



USDOT 2023 Thriving Communities Program Guide for Using Federal Tools to Describe Disadvantage

The purpose of this document is to help applicants use the Equitable Transportation Community (ETC) Explorer and the Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool (CEJST) to articulate their community's challenges related to transportation burden and/or disparity for their Thriving Communities Program (TCP) Letter of Interest. DOT encourages, but does not require, applicants to use the ETC Explorer or CEJST to describe their experience with disadvantage. Applicants may use whichever tool is most useful and most accurately describes their community's lived experience.

Equitable Transportation Community Explorer

The U.S. DOT Equitable Transportation Community (ETC) Explorer is an interactive web application that uses 2020 Census tract data to explore the cumulative burden communities experience as a result of underinvestment in transportation.

Users can find more information about the tool on the [ETC Explorer website](#). User guides are available in [English](#) and [Spanish](#), or applicants can watch a 5-minute tutorial in [English](#) or [Spanish](#).

Step 1: Navigate to the [ETC Explorer Homepage](#). The homepage displays several options via tabs on the top ribbon, including:

- [ETC Explorer-National Results](#), which can be used to understand how a community experiences transportation disadvantage compared to all other census tracts nationally.
- [ETC Explorer- State Results](#), which can be used to understand how a community experiences transportation disadvantage compared to all other census tracts within the state.

The steps below are displayed using the National Results, but the same information and steps are applicable for the State Results. Applicants are encouraged to view their community census tracts using both the National and State Results to comprehensively describe their experience.

• [ETC Explorer- National Results](#)- An interactive dashboard to help users understand how a community or project area is experiencing transportation disadvantage compared to all other census tracts nationally across five disadvantage component and forty indicators. Popup Databoxes provide more information on Transportation Insecurity for a selected census tract.

• [ETC Explorer- State Results](#)- An interactive dashboard to help users understand how a community or project area is experiencing transportation disadvantage compared to all other census tracts in the state across five disadvantage component and forty indicators. Popup Databoxes provide more information on Transportation Insecurity for a selected census tract.

• [ETC Explorer- Add Your Data \(National and State Results\)](#)- Allows users to add their own data to DOT's ETC Explorer National Results and State Results maps to create custom maps and data views. The "Add Your Data" feature defaults to the National Results map. To utilize the State Results map, turn on the State Results layer in the layers feature.

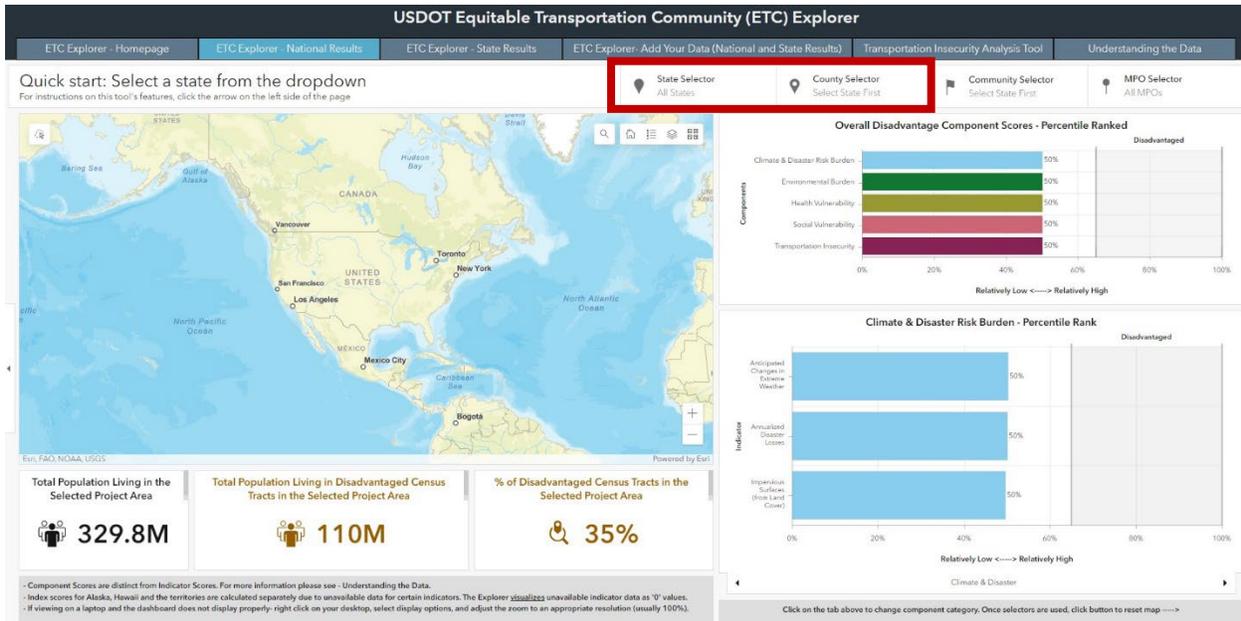
• [Transportation Insecurity Analysis Tool \(TIAT\)](#)- The Transportation Insecurity Analysis Tool displays selected transportation insecurity data at the state or national level. Users can filter the data via preset thresholds or enter their own. Additionally, users can select layers such as MPO boundaries, alternative fueling stations, safety data, transit routes, intercity bus routes, or any of the five Disadvantage Components to gain a deeper understanding into the relationship between transportation insecurity and the selected layer.

• [Understanding the Data](#)- Provides descriptions of the tool features and methodologies used to create the ETC Explorer and Transportation Insecurity Analysis Tool.

Resources-

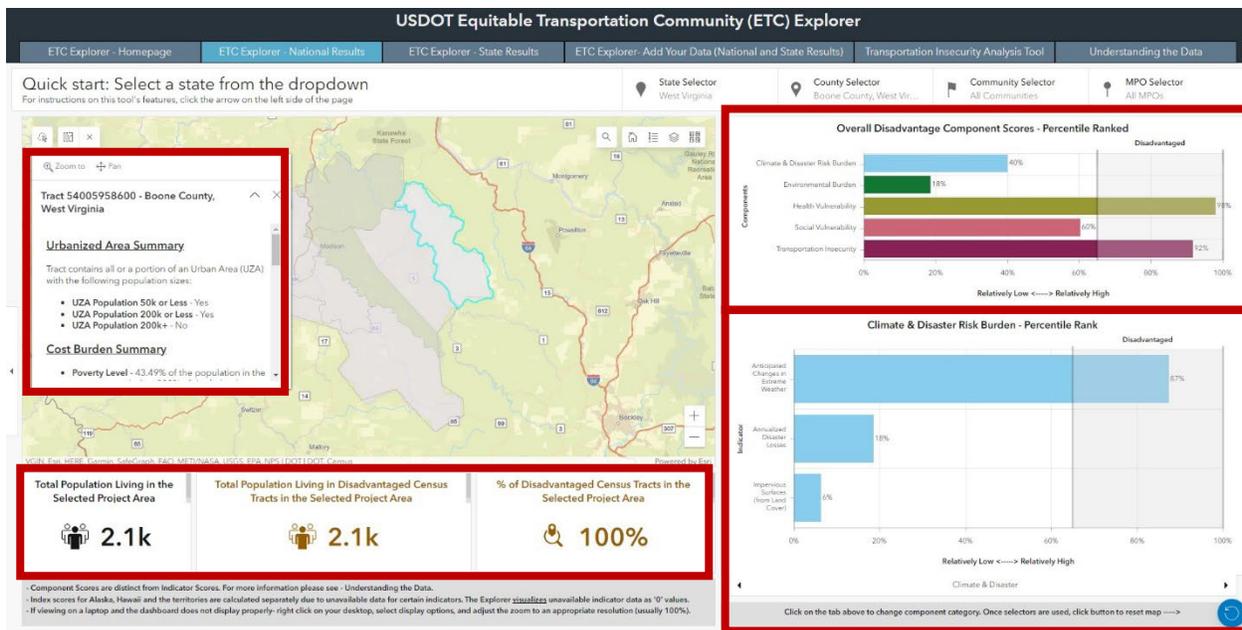
- For additional instructions on how to use the ETC Explorer, download the [User Guide](#) here:
 - English- [US Department of Transportation Equitable Transportation Community Explorer User Guide](#)
 - Spanish- [Guía del usuario de Equitable Transport... Departamento de Transporte de EE. UU. \(transportation.gov\)](#)
- Video tutorial on how to use the ETC Explorer- National Results tool (the State Results tool is used the same as the National Results tool):
 - English- [USDOT ETC Explorer - YouTube](#)
 - Spanish- [USDOT ETC Explorer - ESPAÑOL - YouTube](#)
- Video tutorial on how to use the Transportation Insecurity Analysis Tool:
 - English- Coming Soon
 - Spanish- Coming Soon

Step 2: Find your community by either selecting one of the Selector filters, which filter by state, county, community, or metropolitan planning area or click on the magnifying glass search tool to Zoom into a specific place or address from the search bar. If you'd like to select multiple census tracts, press and hold the shift key and click on the census tracts or use the lasso tool in the upper left corner of the map.



Step 3: Once you've selected the appropriate census tracts, the tool will display the following information:

1. Pop-Up Databox: The pop-up databox provides information on whether the census tract contains all or a portion of an urbanized area of certain population sizes, income data related to cost burden, data related to access to transportation, and safety summary statistics.
2. Total population of the selected area, population living in disadvantaged census tracts in the selected area, and percent of disadvantaged census tracts in the selected area (this information is displayed underneath the map)
3. Overall disadvantage component scores, by percentile ranking, for: Disaster and Risk Burden, Environmental Burden, Health Vulnerability, Social Vulnerability, and Transportation Insecurity. Census Tracts/areas at "0%" are considered the least disadvantaged and "100%" are the most (this information is displayed in the box in the top right corner of the tool).
4. Percentile ranking for each individual component, showing the indicators that make up the composite score for each and their individual percentile rankings. You can navigate between the indicators by using the tabs at the bottom of the box (this information is displayed in the box in the bottom right corner of the tool).



If the data in the “National Results” tab does not seem to reflect your community’s experience with disadvantage, remember to run through steps 2 and 3 in the “State Results” tab, to see if the data on that tab better reflects your community’s experience.

Users are encouraged to review the [“Understanding the Data”](#) tab to understand what each component of disadvantage means and the indicators that are included in them. For example, the page explains that Transportation Insecurity includes transportation access, transportation cost burden, and transportation safety indicators.

Step 4: Use the data to describe and support your community’s experience with disadvantage in your Letter of Interest. Applicants may use any of the data displayed in the tool that helps them describe their challenges and TCP goals. For example, if the applicant seeks TCP support for planning or design, development, or delivery of a project to address transportation access and safety issues in the community, describing data related to the transportation insecurity component may be most relevant. If the applicant seeks support for a project to reduce pollution and improve community health, the Environmental Burden and Health Vulnerability components may be useful. Applicants are encouraged to select data and information from the tool that best supports their applications, and to include specific data in their applications.

Applicants can also [download data and shapefiles](#) from the tool if useful to prepare their applications.

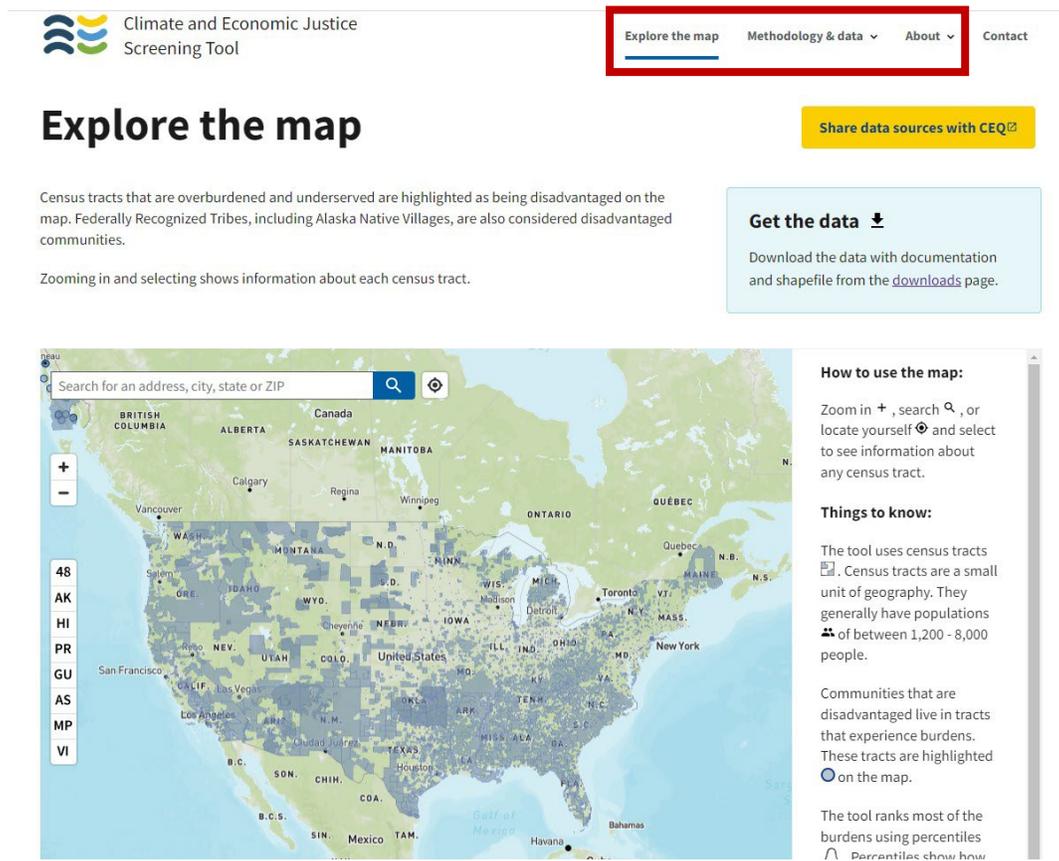
Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool (CEJST)

The Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool (CEJST) is an interactive map that uses datasets to identify communities experiencing burdens in eight categories: climate change, energy, health, housing, legacy pollution, transportation, water and wastewater, and workforce development.

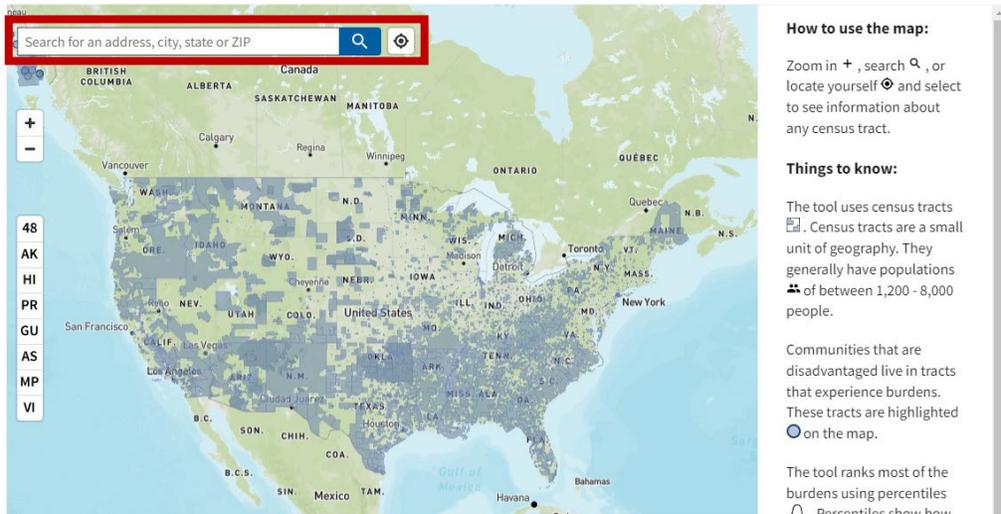
Step 1: Navigate to the [CEJST homepage](#). In the top right corner of the homepage, you'll find several helpful tabs:

- [Explore the Map](#): This is where you can find information about your community's disadvantage status.
- [Methodology and Data](#): This page provides information about each of the tool's categories of disadvantage and the datasets used in the tool.
- [About](#): Here you will find more information about the tool, including a CEJST tutorial and information about how to download and use the data from the tool. The [Frequently Asked Questions page](#) also provides more information about the tool and how to use it.

Users are encouraged to browse the Methodology and Data and About pages prior to using the tool.



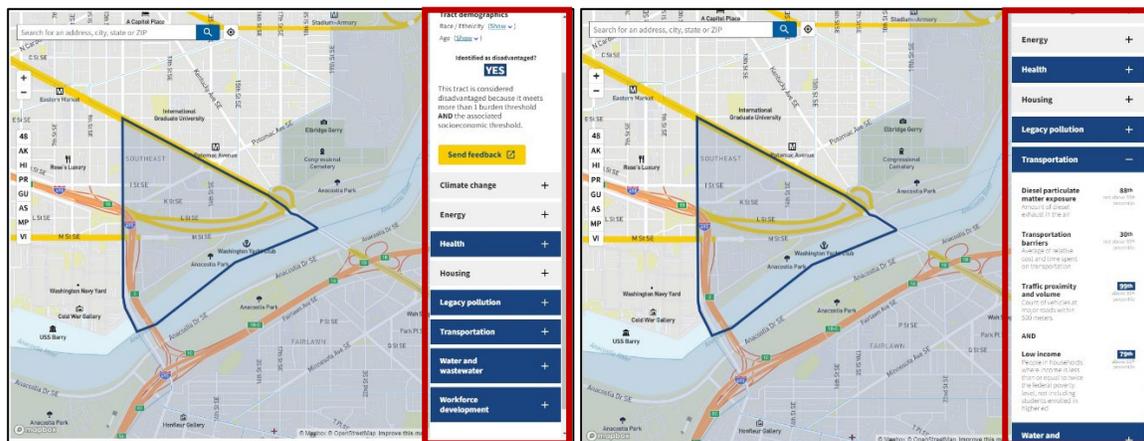
Step 2: On the homepage (“Explore the Map” page), enter your community’s address, city, state, or zip code in the search box. The map will zoom into your community’s location. Select the census tract that best represents your community by clicking on the map. If your community spans multiple census tracts, you will need to analyze each tract separately.



A community is highlighted as disadvantaged on the CEJST map if it is in a census tract that is (1) at or above the threshold for one or more environmental, climate, or other burdens, and (2) at or above the threshold for an associated socioeconomic burden. In addition, a census tract that is completely surrounded by disadvantaged communities and is at or above the 50% percentile for low income is also considered disadvantaged.

Categories in which the tract is considered disadvantaged will be highlighted in blue in the panel on the right-hand side of the map. Click the categories to see the indicators that contribute to each category.

In the images below, for example, the highlighted census tract is considered disadvantaged because it meets more than one burden threshold AND the associated socioeconomic threshold for the Health, Legacy Pollution, Transportation, Water and Wastewater, and Workforce Development categories. Expanding the Transportation category shows that the traffic proximity and volume indicator is in the 99th percentile, and the low-income indicator is in the 79th percentile, both of which exceed the threshold to be considered disadvantaged (90th percentile for traffic proximity and volume and 65th percentile for low income).



Step 4: Use the data to describe and support your community’s experience with disadvantage in your Letter of Interest. Applicants may use any of the data displayed in the tool that helps them describe their challenges and TCP goals. For example, if the applicant seeks TCP support for planning or design, development, or delivery of a project to address transportation barriers for a low-income community, describing data related to the Transportation category may be most relevant. Applicants are encouraged to select data and information from the tool that best supports their applications and are not limited to describing data relevant to the Transportation category. To the extent possible, applicants should include specific data in their applications.