

Memorandum

PREPARED FOR: CT Energy Efficiency Board (EEB)

PREPARED BY: ILLUME Advising, LLC

DATE: February 17, 2023

TITLE: Equity Energy Efficiency Board (EEB) DEI Consultant 2023 Work Plan

This memo summarizes the tasks that the DEI Consultant Team (“the Team”) anticipates completing in our 2023 engagement. Here, we provide descriptions and cost estimates for our core work and offer additional tasks that the EEB may find valuable to act on the recommendations outlined in the DEI Consultant Team’s Preliminary Equity Assessment.

If the EEB needs additional time to define priorities for 2023, we recommend that, as a preliminary step, the EEB approve Tasks 1, 2, and 3. This will ensure the Team is able to attend Committee meetings and keep work moving forward in Q1 2023.

Notable Changes

Note that this plan was updated on February 9, 2023 to incorporate feedback the Board shared during the February 8 EEB Meeting. The table below illustrates the notable changes we made to the workplan after incorporating feedback from the EEB.

TASK	EXPLANATION OF CHANGE
<i>Overall budget</i>	Shifted the \$ amount of Task 1 (\$24,780) and moved dollars for Task 6 (\$12,000 in 2023, \$38,000 in 2024) to accommodate the final approved budget for the DEI Consultants: \$112,780.
<i>Task 4: Facilitate Effective Decision-making: Equity Subcommittee</i>	Removed this task
<i>Task 1. EEB Board Meetings and Committee Meetings</i>	Added hours (new assumption: 10 hours/month) as we will use those meetings to facilitate decision-making on key DEI decisions. Added time accounts for attending portions of additional meetings and preparation for meetings.
<i>Task 1. EEB Board Meetings and Committee Meetings</i>	Added language that ILLUME can accommodate the cost of in-person travel into this task should the EEB deem it prudent, and that we would work strategically with the Technical Consultants to determine where we can find efficiencies in meeting attendance (i.e., attending portions of Board and Committee meetings rather than full meetings) to accommodate the cost of travel.

<i>Task 2. Ad Hoc Technical Consulting</i>	Added examples of the types of ad hoc activities our team could support; we pulled these examples from the RFP
<i>[see explanation]</i>	<p>Changed the order of tasks to reflect prioritization we heard from the EEB:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Task 4. Define the “What”: Equity Goal Development</i> (formerly Task 6) 2. <i>Task 5. Articulate the Near-Term “How:” 2024 PMI Equity Metric Development</i> (still Task 5) 3. <i>Task 6. Define the “Who:” Target Populations Definition Development</i> (formerly Task 7)
<i>Task 4. Define the “What”: Equity Goal Development</i>	Changed the activities to accommodate more goal-defining support from ILLUME at a slightly lighter lift than was initially outlined Pathway 2 of the workplan (and lower budget – \$26,000 as opposed to \$32,000 – as a result)
<i>Task 6. Define the “Who:” Target Populations Definition Development</i>	Brought Activity 1 of this task (totaling \$12,000) into 2023 to account for 2023 budget limitations; Activities 2 and 3 (totaling \$38,000) would occur in 2024
<i>Task 8. Community Stakeholder Engagement: Focus Groups or Interviews</i>	Added a budget range (\$20,000 - \$48,000) to illustrate the variety of ways in which we can solicit community stakeholder feedback.

Overview

The table below summarizes our proposed set of 2023 tasks. Each task in the table is hyperlinked to allow easy navigation to the task overview in this document.

We recommend the following tasks as part of our core 2023 DEI Consultant Team role. These tasks total \$112,780 representing 100% of our allocated budget for 2023. Please note that all of these tasks are intended to fall within the existing authority of DEEP, the EEB, and C&LM programs.

2023 TASKS	ESTIMATE
1. EEB Board Meetings and Committee Meetings	\$24,780
2. Ad Hoc Technical Consulting	\$15,000
3. Project Administration	\$18,000
4. Define the “What”: Equity Goal Development	\$26,000
5. Articulate the Near-Term “How:” 2024 PMI Equity Metric Development	\$17,000

6. Define the “Who:” Target Populations Definition Development [activity 1] \$12,000

2023 budget covers Activity 1; this task will need to continue into 2024 or the EEB may consider whether 2024 funding can be moved into 2023 to move this task further along in 2023.

TOTAL	\$112,780
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The tasks we outline for 2023 will set the EEB up to pursue the following tasks in 2024. Additionally, should the EEB wish to move any of these tasks forward in 2023, the EEB might explore whether 2024 funding could be moved into 2023 to accommodate any of these tasks (or a sub-set of activities within these tasks).

2024 TASKS FOR CONSIDERATION	ESTIMATE
6. Define the “Who:” Target Populations Definition Development [<i>activities 2 and 3</i>]	\$38,000
7. Articulate the Longer-Term “How:” Equity Indicator Framework Development	\$75,000
8. Community Stakeholder Engagement: Focus Groups or Interviews [optional]	\$20,000-\$54,000
TOTAL	\$133,000 – 167,000

2023 Core Tasks

In this section, we document a set of recommended core 2023 tasks for the EEB’s consideration.

1. EEB Board Meetings and Committee Meetings

Budget: \$24,780 (assumes 10 hours/month)

Timeline: Q1-Q4 2023

How this task will support the EEB: Several key players (e.g., the EEB, the DEEP, the Companies, the Technical Consultants, and other community stakeholders) will shape how Connecticut’s conservation and load management (C&LM) programs center and advance equity across the state. When it comes to equity, it is critical that these players have an aligned vision around their goals (the **who** and the **what**), their approach (the **how**), and their implementation plan (the **when**). By attending these meetings, the ILLUME Team will support effective coordination across key players.

Note that the volume of meetings taxes ILLUME’s resources – and, by extension, the budget. To preserve budget, ILLUME recommends working with the EEB to define which meetings are critical for ILLUME to attend to meet our other priorities for the year (see the rest of this workplan). This budget assumes the DEI team will

dedicate six hours per month to meetings; some of these meetings will include two ILLUME staff. *Should the EEB wish ILLUME to attend all EEB Board Meetings and Committee Meetings, extra budget will be required.*

Activities: One member of the ILLUME Team will attend select board and committee meetings; ILLUME will work with the other Technical Consultants to develop a schedule of meetings to attend that align with key decision-making milestones. Our team will document key meetings we plan to attend – and key decisions that need to be made during those meetings to move planned DEI objectives forward – and share this with the EEB to ensure that everyone is in alignment.

As discussed during the February 8 EEB meeting, ILLUME proposes that existing Committee meetings be used to make key decisions related to DEI work in 2023. The Technical Consultants will support ILLUME in allocating time during existing Committee meetings (e.g., Residential, C&I) to facilitate this work. Where appropriate, we may attend portions of Committee meetings (i.e., not the whole meeting).

We want to underscore that this process will require rigorous input and engagement from the EEB, DEEP, and the Companies. Internal buy-in and coordination among CT stakeholders will be required to keep these activities moving forward.

The ILLUME team will complete the following activities for each EEB Board and Committee meeting:

1. *Meeting preparation:* Preparing materials, progress updates, and discussion points
2. *Meeting agenda:* Coordinate with the EEB, Technical Consultants, and Executive Secretary in identifying agenda items
3. *Meeting attendance and facilitation:* Attending select EEB Board and Committee meetings (or portions of meetings) and facilitating portions of meetings to enable decision-making
4. [as needed] *Follow-up on action items:* Managing action items where ILLUME can support effective coordination across the EEB and other key stakeholders

During the February 9th EEB Meeting, the EEB discussed the possibility that in-person travel may be required for the 2024 Planning Meeting. ILLUME can accommodate the cost of in-person travel into this task budget should the EEB deem it prudent. To do so, we would work strategically with the Technical Consultants to determine where we can find efficiencies in meeting attendance (i.e., attending portions of Board and Committee meetings rather than full meetings) to accommodate the cost of travel.

Deliverable(s): [as needed] advance reading material, meeting agenda coordination, follow-up action items

2. Ad Hoc Technical Consulting

Budget: \$15,000 (assumes 5.5 hours/month)

Timeline: Q1-Q4 2023

How this task will support the EEB: The State of Connecticut is building a strategy to advance equity in C&LM programs in a complex, ever-changing, and nuanced environment. In ILLUME’s experience working on similar efforts with other clients (New York State, Maine, ComEd), we understand that there is no concrete ‘roadmap’ – unique needs around coordination, problem-solving, and prioritization will inevitably arise. We recommend proactively earmarking budget for allow the ILLUME team to respond to these emergent needs.

Activities: The ILLUME team will leave the activities for ad hoc technical consulting open-ended, as we would like to be able to respond to emergent needs as they arise. This task might include the following activities (as outlined in the RFP):

1. Present on progress and topics of interest as requested by the EEB during monthly meetings
2. Consult on the development of the C&LM Plan Update, which the utilities will submit for DEEP approval in November
3. Advise on the development of the utilities' Communities RFP outreach strategy and additional outreach strategies
4. Develop systems to track energy efficiency supplier diversity and metrics to promote a diverse supplier pool.

Deliverable(s): Dependent on emergent needs

3. Project Administration

Budget: \$18,000 (assumes 30 hours of workplan development; assumes 4 hours/month of project management/admin support)

Timeline: Q1-Q4 2023

How this task will support the EEB: This task ensures that the EEB and the ILLUME team have up-front alignment on the core roles and responsibilities of the ILLUME team in 2023. It also ensures that ILLUME can deliver on the EEB's expectations and keep our work on schedule, within scope, and within budget.

Activities: This task consists of 2023 workplan development (this document) and, as needed, revisions to the workplan after receiving guidance from the EEB. It also covers project management activities that do not fall directly into one of the other task areas, including:

- Resource planning,
- Budget oversight
- Contractual activities
- Regular check-ins with the Technical Consultant team

Deliverable(s): 2023 workplan (this document), monthly invoice

4. Define the “What”: Equity Goal Development

Addresses: Recommendation 3: *Formalize a Definition of, and Goal For, Equity in C&LM Programs that Aligns with E3's Vision and Goals.*

Budget: \$26,000

Timeline: Q1-Q3 2023

How this task will support the EEB: To delineate the EEB’s commitment to equity more clearly – and document how it will meet this commitment – we recommend the EEB clearly establish its goal or “north star” for equity. This goal should clearly articulate how customers that currently experience the greatest disparities in costs, service, and systems burdens will be moved closer to optimal experiences.

It is important to distinguish the EEB’s organizational equity goal from the state’s equity vision; that is, the EEB must establish what it is within its sphere of influence and develop its goal accordingly. Creating a C&LM-specific equity goal will require committed leadership and sustained effort and will require that the EEB coordinate closely with other actors in Connecticut. This equity goal would then inform those working at the organization-wide level to ensure alignment and mitigate the risk of developing conflicting visions.

Defining an equity goal – the **what** – is the essential first step for the EEB to develop a set of equity benchmarks by which it will measure progress. We recommend that key decisions for this task be made at existing Committee meetings.

Activities: The ILLUME team will complete the following activities:

1. **Support decisionmakers to reach agreement on key considerations:** To facilitate goal development, ILLUME will clearly detail document the key considerations that need to be made by the EEB. In the 2022 Preliminary Equity Assessment, ILLUME outlined two key considerations for DEEP and the EEB to align on as they formalize a definition of, and goal for, equity in C&LM programs:
 - a. Determine whether to expand the definition of equity in Connecticut’s C&LM programs beyond cost-benefit parity: *to begin discussion during the March EEB meeting*
 - b. If CL&M programs expand the definition of equity to achieve E3 goals, identify DEEP and the EEB’s primary objective in achieving equity, and what form or forms of equity will be set as targets for CL&M programs.

The EEB and DEEP need to reach alignment on these considerations before developing its C&LM equity goal, as the outcomes of these considerations will, in turn, shape the goal. ILLUME will map out a menu of options for CT decisionmakers to consider as they reach agreement on these key considerations and facilitate discussion during Committee meetings to reach consensus. Where relevant, ILLUME will also document how other states and jurisdictions have approached equity goal development, particularly in respect to the two key considerations listed above (*a.* and *b.*).

2. **Draft the equity goal:** Informed by the discussion and decisions reached in Activity 1, IILLUME will work with the EEB to draft two to three iterations of an equity goal. This will include:
 - a. *Pre-work* – ILLUME will distribute brainstorming pre-work to the EEB to complete that that documents key ‘ingredients’ of the EEB’s equity vision; ILLUME will then synthesize pre-work results.
 - b. *Draft equity goals* – Informed by the results of the pre-work, ILLUME will lead the development of 2-3 draft equity goals, to be presented at Committee meetings for feedback. As desired, the EEB can share these draft goals more widely among internal Connecticut stakeholders (e.g.,

DEEP, the Governor’s Council on Climate Change) to receive feedback. ILLUME will facilitate the process to receive and incorporate feedback.

- c. *Incorporate feedback* ILLUME will review and organize feedback from the EEB and from other internal stakeholders.
3. **Finalize the equity goal:** Informed by the pre-work, the draft equity goals, and the feedback on the draft equity goals, ILLUME will develop the final C&LM-centric equity goal for the EEB. We recommend formally sharing the finalized goal with other key stakeholders and clearly documenting the process the EEB took to develop it; ILLUME can facilitate this communication.

Note: Given timing constraints, we recommend that the EEB develop its equity goal internally (i.e., without public participation and/or stakeholder feedback). Should the EEB wish to integrate stakeholder feedback into this process, extra budget will be required.

Deliverable(s): [core] memo documenting key considerations and options; draft and final C&LM equity goals

5. Articulate the Near-Term “How:” 2024 PMI Equity Metric Development

Budget: \$17,000

Timeline: Q1-Q3 2023

Addresses: Recommendation 4: *Consider Updates to the 2024 PMI Equity Metrics, While Also Building the Foundation for a Long-term Equity Indicator Framework*

How this task will support the EEB: Building on the preliminary equity indicator assessment presented to the EEB at the beginning of 2023, ILLUME will provide technical assistance to identify and prioritize new or modified secondary PMI equity metrics for 2024.

This will help the EEB articulate **how** it will advance equity through C&LM programs and **when** it expects to see results. Benchmarks – that is, measurable indicators by which C&LM programs will measure their progress toward equitable service – will help the EEB define where it wants to make progress and will provide scaffolding to measure that progress. In tandem, we understand that the EEB is exploring making updates to interim performance management incentive (PMI) equity metrics in 2024. In the activities below, we propose how the EEB might respond to the near-term need to refine PMI equity metrics and develop a more holistic, long-term set of equity benchmarks to measure C&LM programs’ progress in advancing equity.

As in Preliminary Equity Assessment, we use the following terms to describe two types of equity indicators that we will explore:

1. *PMI equity metrics:* Indicators that rise to the level of a Performance Metric Incentive (PMI), following the nomenclature used in Connecticut.
2. *Benchmarks:* Indicators that are used to assess the progress made by a program or set of programs in achieving its equity goals.

This activity describes how ILLUME will support the EEB to update 2024 secondary PMI equity metrics – one for the residential sector, and one for the commercial and industrial (C&I) sector. We discuss the development of a long-term equity indicator framework in **7. Articulate the Longer-Term “How:” Equity Indicator Framework Development**. The development of a longer-term equity framework will require additional budget, which is why we have divided these into two discrete tasks.

Activities: The ILLUME team will complete the following activities:

1. **Work with the EEB, DEEP, and the Companies to define potential secondary PMI equity metrics (residential and C&I) for consideration.** Working from the preliminary PMI equity metrics presented to the EEB in January 2023 and the secondary PMI equity metrics outlined in the 2022-2024 C&LM Plan, ILLUME will conduct a review of potential PMI equity metrics to identify data needs, data availability, and measurement approaches. We will also document feasibility (i.e., the ease by which metrics can be measured and tracked). We will document potential metrics in an Excel workbook. In this process, we will also identify opportunities to align benchmarks with state or federal efforts.
2. **Incorporate preliminary community stakeholder feedback.** Working from the preliminary set of equity metrics identified in Activity 1, ILLUME will conduct up to five one-hour phone interviews with community stakeholders (e.g., community groups) who represent vulnerable communities in CT. Through these interviews, we will gather input to understand what benchmarks are most meaningful to them and their communities. ILLUME will work with members at Committee meetings to create a list of community stakeholders with whom we should conduct outreach.¹ We will develop a high-level topic guide to organize these interviews but expect each conversation to be tailored to the respondent and their area of expertise/influence.
In addition, our team will conduct 1-2 interviews with the team at University of Connecticut who developed the Environmental Justice Map, as well as the team at DEEP responsible for creating the EJ Communities definition. The purposes of these interviews will be to understand the community stakeholder feedback they received through each respective process.
3. **Facilitate decision-making with the EEB, DEEP, and the Companies to finalize updated 2024 secondary PMI equity metrics for the November 1 filing deadline.** Working in concert with the members at Committee meetings, ILLUME will help the EEB to finalize updated 2024 secondary PMI equity metrics – one for the residential sector, and one for the C&I sector. These metrics will:
 - a. *Reflect the needs of priority populations:* Align with the needs of priority populations, as articulated by priority populations (defined by learnings in Activity 2).
 - b. *Can be measured using existing data:* Leverage data the EEB, DEEP, and/or the Companies already collect and/or have access to.

¹ Note that ILLUME adopted a similar approach with New York State, where we worked closely with the Climate Justice Working Group (CJWG) to understand what benefit indicators would be most meaningful to stakeholders – and used this information to define the benefit indicators it would use to measure progress toward the vision of the Climate Leadership and Protection Act. As the EEB looks to develop more equity benchmarks (beyond the two PMI equity metrics), we strongly recommend a much more rigorous community stakeholder engagement and public participation process.

- c. *Reflect the larger goal:* Tie directly to the equity goal the EEB is trying to achieve through C&LM programs.
- d. *Are simple and achievable:* Complexity can be the deterrent of progress. Working with the Equity Working Group, we will aim to create benchmarks that C&LM programs can accurately measure, track, and that are reasonably achievable.

Our ability to achieve these objectives are contingent on timeline and expedient decision-making on an equity goal and priority populations. For each equity benchmark, ILLUME will work with the EEB and the Technical Consultants to develop a reasonable threshold that C&LM programs will be expected to cumulatively meet.

Deliverable(s): Workbook of potential PMI equity metrics; final set of 2024 secondary PMI equity metrics – one for the C&I sector, and one for the residential sector

6. Define the “Who:” Target Populations Definition Development (Activity 1)

Budget: \$12,000 for Activity 1 in 2023 (+ \$38,000 for Activities 2 and 3 in 2024)

Timeline: Q2-Q3 2023 and continuing into 2024

Addresses: Recommendation 2: *Identify a Unified Definition of Priority Populations*

How this task will support the EEB: To drive equity in C&LM programs, the EEB and DEEP need to have a clear understanding of whose needs they are trying to address (the **who**) in both the residential and C&I sectors. Having a clear definition of priority populations will enable the EEB to develop approaches to advance equity – and metrics to measure progress.

Activities: After discussion with the Board during the February 8 EEB meeting, we understand that the Board would like to pursue the more rigorous approach to identify priority populations; this approach is reflected in the revised activities below. Note that, given budget constraints, our team can complete Activity 1 in 2023; we suggest continuing the remaining activities in 2024. **Should the EEB wish to move this task along, the EEB might consider whether 2024 funding can be moved into 2023, or whether additional funding streams are available.**

In 2023, our team can:

1. **Identify and benchmark the definitions and screening tools used to identify priority populations, both at the federal and state level.** Our team will review relevant federal (e.g., Justice 40, US EPA’s EJScreen), state (e.g., CT EJ Map), and utility approaches and screening tools to define and identify priority populations. To do so, we will build on our 2022 work and, as needed, conduct 1:1 outreach with internal stakeholders to ensure we have the most up-to-date information about Connecticut-specific approaches. Our team would then benchmark indicators used across all screening tools, both at the geographic and individual level.

Given budget constraints, ILLUME recommends continuing this work in 2024. We outline recommended 2024 tasks in the next section.

2024 Tasks

In this section, we document a set of 2024 tasks for the EEB's consideration. Should the EEB wish to move any of these tasks forward in 2023 (and additional funding is made available in 2023), ILLUME would be happy to do so.

6. Define the “Who:” Target Populations Definition Development (Activities 2 and 3)

Budget: \$38,000 for Activities 2 and 3 in 2024 (+\$12,000 for Activity 1 in 2023)

Timeline: Q1 and Q2 2024

Addresses: Recommendation 2: *Identify a Unified Definition of Priority Populations*

In 2024, ILLUME will continue the work started in 2023 through:

2. **Map out the priority populations identified at the geographic level in Activity 1 and how they overlay across Connecticut.** ILLUME would use the results of the benchmarking in Activity 1 to visually map out how current priority population definitions identify communities and customers. DEEP and the EEB may also be interested in overlaying other data – such as grid system reliability and siting (relative to priority populations) – to better understand and identify priority populations. *Note: ILLUME completed a similar mapping exercise for ComEd, which you can [view here](#).*
3. **Work with the EEB to define priority populations for 1) the residential sector and 2) the commercial and industrial (C&I) sector.** Working from the information gained in Activities 1 and 2, ILLUME will work with the members at Committee meetings to develop a proposed approach to define priority populations in the residential sector and the C&I sector – that is, whether to a) align with other state/federal efforts and b) leverage geographic and/or individual data. Our team will collate decisions from the decisions made at Committee meetings and develop a memo that summarize the proposed approach to define and identify priority populations.

The approach to define residential priority populations will inevitably be different from the approach to define C&I priority populations. We recommend focusing on the residential priority population definition first. Then, drawing on this definition, we will focus on developing the C&I definition.

Note: this scope covers the identified definitions/approaches leveraged at the federal and state level to identify priority populations, as well as documenting the process the EEB will use to define priority populations. Should DEEP and the EEB want to develop a tailored priority population definition – one that is entirely unique from current definitions or screening tools – extra budget will be required to build the definition and identify those populations.

In addition, this task does not include engagement with public stakeholders, as we recommend an overarching stakeholder outreach task to gain community perspectives on both Task 6 (this task) and Task 7. We provide an estimate of this in **Task 8. Community Stakeholder Engagement: Focus Groups or Interviews.**

Deliverable(s): benchmarking results, interactive maps, finalized residential and C&I definitions

7. Articulate the Longer-Term “How:” Equity Indicator Framework Development

Addresses: Recommendation 5: *Prioritize the Development a Long-term Equity Indicator Framework after Alignment on Goals and Priority Populations*

Budget: \$75,000

Timeline: Q1-Q4 2024

How this task will support the EEB: As noted in Recommendation 3, Consideration #2: We understand that there is a desire to have a metric framework in place for 2024. However, to achieve this goal with an eye toward enduring PMI equity metrics and benchmarks, additional funding will be needed in 2023 to support this effort. These dollars will ensure greater collaboration, alignment, and buy-in to a final equity indicator framework. *Alternatively, the EEB may want the DEI Consultant Team to use 2024 dollars to complete this task, which means that a final framework will be in place for the 2025-2027 cycle.*

Activities: The ILLUME team will complete the following activities:

1. **Collaborate with stakeholders.** To establish an equity indicator framework that measures the effectiveness of C&LM program activities in creating multidimensional equity, we recommend conducting rigorous engagement with key stakeholders, including interviews with:
 - a. Company Staff: Understand utility programs, eligible investments, metrics, and data tracking and reporting capabilities
 - b. C&LM program managers: Understand programmatic types, funding sources, investment types, geography, scale, and funding recipients. This will help our team develop allocation and localization rules, and ensure rules are flexible for relevant programs
 - c. Company and state Subject Matter Experts: Gather Subject Matter Expert (SME) input on defensible and feasible indicators, the models or assumptions needed to convert, localize, and/or monetize indicators, and feasibility within the EEB’s timeline
 - d. Evaluation team: Discuss CT’s data, tracking, and changes/enhancements needed to support the Distribution of Benefits analysis
2. **Inventory indicators (PMI metrics and other benchmarks) for consideration.** Working from the 2022 Equity Assessment, as well as the Equity Metric Development (Task 5), ILLUME will inventory a comprehensive set of benchmarks and PMI metrics for consideration. For each of these, we will document relevant measurement approaches.
3. **Develop a process by which to prioritize indicators.** ILLUME will support the EEB to enable a Stakeholder process that clearly identifies if and how equity-related indicators should be prioritized against primary PMI metrics. Within an equity framework, PMI metrics should be paired with a set of benchmarks within a single framework for understanding C&LM programs’ progress in equity. These indicators should also align with the phases outlined in E3.
4. **Conduct a needs assessment of measurement approaches and localization rules for prioritized indicators.** Along with the EEB, ILLUME will facilitate a process to identify and communicate

analytical needs and gaps for calculating and/or localizing indicators (when we say “localize” we refer to the process of being able to measure the indicator’s impact on a priority population).

5. **Document findings in an Equity Indicator Framework.** The equity indicator framework will be a document that logically summarizes the indicators under consideration, a method for prioritization, alignment with E3, and measurement approaches.

Deliverable(s): equity indicator framework documenting indicators, prioritization, and measurement methods and potential limitations

8. Community Stakeholder Engagement: Focus Groups or Interviews

Addresses: *Recommendations 2-5* (dependent on which Task(s) the EEB wishes it to support)

Budget: \$20,000 - \$54,000 (dependent on virtual interviews vs. focus groups and number of interviews/focus groups)

Timeline: Q1-Q4 2024 (dependent on which Task(s) the EEB wishes it to support)

How this task will support the EEB: To ground-truth the work done by ILLUME and the EEB – particularly around *Task 6. Define the “Who:” Target Populations Definition Development (Activity 1)* and *Task 7. Articulate the Longer-Term “How:” Equity Indicator Framework Development* – ILLUME recommends incorporating stakeholder engagement into the process. This exercise will help the EEB understand the needs and priorities of communities, as articulated by those communities – and this insight can feed into the definition of priority populations and the development of metrics to measure equity in C&LM programs.

Activities: Depending on budget constraints, we recommend hosting up to four focus groups or a series of interviews with groups of interest that align with the priority tasks and research needs. Potential target groups may include (but are not limited to) residents in priority populations, contractors, employees with community or governmental organizations, and small businesses. We will provide an incentive for participation.

For focus groups, we recognize that it is ideal for the group facilitator to be a trusted individual. For example, a focus group with customers that primarily speak Spanish is ideally led by a native Spanish speaker. We will consider this factor when determining a focus group facilitator and language needs of that group. One strategy we have used for other studies is to engage organizations within the community to lead or co-lead groups, compensating them for their time and effort. Since the COVID-19 pandemic, our team has moved to a primarily online focus group format, which also allows for individuals within diverse locations to participate. However, there are many benefits to in-person focus groups, especially when addressing sensitive or community-focused topics. We will determine the best forum based in the planning stages and based on the EEB’s guidance.

Deliverable(s): Topic guide or interview guide; facilitated focus group (up to 4) or interviews; focus group recordings; memo summarizing key observations and outcomes from focus groups/interviews