



Community Benefits Planning for Energy Projects

TEXAS ENERGY POVERTY RESEARCH INSTITUTE (TEPRI)

*TEPRI is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization that advances equitable solutions for affordable, reliable, and clean energy for disadvantaged communities. We engage with communities and test solutions that can support an equitable energy transition, as the country integrates more diverse sources into our energy composition. Our work advances **research on the energy needs of low-income consumers, develops solutions** to address those needs, and establishes a network of on the ground relationships to **enable deployment**.*

At TEPRI, we have meaningful relationships with utilities, energy companies, and community groups who collaborate with us to accelerate and scale energy solutions to meet the needs of disadvantaged communities. We are excited by a range of solar, micro-grid, virtual power plant, wind, and energy efficiency projects that have the power to usher in an energy transition that is equitable, affordable, reliable, and clean. Our projects **test innovative solutions that illuminate pathways forward**.

COMMUNITY BENEFITS PLANNING

TEPRI provides tailored Community Benefit Planning for a variety of energy-related projects.

Our Community Benefits planning process is informed by the results of our comprehensive Community Voices Energy Survey, as well as a tailored community needs assessments (CNAs) for each geographic area and project. We measure key indicators and gather valuable perspectives from households who contend with low incomes to help us better understand the ongoing challenges surrounding energy in communities across Texas. Our Community Benefits planning allows us to accurately gauge obstacles to the deployment of successful solutions for stakeholders - directly from those who are most impacted.

The Community Benefits Plan process begins by clearly defining the objectives of the needs assessment. This measure helps to inform the data collection process and ensure that the perspectives and time of those providing responses, i.e., community members, is respected. Sample goals include:

- Identifying relationships with energy service providers and utilities
- Measuring participation in income-based energy efficiency and weatherization programming
- Determine how well the needs of low-income persons are being met
- Identifying (organization-based and client-based) barriers to serving residents
- Identifying community strengths and assets
- Soliciting recommendations of solutions to address barriers
- Determining broad categories of data to gather. Examples include:
 - Energy burden by census tract
 - Population profile: racial/ethnic demographics, family size, etc.
 - Employment status
 - Education level
 - Income
 - Housing type and ownership status

COMMUNITY VOICES IN ENERGY SURVEY

The cornerstone of our research is our comprehensive Community Voices in Energy Survey (CVES), which entails statistically significant surveying on a range of concerns and priorities of low-income households throughout the state. As the different geographies in Texas represent unique interests, we do discrete analysis on the 13 energy districts that have been delineated by the Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs (TDHCA). Our surveying, which reveals customers salient interests around energy, is bolstered by focus groups that help us to better understand survey revelations. We layer what we learn with external data that allows us to map out the distinct needs and characteristics of the different regions in the state.

We incorporate the results of our Community Voices Energy Survey into our planning process to inform each Community Benefits Plan.

CONTACT

If you are interested in discussing how a Community Benefits Plan could help your project meet the needs low and moderate-income households, we are happy to discuss our process and how we might advance your project goals.

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