

Instructions for Using Federal Tools to Identify Disadvantaged Communities for the DOT Thriving Communities Program

A complete Letter of Interest (LOI) for the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT)'s Thriving Communities Program should identify the community in which the program's activities for comprehensive community- and data-driven transformative infrastructure and community development activities will take place.

Applicants are asked to verify whether the identified geographic focus area includes federally identified disadvantaged Census tracts, and whether these comprise a majority of the geographic area or not. Applicants can use the following tools to verify:

1. [DOT's mapping tool for Historically Disadvantaged Communities](#)
2. [Areas of Persistent Poverty table](#)

Applicants may also indicate in their LOI form whether there are other Federally designated community development zones (e.g., Empowerment Zones, Promise Zones, or Choice Neighborhoods) within the identified geographic area.

This document provides instructions for how to use these tools to identify disadvantaged communities for the DOT Thriving Communities Program.

DOT's Mapping Tool for Historically Disadvantaged Communities

Link to the tool:

<https://usdot.maps.arcgis.com/apps/dashboards/d6f90dfcc8b44525b04c7ce748a3674a>

The disadvantaged Census tracts identified in this tool exceeded the 50th percentile (75th for resilience) across at least four of the following six transportation disadvantaged indicators:

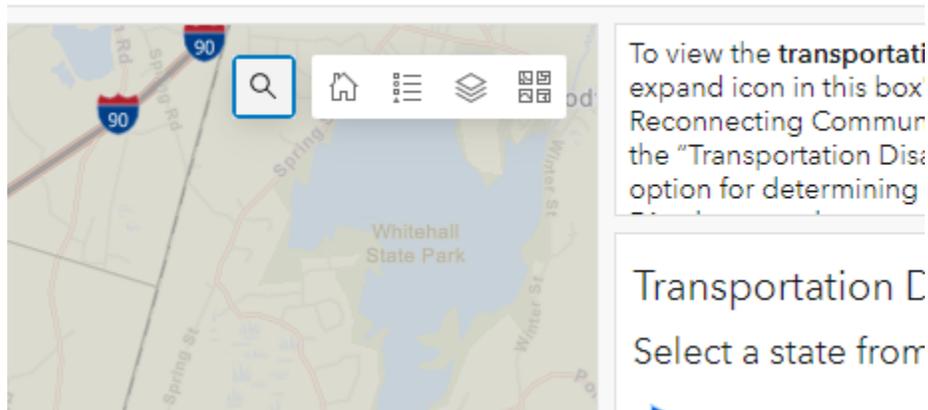
1. **Transportation Access disadvantage** identifies communities and places that spend more, and longer, to get where they need to go. (CDC Social Vulnerability Index, Census America Community Survey, EPA Smart Location Map, HUD Location Affordability Index)
2. **Health disadvantage** identifies communities based on variables associated with adverse health outcomes, disability, as well as environmental exposures. (CDC Social Vulnerability Index)
3. **Environmental disadvantage** identifies communities with disproportionate pollution burden and inferior environmental quality. (EPA EJ Screen)
4. **Economic disadvantage** identifies areas and populations with high poverty, low wealth, lack of local jobs, low homeownership, low educational attainment, and high inequality. (CDC Social Vulnerability Index, Census America Community Survey, FEMA Resilience Analysis & Planning Tool)
5. **Resilience disadvantage** identifies communities vulnerable to hazards caused by climate change. (FEMA National Risk Index)
6. **Equity disadvantage** identifies communities with a high percentile of persons (age 5+) who speak English "less than well." (CDC Social Vulnerability Index)

A detailed methodology for the tool can be found on [DOT's Justice40 webpage](#).

How to use it

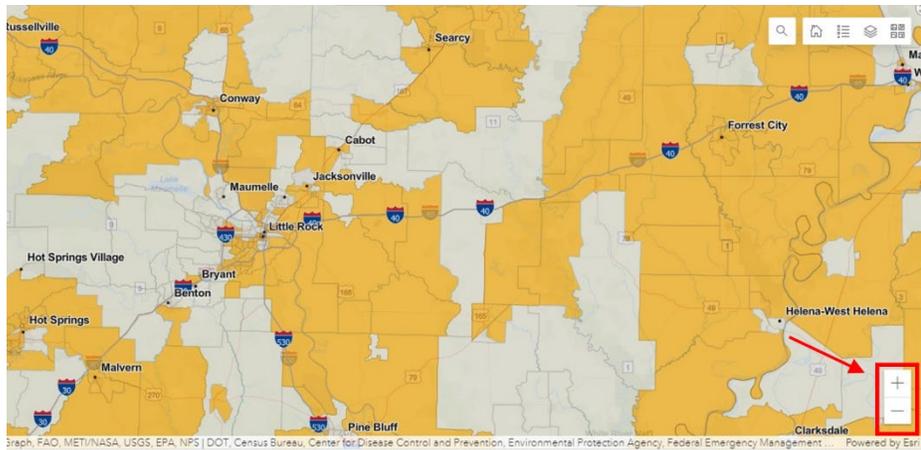
There are two ways to locate a Census Tract, community, county, or Urbanized Area (UZA) using the tool.

The first is to click on the magnifying glass in the top right corner of the map and insert your Census Tract number, community, county, or UZA name.

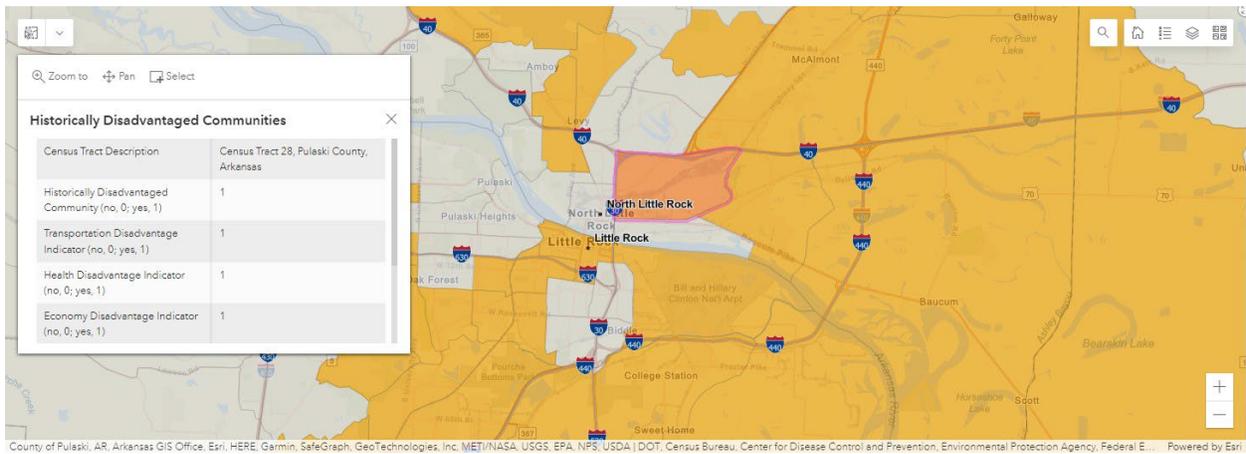


The second is to select your state from the list on the right-hand side of the screen. Then, use the +/- icons or your mouse wheel to zoom into your community on the map.

Transportation Disadvantaged Tracts by State	
Select a state from the list	
	Alabama: 601
	Alaska: 33
	American Samoa: 1
	Arizona: 519
	Arkansas: 357
	California: 4168
	Colorado: 208
	Connecticut: 32

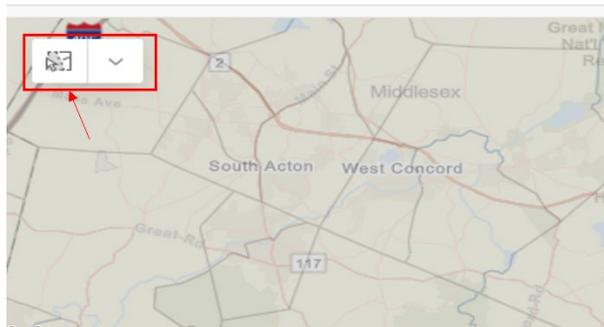


Use your mouse to select Census tracts within your community. Historically disadvantaged Census tracts (those that meet four or more of the indicators listed above) will appear in orange. You can use the [Census Geocoder](#) to help you identify the Census tracts in your community.

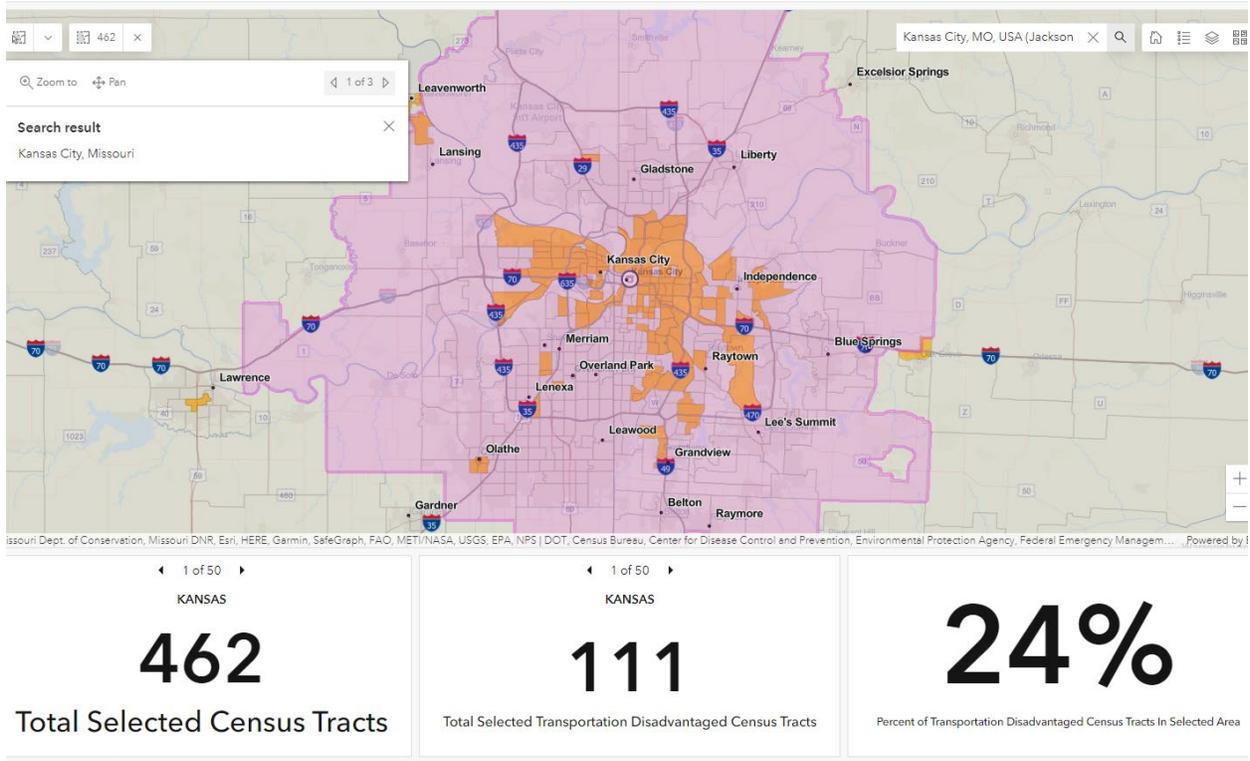


To determine the percentage of disadvantaged in your community/service area use one of the tools in the toolbox in the upper left corner of the map to outline the service area.

User Instructions: On the list to the right, select your state indicators will be visible in orange. Single-click on a Census



Tract(s) shown on the map in orange have triggered as historically disadvantaged Census tracts. The data at the bottom of the map indicates how many Census tracts are within the area and how many of those are disadvantaged. It also calculates the percent disadvantage.



1. Include this information in your Letter of Interest submission. If you are selected as a finalist, DOT will verify the information related to disadvantaged status included in your submission.

Areas of Persistent Poverty Table

Link to the tool: <https://datahub.transportation.gov/stories/s/tsyd-k6ij>

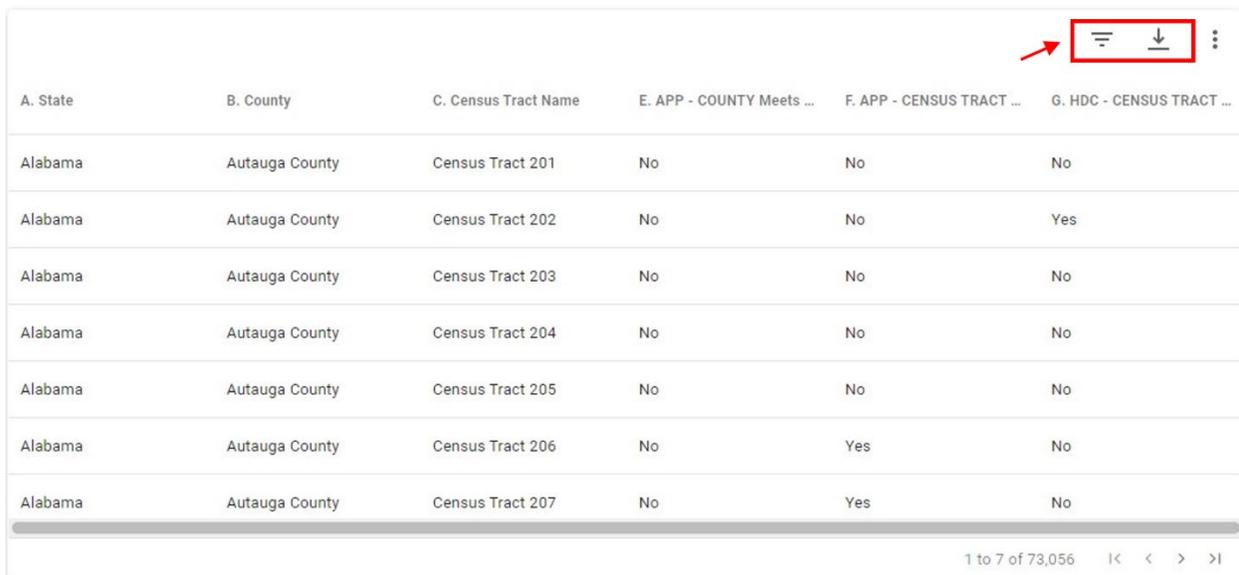
This tool can be used to identify Areas of Persistent Poverty at the County or Census tract level. For the purposes of this tool, Areas of Persistent Poverty means:

1. Any County that has consistently had greater than or equal to 20 percent of the population living in poverty during the last 30-year period, as measured by the 1990 and 2000 decennial census and the most recent annual Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates as estimated by the Bureau of the Census.
2. Any Census Tract with a poverty rate of at least 20 percent as measured by the 2014–2018 5-year data series available from the American Community Survey of the Bureau of the Census.
3. Any U.S. Territory.

How to use it

1. Determine the state and county that your community falls into. Identify any Census tracts that are included in your community. You can use the [Census Geocoder](#) to help you identify the Census tracts in your community.
2. Use the Areas of Persistent Poverty table (at the bottom of the webpage) to determine:
 - a. If the county meets the definition of an Area of Persistent Poverty (Column E);
 - b. If the Census tract meets the definition of an Area of Persistent Poverty (Column F); or,
 - c. If the Census tract meets the definition of Historically Disadvantaged Community (Column G)

You can use the filter on the table to select the state, county, and Census tract. You can also export the data to Excel or other formats.



A. State	B. County	C. Census Tract Name	E. APP - COUNTY Meets ...	F. APP - CENSUS TRACT ...	G. HDC - CENSUS TRACT ...
Alabama	Autauga County	Census Tract 201	No	No	No
Alabama	Autauga County	Census Tract 202	No	No	Yes
Alabama	Autauga County	Census Tract 203	No	No	No
Alabama	Autauga County	Census Tract 204	No	No	No
Alabama	Autauga County	Census Tract 205	No	No	No
Alabama	Autauga County	Census Tract 206	No	Yes	No
Alabama	Autauga County	Census Tract 207	No	Yes	No

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3. Determine whether your community contains one or more Census tracts that qualify as an Area of Persistent Poverty, if the county in which your community falls qualifies as an Area of Persistent Poverty, and/or if the community contains one or more historically disadvantaged Census tract(s). If it does, determine whether more or less than 50 percent of your community contains Areas of Persistent Poverty (by county or Census tract) or historically disadvantaged Census tracts (by geographic area).
4. Include this information in your Letter of Interest submission. If you are selected as a finalist, DOT will verify the information related to disadvantaged status included in your submission.

Other Federally Designated Community Development Zones

Examples include:

Empowerment Zones

Empowerment Zones are designated areas of high poverty and unemployment that benefit from tax incentives provided to businesses in the boundaries of the Empowerment Zone.

To determine whether your community contains any Empowerment Zones, you can use the [Empowerment Zone Address Locator Tool](#). The tool must be used on Excel 2013 and later versions and Windows platforms. An internet connection is required.

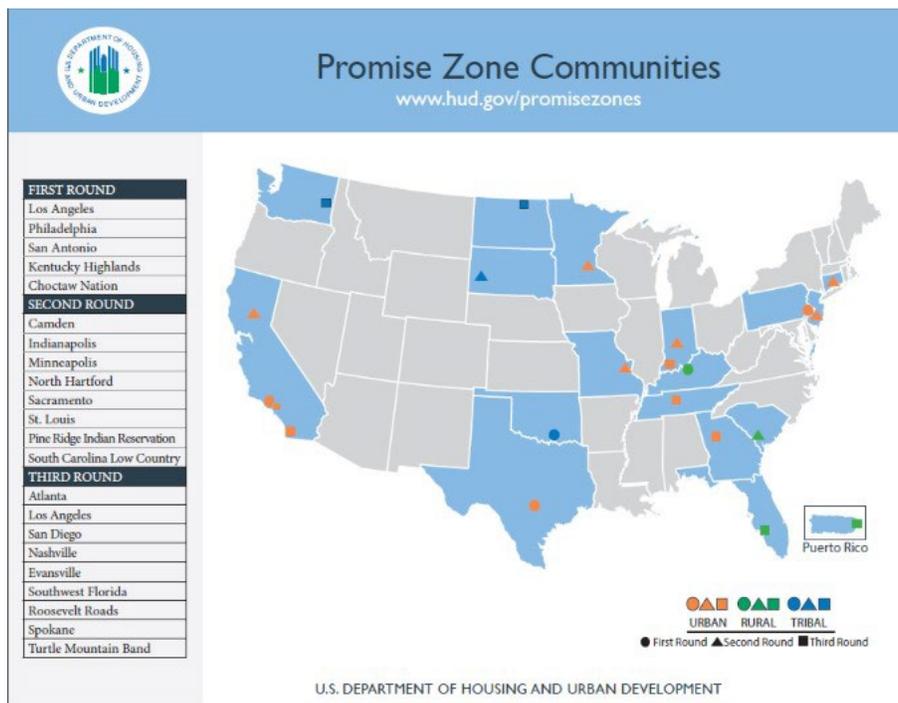
Enter one or more addresses into the spreadsheet to learn if it falls within an Empowerment Zone and to get more information about the Zone. If an address is outside a HUD Empowerment Zone, the Zone Status field will read "OUT" and the remaining fields will be left blank. If an address is within a HUD Empowerment Zone, the Zone Status field will read "IN" and the HUD Empowerment Zone name will be entered in the Zone Name field. A URL to a map with the address within the Empowerment Zone will be included in the Map URL field so users can double-check the accuracy. Review the first tab of the Excel workbook for detailed instructions for using the tool.

If your community falls within or contains an Empowerment Zone, include that information in your LOI submission. If you are selected as a finalist, DOT will verify the information related to disadvantaged status included in your submission.

Promise Zones

Promise Zones are high poverty communities where the federal government partners with local leaders to increase economic activity, improve educational opportunities, leverage private investment, reduce violent crime, enhance public health, and address other priorities identified by the community. There are 22 designated Promise Zones. Visit the [Promise Zone website](#) to determine whether your community falls into a Promise Zone.

If your community does fall within a designated Promise Zone, indicate that information in your LOI submission. If you are selected as a finalist, DOT will verify the information related to disadvantaged status included in your submission.



Choice Neighborhoods

The Choice Neighborhoods program leverages significant public and private dollars to support locally driven strategies that address struggling neighborhoods with distressed public or HUD-assisted housing through a comprehensive approach to neighborhood transformation.

You can use the [Choice Neighborhood Program Grantee Map](#) to find the target areas submitted by Choice Neighborhood Program award grantees. Use the +/- tool to zoom into your community on the map to determine if it falls within or contains a Choice Neighborhood. Choice Neighborhood areas are highlighted in blue on the map. You can click on the Choice Neighborhood to learn more about it.

Choice_Grantees

OBJECTID	73
GRANT_NUM	MSFS19CNP114
LEAD_APP	City of Flint
CO_APP	Flint Housing Commission
PROJ_CITY	Flint
PROJ_STATE	MI
E_PHA_DEV	Alborton East
GRANT_TYPE	Planning
GRANT_YEAR	2014
GRANT_AMOUNT	500,000
HOUSING_TYPE	PH
Shape_Area	21,008,233.055

You can also [download the dataset](#) to Excel to view a list of Choice Neighborhoods by city and state.

Choice Neighborhood Program Grantees

HUD GIS Helpdesk
Department of Housing and Urban Development

View Map Download More

If your community falls into or contains a Choice Neighborhood, include that information in your LOI submission. If you are selected as a finalist, DOT will verify the information related to disadvantaged status included in your submission.