

GOAL EJ-7. CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

Inclusive, culturally sensitive outreach to better inform residents and encourage active participation in decision-making, shaping a community reflective of diverse voices.

Civic engagement is crucial for local planning, fostering a sense of place and investment in neighborhood improvements. In EJ Communities, engaging low-income, minority, and linguistically isolated stakeholders is essential to address their unique needs. Effective engagement strengthens the City's relationship with the community and ensures decisions reflect community needs, leading to better investments in the future. Glendale offers various opportunities for civic engagement; however, residents may face challenges in identifying and accessing information about these opportunities as the information is dispersed across various departmental webpages. The demographic assessment of Glendale reveals key factors influencing civic participation and engagement.

Key Takeaways From Existing Conditions Report

The demographic assessment of Glendale reveals key factors influencing civic participation and engagement. The City has a diverse age distribution, with adults aged 45 to 64 representing 21.8% of the population, seniors (65 and over) comprising 21.7% of the population, and a significant portion of families with children under 15 (14.8%). The presence of many seniors suggests higher participation in conventional civic activities, while younger families may require outreach through virtual tools and community events.

Linguistic isolation is prevalent in Glendale, particularly within Environmental Justice Communities, with 33% of households speaking limited English, indicating a need for translation services and culturally tailored engagement.

Three census tracts in Glendale have high CalEnviroScreen burden scores for education, all within Environmental Justice Communities. Only eight census tracts have low burden scores. All other census tracts in Glendale have medium burden scores. Educational attainment can impact civic participation, with lower education correlating with reduced engagement due to underemployment or lack of time.

Glendale's population is predominantly White (36%), with significant Armenian, Hispanic, and Asian or Pacific Islander communities, highlighting the importance of inclusive outreach to ensure all voices are heard and policies reflect the diverse needs of the City.

Glendale offers various opportunities for civic engagement; however, residents may face challenges in identifying and accessing information about these opportunities as the information is dispersed across various departmental webpages. Encouraging the use of virtual outreach tools, such as social media and online surveying, and outreach approaches at other community events, such as farmers markets, fairs, and sporting events, can help increase participation among groups who have not participated in traditional in-person meetings.

Key Takeaways From Community Input

When asked to rate their satisfaction with various aspects of City communication and engagement, many residents expressed satisfaction with the availability of information in their preferred language. However, responses were generally mixed across the other categories, including ease of finding information about City meetings, plans, and programs, as well as the ability to participate in City meetings in a convenient way. While some respondents felt their input on City decisions was fairly considered, there was a noticeable level of dissatisfaction with this area and with the ease of accessing information about City activities.

EJ-7 Policies

- EJ-7.1 **Inclusive Input.** Foster an inclusive decision-making process by actively seeking and genuinely considering community input on City decisions, encouraging all voices to be heard and valued, particularly those from underserved and Environmental Justice Communities, and integrating their input into planning and policy development.
- EJ-7.2 **Multifaceted Approach.** Support a multifaceted approach to civic engagement and public outreach on local planning and decision-making processes to facilitate a variety of participation opportunities and methods.
- EJ-7.3 **Information Accessibility.** Continue efforts to increase transparency of City processes and to promote accessibility and organization of information.
- EJ-7.4 **Information Distribution.** Distribute City information in Environmental Justice Communities, such as numbers to call for code enforcement, programs offered through the City, housing needs, and general City information.
- EJ-7.5 **Targeted Outreach.** Perform targeted outreach to historically excluded groups, including multicultural communities, limited-English speakers, youth, seniors, and those with disabilities in Glendale to help make sure that policies reflect the needs and aspirations of the entire community, not just those of the majority population.
- EJ-7.6 **Representation.** Specifically invite residents from traditionally underrepresented demographic groups to become board, commission, and committee members as openings occur.
- EJ-7.7 **Community Events.** Continue to promote, sponsor, and support a variety of community events to strengthen social cohesion and the overall identity of Glendale such as Earth Day, Fire Service Day, Fall Festival, and National Night Out.
- EJ-7.8 **Partnerships.** Partner with and support the efforts of any community-based organizations or non-profits that focus on programs and activities for the Environmental Justice Communities.

EJ-7 Actions

- EJ-7a **Participation Opportunities.** Promote the City's public meeting portal and City calendar so residents can easily find all participation opportunities on City decisions.
- EJ-6f **Foster Relationships.** Identify stakeholders and foster relationships with individuals and organizations within Environmental Justice Communities to encourage participation in the decision-making process.
- EJ-6a **Community Surveys.** Conduct periodic community surveys to determine if the General Plan and other City documents are fulfilling the residents' vision for Glendale and how satisfied residents are with community engagement efforts by the City overall.
- EJ-6b **Cross-Cultural Participation.** Promote meaningful cross-cultural participation in local planning and decision-making processes by:
- Continuing to provide City-sponsored material in multiple languages.
 - Organizing outreach events and conducting surveys directly to specific demographic groups.
 - Partnering with community-based organizations that have relationships, trust, and cultural competency with target communities to conduct outreach for local initiatives and issues.

- Tailoring activities and the venues where they take place to accommodate the cultural preferences of different racial/ethnic groups.

EJ-6c

Accessible Meetings. Make meetings and other public engagement forums accessible to a wide range of residents and encourage greater attendance by:

- Ensuring any materials are distributed far enough in advance of meetings to allow sufficient time for review and comment.
- Using communication methods that convey complex or technical information in an easily understandable manner.
- Facilitating meetings using diverse methods that can engage all participants and can appeal to multiple styles of learning.
- Focusing on methods to effectively engage younger residents.
- Encouraging the use of virtual outreach tools, such as social media and online surveying and implementing new communications technologies as they evolve.
- Consider outreach at community events, such as farmers markets, fairs, and sporting events, to help increase participation among groups who have not participated in traditional in-person meetings.