



Applying an Equity Lens in MTI Development

April 3, 2026





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1 What to expect in this document:

CalMTA's best-practice guidance for integrating equity in development of our Market Transformation Initiatives (MTIs) describes a practical approach to the following tools and practices:

- **[Equitable research practices](#)** (p. 7-15) to ensure processes and questions remain free from the biases and assumptions of the researchers, with recommendations for project planning, data collection, analysis, and knowledge-sharing
- **[Equity-focused logic model development guidance](#)** (p. 16-23) to bring a more structured and intentional equity perspective into the process of developing conceptual and final MTI logic models, including pre-session activities and questions to be used in logic model workshops
- **[Equity-oriented intervention strategy best practices](#)** (p. 23-27) targeting both the supply- and demand-side, designed to serve as a dynamic resource and informed by top recommendations from industry experts.

This guide is a living document that will grow and shift as we learn, listen, and adapt. Keeping this document up to date helps us hold ourselves accountable to what we're learning along the way. By revisiting and refining it regularly, we make space for new insights, adjust to emerging challenges, and ensure we are not merely checking a box but moving toward more equitable outcomes in a meaningful way.

2 Introduction

Recognizing the historical inequities of energy efficiency (EE) investment, as well as the disproportionate energy burden faced by communities across California, CalMTA applies an equity lens in our approach to developing a market transformation portfolio for California. This aligns with the Adopted Market Transformation Framework attached to [California Public Utilities Commission \(CPUC\) Decision 19-12-021](#), which states that in addition to supporting California's energy and climate goals, MTIs should "integrate strategies to maximize equity" and should "consider how to transform the EE marketplace to maximize energy savings, health, affordability, and job access for disadvantaged communities."

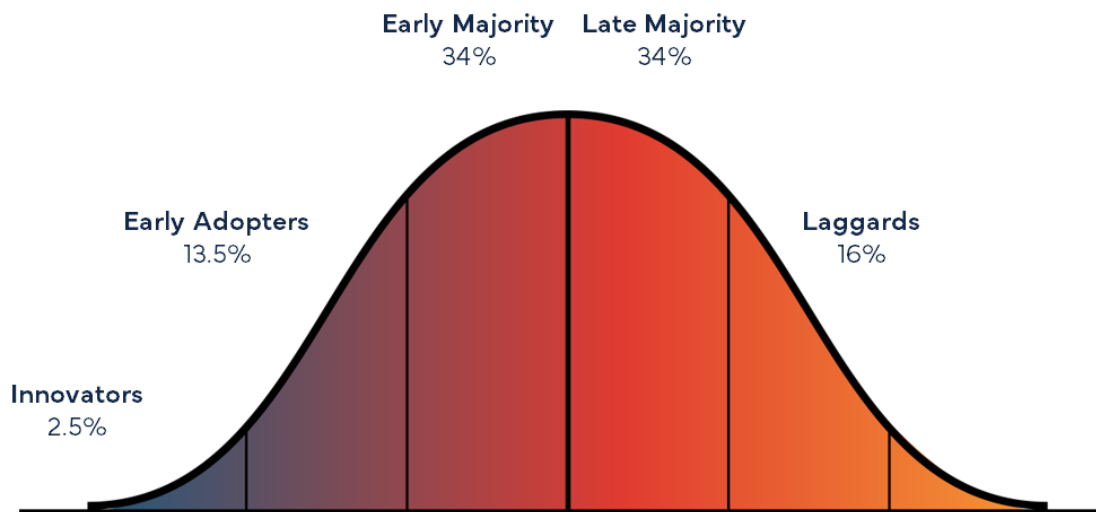
Prioritizing equity in our program design requires developing a unique set of tools and best practices for application to market transformation. This guidance is a starting point for integrating equity considerations into MTI development - recognizing that we will continuously learn and adjust our approach as we support a clean energy future for all Californians.

MT strategy focuses on influencing supply chain entities that offer market leverage (e.g., manufacturers, distributors, contractors, retailers, and organizations representing industries) or demand-side opportunities that offer market leverage rather than targeting specific end-use



customer segments. The diffusion of innovation curve developed by E.M. Rogers (Figure 1) directs MT administrators to target risk-tolerant early adopters and the early majority while categorizing consumers who typically have fewer resources or face greater barriers to adoption as “laggards.” To yield benefits for the later-stage audiences, MTIs typically rely on efforts to increase market availability and influence enhanced codes and standards for energy-efficient products rather than considering ways to bring those consumers into the early majority sooner.

Figure 1. Diffusion of Innovation Model (Rogers 1962)

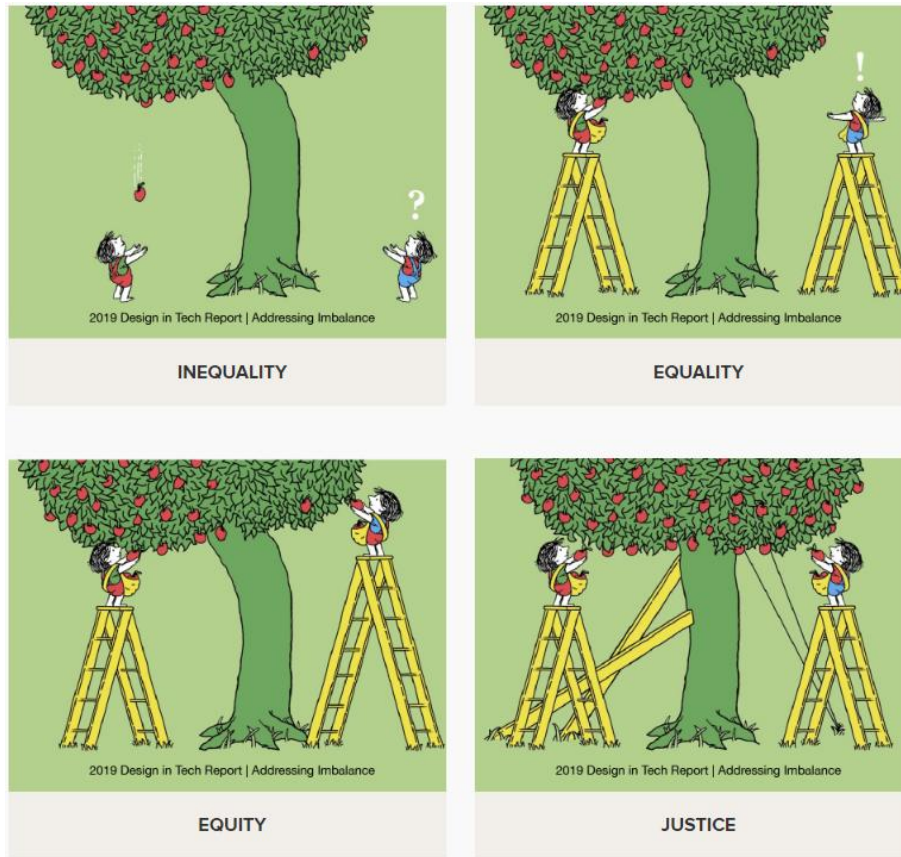


CalMTA also recognizes the historical inequities of energy efficiency investment. We use an equity lens in our approach to developing a market transformation portfolio for California that seeks to deliver the benefits of energy efficiency more quickly to environmental and social justice (ESJ) communities. We accomplish this by deploying strategic interventions designed to break down market barriers that disproportionately affect ESJ communities, with the goal of increasing access to resources and creating opportunities that help these communities thrive.

Our focus is on bringing fairness and access to communities that have been systemically marginalized, using equity-focused approaches and strategies to address existing inequalities by giving communities what they need, as illustrated in Figure 2.



Figure 2. "Addressing Imbalance" by Tony Ruth¹



As defined by the CPUC, ESJ communities² include:

- Predominantly communities of color or low-income
- Underrepresented in the policy setting or decision-making process
- Subject to a disproportionate impact from one or more environmental hazards
- Likely to experience disparate implementation of environmental regulations and socio-economic investments in their communities

These communities may also include:

- Disadvantaged Communities (defined pursuant to CalEnviroScreen 4.0 as census tracts that score in the top 25% of CalEnviroScreen 4.0, those that score within the highest 5% of

¹ The George Washington University's Milken Institute School of Public Health. *Equity vs. Equality: What's the Difference?* November 5, 2020. <https://onlinepublichealth.gwu.edu/resources/equity-vs-equality/>

² CPUC. *Environmental & Social Justice Action Plan, Version 2.0*, November 28, 2025. <https://www.cpuc.ca.gov/ESJactionplan/>

CalEnviroScreen 4.0's Pollution Burden but do not receive an overall CalEnviroScreen score, census tracts identified as Disadvantaged Communities in CalEnviroScreen 3.0, and areas under the control of federally recognized Tribes)

- All Tribal lands
- Low-income households (defined as household incomes below 80% of the Area Median Income)
- Low-income census tracts (defined as census tracts where aggregated household incomes are less than 80% of area or state median income).

3 Equitable research practices

Equity should be a core consideration in the research process, with a focus on inclusiveness, accessibility, engagement, and representation across all segments of a population. Equity in research means intentionally designing the work to reveal structural barriers and understand how they shape access and outcomes. We then translate those findings into concrete actions that remove barriers, ensuring historically excluded (or equity-denied) groups have fair access to meaningful opportunities.

The following material covers best practices to support equitable research in four key areas: Planning, Data Collection, Analysis, and Knowledge Sharing.

3.1 Planning

During the planning phase of the research process, the research team will make foundational decisions that guide the rest of the project. Because of this, it is important to center equity considerations from the very beginning. If a research team attempts to incorporate equity considerations in a later stage of the project, it may be challenging to fully incorporate them.

To engage in participatory research (e.g., focus groups, interviews, or surveys), the team should include community partnerships in the planning stage and involve the target community in the design process. They should also develop methods to reveal and challenge assumptions to ensure the research is grounded in accurate information and is inclusive of diverse perspectives.³ Some best practices in equity-oriented research planning are described below.

3.1.1 Partnerships

- When appropriate, develop partnerships with individuals impacted by research work as well as relevant community-based organizations (CBOs).

³ For CalMTA, the Equity Sounding Board can serve as a proxy, along with other methods like listening sessions and focus groups.

- Engage key stakeholders as collaborators early in the process so that partners share ownership over the research process.
- Review the spectrum of public participation (see Appendix B). To be truly inclusive, partner communities should be key players in decision-making at each stage of the research when possible, including support of:
 - Research question selection
 - Target audience determination
 - Research tool development
 - Data collection
 - Data analysis
 - Dissemination of research findings

3.1.2 Consider biases and assumptions

Everyone has unique experiences and worldviews that will impact their decision-making process. These unconscious biases are difficult to spot and can have a negative impact on both equity and research efficacy at every step of the process. The questions below can help raise awareness of these biases and mitigate their impact when performing research. See Figure 3 for more strategies to address unconscious bias.

Ask yourself how you know what you know. Have you made any assumptions? Where could your biases be impacting your decision-making? Reviewing your thought process explicitly can help to uncover research assumptions that were made implicitly. Additional questions to ask yourself include:⁴

- What am I assuming about the causes of the problem I am trying to address in my research? What do I believe will trigger people, organizations, or systems within ESJ communities to act differently?
- What am I assuming about the leverage or influence that key partners, market actors, etc., have and with whom?
- What kinds of reactions am I expecting the research to trigger among participants in the system?
- What changes to the context (positive/negative) will force me to rethink my plan?

⁴ For more information, see Beer, T. and Coffman, J. *Guidance on Developing Assumptions*, November 2021. <https://www.evaluationinnovation.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/Assumptions-Guidance-2021-Suggested-Website-Version-copy.pdf>



- Do I already have predictions about the research results?

Develop additional questions that are specific to the research context. Review answers with others, especially community partners or (in CalMTA's case) Equity Sounding Board members, to identify and catch where assumptions may be incorrect. Check assumptions against evidence.

Figure 3. Strategies for addressing unconscious bias

Strategies for addressing unconscious bias⁵

Introspection: Delve into and uncover your own biases by engaging in self-reflection.

Mindfulness: Because stress can amplify biases, practice stress-reduction techniques and mindfulness, such as focused breathing, to stay centered.

Perspective-taking: Try to understand the experiences of others.

Learn to slow down: Take a moment to think before engaging with individuals from certain groups to avoid automatic biased responses. Recall positive examples of people from that group, such as notable figures or friends.

Individuation: Assess individuals based on their unique traits rather than group stereotypes.

3.1.3 Target audience

Key strategies to consider when defining your target audience for research include:

- Work to understand your target audience's perspective.
- Think about who is excluded from your target audience. Why were they excluded? Are ESJ communities appropriately represented?
- Consider your audience's pain points and their level of knowledge so you are sensitive to their concerns and speaking for understanding.
- Determine how you can reach your target audience: through the client, the implementer, online sources, purchased lists, in-person outreach, community partnerships, or other means. Consider how inequities such as internet access, language barriers, level of literacy, access to education and other accessibility issues may impact your outreach process.
- Understand the size and demographics of the target audience so you understand whether your outreach is representative.

⁵ Adapted from Edgoose, J., Quiogue, M., and Sidhar, K. *How to Identify, Understand, and Unlearn Implicit Bias in Patient Care*, July/August 2019. <https://www.aafp.org/pubs/fpm/issues/2019/0700/p29.html>

3.1.4 One-on-one meetings

The following guidance can be beneficial when conducting meetings with individual participants:

- Having individual meetings with research subjects before in-person group engagements can yield deeper insights, especially on issues the subject might not feel comfortable discussing in public.
- Topics that may arise in your research that can be sensitive to discuss might include, but are not limited to, experiences with poverty, displacement, housing insecurity, discrimination, and more. It is important to carefully choose your language when discussing these matters, ensuring that you avoid blame or shame and instead define people by their values, assets, and aspirations.

3.2 Data collection

Incorporating key equity considerations into the data collection process helps ensure that the diversity of the target community is included and reflected in the sampling process, and that research tools are accessible and easy to understand. Developing a robust, informed-consent process helps participants understand the research process more clearly and know how their data will be used. The following data collection best practices can better align MTI research with equity objectives.

3.2.1 Develop effective instruments

- Test the research instrument (interview guide, survey, etc.) or request for information (RFI) with a small group before broad deployment.
- Share research tools with community partners such as the Equity Sounding Board for their assessment and feedback.
- Engage community representatives through hands-on workshops or meetings to actively test data collection tools.
- Ensure a fair and equitable level of surveying that matches the demographics of your target community while being sensitive to over-surveyed communities.
- Refer to Table 1. Primary Data Collection Tools: Best Practices below.

3.2.2 Accessibility and engagement

- Address accessibility barriers (see the Useful Tools section of Appendix A for more).
- Meet language needs, including culturally relevant content rather than just direct translations.
- Use appropriate engagement channels to reach your audience. This may include having staff present at events to assist attendees who are less familiar with technology (for example, when completing web-based surveys).



3.2.3 Participant understanding

- Inform research participants about the research goals and methods.
- Compensate participants appropriately for their time. To minimize potential bias, compensation should be substantial enough to demonstrate respect for participants' time, but not so high that it creates the risk of attracting participants solely for financial gain.
- Ensure the time commitment required for participation is not burdensome.
- Maintain open communication before, during, and after data collection.
- Consider wrap-around services like childcare and transportation for in-person activities to enable further participation.

3.2.4 Community involvement

- Engage community members in data collection, such as hiring local partners to conduct surveys or interviews.
- Provide training if needed to share skills and build capacity within your target community so that they can participate at this stage.

3.2.5 Sampling considerations

- Develop a robust sampling methodology to reduce errors and improve the likelihood that the sample is inclusive and representative of ESJ populations.
- See the *Network Sampling Approach* in Appendix A.



Table 1. Primary data collection tools: best practices

Surveys	Interviews	Focus groups	Ethnographies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A structured list of question-and-answer choices posed to many people 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suitable for small number of respondents (<20) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suitable for test concepts; see and hear your target audience • 3-8 respondents per group • Provides visibility into target audience 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Captures observations of your target audience in a specific setting, or while doing a certain action • Allows you to see how something is done; understand complex transactions and relationships; observe behaviors
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep it short • Offer compelling, respondent-centric reasons for taking the survey • Offer gift card relevant to participants⁶/incentive to honor time and expertise • Use simple, non-jargon words, and do not assume the audience will know the terms • Avoid open-ended questions • Avoid making questions required, to allow skipping, if necessary • Use consistent scales - do not switch often within a survey 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reach out first and ask for the preferred time to call • Ask whether text messaging may be easier and more accessible for those who do not have a desk job • Offer compelling, respondent-centric reasons for participating in the interview • Aim for the interview to be as short as possible • Confirm they have time to talk to you at the start of the interview • Avoid leaving a voice message on your first attempt. Move on to the next person on the list (can leave voicemail on future attempts) • Offer compensation to honor time and expertise 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider your target audience when it comes to choosing online vs. facility-hosted focus groups (e.g., some individuals cannot participate online due to internet or computer requirements) • Over-recruit in case of no-shows • Schedule at the time that works best for your participants, potentially during evening hours • Test out online technology or visit the facility in advance • Offer compensation to honor time and expertise • Help your moderator prepare by reviewing and rehearsing the discussion guide and timeline well ahead of the session 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have an open mind going into every observation • Limit your influence and participation during an observation • Gather a variety of observations: different key personnel on different days, different types of households, etc. • Devise a system for how you will take notes and practice using it ahead of time

⁶ Care must be taken to ensure gift cards are useful to participants (i.e., not from store that are outside their local region).

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3.3 Analysis

Biases and assumptions can substantially impact the data analysis process. Data analysis must include diverse perspectives and develop built-in strategies to recognize and challenge biases. The following data analysis best practices can better align MTI research with equity objectives.

3.3.1 Participation

- If interviews were conducted, provide interview subjects with the chance to review their transcript and make changes for accuracy.
- Invite participants to be part of the analysis process, such as through a “data party” (see the *Useful Tools* section of Appendix A).
- Provide participants with the chance to carefully review and discuss the data and findings before publication.

3.3.2 Address bias

- We tend to seek confirmation of our beliefs and expectations, jeopardizing research quality.
- Analyze and beware of cognitive bias. Table 2 describes examples of confirmation bias forms to avoid.

Table 2. Examples of confirmation bias

Confirmation bias	Anchoring bias	Sunk cost effect	Serial position
Interpreting information in a way that confirms existing beliefs	Placing more significance on the first piece of information we receive	We do not want time/effort to be wasted, so we persevere with something until the investment is justified.	The first and last pieces of information in a list are interpreted as more important and remembered more clearly.
Example: If you assume that lower-income people are too busy with multiple jobs and other obligations to care about sustainability, you may interpret low uptake in an energy efficiency program as a lack of interest in sustainability.	Example: If the first interviewee in a round of interviewees explains that they do not like the proposed technology, you may subconsciously assume the following interviewees agree.	Example: If you have been working on a new strategy for months, you may downplay feedback from your community that demonstrates why the strategy won't be effective.	Example: If you have a list of possible cities that could be the targets of a new program, you may remember and prioritize the first and last cities on the list.



3.3.3 Use team strategies to recognize and address bias.⁷

- Notice and set intentions: Before jumping into teamwork, build awareness about the factors that feel important to everyone on the team.
- Define: Set clear equity goals early in the process, with multiple metrics for measuring outcomes that are grounded in historical contexts and recognize the complexity of the situation.
- Inquire: Ask questions with your team and community partners to help recognize when you may need additional data.

3.4 Knowledge-sharing

Research work is not over when the analysis is done. Equitable research practitioners should ensure that the communities they work with receive, understand, and are credited for their contribution to the results. Consider sharing the results in non-traditional methods, such as infographics, podcasts, and community presentations. Best-practice approaches are described below.

3.4.1 Clear communication

- Consider who you will be communicating to and their needs and expectations.
- Share your results with the research participants.
- Consider communicating your results through storytelling to make results more accessible.
- Prior to publication, verify your recommendations with the community partners you conducted the research with.

3.4.2 Shared ownership

- Consider co-authorship with participants when possible.
- Credit everyone involved in the research.

3.4.3 Ongoing relationships

- Communicate with your community participants about what will happen at the end of the research project.
- Do not “parachute in and parachute out” to collect your data.

⁷ Liberatory Design. *Mindsets and Modes to Design for Equity*, 2021.

<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/60380011d63f16013f7cc4c2/t/64e7eec1af73ab61a813bd72/1692921543446/Liberatory+Design+Deck.pdf>

4 Equity-focused conceptual logic model development

A conceptual logic model is a visualization of the preliminary market transformation theory that reflects the team's initial understanding and hypotheses when crafting the Advancement Plan. At this stage, because many things are still unknown, the logic model is intentionally basic, serving as a guide for Phase II: Program Development research. Ultimately, a final logic model is included in the MTI Plan. See Section 5 for details on how to apply an equity lens to a full logic model.

This section outlines how CalMTA can incorporate an equity lens in this initial logic model development. Strategy managers can use this guide to integrate a more structured and intentional equity perspective throughout the conceptual logic model development process.

4.1 Pre-session individual work

Equity work requires dedicated time and practice. We suggest each participant spends time before the conceptual logic model session reflecting on how equity could be integrated into the potential future MTI. By doing this, participants will arrive at the logic model session with a foundation in equity-aligned thinking, allowing them to efficiently apply these considerations in logic model development.

Strategy Managers can invite each team member to engage in the following pre-session activities when setting up the conceptual logic model session:

- Review the idea's preliminary MT theory, target market, and product/practice/service definition.
- Review and reflect on barriers to the technology/service/practice's broad adoption and if those barriers have specific applicability to ESJ communities.
- With the MT theory in mind, think about opportunities within the prospective MTI to create more favorable equitable outcomes, for example:
 - What jobs might be created by this MTI and how they can benefit ESJ communities?
 - What potential benefits or risks to health could be linked to this MT idea?
 - What potential benefits or risks to safety could be linked to this MT idea?
 - What are potential environmental impacts related to adoption of the focus technology/practice/service?
 - Can the potential MTI impact energy use? Can it reduce it? Might it increase it?
- Think about perceived barriers to equitable adoption in this market. Consider these questions:



- What are the specific barriers to adoption or benefits for a particular geographic area, a particular race, ethnicity, group of people (elderly, veterans, etc.)?
- What are the historic and systemic root causes of what is causing those barriers? This is important for building awareness and making sure we do not perpetuate those root causes.
- Can sub-optimum housing/building conditions (e.g., panel capacity, asbestos, lack of insulation, broken windows, etc.) impact the adoption of this product, service, or practice?
- Will the first cost be an issue? Are there specific conditions impacting first cost? For example, technology and products are more expensive in rural communities.
- Is there access to and ability for financing? For example, are there reasons ESJ community members may not get approved for loans?
- Are there any other barriers specific to ESJ groups, such as trust, accessibility, language, culture, etc.?
- You should prepare to identify equitable outcomes, aligned with the MT theory, that you want to see for the initiative. Equitable outcomes will allow us to design interventions in a way that address existing disparities, providing necessary market support to ensure that all individuals and communities can reach similar levels of adoption of the proposed technology, practice, or service. Take a moment to acknowledge context and test your assumptions.
 - Who are the end-users of the technology? How are they different than you? What are your assumptions about how the user would interact with this initiative's product, service, or practice?
 - How are you respectively situated (e.g., institutional power, relative to opportunity)?
 - What barriers will the MTI have to overcome to achieve equitable outcomes?
 - What kind of partnerships would help achieve the equity goals?
- Set your intentions: What are the equitable outcomes you hope to achieve through this initiative? At this point, do not let limitations hold you back. Dream and dream big. Think about how the initiative can generate increased equity. How can the initiative end-state be equitable?

4.2 Work during the conceptual logic model session

4.2.1 Notice and reflect step #1

Before beginning the session, as a team, discuss what each person noticed during the pre-work exercise. It is important for the team to share their assumptions and learnings without being judged, corrected in a negative way, or made to feel inadequate.



- How might our lived experiences cause us to unintentionally disregard issues that impact the outcome of our design?
- What are our assumptions about the people who will be interacting with/using the product, practice, or service? What do we assume we know about the personas and their motivators?

Pause and reflect on your emotions and your new understanding. Feel free to share what your reflections revealed to you.

4.2.2 Define the end state

When creating the conceptual logic model end state for an initiative, take a minute to describe the desired end state from an equity perspective. For example, what can be included in the end state to make it inclusive and equitable of ESJ communities? Initially, be deliberate in capturing that. Instead of saying “all residents will adopt this new technology,” call out low-income households, renters, people living in sub-optimal homes, etc. This will help bring an additional equity focus to the discussion.

4.2.3 Define barriers and opportunities

Think about equitable and fair outcomes, aligned with the MT theory, that you want to see for the initiative. During the conceptual logic model development, prompt the team for the following questions:

- What are our perceived barriers to adoption of the initiative from an equity perspective?
- What are opportunities this initiative presents from an equity perspective?

4.2.4 Intervention strategies for conceptual logic model development

Determine targeted intervention strategies to overcome perceived barriers. Consider how the following best practice approaches can be embedded into MT intervention strategies:

- How can we integrate ESJ voices in the way we influence the market (product design, distribution, ENERGY STAR® or other labeling, policies, etc.)?
- How do we forge partnerships with trusted sources like community leaders and organizations that are recognized and respected within ESJ communities?
- How do we ensure targeted and prioritized outreach/education for ESJ communities?
- How do we ensure the varying home/building conditions and needs are considered?
- What negative impacts can be caused by the MTI? How do we ensure our initiatives do not cause negative impacts or find ways to mitigate impacts such as bill increases, added cost of maintenance, or environmental damage in communities in which they are adopted?



- Discuss the intervention strategies the team has come up with (not just from an equity perspective) to make sure they do not have unintended impacts that would harm communities. If they do, determine how they can be adjusted so those harms are remedied. For example, if upgrades to homes brought forward by an initiative can increase rent or cause evictions, how can the initiative consider policies that prevent these as well?

4.2.5 Equity-focused outcomes for conceptual logic model

When prompting the team to talk through desired outcomes, call out specific equitable outcomes related to ESJ communities. This is an opportunity for team members to bring forward the outcomes on which they reflected during pre-work. Consider asking:

- What equitable outcomes caused by the above intervention strategies would you like to see this initiative achieve?
- How do they align with the desired end-state you worked on?

5 Equity-focused final logic model development

During Phase II, a comprehensive market transformation logic model is developed for inclusion in the full MTI Plan. This final logic model is grounded in research and strategy-testing conducted in Phase II, which yields a deeper understanding of market-level barriers and opportunities as well as possible intervention strategies. The final logic model is more detailed and comprehensive than version featured in MTI Advancement Plans. It includes time-bound outcomes, outputs, and ties to more comprehensive market progress indicators detailed in the evaluation plan.

This guidance outlines how CalMTA can incorporate an equity lens into final market transformation logic model development (see Section 4 for preliminary or conceptual logic model development). Strategy Managers can use this guide to integrate a more structured and intentional equity perspective across the team and throughout the logic model development process.

5.1 Pre-session individual work

Equity work requires dedicated time and practice. We suggest each participant spends time before the final logic model session reflecting on how equity could be integrated into the initiative. Participants that arrive at the logic model session with a foundation in equity-aligned thinking will be more efficient at applying these considerations during development of the logic model.

Strategy Managers can invite each team member to engage in the following final logic model development pre-session activities.



5.2 Preparing for a final MTI logic model session

Review the revised MT theory, the target market, and product/practice/or service. Based on the Phase II research and pilot results, consider the following:

- How has what we learned changed the assumptions we had made during Advancement Plan development?
- What part of the target market includes ESJ communities? For example, building owners, building occupants, installers, or retailers.
- What have we learned that is unique about the ESJ segment of the target market? For example, their unique barriers, unique factors impacting decision-making processes, etc.
- How have ESJ communities been impacted by existing policies and decision-making processes in this market?
- Have we discovered any barriers we did not think about previously? Have we discovered anything new about our perceived barriers?
- What have you learned during Phase II about opportunities within the initiative to create more favorable equitable outcomes? What could cause further inequities? Recall examples we considered during Phase I logic model development:
- What jobs might be created by this MTI and how would they benefit ESJ communities?
 - What potential benefits or risks to health and safety could be linked to this initiative's technology?
- What are potential environmental impacts due to this initiative?
- Can the initiative reduce or increase energy use? Will it reduce or increase utility bills (e.g., when replacing a gas appliance with an efficient electric alternative)?

5.3 Work during the final logic model session

Step 1: Notice and reflect

Before beginning the session, discuss with the team what each person noticed during the pre-work exercise. It is important for the team to share their assumptions and learnings without being judged, corrected in a negative way, or made to feel inadequate.

- How might our lived experiences cause us to unintentionally disregard issues that impact the outcome of our design?
- What are our assumptions about the people who will be interacting with/using the product, practice, or service? What do we assume we know about the personas and their motivators?



- Pause and reflect on your emotions and any new understanding. Feel free to share what your reflections revealed to you.

Define the end-state

When working on a final MTI Plan, remind the team to think about how you can bring equity to the end vision of the initiative. Is there anything we have learned about the affected ESJ communities, their needs, and how they interact with the product, service, or practice that make us think about the end-state differently?

Define barriers and opportunities

During the final logic model development and with what you have learned from Phase II research, think about unique barriers to equitable adoption of this initiative’s product, service, or practice. Consider these questions:

- What are the specific barriers to adoption or benefits for a particular geographic area, a particular race, ethnicity, group of people (elderly, veterans, etc.)? For example:
 - Sub-optimum building structures
 - Access to fair financing
 - Contractor, resource availability
 - First cost
 - Trust
 - Language/culture/accessibility
 - Grid resiliency
 - Access to information
- Operating cost
- Digital divide
- Also consider unique market opportunities that the MTI can leverage, for example:
 - Bill assistance programs
 - Any other unique programs or services in the market that are designed to address ESJ-specific barriers
 - Federal funding.

Step 2: Notice and reflect

Take a moment to acknowledge what you have learned from the research.



- What assumptions did we make about the people who will be interacting/using the product, practice, or service? What did we learn about ourselves and our assumptions?
- What did we assume we know about the personas and their motivators? What do we know now?
- Have we learned anything new about how we are respectively situated to the users? (Institutional and economic power, relative to opportunity?)

Pause and reflect on your emotions and your new understanding. Feel free to share what your reflections revealed to you.

Intervention strategies for final logic model development

When prompting the team to discuss intervention strategies, remind the team to think about how you can bring an equity lens into our intervention strategies. Is there anything we have learned during our strategy tests or research that can influence or make us think of new intervention strategies?

Look at each market intervention strategy created by the team (not equity specific) and determine what will make the intervention strategies equitable and tailored to the needs of ESJ communities. Consider the following:

- How might you bring ESJ communities into policy formation?
- How can we shift power to ESJ communities? For example, will we report back to the communities on demonstration projects or create opportunities for them to be acknowledged and own their stories?
- How can the initiative best leverage CBOs as trusted sources in the communities?
- How can the initiative leverage existing informal networks?
- How can you make sure the right products are accessible in ESJ communities? How can solutions be tailored to the needs of ESJ communities to bring fairness?
- How can workforce development benefit ESJ communities?
- Are there unique barriers or challenges that need specific intervention strategies (e.g., blackouts in certain areas)?
- How do we ensure our initiatives do not cause negative impacts, such as bill increases, added cost of maintenance, environmental damage in communities within and outside the area in which they are adopted?
- Reflect on intervention strategies to make sure they do not have negative impacts that would harm communities (e.g., upgrades causing gentrification and displacement)? If they do, determine how they can be adjusted so those harms are mitigated.



Equity-focused outcomes for a final logic model

When prompting the team to talk through desired outcomes, guide the team to reflect on near, mid-, and long-term outcomes with an equity lens. Consider the following prompts:

- Look at each MTI outcome you have identified. Think about how each outcome can be fair. For example, an equitable outcome would be equal percentage of adoption in ESJ communities compared to non-ESJ communities.
- Are there unique outcomes for ESJ communities that are tied to the intervention strategies?
- Are there unique outcomes for rural communities that need to be captured?
- Are there unique workforce development outcomes specific to ESJ communities that need to be captured?

Equity-focused market progress indicators

When developing equity metrics for market progress indicators, consider the following principles:

- Metrics are equity outcome-based: they measure the ultimate outcome.
- They include feedback from the community.
- There are ways to measure potential negative impacts (even unintended).

Representative equity-aligned metrics include:

- Meaningful participation indices for information accessibility and ease of participation
- Metrics to track community participation in program design and implementation (CBO engagement/partnership)
- Percentage of eligible customers served by financing programs or financial support programs.

6 Applying an equity lens to MT strategy development

Intervention strategies represent the best opportunity to express how an MTI will specifically work within ESJ communities to deliver the benefits of our work. It is also part of the logic model development process referenced in the previous section. The guidance curated in this section is based on secondary research, such as tools and reports that are widely available and primary research through CalMTA listening sessions, Equity Sounding Board inputs, Strategy Test, and market transformation deployments. They are not one-step activities but could include outreach and research conducted throughout Phase II and Phase III of the MTI process. These resources are also linked to in Appendix B.



6.1 Supply-side strategies

6.1.1 Partner with manufacturers to improve product availability

Strategies for applying an equity lens to manufacturer engagement include:

- Through engagement with ESJ communities, identify specific needs and preferences for products and implementation. Make sure community input is a key part of product development and availability strategies. As an example, manufacturer engagement can seek to influence availability of products that are appropriate for lower panel capacity and do not require a panel upgrade, or work to support grid resiliency, such as a 120V induction stove with backup battery.
- Work with manufacturers to ensure efficient and cost-effective products are available to ESJ communities. This may include offering more basic products that prioritize core functionality and efficiency over premium features. As is common in MT work, manufacturer competition can eventually drive down cost.

6.1.2 Provide midstream or upstream incentives to reduce first cost

While MT does not typically provide incentives to end-use customers, offering midstream or upstream incentives for a limited time can accelerate adoption in the early stages of market deployment. The following considerations can position these incentives as a strategy to achieve equity goals:

- Implement targeted incentives for manufacturers who prioritize producing affordable and energy-efficient products for ESJ communities. Ensure these incentives are designed to benefit smaller, community-based manufacturers as well.
- Work with supply chain and retailers to make sure targeted products and practices are accessible within ESJ communities. If possible, incentivize sales and installation.

6.1.3 Develop workforce capability

Potential strategies for aligning MTI workforce development interventions with equity best practices include:

- Through supply chain partnerships, develop holistic, locally grounded training programs with wrap-around supports (career counseling, job placement assistance, childcare, and transportation) and partner with trades programs that prioritize reaching and supporting youth.
- Ensure that the training programs are designed to meet the specific needs of ESJ communities, offering skills that are in demand locally and providing pathways to reliable, higher-wage employment.



6.2 Demand-side strategies

6.2.1 Develop financing solutions/awareness to reduce first cost

In exploring interventions related to financing or access to capital, consider the following approaches:

- Investigate existing programs and foster the creation of new programs that could reduce the upfront cost of accessing MTI-targeted products or services for ESJ community members.
- Consider partnerships with financial institutions that have a history of serving ESJ communities with culturally sensitive outreach programs, both to increase awareness on financing options and to increase opportunities for granting loans and financing. Make sure the information about financing options are available in plain language as well as accessible in multiple languages. Examples of financing access include:
 - Create access to zero-interest financing options or eco-financing⁸ to support energy efficiency upgrades for ESJ communities. Create awareness to these financing options.
 - Ensure that zero-liability financing options where the person or community using the funds does not bear the financial risk if things do not go as planned. This is important if we are offering innovative technologies that might have field failures or a high cost of repair.
 - Make sure gap financing is available, and people are aware of it to cover any shortfalls, ensuring comprehensive financial support for energy efficiency projects.

6.2.2 Partner with utilities on rate design that reduces total cost of ownership/operating costs

When encouraging a switch from gas technologies to efficient electric alternatives, a key barrier is posed by the potential for higher utility bills and therefore increased operating costs. The following tactics can help reduce this barrier for ESJ communities and resource-constrained businesses:

- Supporting local and statewide efforts to create more equitable standard rate structures
- Creating specialized rate structures that encourage electrification for ESJ communities.
- Working with utilities to develop tariff structures that specifically address the energy burden on ESJ communities
- Ensuring these structures are transparent and include input from the community stakeholders.

⁸ <https://www.enervee.com/ecofinancing>

6.2.3 Identify compelling value propositions

Each community faces unique challenges and has different motivators. As such, the following strategies should be considered:

- It is important to conduct research to understand value propositions and motivators in ESJ communities. In our development of our market interventions, we make no assumptions about whether ESJ community members will be early adopters of practices, services, or products.
- Community needs and worldviews are different based on various lived experiences (for example, immigrant communities from various countries might have a different value proposition and motivators.)

6.2.4 Conduct demonstration projects in ESJ communities to build awareness of MTI benefits/business cases

- Demonstrating real-world examples of the benefits of a specific technology, practice, or service is essential to influencing adoption and building trust in ESJ communities. If relevant, conduct demonstration projects in ESJ communities to learn about barriers and opportunities specific to ESJ communities, understand early adopter motivators and build trust in the communities.
- Involve community members in the planning and implementation of demonstration projects to enhance engagement and ensure the projects address real community needs.
- Use demonstration projects to provide hands-on experience with technologies, build consumer interest and confidence, and showcase benefits of the product or practice, including non-energy benefits of health, comfort, etc.

6.2.5 Leverage trusted community partners

- Local communities are more likely to accept new information when it is delivered by a trusted source. Highlight success stories and testimonials from community members to build trust and provide relatable examples. Improve customer experience to make adoption/purchase easier. Other examples include:
 - Partnering with local community leaders and organizations as trusted sources for education and outreach. These partnerships enhance credibility and effectiveness, ensuring the strategies are well-received.
- Prepare clear and concise educational materials that use plain language, eliminate cultural barriers, and are translated into languages mostly spoken by the community members. Provide materials in multiple formats such as videos, infographics, and in-person workshops to cater to different preferences and literacy levels.



- Consider leveraging existing informal networks such as promotores/promotoras⁹ as trusted community partners. Informal networks are the “no-name” relationship systems through which communities share information, make decisions, and mobilize support. They often include elders, youth, families, and other trusted connectors. These networks are adaptive and fluid, and are built over time through personal, reciprocal relationships.

6.2.6 Multi-generational engagement

Take a multi-tier, multi-generational approach when engaging decision-makers, especially in immigrant communities. In households where multiple generations live together, decisions are often made collectively.

- Plan outreach and design information to reach each generation in age- and culturally appropriate ways.
- Map the digital divide across generations to identify leverage points. For example, parents and grandparents often rely on younger family members to access technology and navigate online information at home or in their mom-and-pop shops/businesses.
 - This can create an avenue for influence as messaging targeted at the younger generation, in formats they trust, can be transmitted organically to older family members, while influence can also flow in the opposite direction, as younger family members may shape household decisions based on the information they consume and share.

6.2.7 Bundling

In addition to reducing first cost through manufacturer competition and demand aggregation, layering other offers with MTI interventions can further mitigate the cost barrier faced by many ESJ community members. Consider the following strategies:

- Collaborate with other programs when possible. Explore opportunities to foster partnerships between programs to create bundled approaches that provide comprehensive solutions to ESJ communities.
- Work with CBOs to leverage federal and state funds as well as local programs, offering a one-stop-shop for community members to access various resources and services.

⁹ <https://chwcentral.org/resources/the-power-of-promotoras/>



Appendix A: Additional resources for research

Further reading

- [Essentials of Community Based Research](#): An introduction to participatory research.
- [Knowledge Mobilization Toolkit](#): A toolkit to support the mobilization of your results.
- [Network Sampling Approach](#): A recruitment approach to engage hard-to-reach audiences.
- [Native Women's Association of Canada Research Toolkit](#): Tools, activities, and guides to support decolonized research and ethical research relationships with Indigenous communities.
- [Liberatory Design Tools](#): A guide to support thoughtful, inclusive, and reflexive design processes.

Useful tools

- [Data Party Planning Guide](#): A guide for how to invite your participants into the data analysis process.
- [Sample forms for consent in research ethics](#): Examples of consent forms for ethical research practices.
- [Plain language writing survey](#): A survey to guide plain language writing.
- [Readability calculator](#): A tool to calculate the readability of a block of text.
- [Accessibility testing tools](#): Tools to measure the accessibility of a website or document.
- [Guide for Research Partnership Agreements](#): Guiding questions to develop strong research relationships.



Appendix B: Best practice resources for intervention strategies

Further reading

- [The Residential Retrofits for Energy Equity Playbook](#): A resource designed as a tool for program administrators at community-based organizations (CBO) and government offices to help ensure that building energy upgrade programs are community-led, easy to use, and able to accelerate equitable decarbonization. Residential Retrofits for Energy Equity (R2E2) is a partnership of the American Council for an Energy-Efficient Economy (ACEEE), Elevate, Emerald Cities Collaborative, and HR&A Advisors.
- [Advancing Equity in Utility Regulation](#): This report provides four perspectives on advancing equity in electric utility regulation, from representatives of energy justice and consumer organizations and a leading utility in this area. It was funded by the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE)'s Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy – Solar Energy Technologies Office and Office of Electricity - Energy Resilience Division as part of DOE's Grid Modernization Initiative.
- [Energy Equity Project Report](#): To bolster a just transition to cleaner, more resilient energy systems, the Energy Equity Project (EEP) developed the first standardized national framework for comprehensively measuring and advancing energy equity.
- Two reports summarizing CalMTA's key findings from listening sessions with ESJ community representatives can be found on our website:
 - [Listening Sessions with ESJ Communities](#)
 - [June 2024 ESJ Community Listening Sessions Key Findings and Follow-Up Action](#)

