



Safe Streets and Roads for All Calculating Percent of Population in Underserved Communities

Revised June 21, 2023 to reflect changes made to the ETC Explorer selection tools.

The Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) defines an Underserved Community consistent with the USDOT definition of a disadvantaged community designation, which includes:

- Any Tribal land; or
- Any territory or possession of the United States (e.g., Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, etc.); or
- U.S. Census tracts identified in the [Equitable Transportation Community Explorer \(ETC\) Explorer tool](#); or
- U.S. Census tracts identified in the [Climate and Economic Justice Screening \(CEJST\) Tool](#).

All SS4A applicants must include data on the total population of the jurisdiction(s) covered by the application, as well as the percentage of the population in Underserved Communities Census Tracts. Applicants may use the ETC Explorer tool to report the Jurisdiction Population as well as to create a project-level map (as applicable) for SS4A grant applications. Applicants outside of Tribal or territorial lands must use either the ETC Explorer or the CEJST tool to obtain the Percentage of Population in Underserved Communities. Applicants may not use one tool for some Census tracts and another tool for other Census tracts for a given project.

This document provides instructions on how to use the map tools to obtain the necessary data and calculate the Jurisdiction Population and Percentage of Population in Underserved Communities for an SS4A grant application.

Note: FY23 SS4A applications must use 2020 Census tract population counts. The USDOT ETC Explorer tool uses this data. CEJST uses older Census population data and applicants will need to provide the appropriate numbers for 2020 if they use this tool, as described later described in this document.

USDOT Equitable Transportation Community Explorer Tool

The tool can be used to select and analyze different geographies, including states, counties, MPOs, municipalities, and specific project areas. Once you have made the appropriate selection(s) for your project, the data in the dashboard will update for the selected area. In the SS4A Valid Eval application, record the **Total Population** for Jurisdiction Population # and the **Percent of Population Living in a Disadvantaged Community** for Percent of Population in Underserved Communities (%). As seen in the examples below, **the tool provides the percent of disadvantaged Census tracts, but you will need to calculate the percent population separately**. You will also need to upload a screenshot of the dashboard as an attachment in your application.

Note: the tool provides extensive information on various indicators related to climate and disaster risk, environmental burden, health vulnerability, social vulnerability, and transportation insecurity. None of this

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information is required in your application, though it may provide valuable insight to incorporate into your application narrative. This is especially relevant for Implementation Grant applicants.

Locating Area of Interest on Mapping Tool

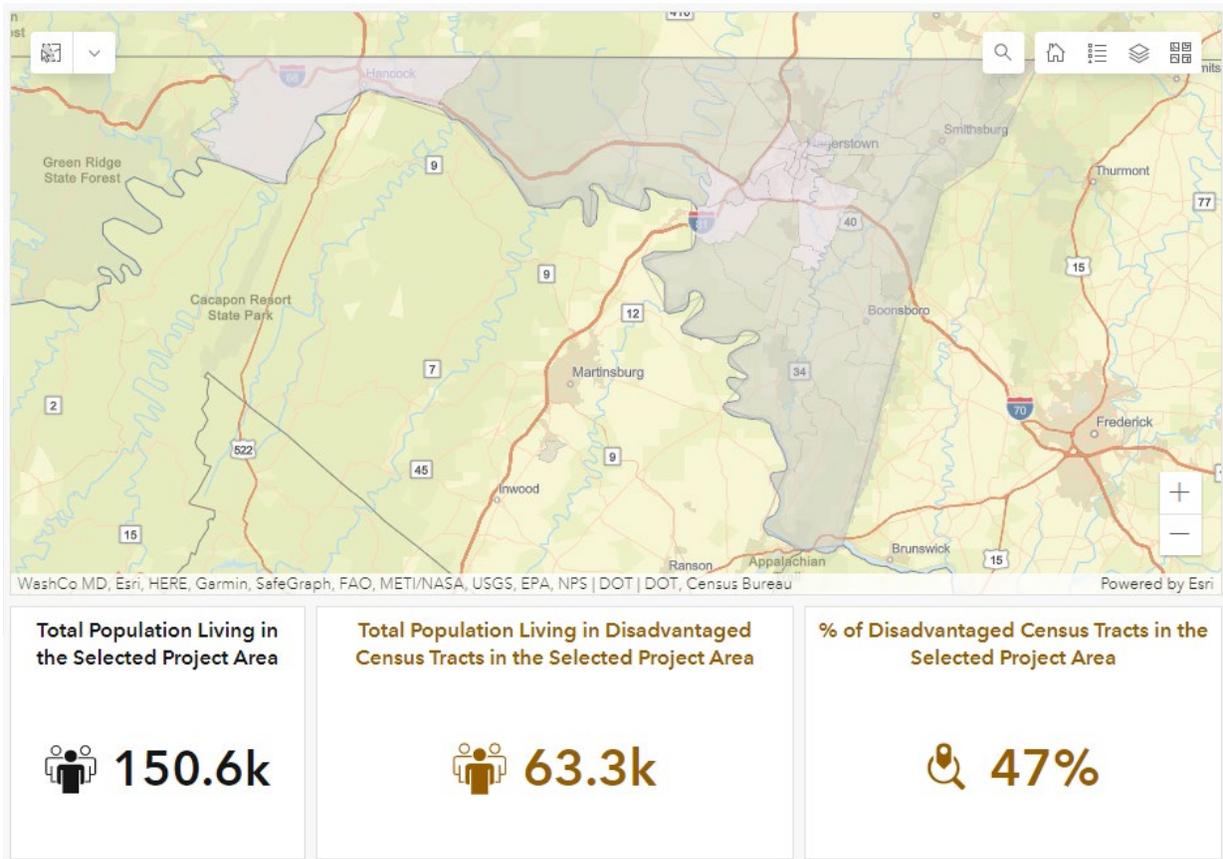
1. Visit the [USDOT ETC Explorer tool website](#). Select the "ETC Explorer - National Results" tab on the top toolbar.
2. To select a county, community, or MPO, use the search bars on the top right. You may select only counties, communities, or MPOs at a given time, not a combination of the different jurisdiction types.
3. Click on the arrow on the left side of the screen for additional instructions on this tool.

County Selection

To select a county, start first with the state and then select from the counties within the state. For the Washington County, Maryland example, select Maryland first and then scroll to Washington County.

The map will zoom to the general area and shows the county shaded gray on the map. The metrics on the dashboard will update to reflect the selected geography. Pink shading indicates Census tracts of historically disadvantaged areas.

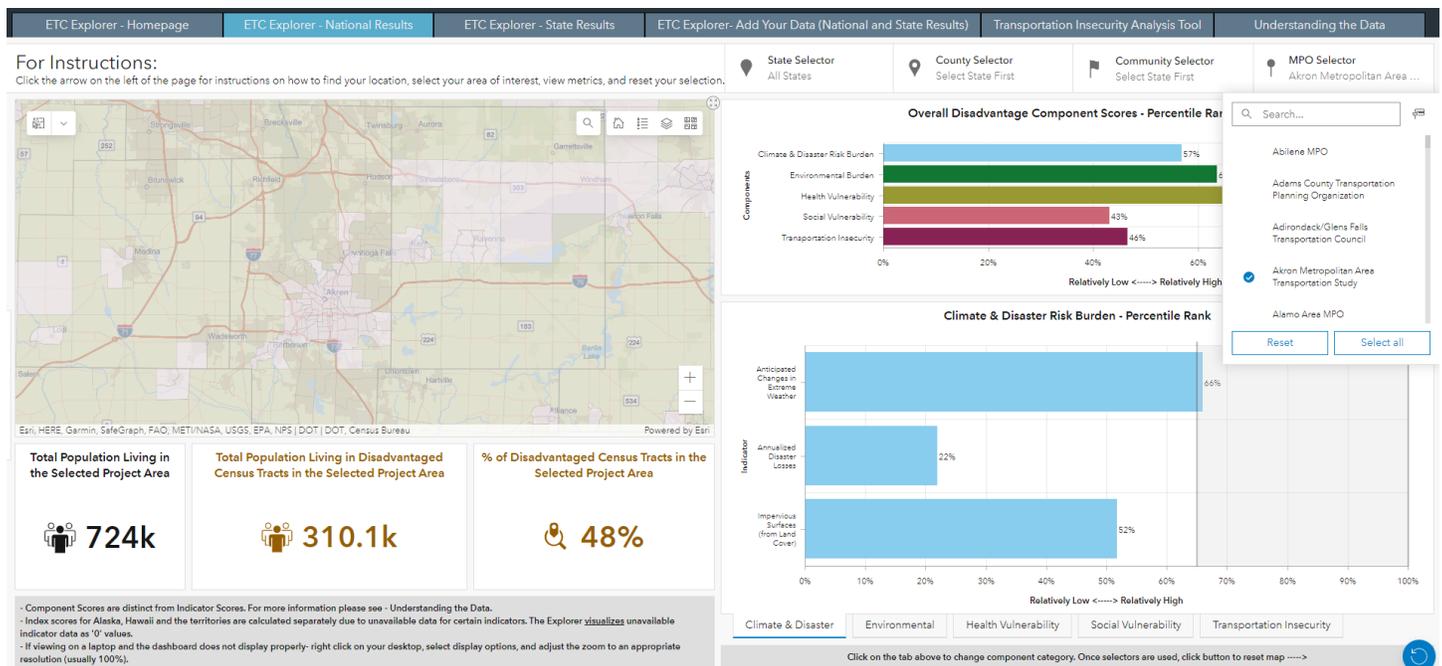
For more information on the Safe Streets and Roads for All program, please visit the [SS4A website](#).



Approximately 63,300 of the 150,600 residents in Washington County live in disadvantaged Census tracts. For Washington County, approximately 42.0% of the county population lives in a disadvantaged Census tract.

MPO Selection

To select one or more MPO areas, you can scroll or search for the MPO(s) to make your selection(s).



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In this case, approximately 310,100 of the 724,000 residents in the Akron Metropolitan Area Transportation Study MPO live in disadvantaged Census tracts. This represents approximately 42.8% of the MPO population.

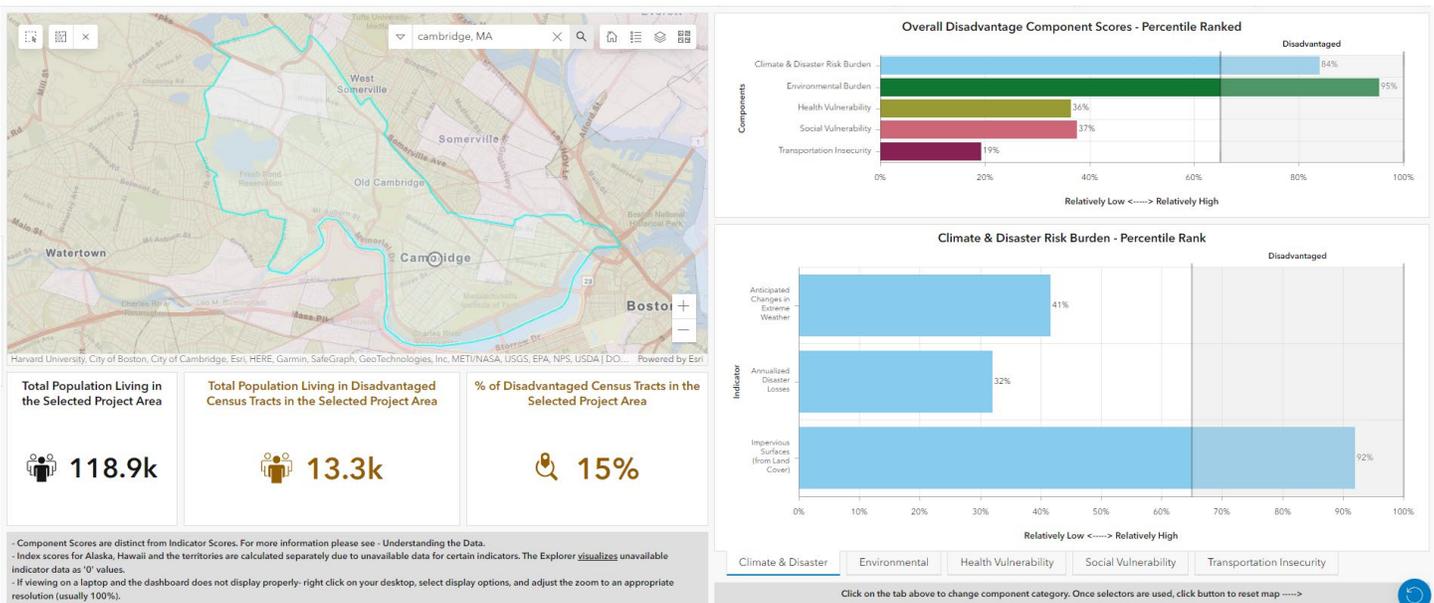
Municipality Selection

Use the  search tool at the top of the map or pan and zoom in on the map to reach the general area of interest. The search tool will zoom to the municipality but does not show the specific boundaries or associated Census tracts.

As of **6/15/23**, there is no tool dropdown in ETC Explorer, as was described in previous versions of this fact sheet. However, there are options to select the Census tracts contained in the municipality.

- While there is no point tool, clicking anywhere in the map will select that Census tract. You can then hold the shift key and click on additional Census tracts to expand the selection to include all Census tracts within the municipal boundary.
- The rectangle selection tool is still available. If you click on this tool (in the upper left corner of the map) to activate it, you can draw a rectangle on the map within the municipal boundary. All Census tracts that touch that rectangle will be selected. You can then expand the selection by clicking the rectangle selection tool again, holding down the shift key, and drawing another rectangle.
- You can also combine these two options. You may first activate the rectangle selection tool and draw a rectangle that takes up most of the municipality, staying within the boundary of the municipality to avoid selecting any Census tracts outside of the municipality. Then, *without* clicking on the rectangle tool again, hold down the shift key and click on additional Census tracts to add them to your selection.
- There is no deselect option, so it may take some trial and error to get the right selection.

Note: Because the tool uses Census tracts as the unit of measurement, the tool will select the entire tract if the boundaries of the area that you select cut through a portion of a Census tract. It may help to err on the side of drawing a smaller boundary outline avoid unintentionally selecting additional Census tracts.

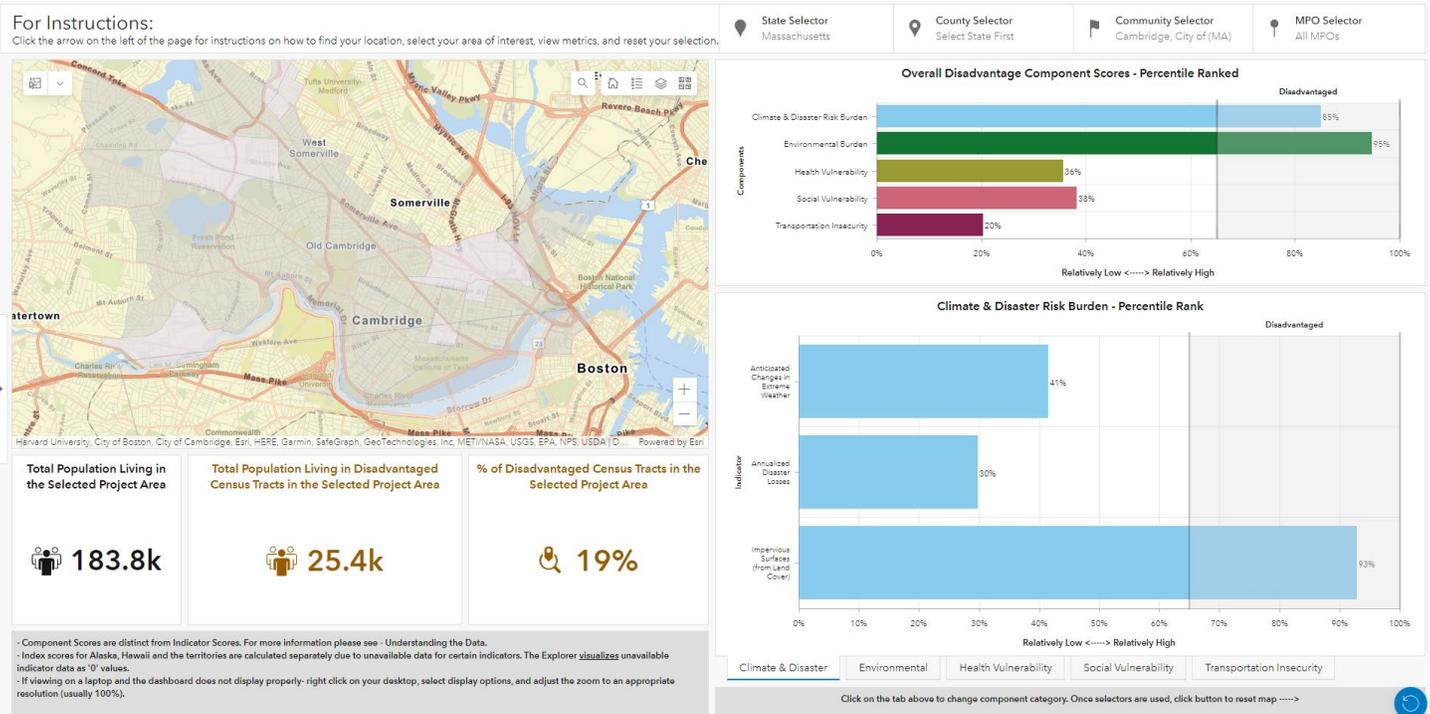


In this case, approximately 13,300 of the 118,900 residents in Cambridge, MA live in disadvantaged Census tracts. This represents approximately 11.2% of the population.

For more information on the Safe Streets and Roads for All program, please visit the [SS4A website](#).

Note: there is an option to use the Community Selector tool at the top, next to the County Selector and MPO Selector. The SS4A program does not recommend using this tool, because the data are not consistently available nationwide, and that tool tends to select all Census tracts that neighbor the community.

In the Cambridge, MA example, using the Community Selector tool selects a significantly larger area. Using the larger area will lead to inconsistent results, including for calculating jurisdiction fatality rate.



Specific Project Location Selection

Similar to the municipality selection, use the  search tool at the top of the map or pan on the map to reach the general area of interest.

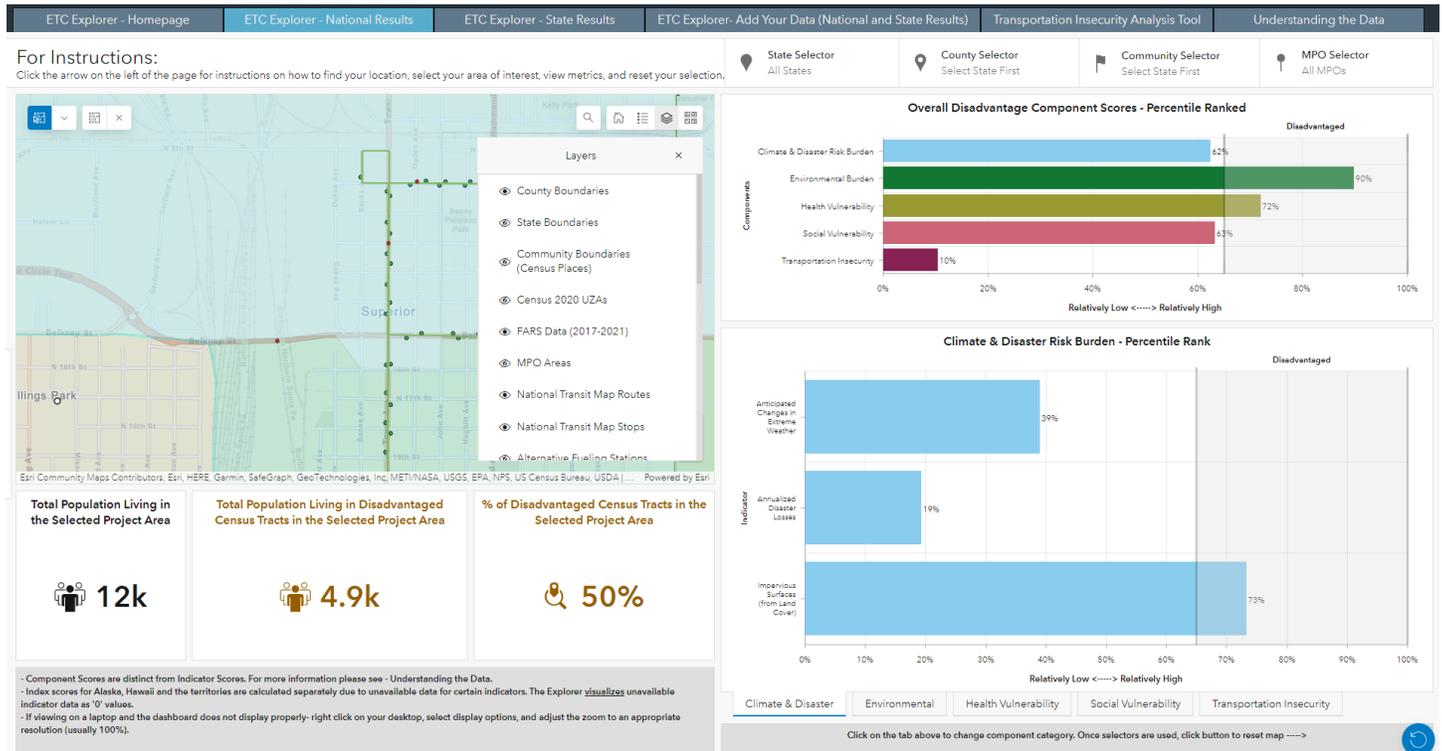
As of **6/15/23**, there is no tool dropdown in ETC Explorer, as was described in previous versions of this fact sheet. However, there are options to select the Census tracts contained in the municipality.

- While there is no point tool, clicking anywhere in the map will select that Census tract. You can then hold the shift key and click on additional Census tracts to expand the selection to include all Census tracts that include the project area.
- The rectangle selection tool is still available. If you click on this tool (in the upper left corner of the map) to activate it, you can draw a rectangle on the map that approximates the project area. All Census tracts that touch that rectangle will be selected. You can then expand the selection by clicking the rectangle selection tool again, holding down the shift key, and drawing another rectangle.
- You can also combine these two options. You may first activate the rectangle selection tool and draw a rectangle that takes up most of the project area, erring on the smallest project area to avoid selecting any Census tracts outside of the project area. Then, *without* clicking on the rectangle tool again, hold down the shift key and click on additional Census tracts to add them to your selection.
- There is no deselect option, so it may take some trial and error to get the right selection.

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Note: the boundaries of the area that you select may cut through a portion of a Census tract. Because the tool uses Census tracts as the unit of measurement, it will select the entire tract, including the portion beyond your intended boundary. It may help to err on the side of drawing a smaller boundary outline avoid unintentionally selecting additional Census tracts.

The mapping tool has additional layers that you may find useful to add to the project-level map. We recommend adding the layers showing locations of fatalities (red) and transit routes and stations (green), if applicable, to your project area map.



In this case, approximately 4,900 of the 12,000 residents in this area of Superior, WI live in disadvantaged Census tracts. This represents approximately 40.8% of the population.

Downloading the Data

Alternatively, applicants can download the data to obtain findings from regions of interest. Scroll to the bottom of the [ETC Explorer webpage](#) to find options to download shapefiles and tables, as well as index documentation. Note that you cannot download only the data for a selected area. Use the link to download the DOT_Index geodatabase or .csv file and find the Census tracts for your project area within the downloaded data. Do not download the DOT_Index_State files, as the data is different from the national data.

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Climate and Economic Justice Screening (CEJST) Tool

This tool can be used to search for locations and identify Census tracts that are overburdened and underserved. Because the map is only able to select one Census tract at a time, applicants with larger geographic areas may wish to download the data directly.

This document uses examples from **Washington County, Maryland** for collecting and calculating the data.

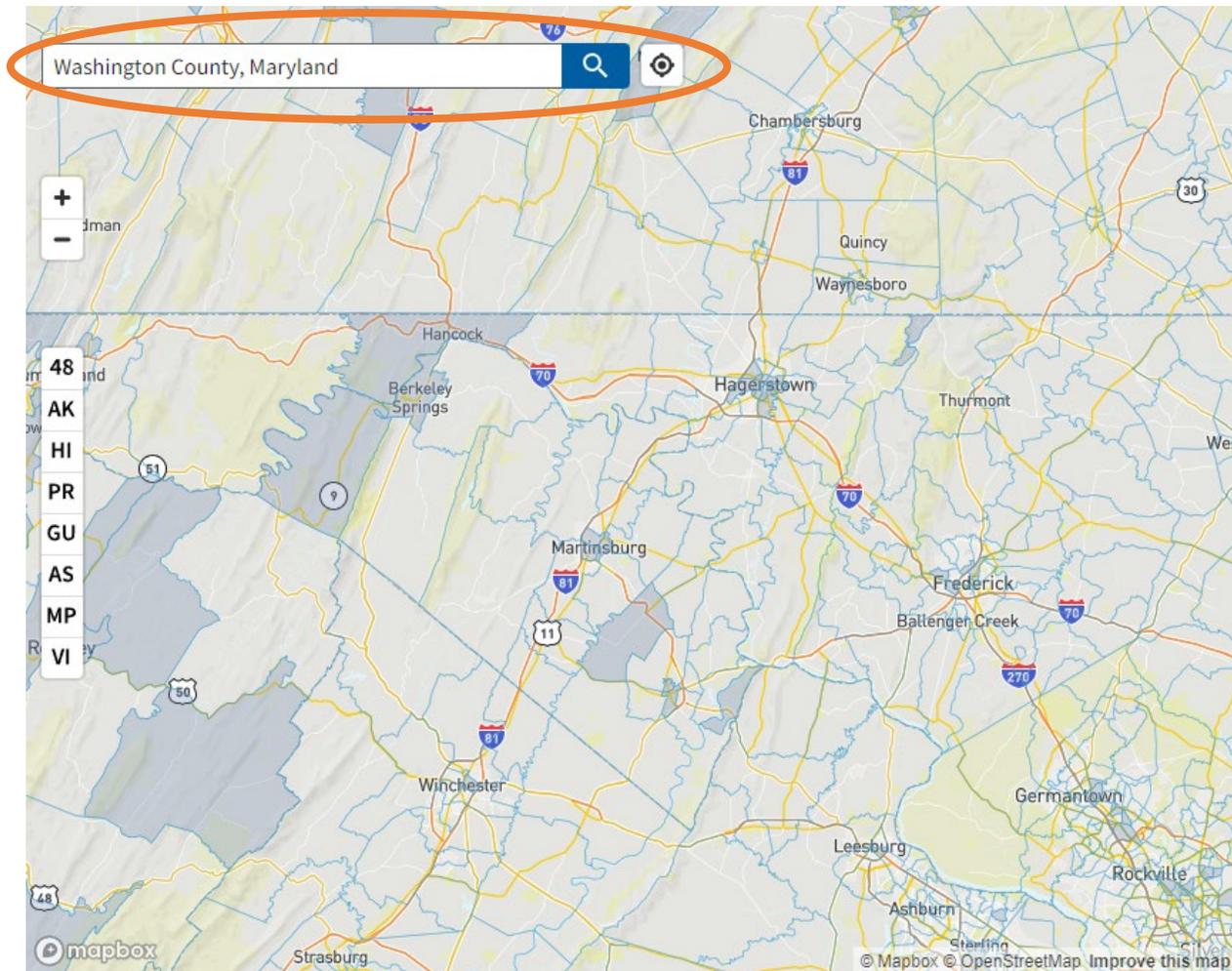
Locating Area of Interest

From the [U.S. Climate and Economic Justice Screening \(CEJST\) Tool](#) website, you can explore the map to identify Census tracts and/or download the data.

Searching by Map

Type location of interest into the search bar on the top of the map. This could include a community name, or a specific street address.

The map will zoom to the area but the Census tracts in the area of interest will not be highlighted. Census tracts that are underserved are shaded in gray.



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Select individual Census tracts in the area of interest to see whether they are considered underserved. The selected Census tract will be outlined in dark blue. The panel along the right-hand side of the tool will indicate "Yes" or "No" if the selected Census tract is considered underserved.

Washington County, Maryland

Tract information
Number: 2404300900
County: Washington County
State: Maryland
Population: 3,808

Tract demographics
Race / Ethnicity (show v)
Age (show v)

Identified as disadvantaged?
YES

This tract is considered disadvantaged because it meets more than 1 burden threshold **AND** the associated socioeconomic threshold.

Send feedback

Climate change +
Energy +
Health +
Housing +

Washington County, Maryland

Tract information
Number: 24043010500
County: Washington County
State: Maryland
Population: 6,541

Tract demographics
Race / Ethnicity (show v)
Age (show v)

Identified as disadvantaged?
NO

This tract is not considered disadvantaged. It does not meet any burden thresholds **OR** at least one associated socioeconomic threshold.

Send feedback

Climate change +
Energy +
Health +
Housing +

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Calculating the Jurisdiction Population # and Percentage of Population in Underserved Communities

For the area of interest, select each Census individually and note the 11-digit Census tract number and whether it is considered underserved. The 11-digit Census tract number is unique to each Census tract and is reported at the top of the panel along the right-hand side of the tool.

CEJST uses older population data than the 2020 data required for the FY23 SS4A application. To determine the 2020 population for each Census tract in the area of interest, use the 11-digit Census tract number and refer to the USDOT ETC Explorer tool or the U.S. Census website directly. To determine the percentage of underserved population in the area of interest, sum the 2020 population in the Census tracts marked "Yes" and divide by the sum of the 2020 population in all of the Census tracts in the area of interest.

You will need to take a screenshot of each selected Census tract in the area of interest and submit them together as one PDF file.