

Principles for Ensuring Disadvantaged Community Benefits under SB 535

Proposed by the SB 535 Coalition (APEN, Coalition for Clean Air, Greenlining Inst., Public Advocates)

These principles are intended to guide the SB 535 funds and ensure that investments result in meaningful and tangible benefits for disadvantaged communities.

- A. Establish a process, with indicators and metrics, for project development, selection and evaluation.** The indicators and metrics for assessing disadvantaged community benefits (DCBs) should evaluate specific investments (as opposed to broad investment program areas as a whole).
1. Selection and evaluation indicators will serve as a template to aid project sponsors as they **develop** proposals that will maximize DCBs.
 2. Tailoring indicators to evaluate proposed investments will promote the **selection** of the best investments by distinguishing between “high scoring” and “low scoring” proposals in the same program area.
 3. Finally, the indicators will provide the metrics for **evaluating** the extent to which each investment actually realized the DCBs that it was intended to provide.
- B. Proposed investments must clearly demonstrate how they will address the needs of the most vulnerable residents of identified disadvantaged communities.**
1. DCB indicators should be tailored to reflect the priority unmet needs residents of disadvantaged communities across California repeatedly identify and work to address in their communities. (Some common examples are listed on the next page.) Where possible, the indicators should be quantified, with metrics.
 2. To ensure that disadvantaged communities have the flexibility to identify and meet their most pressing needs, a separate criterion should be included for an investment that addresses an unmet need that has been identified as a high priority in an inclusive process led by disadvantaged community residents and groups.
 3. The links between project design and benefit provided must be clearly articulated. Strategies that will be utilized to maximize benefits should be identified.
- C. The DCBs of the proposed investment must significantly outweigh its adverse impacts on the disadvantaged community.**
1. An adverse impact includes the degree to which the investment would impede one or more DCB indicators. Adverse impacts also include other potential harmful effects of investments, such as displacement.
 2. Total net benefits over harms should exceed some minimum threshold.
- D. Relationship of the location of an investment to its benefits to a disadvantaged community.**
1. The location of a project or investment in a disadvantaged community does not necessarily provide a benefit to that community. Nor does it guarantee that its benefits to that community outweigh its harmful impacts. For instance, care must be taken to ensure that the benefits of otherwise beneficial investments are not reduced by locating them in proximity to harm. (E.g., bike and pedestrian improvements on a truck route.)
 2. The residents of disadvantaged communities should have the choice and opportunity to work in, travel to, and live in high-opportunity communities, and investments that would make that choice real should be part of a comprehensive investment strategy for benefiting disadvantaged communities. (E.g., affordable housing near high-opportunity suburban job centers.)

Categories of Some Common Disadvantaged Community Benefits

Public Health/ Co-pollution benefits	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Reduce health harms (e.g., asthma) suffered disproportionately by low-income residents/communities due to co-pollutants 2. Reduce health harms (e.g., obesity) suffered disproportionately by low-income residents/communities due to the built environment (e.g., by providing active transportation opportunities, parks) 3. Increase community safety
Economic benefits: Increased family income and assets	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Increase family income (e.g., targeted hiring for living wage jobs) 2. Increase job readiness and career opportunities (e.g., workforce development programs, on-the-job training) 3. Revitalize local economies (e.g., increased utilization of local businesses)
Economic benefits: Reduced family costs	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Rent savings (e.g., affordable housing) 2. Transportation cost savings (e.g., free or reduced cost transit passes) 3. Energy cost savings (e.g., weatherization, solar, etc.)
Mobility and Access to Opportunity	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Improve transit service levels on systems/routes that have high-ridership of low-income riders 2. Bring jobs and housing closer together (e.g., affordable housing in transit oriented development, and in healthy, high-opportunity neighborhoods)
Sustainable Community Infrastructure	Improvements that will benefit low-income residents without increasing the risk that they will be displaced.
Community-identified Priority Needs	An investment will meet an unmet need that has been identified as a high priority in an inclusive process led by disadvantaged community residents and groups.