

Working with a Community Accountability Board to Co-Design Equitable Building Performance Standards

Putting Policy in Action: Quick-Reference Guide

Working with CABs: Remember the Three R's



1. Representation

Members of a CAB should be comprised of residents living in the jurisdiction and people from communities affected by the climate crisis and systemic inequities.



2. Resources

Committed investment is key to a CAB's success; jurisdictions should provide compensation for members' time and tools to bolster the efforts of the group.



3. Responsibilities

CABs must be empowered to recommend material changes to policy and supportive programs.

When implementing a [building performance standard \(BPS\)](#), jurisdictions must prioritize community collaboration and ownership. A Community Accountability Board (CAB) works with policymakers and administrators to review a BPS' impact on frontline and fenceline communities — those that experience the first and worst impacts of climate change. As building infrastructure can be a major contributor to inequity (i.e. lack of affordable housing, urban heat islands, poor indoor air quality) CABs are crucial as state and local governments tackle their building-related climate goals. CABs make recommendations that can reduce and repair historical inequities to the implementing government department, Building Performance Improvement Board (BPIB), and Technical Committee. All of these roles are fully described in our [BPS Implementation Guide](#). This CAB primer should be used in conjunction with the full guide.

Representation of Community Members

When nominating candidates, a Mayor or Governor should gather input from local community-based organizations (CBOs) to determine potential members. Ideally, these CBOs were consulted throughout the policy development process and have strong ties to frontline communities. For example, members of the CAB can be engaged in environmental justice work and have relevant lived experience; be affiliated with CBOs; or are owners of small and local businesses located in or serving frontline communities.

A Note on Expertise

It's important to broaden who has historically been considered an expert on climate solutions and how the status quo assumptions on who holds 'expertise' has further marginalized people. Frontline communities have become experts on the climate crisis because they not only know what it's like to experience its consequences better than anyone, but also what solutions best work on the ground.

Resources for Jurisdictions and CABs

Jurisdictions must go beyond simply establishing a CAB. They should provide members compensation for their time, grant appropriate authority, offer access to requisite data and tools, and make connections to relevant people and partner organizations. [See the last page for example organizations, case studies, and suggested tools.](#)

Responsibilities of a CAB

Advise on BPIB and Technical Committee members

The CAB will advise the government lead on the selection of members to the Building Performance Improvement Board (BPIB). This promotes equitable representation on the BPIB and gives frontline communities a say in who advises on the technical aspects of implementation, an important role as these decisions will inevitably have equity implications.

Evaluate equity impacts

Accurate qualitative and quantitative data are key as CABs develop their recommendations. Every three years, CABs should publish a report that analyzes the impact of a BPS on equity and climate goals. CABs can evaluate the BPS on several metrics, such as:

- Compliance rates for buildings that serve frontline and fenceline communities
- Proportion of incentive dollars flowing to buildings serving frontline and fenceline communities vs. total amount distributed
- Amount of alternative compliance payments (ACP) and how these were distributed among property types and locations
- Impact of workforce development programs such as the number of recruits, graduates, and placements from frontline and fenceline communities

Help equitably distribute effort and investment

There are a number of ways that CABs can help the implementing department ensure just processes are at the root of BPS.

- Co-develop incentive and financing programs that prioritize communities and neighborhoods that need assistance as they pursue BPS compliance.
- Direct funds collected from alternative compliance payments to support performance improvements in buildings such as local shelters, nonprofit agencies, and houses of worship that will benefit frontline communities.
- Ensure that [high-performance building hubs](#) provide accessible services for resource- and capacity-constrained building owners.

Host community accountability meetings

Regular feedback and transparent reporting are important accountability measures. At a minimum, public meetings should be held annually. If a jurisdiction is moving on an accelerated timeline, more frequent meetings may be necessary. These meetings should be attended by several representatives from the CAB, BPIB, implementing department, and Technical Committee to ensure accurate information can be relayed to community members. To lower participation barriers and increase meaningful engagement, jurisdictions should provide ample notice of meetings, including in print format, and should provide options for virtual attendance, closed captioning, translation, and interpretation.

Provide recommendations

Every community will have different needs when it comes to implementing equitable BPS. Population demographics, jurisdictional budgets, and community priorities will influence what the CAB's recommendations are trying to accomplish. Examples of goals an empowered and well-resourced CAB might pursue could include the following:

- Prevent BPS from contributing to the displacement of commercial or residential tenants in frontline communities
- Advance community priorities related to the built environment such as energy burden, indoor air quality, and resilience
- Reduce economic burdens on covered properties which serve members of frontline communities and that are in need of financial assistance
- Increase the share of contracts and jobs resulting from the BPS that go to members of frontline communities
- Establish funding, financing, and turnkey technical assistance programs
- Create equitable workforce development initiatives
- Promote [high-road contracting](#) (a business standard of productivity and efficiency rooted in environmental sustainability, livable wages, and shared prosperity and inclusion)
- Advance community priorities at the public utility commission or legislature levels

Resources and Tools for CABs

Putting Policy in Action: Quick-Reference Guide

Frameworks

- [Just Transition](#)
- [Process Guide for City-Community Collaboration](#)

Organizations

- [Solid Ground Community Accountability Council \(CAC\)](#)
- [Washington Health Equity Environmental Justice Task Force](#)

Equity Impact Reports and Case Studies

- [Environmental Justice Task Force Recommendations for Prioritizing EJ in Washington State Government](#)
- [Fighting Redlining & Climate Change with Transformative Climate Communities: Case Study – East Oakland](#)
- [Los Angeles Building Decarbonization: Tenant Impact and Recommendations](#)
- [Monterey County: From Disenfranchisement to Voice, Power, and Participation](#)
- [Oakland 2030 Equitable Climate Action Plan](#)
- [Portland Zero Cities Project Report](#)
- [Seattle Racial and Social Equity Index Map \(ArcGIS Credentials Required\)](#)
- [Vulnerability to Climate Change in Denver](#)

Data & Analysis Tools

- [Community Indicators Consortium](#)
- [EPA's EJScreen Environmental Justice Screening and Mapping Tool](#)
- [Greenlink Equity Map](#)
- [National Equity Atlas & Racial Equity Data Lab](#)
- [Partners for Collaborative Change](#)