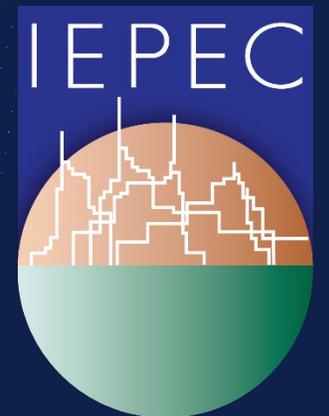# Defining and measuring equity in a C&I context

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IEPEC

Objective: What does equity mean for C&I programs?

- Equity definitions and frameworks have traditionally focused on the residential sector

- This research, conducted for the MA Program Administrators, sought to examine how C&I programs address equity. Key research activities:
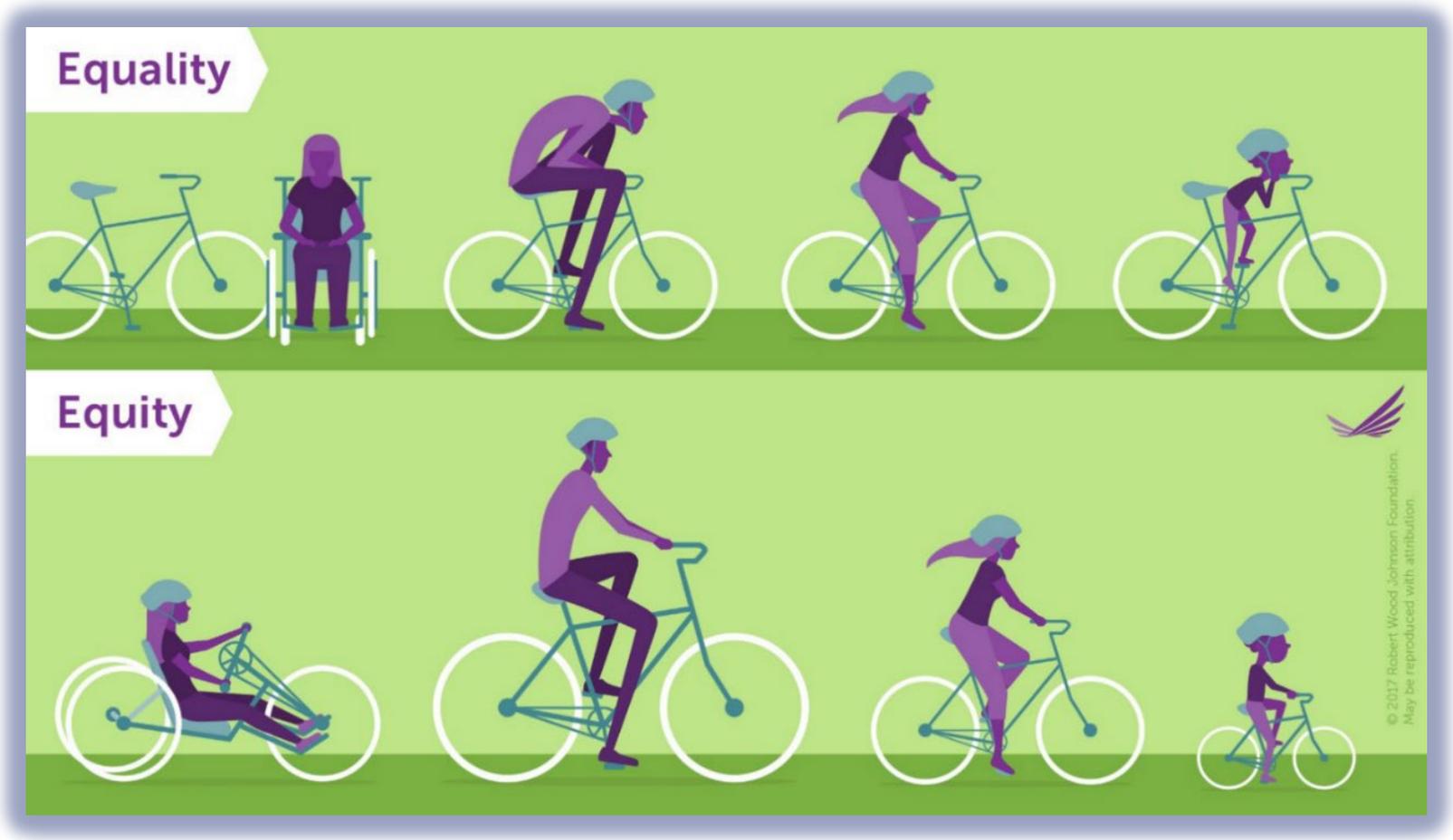
Literature review	Explore how existing programs in MA and peer jurisdictions approach C&I equity
Community-based organization (CBO) interviews	Connect with MA-based CBOs working with businesses within the community

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Level-setting – equity vs. equality

Source: Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. https://www.rwjf.org/en/insights/our-research/infographics/visualizing-health-equity.html.

Energy equity – a framework

Structural equity – ensures that decision-makers build more equitable policies and programs

**Procedural** equity – ensures the equitable development off those policies and programs

Distributional equity – for energy efficiency program to be equitable, all community members should benefit from it
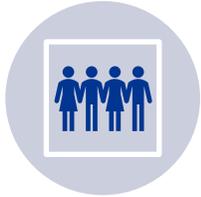
Transgenerational equity – consider impacts on future generations

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Massachusetts C&I equity context

- Small Business Turnkey Program

- Community First Partnership

- Main Streets

- Workforce development
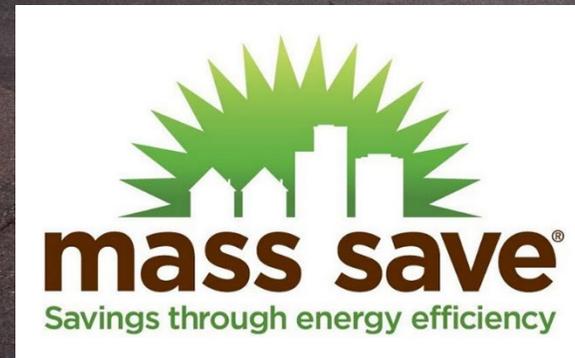
Literature review themes

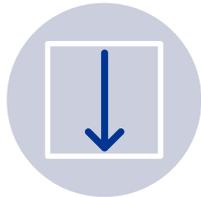Use US Census data to identify geographic communities of focus

Small business focus

Prioritization of turnkey or direct install measures

Additional incentives for businesses within disadvantaged communities

Strategies to reduce overall and/or upfront costs

Customer education and support

Interviews with CBOs

Defining equity

How to identify and serve target businesses

Measuring success

CBO Interviews – Defining equity

- Equity is achieving similar impact rather than equal inputs

- Businesses face many of the same equity challenges as residents
  - Housing is a core equity need

- Equity is about changing the narrative for businesses and communities

- Energy cost is a large burden for small brick-and-mortar stores

"Energy equity is ensuring the benefits of energy efficiency and clean energy reach communities that have historically faced systemic barriers."

Identifying and serving target businesses

- Need for engagement within local communities, leverage existing networks

- Addressing perception and trust is critical

- Upfront cost remains the primary barrier once businesses are aware of opportunities

- Education and outreach remain primary pathways to increasing awareness

"Change happens at the speed of trust. Business owners trust us because they know us."

- CBO Interviewee

"Talk to neighborhood-level organizations, civic organizations, churches, charter schools because they know who's in their neighborhoods."

- CBO interviewee

Measuring success

- Baselines are important in measuring progress and refining program delivery

- Regular reporting on key metrics

- No exhaustive public directory of target businesses exists – CBOs and local organizations are critical resources to engage businesses

"The economic impact is the most exciting part of the conversation. The overall dollar amount that customers saved as a result of the programs – claim that and celebrate it, tell the vignettes of individuals."

- CBO Interviewee

Key findings

Key finding	Equity framework component	Implications
The equity needs of businesses are similar to residents	Structural	• Think holistically about the communities and their residents in program design • Consider integration opportunities with residential program offerings.
Local organizations are the key resources	Procedural	• Build trust with communities • Go beyond building awareness • Seek community participation and leadership in program facets
Focus on small and micro businesses is the most broadly adopted approach	Distributional	Ensure there are opportunities for small businesses as well as large
No one size fits all approach to identify communities / businesses	Transgenerational	Consider impacts to future generations

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Future opportunities for equity measurement and analysis

- Conduct deep-dive analyses of locationally-targeted program delivery

- Measure from a community perspective

- Analyze geotargeted marketing

Thank you and questions.

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