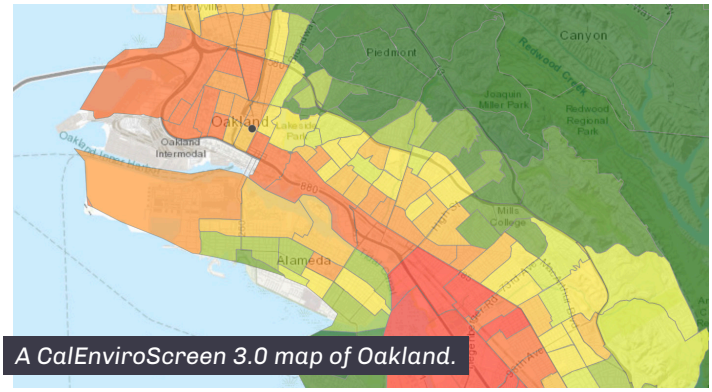
Identifying Disadvantaged Communities



A CalEnviroScreen 3.0 map of Oakland.

Disadvantaged communities (DACs) should be identified at the very beginning of a process to develop a General Plan. Community members should also be involved in the identification of DACs, since they are directly impacted by and have knowledge of EJ issues.

This process can also include ground-truthing, which is "a community fact-finding process where residents supplement technical information with local knowledge in order to better inform policy and project decisions."

Defining a Disadvantaged Community

1. An area identified by the California Environmental Protection Agency as located within the top 25% highest scoring census tracts in the California Communities Environmental Health Screening Tool (CalEnviroScreen or CES).
2. "A low-income area that is disproportionately affected by environmental pollution and other hazards that can lead to negative health effects, exposure, or environmental degradation."

Local governments, planners, and community stakeholders may also choose to adjust or modify how they use CalEnviroScreen in order to fit their particular rural, suburban, or urban communities when identifying DACs.

Ways to Use and Adjust CalEnviroScreen for Contextual Needs

Though CalEnviroScreen provides a pre-calculated composite score, the tool's data is available online and can be used in different ways to be more appropriate in local contexts. A number of options are available for adjusting CalEnviroScreen and the Toolkit recommends the ones outlined below.

Option A: Customizing Indicators

Customize the number or types of CES indicators used to identify DACs. This approach is useful in areas where certain environmental indicators in the tool are not as prevalent.

Option B: Regional Rankings

CES data can be used to generate regional or local rankings instead of the tool's default statewide ranking. This technique can identify highly impacted areas within a region or locality that may not necessarily be captured through a statewide ranking.

Option C: Custom Percentage Threshold

Local governments and planners may choose to select a different percentage of CES census tracts when determining the threshold for defining DACs in their area. Examples:

- A jurisdiction that does not have many census tracts in the top 25% of CES could use an expanded percentage threshold (e.g., the top 30% or 35% highest scoring census tracts in the state or region).
- A jurisdiction that contains a majority of top 25% CES census tracts can choose a more narrow focus (e.g., the top 10% or 15% highest scoring census tracts).

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Full toolkit: **https://caleja.org/2017/09/sb-1000-toolkit-release/**

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Option D: Integrating Other Tools or Indicators

Local governments and planners may choose to use the top 25% (or another percentage) of CES census tracts as a baseline, but may also overlay another indicator or screening tools (e.g., Healthy Places Index, air district data, etc.)

Screening for DACs through Income and Pollution Burden

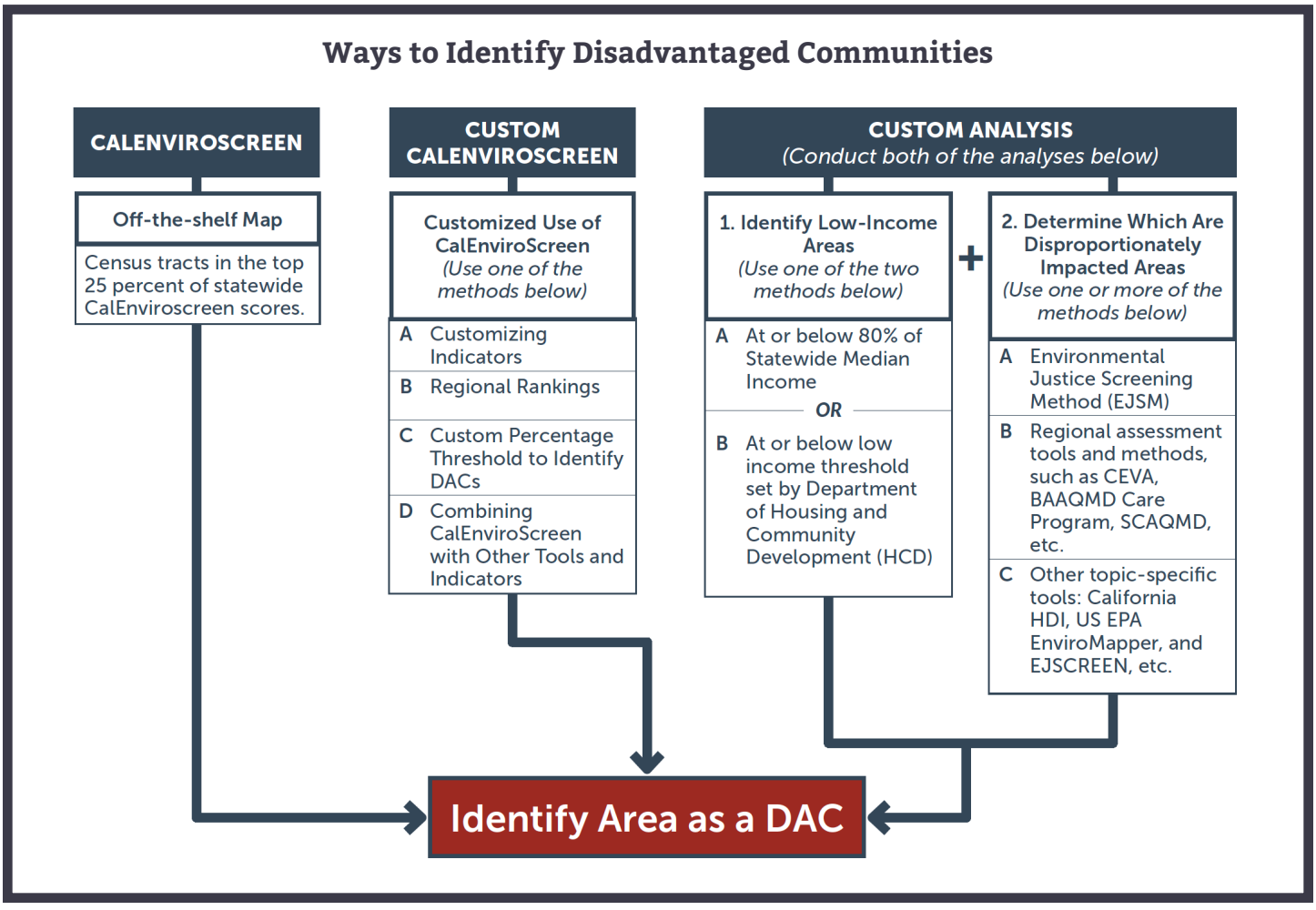
SB 1000 provides local governments with some flexibility to define DACs by identifying areas that are both low-income and disproportionately affected by environmental pollution and other hazards that can lead to negative health effects, exposure, and/or environmental degradation.

Methods for Identifying Low-Income Areas

Low-income areas can be identified by statewide median income (at or below 80%) or by state income limits defined by the California Department of Housing and Community Development.

Tools for Identifying Areas Disproportionately Affected by Environmental Pollution and Other Hazards

- *Environmental Justice Screening Method* (Statewide, Comprehensive)
- *U.S. EPA Environmental Justice Screening and Mapping Tool* (Statewide, Comprehensive)
- *California Healthy Places Index* (Issue Specific: Social Equity)
- *BAAQMD Community Air Risk Evaluation Program* (Regional: San Francisco Bay Area)
- *Cumulative Environmental Vulnerabilities Assessment* (Regional: San Joaquin Valley and Coachella Valley)
- *SCAG Sustainability Maps and Tools* (Regional: Southern California)
- *SCAQMD MATES IV Study* (Regional: South Coast, Issue Specific: Air Quality)



Check out the full toolkit for more information: **https://caleja.org/2017/09/sb-1000-toolkit-release/**