



# DATA FOR THE PUBLIC INTEREST: UTILITY AND REGULATORY POSSIBILITIES FOR EMPOWERING ENERGY EQUITY WITH DATA

NARUC CENTER FOR PARTNERSHIPS &  
INNOVATION

MARCH 11, 2021

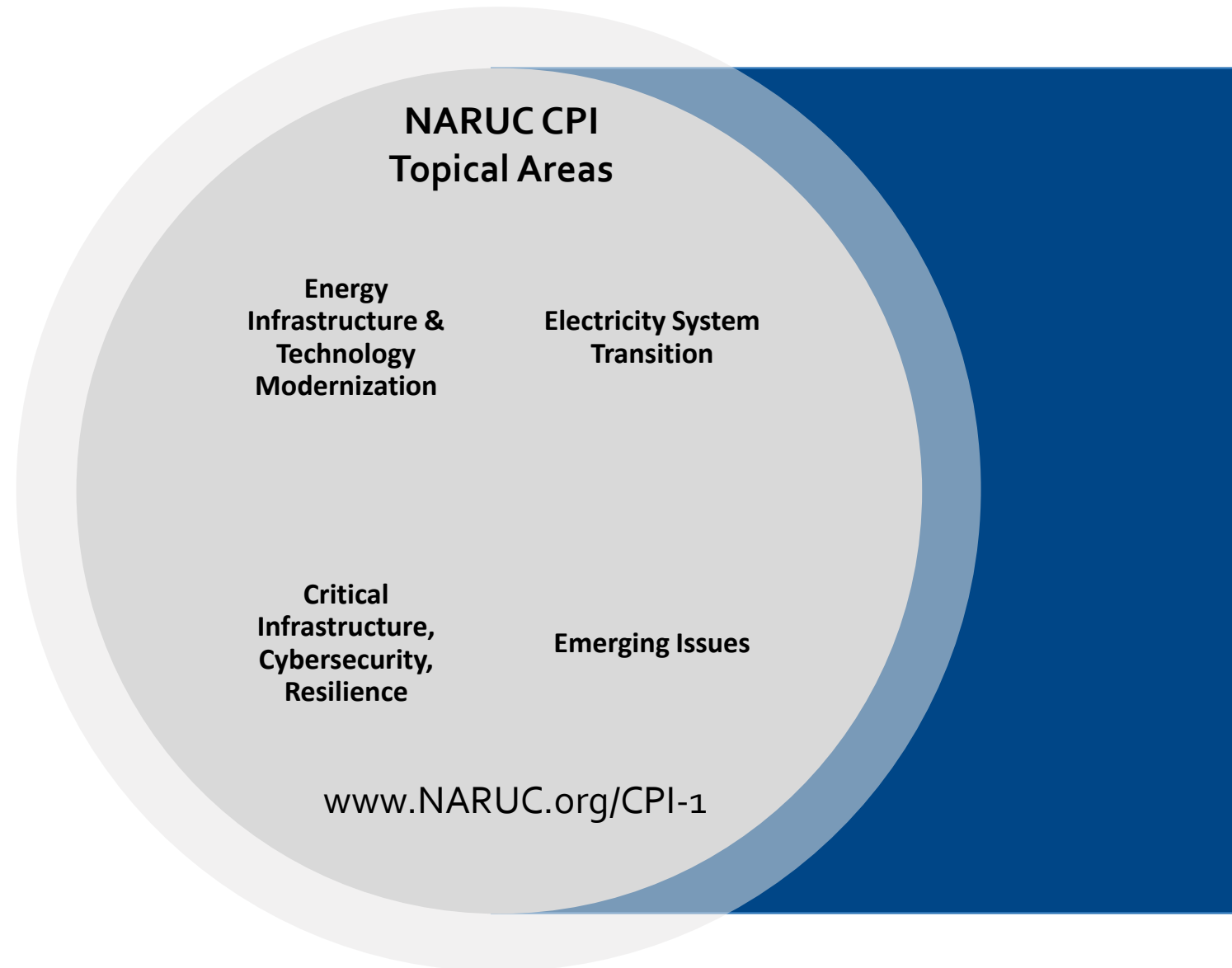
# WHAT IS NARUC

- The National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners (NARUC) is a non-profit organization founded in 1889.
- Our Members are the state regulatory Commissioners in all 50 states & the territories. FERC & FCC Commissioners are also members. NARUC has Associate Members in over 20 other countries.
- NARUC member agencies regulate electricity, natural gas, telecommunications, and water utilities.



# WHAT IS NARUC'S CENTER FOR PARTNERSHIPS AND INNOVATION?

- Grant-funded team dedicated to providing technical assistance to members.
- CPI identifies emerging challenges and connects state commissions with expertise and strategies.
- CPI builds relationships, develops resources, and delivers trainings.



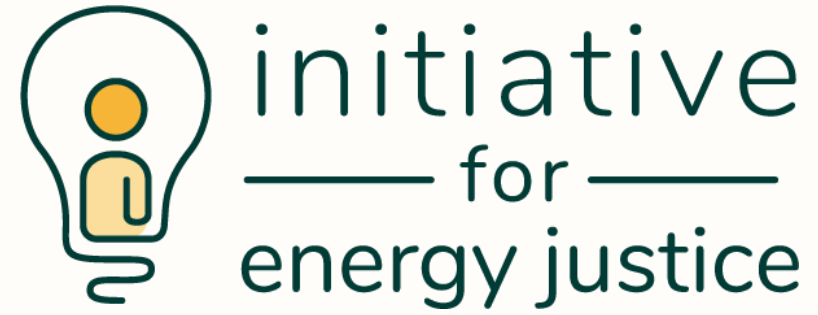


## **Moderator:**

**Commissioner Ann Rendahl**, Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission

## **Panelists:**

- **Subin DeVar**, Co-Founder, Initiative for Energy Justice
- **Mariel Thuraisingham**, Clean Energy Policy Lead, Front and Centered
- **Lauren Ross**, Director of Policy, American Council for an Energy Efficient Economy
- **Hassan Shaban**, Principal, Empower Dataworks



# Energy Justice Scorecard

**Scoring Key: 1 (No), 2 (A Little Bit), 3 (Somewhat), 4 (Mostly), 5 (Yes)**



<u>Question</u>	<u>Score</u>	<u>Explanation</u>	<u>Reference</u>
(1) <b>Process:</b> Have frontline communities participated meaningfully in the policymaking process?	5 4 3 2 1		
(2) <b>Restoration:</b> Does the policy aim to remedy prior harms faced by communities harmed by the fossil-fuel based energy system?	5 4 3 2 1		
(3) <b>Decision-making:</b> Does the policy center the decision-making of traditionally excluded populations?	5 4 3 2 1		
(4) <b>Benefits:</b> Does the policy center economic, social, or health benefits for traditionally excluded populations?	5 4 3 2 1		
(5) <b>Access:</b> Does the policy make energy more accessible or affordable to low-income communities?	5 4 3 2 1		
<u>Score</u>	___ /25		

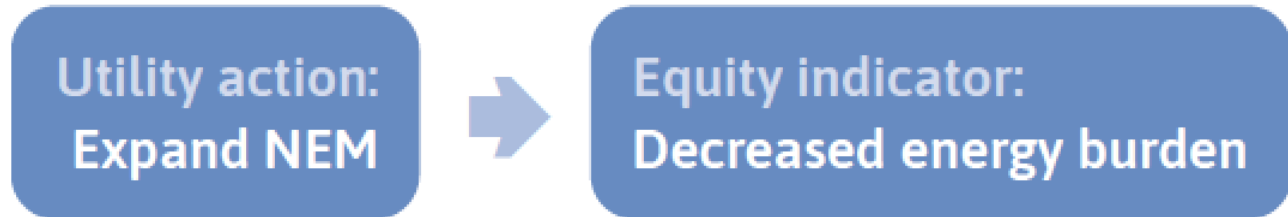
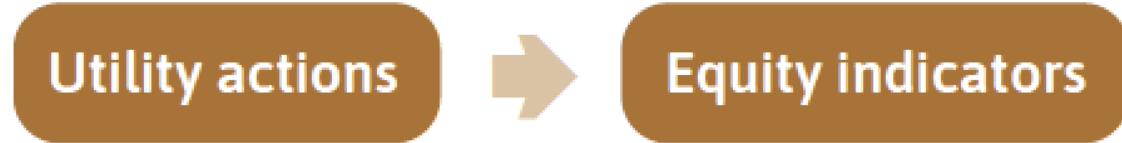
# Scorecard Framework

- **Process:** *Have marginalized communities participated meaningfully in the policymaking process with sufficient support?*
- **Restoration:** *Does the policy aim to remedy prior and present harms faced by communities negatively impacted by the energy system?*
- **Decision-making:** *Does the policy center the decision-making of marginalized communities?*
- **Benefits:** *Does the policy center economic, social, or health benefits for marginalized communities?*
- **Access:** *Does the policy make energy more accessible and affordable to marginalized communities?*

# Accountability Framework

## Actions and Indicators

- Utility actions
- Equity indicators

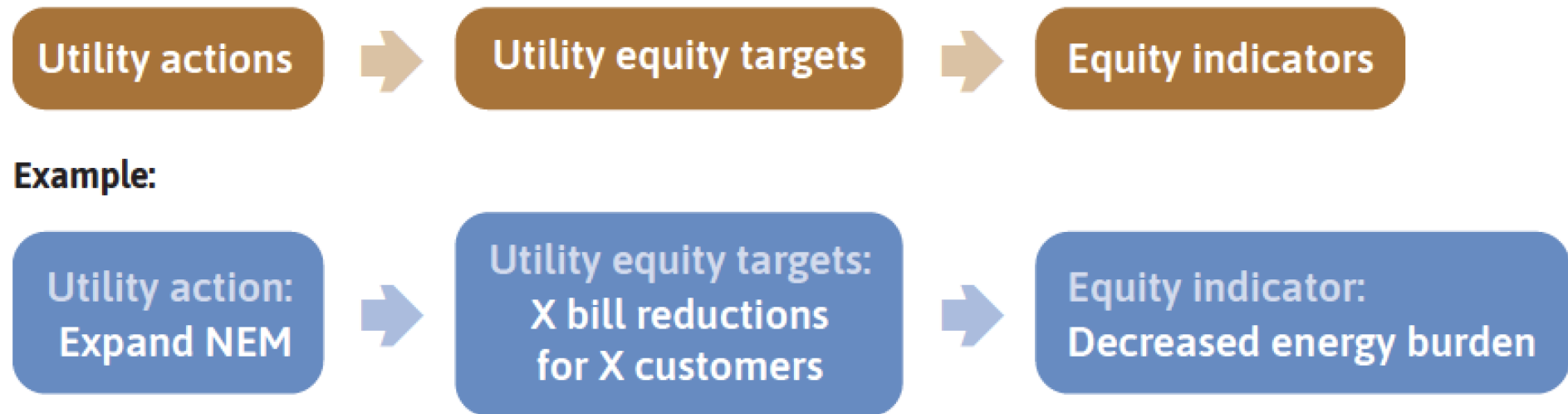


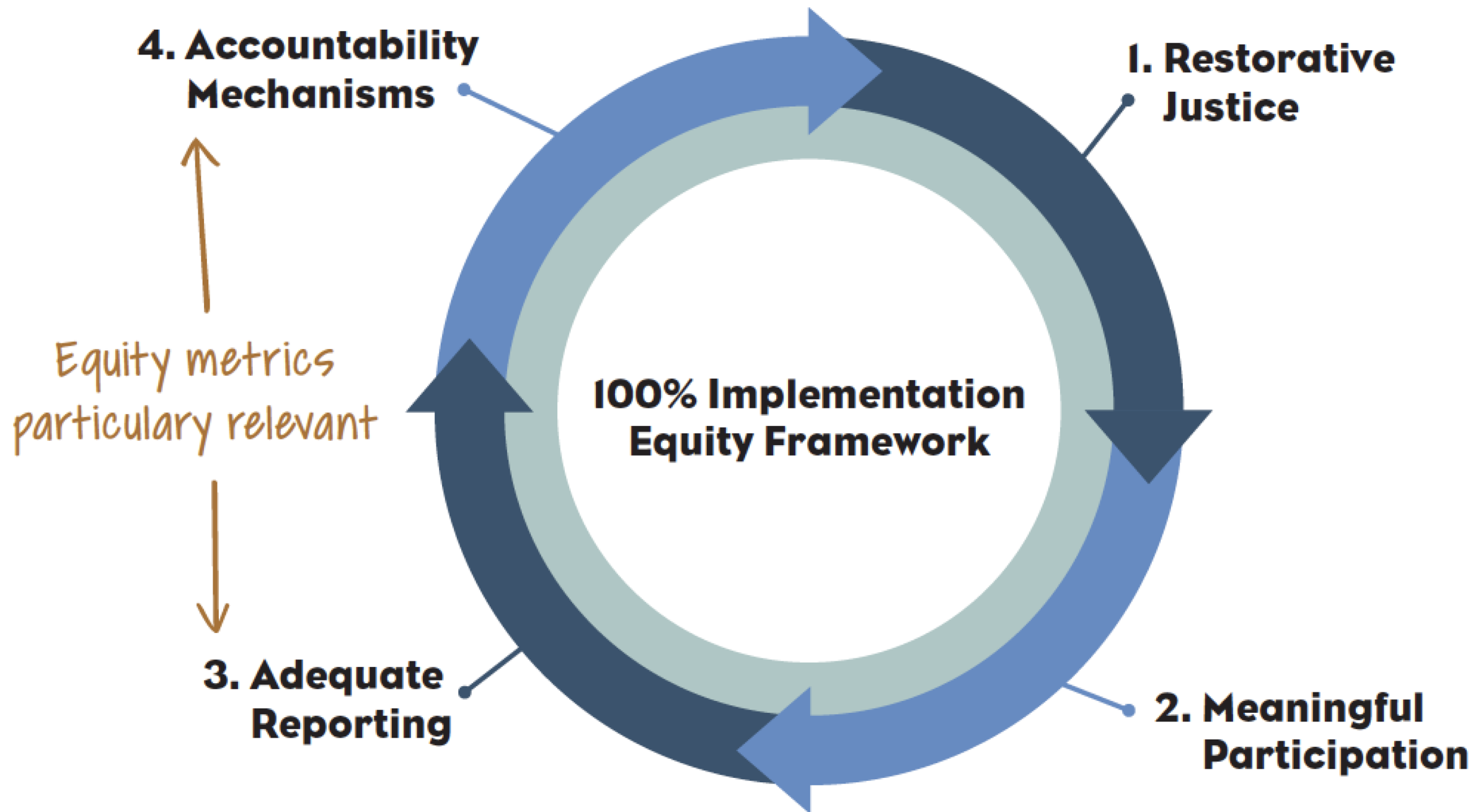


# Accountability Framework

## Actions, Targets, and Indicators

- Utility actions
- Utility equity targets
- Equity indicators





# Equity and Energy Efficiency Policy

Lauren Ross, PhD

**Data for the Public Interest: Utility and Regulatory Possibilities for  
Empowering Energy Equity**

**Thursday, March 11, 2021 | 3:00 – 4:00PM (EST)**



American Council for an Energy-Efficient Economy



The American Council for an Energy-Efficient Economy is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) founded in 1980. We act as a catalyst to advance energy efficiency policies, programs, technologies, investments, & behaviors.

Our research explores economic impacts, financing options, behavior changes, program design, and utility planning, as well as US national, state, & local policy.

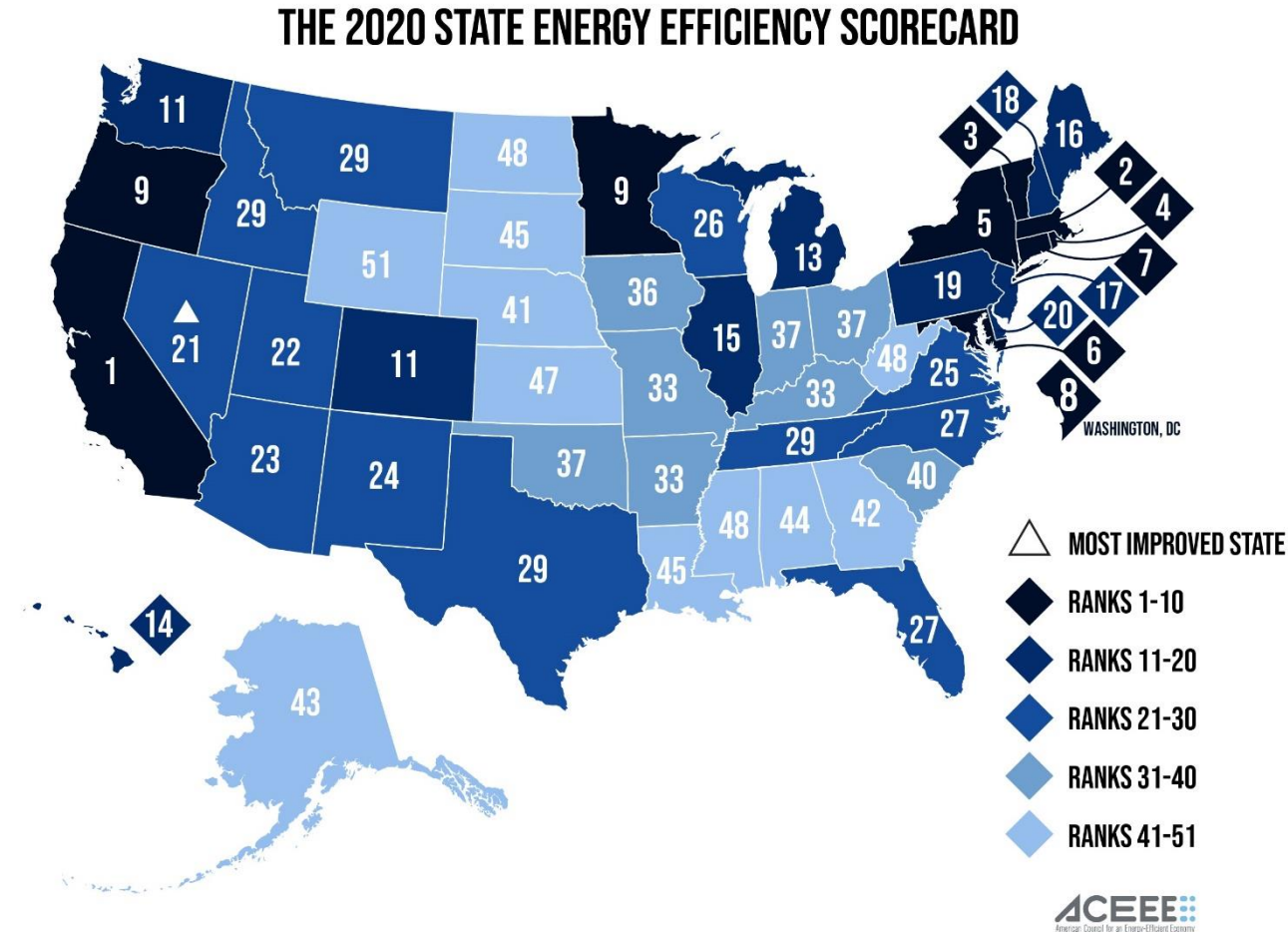
Our work is made possible by foundation funding, contracts, government grants, and conference revenue.

[aceee.org](http://aceee.org) @ACEEEdc

**ACEEE::**  
American Council for an Energy-Efficient Economy

# Key ACEEE Research

- **Energy Efficiency Scorecards:**
  - **1. State, 2. Utility, 3. City and 4. Transportation Electrification Scorecards**
- **State-focused recent research:**
  - **Energy Efficiency Resource Standards**
  - **State freight planning**
  - **Building performance standards**
  - **Reducing GHG emissions through efficiency programs**
  - **Electrification**
  - **EE and electric system reliability**
  - **Evaluation and cost-effectiveness**
  - **EE program best practices, including rural programs**





# State Scorecard goals

1. Provide an annual benchmark of state energy efficiency policies and progress
2. Offer a comparative tool to direct states toward efficiency policies, best practices, and case studies from high-ranking states and regional neighbors



Photo credit: Idaho Office of Energy and Mineral Resources

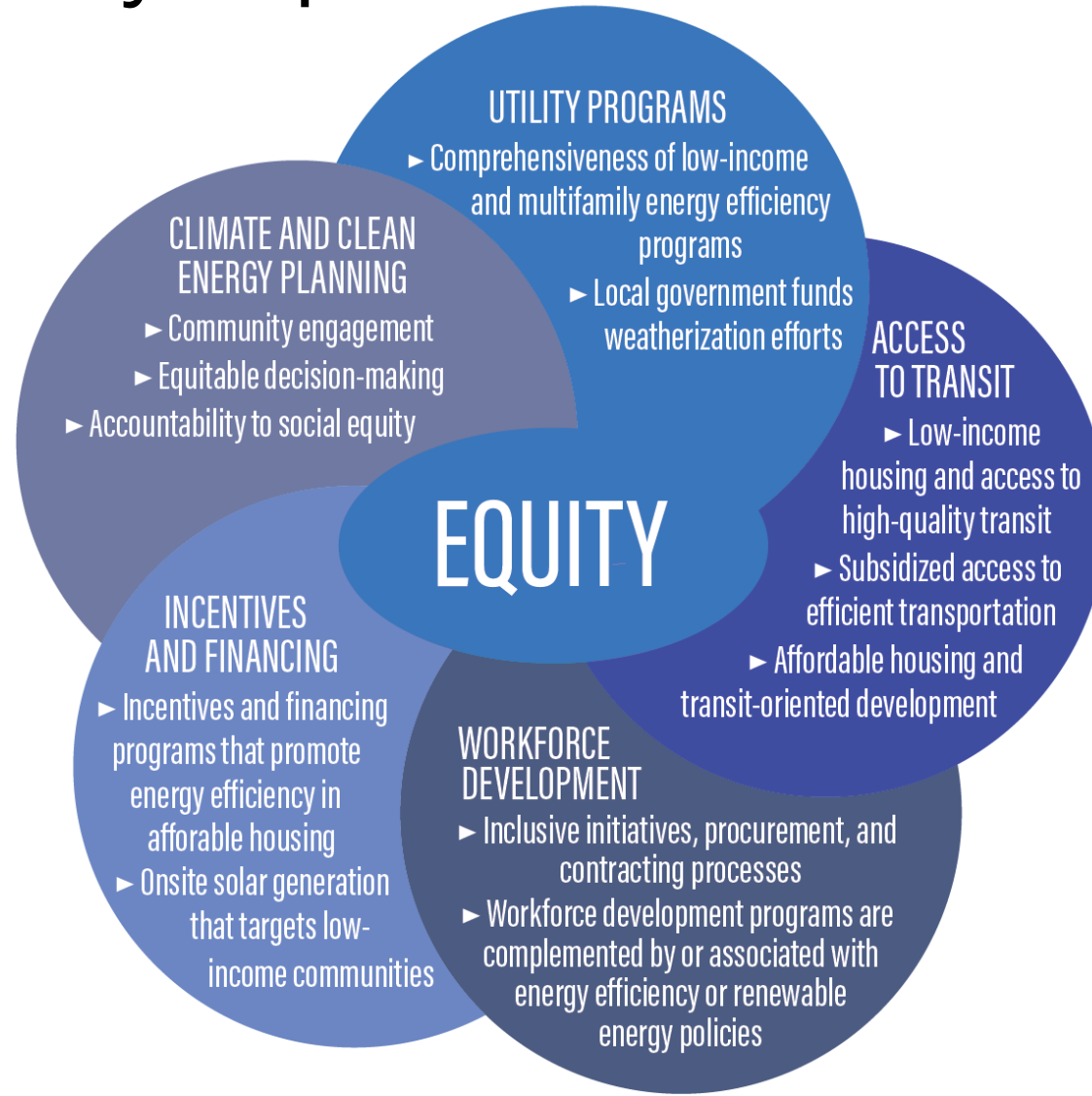


Photo credit: MA Department of Energy Resources



Photo credit: West Virginia Office of Energy

# Approach to addressing energy efficiency and equity in policy implementation



\* Representative of what is in ACEEE's City Clean Energy Scorecard

# Equity: Room for improvement in the State Scorecard

- Currently track low-income EE spending and special benefit-cost screening adjustments for LI customers
- Moving forward will work with states and utilities to incorporate metrics on community engagement, decision-making, workforce development, and adoption of internal protocols and metrics for accountability to equity, the community, and related goals/targets.
- Larger question – how do we assess the social distribution of benefits with limited data?





# Goals

- Ensure frontline communities are represented and are helping to drive the development of a full landscape of improved equity-related metrics
- Better understand current utility, state, and city capacity to report data on desired metrics
- Generate proposed changes to each of ACEEE's scorecards, setting the bar in a way that represents real performance on the metrics that matter most to communities.



## Activities

- Convene community-based organizations, advocates, and utilities
- Work together to define success for equitable decarbonization
- Embed metrics that match this definition in ACEEE's utility, state, and city scorecards



Lross@aceee.org

**Upcoming ACEEE Conferences**

Hot Water Forum	March 10–11	Virtual
Energy Efficiency Finance Forum	May 25–26	Virtual
Summer Study on Energy Efficiency in Industry	July 13–15	Virtual

*The top convener in energy efficiency.*  
[aceee.org/events](http://aceee.org/events)



# Quantitative Energy Equity

## The Utility Perspective

**Hassan Shaban, PhD**  
Principal, Empower Dataworks  
(Wenatchee, Central WA)

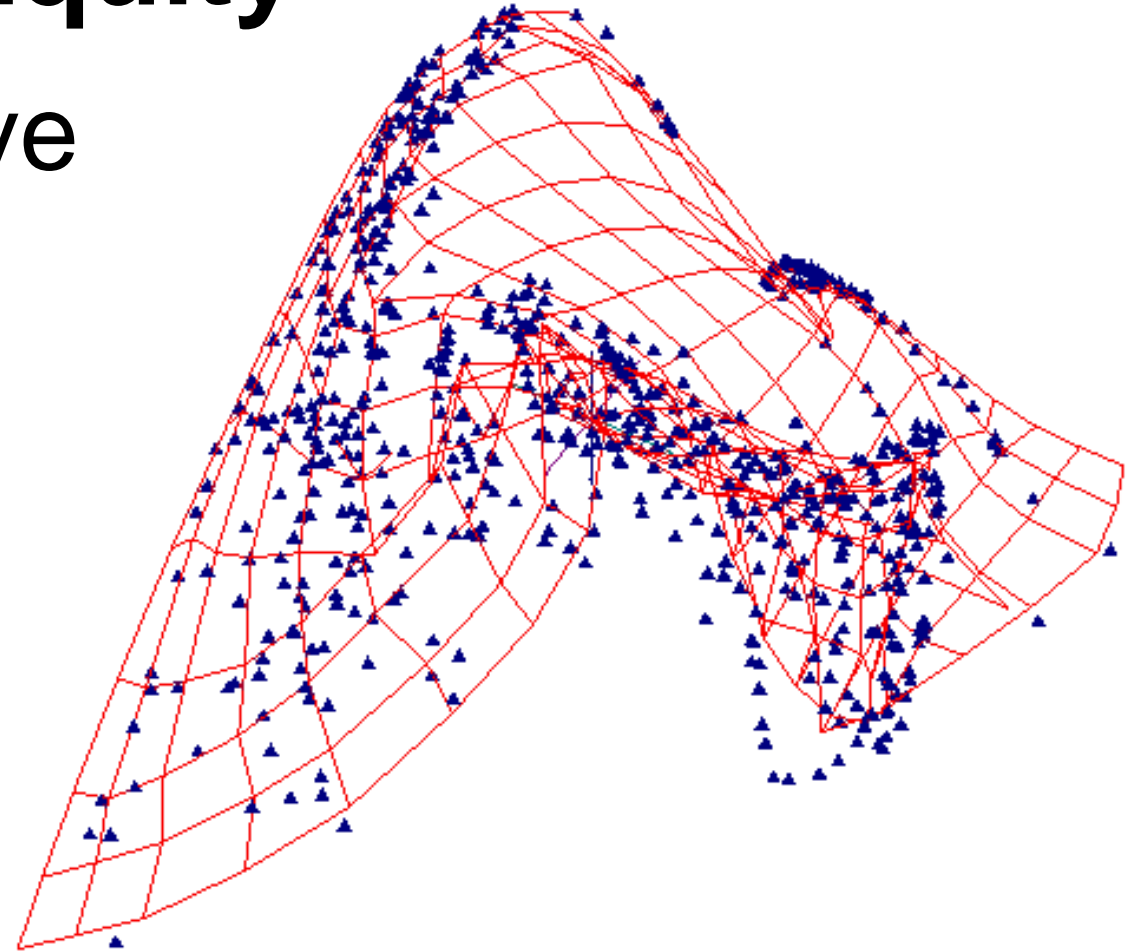
[hassan@empowerdataworks.com](mailto:hassan@empowerdataworks.com)

*Ask me about:*

Data and metrics

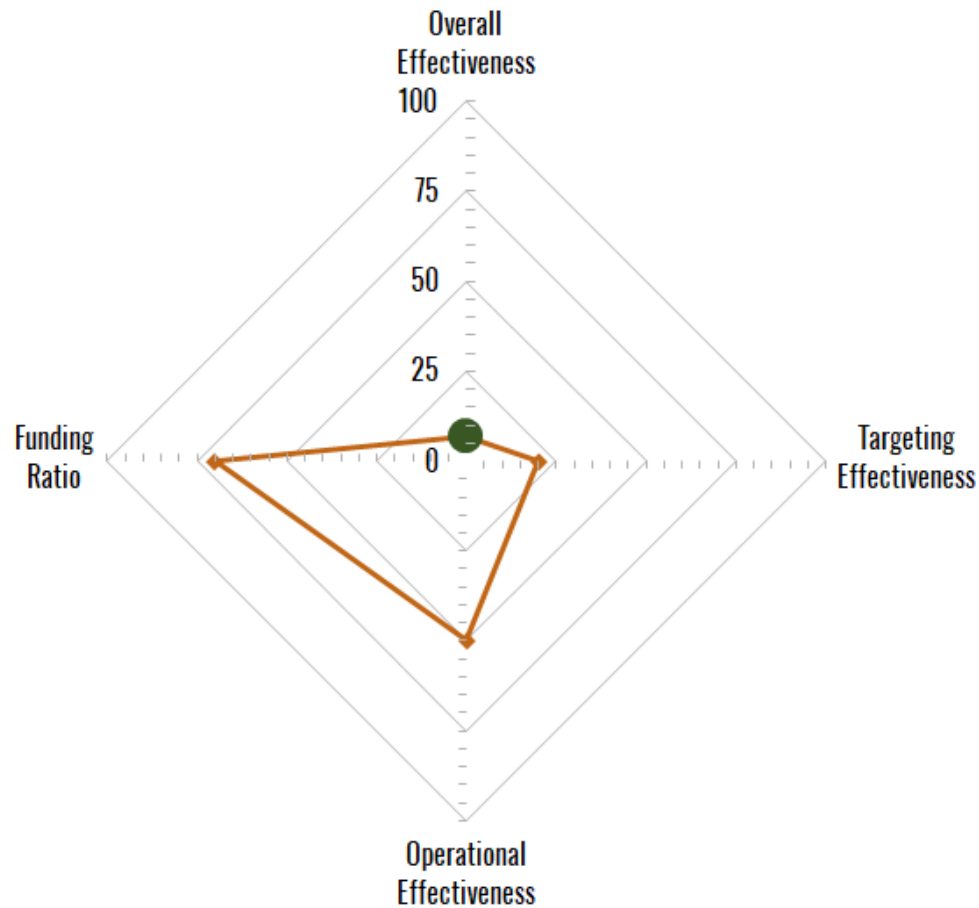
Equity-focused utility programs, planning  
and marketing

empower  
dataworks



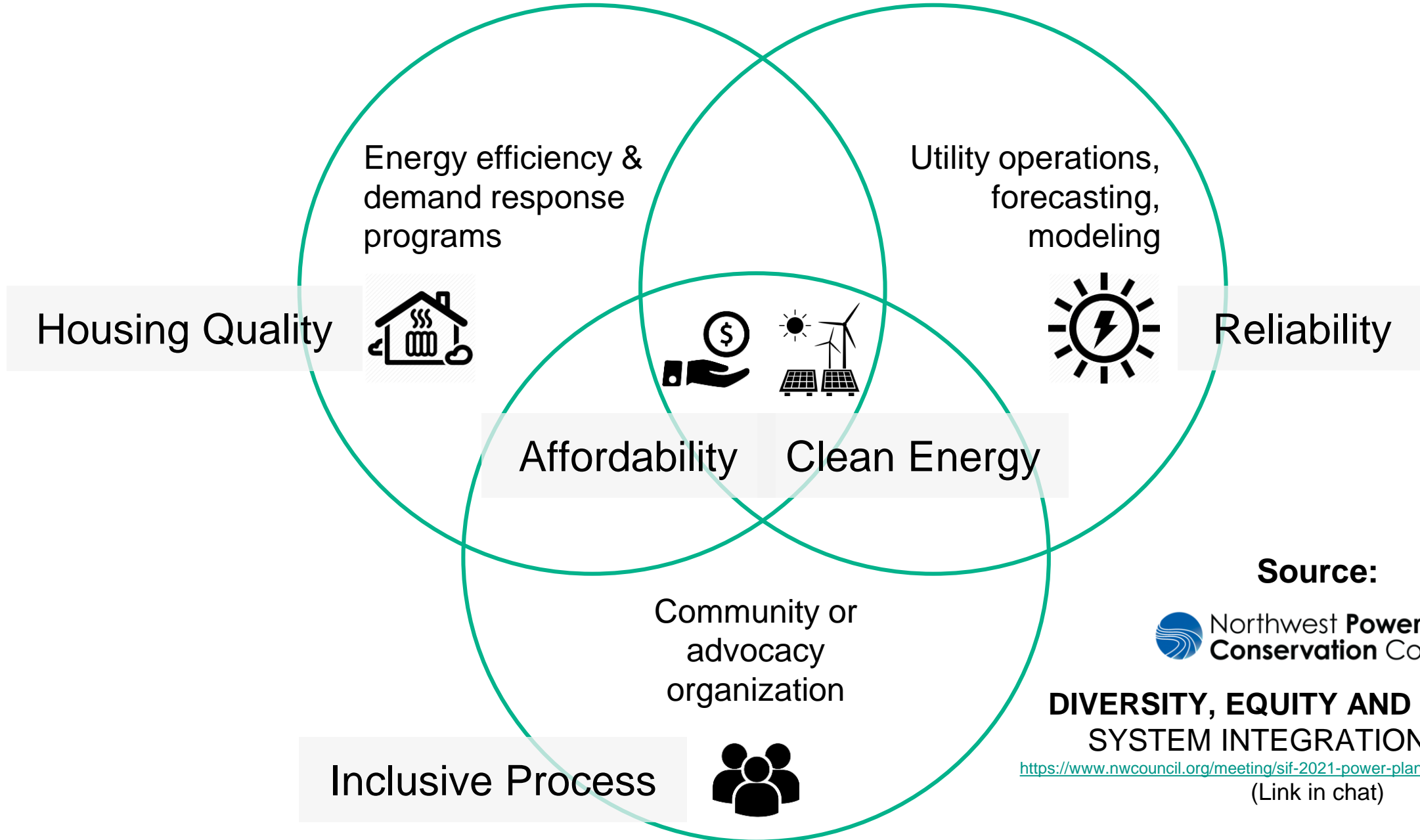
# **Where are utilities today in their equity journey?**

# Tracking Progress of Energy Assistance Programs



- **Funding Ratio:** How much funding is available for assistance programs relative to the need?
- **Operational effectiveness:** How effective are programs at reducing energy burden?
- **Targeting effectiveness:** How effective are programs at reaching customers who need it the most?

# What is Equitable Power Planning?



**Source:**



**DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION  
SYSTEM INTEGRATION FORUM**

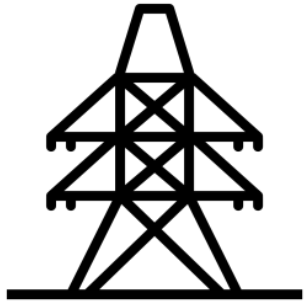
<https://www.nwcouncil.org/meeting/sif-2021-power-plan-and-dei-february-19-2021>

(Link in chat)

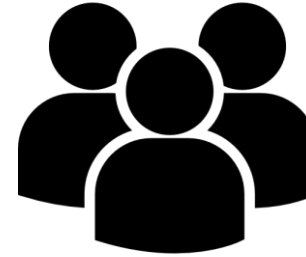
# **How can Commissions support utilities in their equity work?**



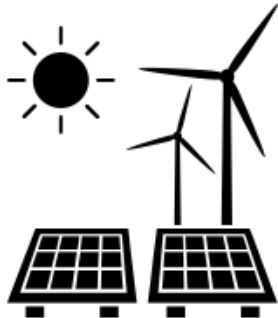
# #1: Accountability in the Right Places + Cross-cutting Collaboration



Utilities



Community  
Based  
Organizations



Distributed  
Energy  
Resource  
Vendors



Regional  
Power  
Organizations  
(BPA, TVA)

## #2: Clear Goals, Flexible Execution

To **assist households with low incomes**, particularly those with the lowest incomes that pay a high proportion of household income for home energy, primarily in meeting their immediate home energy needs.

vs

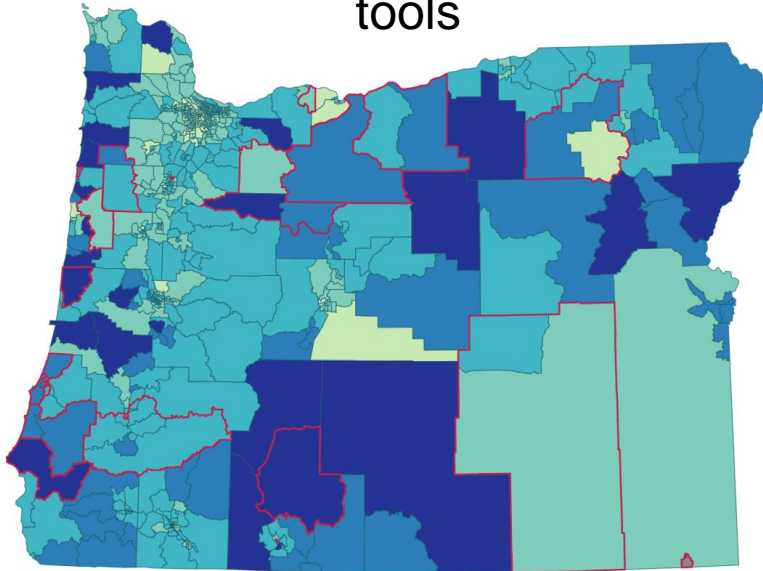
.

Reduce energy assistance need by 90% by 2040.

# #3: Metrics should be Bottom-Up Aggregates, tied to Operations/Planning and Reward Targeting

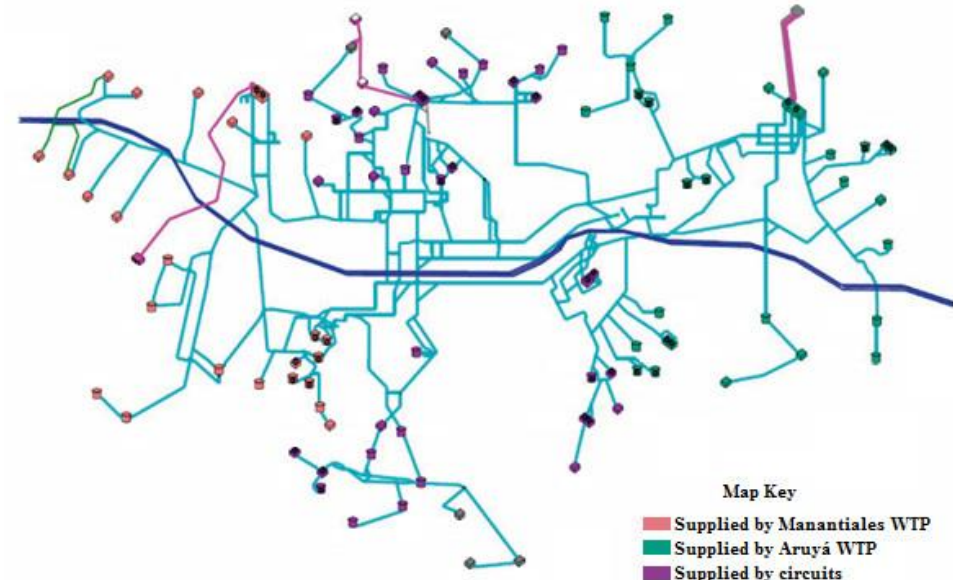
- **Customers, meters and neighborhoods** not census tracts
- **Distributions** not averages
- **Tied to energy use and environmental quality**

High-level maps and tools



vs

What utilities see



# #4: The Equity Data Problem has (mostly) been Solved



We can't find equity-related data.

**There's actually way too much of this data that we're now trying to standardize.**



It's too expensive to collect and analyze data.

**Relative to what? Data costs are less than 1% of program budgets.**



The data is only 70-80% accurate. That's less than 100%.

**So what? You only need to be better than random, untargeted decisions.**

# #5: We asked utility staff what would make them act on energy equity. This is what they said...



**Bottom line:**  
Utility staffers are supportive of energy equity, but policy/regulations by themselves won't necessarily result in change

# What would make Commissions act on energy equity?

<https://www.menti.com/gjouyoez46>

Or go to menti.com and enter this  
code: **8974 5163**

What next? Start with the Quantitative Energy Equity white  
paper:

**[empowerdataworks.com/energy-equity](https://empowerdataworks.com/energy-equity)**



# Q&A

SUBMIT USING THE QUESTIONS PANE IN THE CONTROL  
PANEL

# NARUC Innovation Webinar series



Hosted one Thursday each month from 3:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. ET

- **Initiative on Cybersecurity in Solar Projects: Cybersecurity Advisory Team for State Solar (CATSS)**

*April 15, 2021 | 3:00 - 4:00 pm Eastern*

- **Staffing the Evolving PUC Workforce: Exploring Recruitment, Retention, and Alternative Tactics**

*May 13, 2021 | 3:00 – 4:00 pm Eastern*

Register at: <https://www.naruc.org/cpi-1/emerging-issues/innovation-webinars/>

*NARUC thanks the U.S. Department of Energy for support for this series.*





# THANK YOU

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