMAC members are unsure to what extent GMAC should focus on education of the general public.

- *“Not sure how much value there is in attempting to educate the actual “general public” - such education would have to start at such a 101 level that it likely would not be helpful to either the public or the GMAC. Education for specific groups/subsets of the public with preexisting interest is a better idea.”*
- *“GMAC should continue to be a location for public education on grid planning topics.”*

While some GMAC members feel the GMAC should serve as a body to educate its members (9 of 15), many GMAC members feel that they are already experts in their field.

- *I'm torn on how much GMAC members need to know to be able to speak to/convey the needs of their sectors. It may not be that GMAC members need more education, rather the way we are asking questions and asking GMAC members to engage may need rethinking. How can GMAC members be better leveraged to share their sector-specific knowledge and applicability to the grid questions at hand?*
- *Some background/contextual materials could be helpful, but GMAC members should ideally already be experts in their field and should be able to contribute based on that existing expertise.*

Potential GMAC Objective Focus Areas

1. Effective and Proactive Planning

- Planning for future growth in electrical loads and distributed generation
- Load forecasting

2. Least-cost Investments

- How to make necessary grid investments for the least cost. Understanding EDC approach and providing recommendations.

3. ESMP Implementation and Investment Reprioritization

- First year of ESMP implementation, including investments made and investment reprioritization

4. Equity and Community Impacts

- Emissions impacts, siting and permitting

5. Affordability

- Cost containment, ensuring achieving GHG goals is affordable for ratepayers

6. DER Interconnection and Planning

- Ensuring grid is proactively upgraded to handle increased DER adoption
- Co-optimizing of planning for new load connection and DER interconnection

GMAC Activity Ideas (1 of 2)



Review and Discuss ESMP implementation

- Review and discuss biannual reports and year 1 of ESMP implementation
- Provide feedback to EDCs on ESMP implementation and other grid planning processes going on in MA

Create sub-committees

- On building codes - connect GMAC members with those who influence buildings and their design (e.g., DOER Stretch code or MassSave teams)
- On IEP - dive into the work of the IEP working group and provide recommendations on IEP planning included in the ESMPs

Collaborate with EDCs on next ESMPs

- Develop a GMAC engagement plan and timeline leading up to next ESMPs
- Do forecasting deep dives by end use (e.g., buildings, transportation, batteries)
- Collaborate on forecasting and how it relates to least-cost investments

Produce Work Products

- Produce a GMAC resolution on forecasting recommendations
- Create GMAC internal memos and/or summary briefs of dockets and public comments by topic

Develop a larger scale education and engagement campaign

Organize additional tours of energy infrastructure sites

- Such as solar/storage project sites, complex C&I decarb building projects, etc.

Convene a forum of representatives from various states working on proactive system planning to share information.

- States to consider: Colorado, Illinois, Minnesota, New York

GMAC Activity Ideas: Work Products (2 of 2)

GMAC members are generally supportive of producing work products that stay within the GMAC's scope, but there are differing understandings as to the purpose of the work products (Q10)

- *Maybe [a work product] for those involved in building code, energy code and building incentive programs, so that they understand what things THEY could do to help and benefit grid mod.*
- *If it is possible for the diverse GMAC councilmembers to develop resolutions and/or comments that could be submitted to the DPU or other administrative agencies and the legislation, the Council could send a strong message. In practice that could be difficult given the diverse voices.*
- *I very much believe so as we've used the Equity Working Group in this manner. The GMAC is privy and familiar with a lot of information which would be useful to the public and other parties.*
- *I think it is fine for GMAC to produce informational work product. If parties then decide to use/leverage those materials to advocate outside of GMAC, that's fine. I don't see an issue with GMAC advocating for some sort of outcome/initiative, as long as it is not in clear opposition to an EDC position.*
- *Internal memos and/or summary briefs of dockets and public comments by topic would be helpful*

What should GMAC *start, stop and continue* doing in 2026?



GMAC members generally like the current meeting frequency and structure

- But want to make sure the meetings are focused and want to set specific priorities
- Also want to identify specific action items

GMAC members want to continue to focus on dialogue between members and collaboration with EDCs

- Are also interested in hearing from external experts

GMAC members want to continue monitoring ongoing ESMP and related activities

- But are wary of expanding the scope of the GMAC and of requiring additional time commitment from members

GMAC members want to continue to focus on stakeholder education and transparency

- Members are supportive of continuing stakeholder sessions

GMAC members want to review current ESMP implementation and prepare for the next ESMP cycle by:

- Paying close attention to biannual reports and lessons learned
- Providing feedback on ESMP process to EDCs and collaborating with EDCs to create a GMAC engagement plan
- Focusing on key topic areas that will be in the next ESMPs (e.g., forecasting, investment prioritization)

2026 Strategic Plan – Next Steps

Invites sent out for small group discussions in early August

- Discussions will build upon topics and results in GMAC member survey

September GMAC meeting

- Focused on 2026 Strategic Planning

Massachusetts Grid Modernization Advisory Council

Synapse Presentation on Equity



Background and Highlights from Other States

- Energy equity definitions and dimensions
- Examples of other states that incorporate equity into energy planning
 - Illinois: Grid modernization plans
 - Washington: Clean Energy Implementation Plans

Massachusetts Energy Equity Initiatives Related to ESMPs

- Department directives on ESMP equity
- Equity in Massachusetts energy efficiency programs
- Distributional equity analysis for ESMPs

Appendix

- Environmental justice definitions in Massachusetts
- Map of EJ communities and EE designated equity communities
- Equity activities in the US
 - Summary of results from 2023 US DOE report

Energy Equity

Highlights from Other States

Energy Equity



Energy equity means ensuring that all individuals and communities, regardless of socioeconomic status, race, or location, have equitable access to affordable, reliable, safe, and clean energy resources.

Energy equity means ensuring that the benefits and burdens of energy policies, programs, and technologies are distributed equitably, and that the processes used to develop and implement them are inclusive and accessible.

Four dimensions of equity

Recognition

Recognizing the historical, cultural and institutional dynamics and structures that have led to energy inequities

Procedural

Promoting inclusive, accessible, authentic engagement and representation when developing or implementing programs and policies

Distributional

Promoting the equitable distribution of benefits and burdens across all segments of a community and across generations

Restorative

Addressing reparations for past inequities, rectifying practices that perpetuate inequities, promoting accountability for key decision-makers

Adapted from Energy Equity Project, *Framework Report*, v1.0

Example: Illinois Grid Modernization Plans

Equity Investment Eligible Communities = EIEC

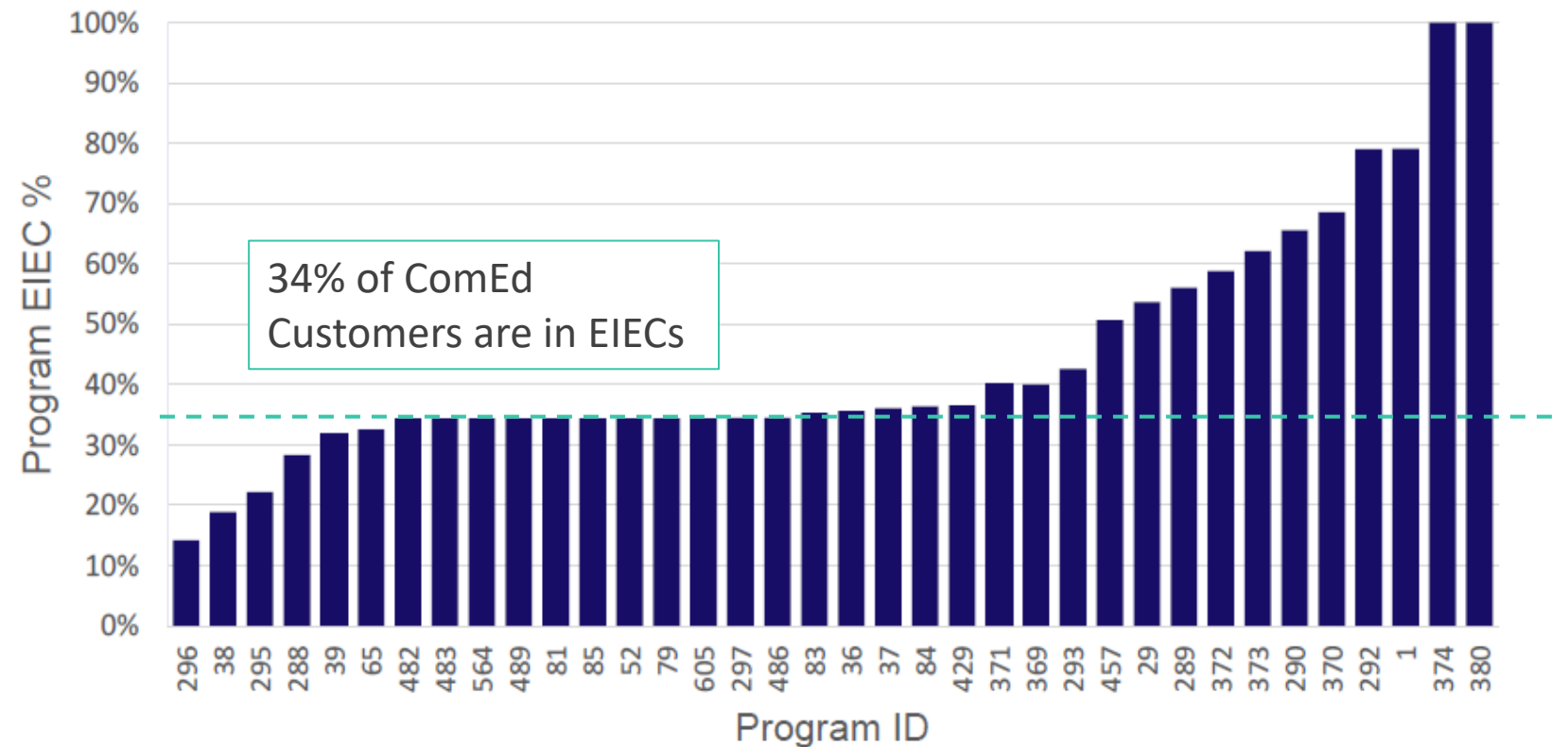
For each grid mod or clean energy program, ComEd estimates the portion of customers served that are in EIECs.



ComEd multiplies these EIEC percentages by the monetary benefits for each program to estimate the benefits that go to EIEC customers per program.

Findings: The portion of the grid mod and clean energy benefits that go to **EIEC customers = 44%**

Figure 2-8: Distribution of EIEC Percentage for Grid Modernization and Clean Energy Programs

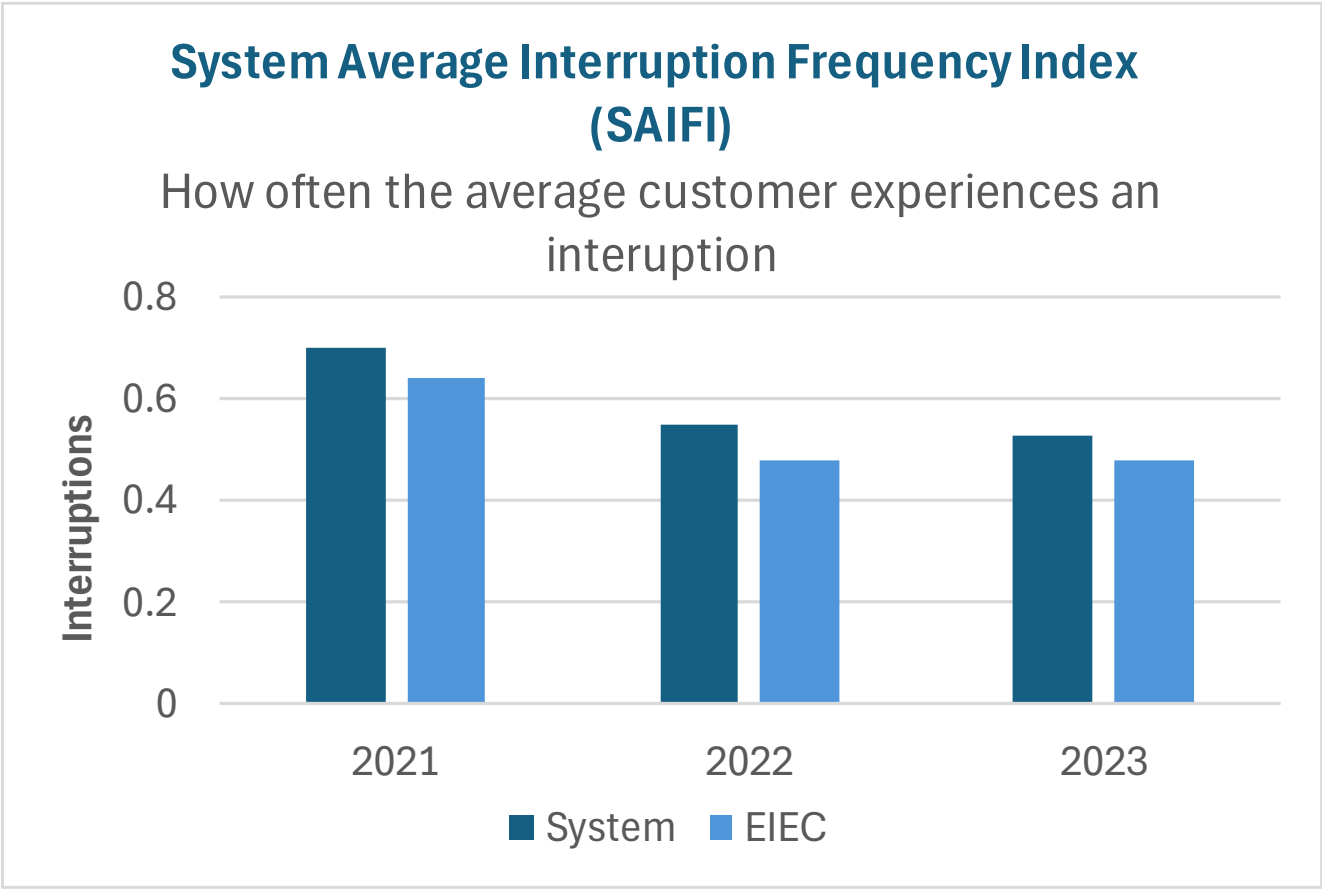


Commonwealth Edison, 2024. *ComEd Refiled Grid Plan*. Available at <https://www.icc.illinois.gov/docket/P2024-0181/documents>

Example: Illinois Grid Modernization Plans

ComEd also assessed how reliability for EIEC customer compares to the system

In the years 2021-2023, EIEC customers experienced fewer outages compared to the average customer



Commonwealth Edison, 2024. *ComEd Refiled Grid Plan*. Available at <https://www.icc.illinois.gov/docket/P2024-0181/documents>

Example: Washington Clean Energy Implementation Plans



Washington's Clean Energy Transformation Act requires that utilities prepare **Clean Energy Implementation Plans**

These are focused on clean energy goals, and account for generation, distribution, grid modernization, and DER options

They are required to, among other things:

- Equitably distribute energy and nonenergy benefits.
- Reduce burdens to vulnerable populations and highly impacted communities.

Puget Sound Energy developed an **Equity Assessment Framework** to incorporate tenets of energy justice into its Clean Energy Implementation Plan.

- What are existing disparities?
- What are existing barriers to equity?
- What steps can PSE take to address those disparities and barriers?
- What benefits are expected for customers, especially vulnerable customers?
- What will it cost customers to implement proposed actions?

Puget Sound Energy, 2023. *2023 Biennial CEIP Update – Chapter 3.*

Available at https://www.pse.com/-/media/PDFs/CEIP/2023/05_BU23_Ch3_Final.pdf

Example: Washington Clean Energy Implementation Plans

Puget Sound Energy created **customer benefit indicators** (CBIs) to account for non-monetary and non-energy benefits in making resource investment decisions.

- The CBIs were in terms of non-monetary values (e.g., DER participation, bills savings, tons of GHG)
- The CBIs were then included in a scoring and weighting system along with monetary impacts used to optimize resource portfolios
- This allows for accounting for equity at the time resource investment decisions are made

Caveat: Properly accounting for equity and other non-monetary impacts through CBIs and scoring techniques is challenging. Washington stakeholders are seeking improvements in future applications.

Customer Benefit Indicators Used:

- Promoting equity through greater participation in DERs by vulnerable customers
- Reduced median electric bill as percentage of income for residential customers
- Reduced median electric bill as percentage of income for energy-burdened residential customers
- Reduce GHG emissions
- Improved home comfort
- Improve outdoor air quality
- Improved community health
- Reduced frequency and duration of outages
- Improved access to reliable clean energy

Puget Sound Energy, 2023. *2023 Biennial CEIP Update – Chapter 3*. Available at https://www.pse.com/-/media/PDFs/CEIP/2023/05_BU23_Ch3_Final.pdf

Massachusetts Energy Equity Initiatives Related to ESMPs

ESMP Equity Framework



The EDCs' proposed an equity framework to incorporate equity principles into ESMPs.

In the ESMP Phase I order, the Department approved the equity framework with modifications.

The Department acknowledged that the framework is the first step to

- engage, educate, and respond to stakeholders, and
- address inequities by mitigating the negative impacts on those communities that bear the burden of hosting electric distribution system infrastructure

The ESMP equity framework (as modified)

- Defines equity, and its three aspects (procedural, distributional, and structural) with respect to energy
- Translation of materials into multiple languages
- Clear and plain language in public-facing materials
- Development of a stakeholder engagement framework
- Community Benefits Agreements (CBAs) on a case-by-case basis with communities hosting energy infrastructure

Additional Department Directives on Equity in ESMPs

In the Phase 1 ESMP order, the Department:

- Requires the EDCs to apply the modified equity framework to any large electric distribution infrastructure project that comes before the Department (p. 382)
- Expects that the next ESMPs will include a more comprehensive and detailed description of distributional and structural equity (p. 384)
- Directs the EDCs to provide updates in their biannual reports on how they are addressing distributional and structural equity in the implementation of the ESMPs (p. 385)
- Encourages the EDCs to collaborate with the CESAG, GMAC, and EWG to gather stakeholder input on implementing all aspects of the equity framework (p. 385)
- Finds that role of community benefits agreements in distribution system planning will be addressed in a separate proceeding with a broader set of stakeholders and involvement with the Energy Facilities Siting Board (p. 381)

In the Phase 2 ESMP Cost Recovery order, the Department:

- Directed the EDCs to incorporate the CESAG community engagement framework into their regular business practices for both ESMP and non-ESMP investments (pp. 138-139)
 - Specified that this is not limited to major infrastructure investments, and that the EDCs should apply the community engagement framework “more broadly to distribution system planning” (p. 139)

Equity in Massachusetts Energy Efficiency Programs



The 2025-2027 Three-Year Energy Efficiency and Decarbonization Plan

Identifies ‘designated equity communities’

- Greater than 35% of population are renters
- More than 8,000 renters reside in the community
- More than 50% of the community’s population are low or moderate income

BCA model separately identifies those benefits that go to equity communities and those that go to other customers. In 2025:

- \$1.3 billion of benefits went to customers in equity communities
- \$2.8 billion of benefits went to other customers

The equity benefits are used as part of the performance incentive mechanism

- To encourage the EDCs to serve equity communities

The Department found that the equity component of the plans is “appropriately designed to encourage the pursuit of all cost-effective energy efficiency opportunities”

Includes enhanced EE services to designated equity communities:

- Increased electrification and access to weatherization
- Enhance access for rental properties
- Enhance access for small businesses
- Enhanced access for schools
- Enhanced access for moderate income
- Support workforce and supplier diversity
- Improve language access
- Improve data collection and reporting practices for historically underserved communities
- Establish statewide contact center

Distributional Equity Analysis (DEA)

DEA is an analytical framework to evaluate the distributional impacts of energy resources on different customer groups

- Particularly on priority populations (e.g., low-income customers, environmental justice communities, disadvantaged customers, or marginalized customers)

DEA can be used to complement benefit-cost analysis (BCA)

- BCAs consider impacts on all customers on average, and therefore cannot identify distributional issues
- DEAs often use many of the same inputs, methods, and assumptions as BCAs
- BCAs and DEAs can be used together to inform decisions about utility investments

DEA can also be used in isolation of BCAs

Two Key DEA and BCA Differences

DEA separates customers into

- priority populations and
- other customers

DEA includes equity metrics

- that are different than the monetary costs and benefits in a BCA

This way DEAs indicate how equity impacts (metrics) are distributed differently

Distributional Equity Analysis

Key steps in a distributional equity analysis

1. Establish robust stakeholder process
2. Identify priority populations
3. Determine the context
 - Which investments?
 - Prospective or retrospective?
4. Develop DEA metrics
5. Apply DEA metrics to priority populations
6. Compare DEA metric results for priority population versus all other customers
7. Use these DEA results in combination with BCA results to inform resource decisions

Example DEA metrics

- Participation in DER programs
- Program dollars invested in priority communities
- Change in numbers and durations of outages
- Percent change in bills or rates
- Percent change in energy burden
- Change in number or frequency of shutoffs
- Reduced air emissions in priority communities
- Workforce development in priority communities

Source: US DOE, [Distributional Equity Analysis for Energy Efficiency and Other Distributed Energy Resources](https://live-etabiblio.pantheonsite.io/sites/default/files/bto-distributed-equity-analysis-guide_may2024.pdf), available at https://live-etabiblio.pantheonsite.io/sites/default/files/bto-distributed-equity-analysis-guide_may2024.pdf

Massachusetts ESMP DEA – A Range of Options

There are many ways that an ESMP DEA could be designed and implemented

DEA Step	Options
Stakeholder process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EWG input and review • GMAC input and review
Priority population	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EJ communities • EE designated equity communities • ESMP specific definition
Context	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ESMP investments • Non-ESMP investments • Retrospective
Metrics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See side table for some options
Use results	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inform changes or reprioritization of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ESMP investments • Non-ESMP investments • Inform 2029 ESMP

Metric Categories	Metrics
Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reliability • Resilience • DER interconnection
Investment in ESMP projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Network projects • Resilience projects • Platform projects • CIPs • LTSP projects
Investment in non-ESMP projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Substations • Aging infrastructure
Participation in DER programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EE & DR • PV • Storage • EV infrastructure • NWAs



CESAG

Community Engagement Stakeholder Advisory Group

Sessions Facilitated and Report Prepared by ASG | July 2025



First Session with the CESAG

March 28, 2025

National Grid's Sustainability Hub, Worcester, MA



OVERVIEW



Background and Goals

In August 2024, the Electric Distribution Companies (EDCs) received approval from the Department of Public Utilities (DPU) to establish the Community Engagement Stakeholder Advisory Group (CESAG) as part of the Electric Sector Modernization Plans.

The CESAG was formed to further inform EDC engagement efforts around proposed clean energy infrastructure projects. It provided a structured opportunity to develop a comprehensive stakeholder engagement framework that could apply to the incremental clean energy infrastructure projects proposed in the Electric Sector Modernization Plans (ESMP).

The CESAG was structured to provide six seats for community-based organizations and three seats for EDCs, to be co-chaired by a CBO and an EDC, and to be professionally facilitated.

Community Participation

Six community-based organizations (CBOs) across Massachusetts were sought to provide unique perspectives and expertise around community engagement and to advance procedural, structural, and distributional equity in the clean energy transition.

Selection Criteria:

Align with key focus areas



Statewide reach preferable



Represent groups that have not historically participated in electric grid planning processes



The Office of Environmental Justice and Equity, the Grid Modernization Advisory Council's Equity Working Group, and the Department of Energy Resources supported the process by promoting the opportunity to participate in the CESAG and recommending organizations to contact.

20+ CBOs were considered based on recommendations.

Partner CBOs

ABCD James Collins <i>Director Climate Equity & Impact</i>	Affordability/Low, Moderate Fixed Income Advocacy	We Are ALX Jose Nino <i>Engagement Lead</i> <i>*CESAG Co-Chair</i>	Economic Empowerment/ Latino Advancement
Slingshot Mireille Bejjani <i>Executive Director</i>	Environmental Health and Justice Advocacy	Emerald Cities Collaborative Alexis Washburn <i>Northeast Regional Director</i>	Community Advocacy/Climate
Browning the Green Space Kerry Bowie <i>Executive Director</i>	Environmental Justice/Equity/ Workforce	Public Health Institute of Western Massachusetts Sarita Hudson <i>Senior Director of Strategy and Development</i>	Healthcare/Public Health



Advisory Sessions

- ASG facilitated and led **eight advisory sessions** (two in-person, six virtual) with the CESAG
- ASG's facilitation provided neutrality, helped **reduce bias and ensured the process was grounded in active collaboration**
- CESAG co-chairs* worked between meetings to integrate the group's feedback into a working framework
- The work centered on **developing a community engagement framework that is replicable, easy to understand, and ready to implement**
- The objective was to create a **flexible, equity-centered framework that can be applied statewide**

*CESAG co-chairs were representatives from Eversource and We Are ALX



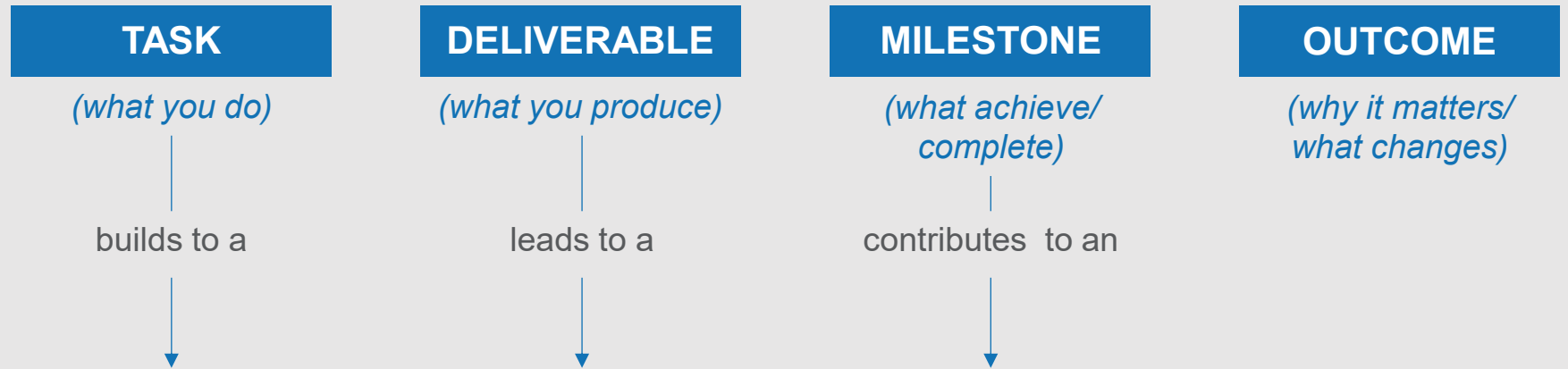
CESAG OUTCOMES

CESAG Final Product

- 1 The CESAG Framework
- 2 Stakeholder Categories
- 3 Equity Measurements
- 4 Glossary

Framework Structure

The co-created framework uses a hierarchical approach to break down complex tasks into manageable steps that support achieving desired outcomes



The agreed upon Framework Outcomes are the engagement pillars submitted in the ESMPs

- Building a Shared Understanding
- Developing Collaboration and Trust
- Continuous Outreach and Engagement



IMPLEMENTATION

The Tasks

The CESAG identified the following responsibilities.

- 1 Define the community
- 2 Anticipate concerns and set expectations
- 3 Seek feedback from stakeholders
- 4 Share information using a variety of strategies
- 5 Make information public and accessible
- 6 Document stakeholder participation
- 7 Establish measures of engagement
- 8 Capture the final mitigation efforts and/or Community Benefit Agreement, if applicable

How To Get There

(deliverables)

1.

Building a Shared Understanding

Develop stakeholder list for the defined community.
Examples include:

- Faith-based Organizations
- Local Municipalities
- Community Based Organizations

Provide timely materials that **set clear expectations** for community input and influence, including:

- Honest Communication
- Constraints and limitations
- Benefits

2.

Developing Collaboration and Trust

Show how community input will shape decisions and reinforce the value of participation, thus building trust and accountability throughout the engagement process.

Outline **how feedback will be evaluated**, when and where stakeholders can expect responses, and communicate any gaps in participation.

3.

Continuous Outreach and Engagement

Deliver **frequent, clear, transparent communication** through the community's preferred channels.

Evaluate the depth and breadth of **participation to inform and improve future engagement**.

Establish mechanisms to **track progress, honor commitments**, and ensure information is made **public and accessible to all**.

What we Achieve

(milestones)

- 1 **Minimizing historical barriers to engagement.**
- 2 Ensuring that engagement efforts that are **inclusive**
- 3 **Striving for authentic and responsive dialogue** that is accessible, relevant, and respectful of varying levels of technical knowledge.
- 4 Increasing understanding through **interpersonal interactions and participation** in community events
- 5 Building trust through “no surprises” approach; managing expectations **and explaining how community feedback influences project outcomes**
- 6 Fostering **two-way communication, transparency and understanding** between EDC and host community
- 7 Establishing mechanisms for on-going communication and collaboration over the long term
- 8 Creating a space for continuous learning and improvement

Why This Matters

(outcome)

1.

Building a Shared Understanding

Establish a foundation of understanding between **Electric Distribution Company** and the **host community**.

2.

Developing Collaboration and Trust

- Stakeholders feel respected
- **Positively engage** communities
- **Improve processes**
- Enable conversations with stakeholders
- Discuss the **insights** to **deliver** the next generation grid

3.

Continuous Outreach and Engagement

- Tailor **engagement plans** to respond to community **feedback**
- **Identify priorities** of the host community
- **Continue to engage stakeholders** about the benefits the project will deliver

MEASUREMENT



Equity Measurements

Procedural Equity

Evaluation should aim to measure:

- Participation gaps of the defined community
- Effectiveness of engagement activity
- Sentiment of participants

Distributional Equity

Evaluation should aim to document:

- Benefits of the project
- Burdens of project
- Stakeholders' concerns
- Actions taken to address concerns

Structural Equity

Evaluation should aim to measure:

- Is there an accessible feedback loop for two-way communication?
- Is there a transparent mechanism to document and respond to the stakeholders' concerns?
- Are responses provided within the defined timeline?



LESSONS LEARNED FROM THE CESAG PROCESS



Recurring Themes

1. **Acknowledge community perceptions**, knowledge gaps, and the complexity of energy systems.
2. **Focus on inclusivity and humanizing** the engagement experience.
3. **Prioritize transparency**, plain language, and two-way communication.

4. **Set clear expectations** about constraints and opportunities for when and how community can influence outcomes.
5. **Improve accessibility** through public "feedback loop" that acknowledges the input from community.

6. **Emphasize** the value of community members' time and expertise.
7. **Recognize the importance of evaluation and accountability**; course correct along the way, if necessary.

Takeaways

	Why it matters	Takeaway
Plan for Iteration and Tension as Part of Collaborative Work	Engaging stakeholders, especially those with different institutional roles requires navigating disagreement and tension productively.	Allow time and space in the engagement for tension, co-learning, and iterative feedback. Create space for new and divergent opinions to allow for all members to participate in the process.
Ground Early Engagement in Shared Learning and Place Based understanding	Beginning with a shared experience (e.g., community walk, site walk, or on-site meeting) helps build common ground and align perspectives before diving into discussions.	Future engagements should start with in-person, immersive, on-the-ground experiences whenever possible.
Respect the Depth of Stakeholder Work and Experience	Acknowledge and respect the experiences and perspectives stakeholders bring to the conversation. Create space for new and emerging voices as projects expand across long timelines.	Recognize that stakeholder time and expertise is valuable and central to the process; maximize efficiencies whenever possible, while providing relevant information for newly engaged stakeholders.
Focus on Process, Not Just Product	A strong co-created process is as valuable as the final deliverable, especially in trust-building. Maintaining engagement across long periods of time requires consistent and respectful communication.	Build in visible process milestones and celebrate them, not just outcomes. Share success across project teams as well as stakeholders you are engaging with.

Perspectives On Process & Product

The development of the community engagement framework was shaped by deep collaboration, learning across sectors, and a shared commitment to centering community voices and equity.

CESAG members reflected on the process and ways to improve future engagement.

Thorough and Intentional Process	Building a Shared Understanding
<p>Importance of dialogue, relationship-building, and co-creation:</p> <p>Members:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Shared pride in the final co-created product• Expressed excitement about moving toward implementation• Described the result as something to be proud of• Acknowledged that the process included early tensions and pushback that were ultimately necessary for alignment.• Highlighted the group's ability to reach respectful consensus, underscoring the collaborative tone of the work	<p>Deeper understanding across roles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• CESAG members represented their community throughout the process• Members emphasized that unstructured conversations allowed members to learn from one another, providing space for shared insights and peer support• Members reinforced the value of broadening the conversation around energy distribution and grounding it in real community experience



Last Session #8 with the CESAG

July 10, 2025

Eversource, Dorchester, Massachusetts



Thank You!



Facilitated by ASG

Point of Contact: Chris Carballo
ccarballo@discoverasg.com

Massachusetts Grid Modernization Advisory Council

Equity Working Group Presentation



I. Overall Role and Responsibilities

The goal of the Equity Working Group is to **provide recommendations on the draft ESMPs for consideration by the GMAC specifically related to equity, with focus on low-income ratepayers and Environmental Justice populations.** It will be the responsibility of the Equity Working Group to provide input and feedback to the GMAC, in carrying out its statutory responsibilities to review and provide recommendations to Electric Distribution Companies as they draft and submit Electric-Sector Modernization Plans (ESMPs). **The Equity Working Group will also provide the GMAC with on-going input and recommendations on how to integrate and improve equity through the review and implementation of the ESMPs.**

Excerpts from EWG Charter



II. Responsibilities

The GMAC charges the Equity Working Group with the responsibility to:

- Provide input and feedback to the GMAC on how to consider equity through its review of the ESMPs and their implementation;
- Provide suggestions for addressing specific equity issues in the ESMPs;
- Provide feedback and specific suggestions on how to reduce impacts on low-income ratepayers;
- Provide feedback and recommendations relating to Environmental Justice Populations
- Advise and assist the GMAC on equity matters;
- Solicit meaningful engagement from stakeholders representing underserved populations; and
- Make recommendations and report to the GMAC on actions and activities of the Equity Working Group

Areas EWG has Provided Feedback to Date:

- Recommendations for the draft ESMPs before the opening of the Phase 1 Docket
- Feedback on metrics and reporting during Phase 2 of the docket
- Recommendations to the EDCs regarding CESAG members and consultants
- Feedback on MassCEC's Grid Services Study

Where do we go from here?



Shift towards proactive planning and research to fill remaining questions from previous ESMP process. Ideas include:

Research on bill impacts and affordability of energy transition processes

Increase public transparency on ESMP investments and their locations (e.g., mapping)

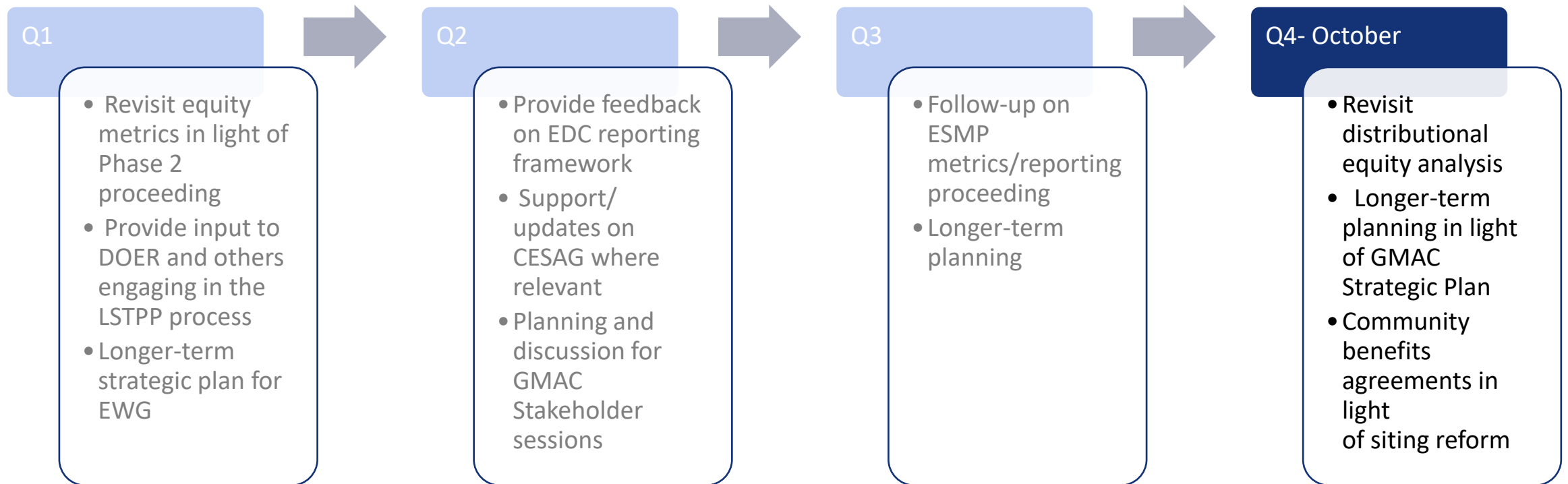
Targeted public convenings regarding WG research and findings

Explore distributional equity analysis, where applicable

Support continuous feedback and improvement process of CESAG and stakeholder engagement by reviewing biannual reports

Next Steps

- One last quarterly working group meeting to discuss 2026 workplan in light of GMAC strategic plan.
- Two-year terms for Working Group members conclude at end of year.



Break

Please be ready to start again in ~5 minutes

Facilitated Discussion

Led by Councilor Julie Curti

GMAC Discussion Questions



The Role of GMAC and Equity Working Group

- How should the GMAC and the GMAC EWG interact?
- How should the GMAC incorporate equity into its 2026 strategic plan?
- What should the GMAC EWG focus on for 2026?
- What else does the GMAC need from the EDCs to collaborate on these equity goals?

Potential Focus Areas

- Are there practices from the MA energy efficiency planning that could be applied to ESMPs?
 - If so, which practices are relevant for ESMP investments?
- Do you think a Distributional Equity Analysis (DEA) for the ESMPs would be valuable?
 - If so, what DEA design options would you prefer?
 - If so, what metrics would you like to focus on?
- Should the GMAC host another stakeholder event that focuses on equity?
 - If so, who is the target audience?

Close and Next Steps



- The next GMAC meeting is August 28th from 1 – 3 PM. The meeting topic is resilience.

Appendix

Environmental Justice Definition in Massachusetts



An Environmental Justice Population contains one of the following:

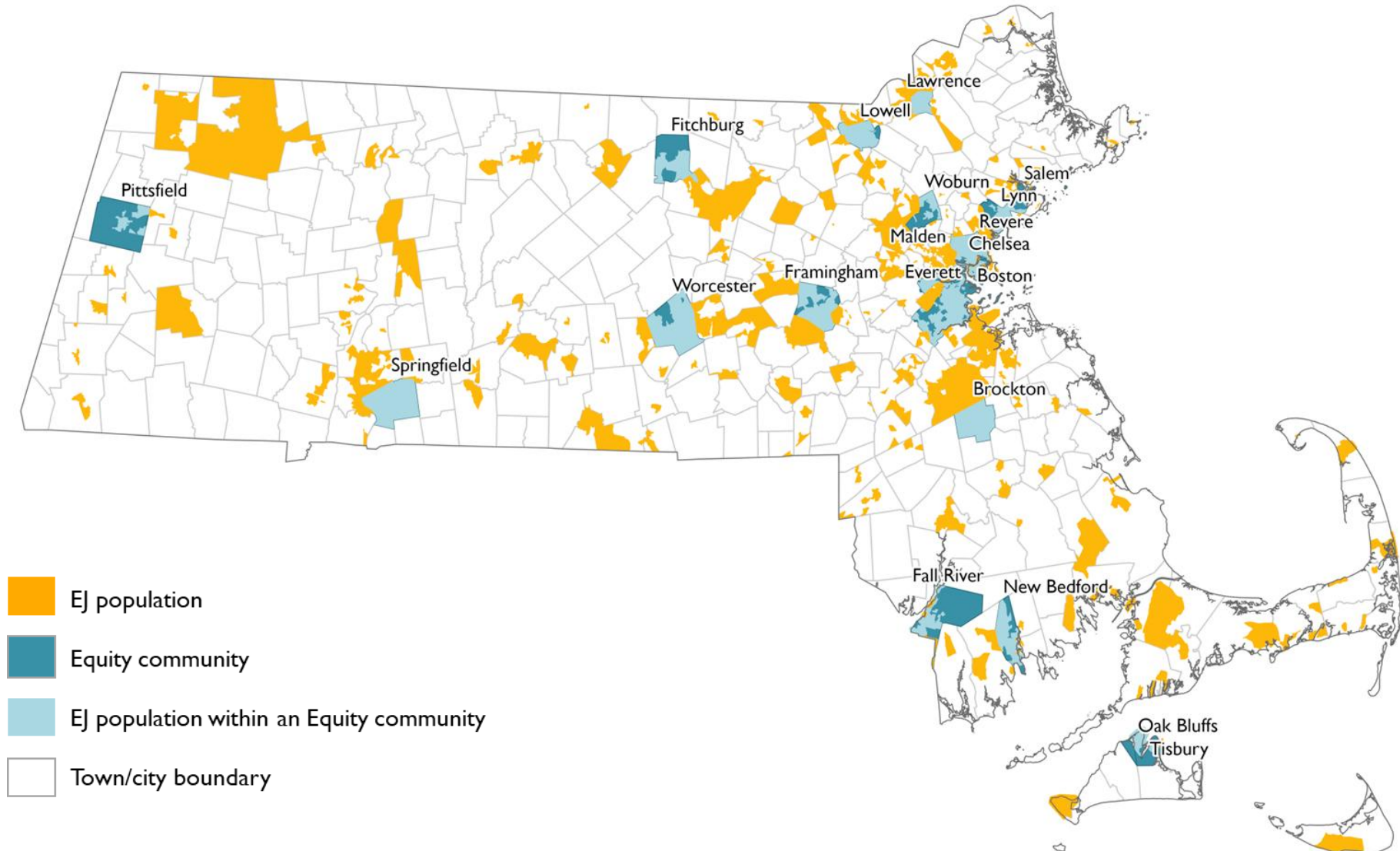
- The annual median household income is 65 percent or less of the statewide annual median household income
- Minorities make up 40 percent or more of the population
- 25 percent or more of households identify as speaking English less than “very well”
- Minorities make up 25 percent or more of the population and the annual median household income of the municipality in which the neighborhood is located does not exceed 150 percent of the statewide annual median household income.
- From: the Massachusetts Office of Environmental Justice and Equity

Massachusetts EJ communities:

- Most of inner-metro Boston
- Worcester
- Springfield
- Lowell
- Brockton
- New Bedford
- Some rural towns

As shown in the map on a later slide

Map of EJ Populations and EE Equity Communities



DOE Study: Energy Equity in State Actions

In 2023 US DOE (PNNL & LBNL) developed a database on state-led energy equity actions.

Identified five energy equity objectives and seven energy equity actions.

Identified several energy equity metrics used across six states.

Summary findings:

- 22 states cumulatively took 95 energy equity actions
- Most of the objectives were to recognize disadvantaged communities
- Most of the rest were to identify equity as a goal

Source: Hanus, N., Barlow, J., Satchwell, A., Cappers, P (2023). Assessing the Current State of U.S. Energy Equity Regulation and Legislation. Available at <https://www.pnnl.gov/sites/default/files/media/file/GMLC%20Equity%20Database%20Report%20-%20PNNL%2033957.pdf>

Energy Equity Objectives

- Recognize disadvantaged communities
- Identify equity as a goal
- Identify environmental justice as a goal
- Increase transparency
- Establish intervenor compensation

Energy Equity Actions

- Enacted legislation
- Executive order
- PUC: petition
- PUC: directive
- PUC: notice
- PUC: order
- PUC: proposed order

DOE Study: State Energy Equity Metrics

State	Metrics
CA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hours at minimum wage required to pay for essential utility services • Vulnerability index of various communities in California • Ratio of essential utility service charges to non-disposable household income
CT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Track and increase participation in energy efficiency programs among customers that are enrolled in the Matching Payment Program
IL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equity/affordability
MA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An equity index metric reporting energy efficiency, demand response, heating electrification, and electric vehicle infrastructure investments in environmental justice communities • Community solar enrollment

State	Metrics
OR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Energy burden • Disconnections for residential customers and disconnections for small commercial customers • Supplier diversity: contract spend for contractors and subcontractors • Organizations engaged and their community representation • Numbers and nature of outreach efforts in energy-burdened communities • EV ownership per capita (per census tract) • Amount of money spent on underserved communities
WA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Energy burden • Community ownership of resources • Resiliency • Nonenergy benefits • Public health

Source: Hanus, N., Barlow, J., Satchwell, A., Cappers, P (2023). Assessing the Current State of U.S. Energy Equity Regulation and Legislation.

Example: Illinois Grid Modernization Plans

Illinois Climate and Equitable Jobs Act requires

- **40% of benefits from grid modernization plans** be allocated to equity investment eligible communities (EIECs)

For each program:

ComEd identifies the percentage of EIEC customers the program serves.

This allows them to determine the portion of total grid mod benefits that flow to EIEC customers.

ComEd also estimates the costs and benefits of each program.

Category	Example Grid Mod Programs
Reliability	Distribution automation
	Microgrid
	Smart city / community
Customer programs	Beneficial electrification
	Community energy assistance
Information technology	Advanced telemetry
Hosting capacity	DER integration
	Advanced grid control and operations
Capacity expansion	Modernize legacy substations & feeders
	Summer critical substations
	Resiliency feeders