

# GUIDE TO HOW COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT CAN LEAD TO COMMUNITY BENEFIT PLANS

Energy Infrastructure Incentives for Zero-Emission Commercial Vehicles (EnergIIZE) is the nation's first commercial vehicle fleet infrastructure incentive project. Funded by the California Energy Commission's (CEC) Clean Transportation Program and implemented by CALSTART, EnergIIZE provides incentives for zero-emission vehicle (ZEV) infrastructure equipment for medium-duty and heavy-duty (MDHD) battery-electric and hydrogen fuel cell vehicles operated and domiciled in California.

Keeping in line with principles that conceived the Justice40 Initiative and California Senate Bill 535 policies, EnergIIZE prioritizes funding infrastructure projects that incorporate meaningful community engagement into the design of their projects. Project Teams are entrusted with the task of helping offset harm done in areas that are disproportionately experiencing pollution burden<sup>1</sup> and economic hardship. This is accomplished by uncovering the community benefits that can be associated with your infrastructure project through engaging the community. Project Teams can then create a Community Benefit Agreements to help increase equity in the widespread transition to clean energy.

## What are the community benefits?



01

### GEOGRAPHIC

Tied to vehicles domiciled in or traveling through a specific geographic region and impact the health of those living and working there.

02

### HEALTH

Impact the health of those living, working, or being educated in a geographic location.

05

### OTHER

Benefits should be tailored to the needs of the community. If there are other benefits or connections you can facilitate to strengthen the community, please incorporate them into your project.

03

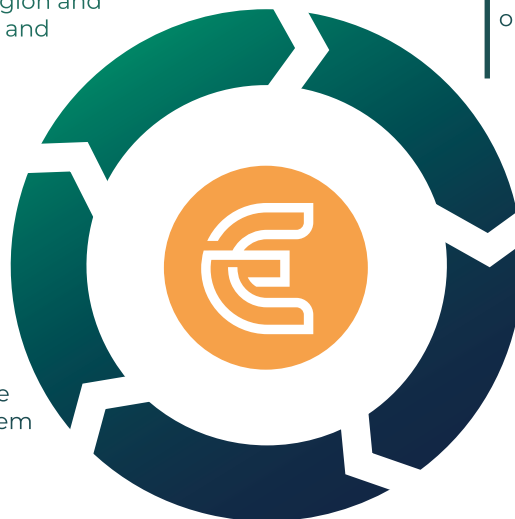
### SAFETY

Elements of the infrastructure project that ensure the road traffic safety of people living in a geographic location.

04

### ECONOMIC

Impact the financial vitality of the geographic region and those working, living, and being educated there.



<sup>1</sup> Read more about these impacts at:

## Geographic –

Cleaning the air is a built-in benefit of the transition to zero-emission vehicles. The health benefits of this improvement are substantial and can save lives and preserve quality of life over time. Beyond this, there are other mutually beneficial<sup>2</sup> ways to engage with the people and businesses in the area surrounding your infrastructure project.

## Health–

As commercial vehicles transition to ZEVs and pollution loads decrease, it is anticipated that the associated health costs will also be reduced. If you can predict the impact your ZEV infrastructure project will have on an area, you can share this with your project site's neighbors. This information can be useful to Authority Having Jurisdiction (AHJ) officials, environmental justice and community-based organizations, school districts, truckers, and other stakeholders from whom you may want to garner support. This is a starting point and can lead to integration with other community benefits.

## Safety –

Some health and safety benefits associated with infrastructure projects are more inherent than others. The changing landscape from internal combustion engine (ICE) vehicles to ZEVs comes with its own set of safety concerns as pedestrians, active transportation users, and other drivers acclimate to the MDHD ZEV landscape. When possible, educate your infrastructure project's neighbors<sup>3</sup> about your commercial vehicles' sounds and safety features. Post signage alerting people that there are quiet but large trucks coming through. Include flashing lights or horns for people with impaired vision or hearing.

## Economic –

In order to strengthen a region's economy and support the resilience of your project, it is important to make a concerted effort to seek out and partner with organizations that develop a workforce with the skills you need to plan, build, and run your site. Visit Argonne National Laboratory's JOBS EVSE 2.0<sup>4</sup> to estimate the economic impact of installing electric vehicle stations. If viable, dedicate a percentage of your workforce to people who live in the area. Connect with workforce agencies to let them know what current and future charging infrastructure needs exist.



## Other –

When engaging with the community, you may find that you can provide a service that falls outside of the scope of the infrastructure project. For instance, one EnergIIZE award recipient found that local residents needed office meeting space. When applying for funding through EnergIIZE for their new South Gate facility, they pledged to offer their indoor/outdoor hospitality space to local community groups to utilize, upon request. These community members will also have access to Level 2 charging in the site's front parking lot. This is an example of how an EnergIIZE-funded project integrated other community benefits outside of its infrastructure project's scope.



## Who helps create community benefits?



When defining the community among commercial vehicle infrastructure builders, it can be hard to know where to start. It may be helpful to think about the people that impact and are impacted by your project. They may represent organizations or be represented by an organization or official. Share the health, safety, and economic community benefits of your project with those organizations, officials, and people in the community and document their feedback.

### Here are examples of common entities to engage:

1. Neighbors to the infrastructure site<sup>5</sup>
2. Native American Tribe Governance Council<sup>6</sup>
3. Trucking Associations or local Unions who might use charging and refueling equipment
4. Environmental Justice Organizations and Coalitions
5. Neighborhood Council/Neighborhood Watch
6. Local Sustainability or ZEV Groups
7. Sustainability and Transportation Officials in the site's area
8. Local Air Quality District
9. Chambers of Commerce and local business development hubs
10. Community Colleges and Trade Schools



<sup>2</sup> Using the framework of mutual benefit when engaging the community centers partnerships between people instead of prioritizing accomplishment of your goal at all costs. It creates interdependence between the community that houses the infrastructure and the infrastructure project that is serving the community.

<sup>3</sup> This can be done by sending mailers with links to videos or presentations or by incentivized in-person workshops.

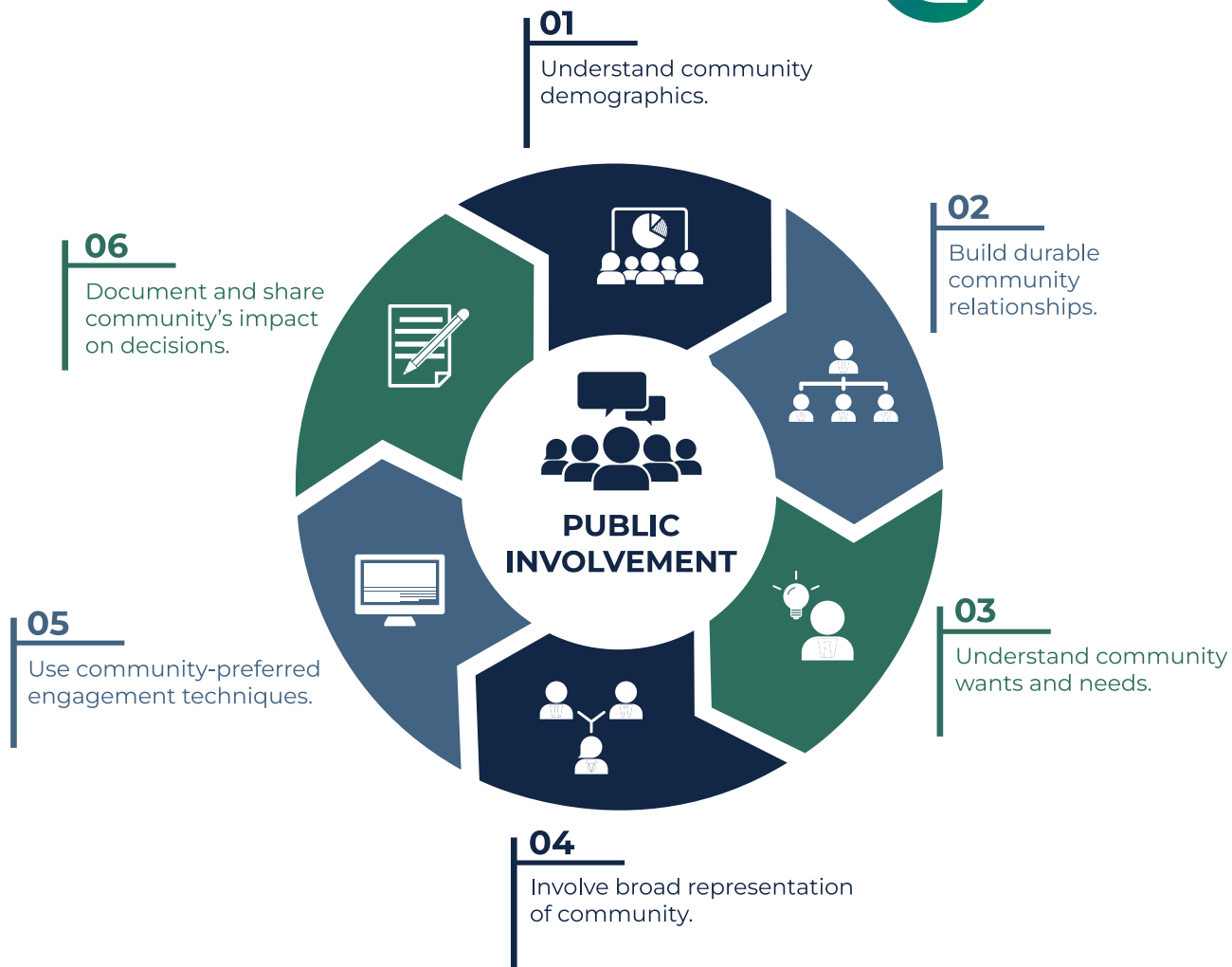
<sup>4</sup> Visit <https://www.anl.gov/esia/jobs-evse>.

<sup>5</sup> This includes landowners and renters.

<sup>6</sup> Native American Tribes are the original caretakers of California lands. Members of many tribe nations are spearheading the transition to clean energy. Find out what nations are near you using [native-land.ca](http://native-land.ca). Then connect to their Tribal Governance Council.

Simply documenting your capacity to practice public involvement methods and then sharing it with local entities could win their support and increase the resilience of your project by forging strong relationships with stakeholders in the area. We urge developers without strong local relationships to consider adding someone with close community ties to their paid Project Team. This community liaison can support meaningful public involvement and incorporate economic community benefits that align with the vision of your project.

## How to create a Community Benefits Agreement



Source: U.S. Department of Transportation, “Promising Practices for Meaningful Public Involvement in Transportation,” 2023. Design modifications made by CALSTART.

Community benefits are integrated into infrastructure projects via meaningful public involvement<sup>7</sup> (also known as community engagement). By understanding the geographic, health, safety, and economic benefits that the project site could produce, the Project Team will have valuable information to share with the community. As the community engages with that valuable information, the Project Team can collect and address questions and concerns, then incorporate that feedback into the project design. If feasible, a Community Benefits Agreement can result from this work.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>7</sup> If you would like a more in-depth guide, please refer to: <https://www.transportation.gov/public-involvement>. Information on capacity building for AHJs can be found here: [https://www.epa.gov/system/files/documents/2023-09/epa-capacity-building-through-effective-meaningful-engagement-booklet\\_0.pdf](https://www.epa.gov/system/files/documents/2023-09/epa-capacity-building-through-effective-meaningful-engagement-booklet_0.pdf).

<sup>8</sup> For more information on creating Community Benefits Agreements, visit: <https://www.energy.gov/justice/community-benefit-agreement-cba-toolkit>

Recognizing that not all MDHD vehicle infrastructure projects are publicly accessible, consider how your project impacts the surrounding area. Document your process and findings and share them when answering EnergiIZE Qualitative Questions in the IPC.



**Inform** – This could involve briefings, site visits, or updates via local neighborhood council social media outlets. Messages should be in languages relevant to the population.

**Consult, Involve, and Collaborate** – This could involve attending transportation or business development meetings, community benefit, or workforce development focus groups; attending community meetings, events, or public hearings relevant to electrification; or distributing surveys to collect information. These efforts can help garner support for and incorporate community feedback and benefits into your infrastructure project.

**Empower** – This could involve incorporating stakeholder feedback into the infrastructure project. It is important that developers in priority communities honor and invest in the well-being of longtime residents. Aligning with the tenets of the CEC’s Disadvantaged Communities Advisory Group’s<sup>9</sup> use of funds from California’s Clean Transportation Program comes with a categorical imperative to develop resilient projects with community input. This supplemental sheet should help you accomplish that. Thank you for being a part of the solution!

## Contact

[energiize.org](https://energiize.org)



<sup>9</sup> For more information on the Disadvantaged Communities Advisory Group, visit: <https://www.energy.ca.gov/about/campaigns/equity-and-diversity/disadvantaged-communities-advisory-group>