

## Established Examples of Frontline Communities

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### [NAACP, Advancing Resistance and Resilience in Climate Adaption Action Toolkit](#)

**Frontline communities** are groups of people who are directly affected by climate change and inequity in society at higher rates than people who have more power in society. They are “on the frontlines” of the problem. For example, people of color, people who are low-income, who have disabilities, who are children or elderly, who are LGBTQ, who identify as women, etc. have less advantages and access to resources in our society than other people. In the context of climate change, frontline communities’ health, income, and access to resources is less than people who have social privilege (people who are white, upper middle-class or upper-class, able-bodied, in middle age ranges, heterosexual, non-trans, etc.).

In other words, people who experience oppression because of race, income, gender, sexual orientation, disability, gender identity, age, etc. are more likely to have less resources and protections in our society in general and even less access to resources and protections not only to adapt to our changing climate but also to pass policies and legislation that are fair and culturally significant.

### [Adaption Clearing House \(powered by Georgetown Climate Center\)](#)

FRONTLINE COMMUNITIES

RURAL     AT-RISK OF DISPLACEMENT     SENIOR CITIZENS     NON-NATIVE ENGLISH SPEAKERS

HOMELESS     LOW-INCOME     PEOPLE OF COLOR

OUTDOOR WORKERS/CLIMATE VULNERABLE LABOR     INCARCERATED POPULATIONS

RENTERS/SUBSIDIZED HOUSING TENANT     CHRONICALLY-ILL/HOSPITALIZED

SINGLE-PARENT HOUSEHOLDS     PERSON WITH DISABILITY     SMALL BUSINESS OWNERS

IMMIGRANTS     UNEMPLOYED/UNDEREMPLOYED     YOUTH

### [Georgetown Climate Center, Equitable Adaption Legal & Policy Toolkit](#)

Frontline communities include people who are both highly exposed to climate risks (because of the places they live and the projected changes expected to occur in those places) and have fewer resources, capacity, safety nets, or political power to respond to those risks (e.g. these people may lack insurance or savings, inflexible jobs, low levels of influence over elected officials, etc.). Frontline communities are those that experience the “first and worst” consequences of climate change. These are often communities of color whose communities were placed in the least desirable areas of cities, often with high exposure to climate impacts like flooding. These can be low-income communities, whose neighborhoods often lack basic infrastructure to support them

and who will be increasingly vulnerable as the climate changes. But these are also communities of people who immigrated to the United States, including legal immigrants, refugees, and undocumented immigrants who may or may not be native English speakers. Frontline communities include but are not limited to:

- People of color
- Low income
- Immigrants
- Those at-risk of displacement
- Senior citizens
- Populations experiencing homelessness
- Outdoor workers/climate-vulnerable labor
- Incarcerated populations
- Renters/Subsidized housing tenant
- Unemployed/Underemployed
- Youth
- Persons with disability and
- Chronically-ill/Hospitalized people.

### WHO ARE “IMPACTED COMMUNITIES”?

*From Maine Equity Assessment*

- People living with low income
- Social/demographic communities – black, indigenous people, people of color, older people, youth, people with limited English proficiency, formerly incarcerated people, LGBTQ+ people, recent immigrants and undocumented people, people experiencing homelessness, people with disabilities, people with ongoing health concerns
- Geographic communities – rural populations, proximity to rivers or coastal waters, those dependent on natural resources, and/or those living in seasonal dependent areas?

*Definitions from Thrive/National Green New Deal Network*

- Communities facing environmental injustice including, but not limited to:
  - Communities that are located nearest to existing areas of grave environmental pollution and degradation.
  - Communities that bear burdens of negative public-health effects
  - Communities whose lands are the site of polluting industries, waste dumps, and resource extraction.
  - Communities that are hit the hardest by climate change impacts and disasters.
  - Communities that have been excluded or harmed by racist and discriminatory policies which have resulted in economic and health disparities
  - Communities from land-based cultures and food subsistence cultures experiencing ecosystem disruption and devastation.
  - Communities facing relocation and resettlement resulting from climate change and impacts to the environment and ecosystem.
  - Communities that possess certain socioeconomic criteria, or comprise high-concentrations of low- and moderate- income and low- and moderate- wealth households, including—
    - Black/African-American, Brown, Latinx, Asian, Pacific Islander, and Indigenous communities and Native nations;
    - deindustrialized communities and communities in transition.

- Priority groups. Groups that have been excluded from economic opportunities, including low-income and low-wealth—
  - Most Impacted Persons;
    - Black/African-American, Brown, Latinx, Asian, Pacific Islander, and Indigenous communities and Native nations;
    - Immigrants, regardless of immigration status;
    - Formerly incarcerated individuals;
    - Women;
    - LGBTQIAP+ individuals;
    - Disabled and chronically ill people; and
    - Young people and elders.
    - Recent graduates of the foster care system