

## FACT SHEET

### Geospatial Data – Environmental Justice (EJ) Communities

#### Overview

Virginia EJScreen+ is a geospatial visual interpretation of the [Virginia Environmental Justice Act \(§2.2-234 and 2.2-235\)](#) which defines an “Environmental Justice Community” as any “low-income community or community of color.” The “EJ Community” layer is a block group level layer that combines both parts of the EJ definitions within the Virginia Environmental Justice Act.

#### Dataset Summary

The [Virginia Environmental Justice Act §2.2-234 and 2.2-235](#) states, “Environmental justice community” means any low-income community or community of color. This dataset uses census block groups to identify areas that meet either or both parts of the definition above.

#### Dataset Description and Purpose

This dataset represents the geospatial extent as polygons and the corresponding attribution for census tracts that meet both definitions of an Environmental justice community.

- “Low income” means having an annual household income equal to or less than the greater of (i) an amount equal to 80 percent of the median income of the area in which the household is located, as reported by the Department of Housing and Urban Development, and (ii) 200 percent of the Federal Poverty Level.
- “Low-income community” means any census block group in which 30 percent or more of the population is composed of people with low income.
- “Community of Color” definition: “‘Community of color’ means any geographically distinct area where the population of color, expressed as a percentage of the total population of such area, is higher than the population of color in the Commonwealth expressed as a percentage of the total population of the Commonwealth. However, if a community of color is composed primarily of one of the groups listed in the definition of ‘‘population of color,’’ the percentage population of such group in the Commonwealth shall be used instead of the percentage population of color in the Commonwealth.”
- “Population of Color” definition: “‘Population of color’ means a population of individuals who identify as belonging to one or more of the following groups: Black, African American, Asian, Pacific Islander, Native American, other non-white race, mixed race, Hispanic, Latino, or linguistically isolated.”

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#### Dataset Credits:

Data layers created by DEQ based on 5-year ACS Census Data.

Additional Map Credits: VGIN, ESRI, etc.

#### Update Cycle:

This dataset will be updated on a 5-year cycle as census bureau 5-year ACS data becomes available.

The Census Tract and associated data are based on 2024 5-year ACS Data accessed from sources in the table below:

Term	Name	Location/Link
Shape file	2024 Census Tiger Lines Tracts for Virginia	<a href="#">Census Tiger Lines</a>
Shape file	2024 Census Tiger Lines Block Groups for Virginia	<a href="#">Census Tiger Lines</a>
Layer	Virginia DEQ EJ – Low Income Communities	<a href="#">DEQ Rest Services</a>
Layer	Virginia DEQ EJ – Communities of Color	<a href="#">DEQ Rest Services</a>

### Methodology

The EJ Communities layer is formed by joining the Communities of color layer and the Low-Income Communities at the block group attributed level. The *EJ Community Y/N* and *EJ Status* fields are

### Resource Constraints / Use Limitations

This dataset forms the communities of color based on populations of color consistent with the Virginia Environmental Justice Act. Crediting the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality when using this data source is requested. [Public REST endpoints](#) are available and updated as changes are made.

### Data Disclaimer

In collaboration with various agencies and organizations, DEQ strives to deliver accurate, useful, and up-to-date information. While every effort is made to ensure the accuracy of the data, it is possible that errors may arise from the physical sources used in developing these resources. Users should be aware of potential limitations and take responsibility for how they use the information, considering factors such as potential errors, original map scale, collection methodology, and data currency. For accurate application, users should consult relevant federal, state, or local resource management officials. Please report any errors or omissions to DEQ via email or phone. By accessing DEQ data, you agree to the terms and conditions outlined above.

### Data Quality

The data included comes from authoritative federal and state sources including U.S. Census Bureau, VGIN, and DEQ. These data are believed to be maintained with a high degree of accuracy.

### Spatial Reference Information

[NAD83, Virginia Lambert (EPSG: 3968) <https://epsg.io/3968>]

### Terminology

Term	Definition
<b>Community of Color</b>	Any geographically distinct area where the population of color, expressed as a percentage of the total population of such area, is higher than the population of color in the Commonwealth expressed as a percentage of the total population of the Commonwealth. However, if a community of color is composed primarily of one of the groups listed in the definition of "population of color," the percentage population of such group in the Commonwealth shall be used instead of the percentage population of color in the Commonwealth.
<b>Population of Color</b>	A population of individuals who identify as belonging to one or more of the following groups: Black, African American, Asian, Pacific Islander, Native American, other non-white race, mixed race, Hispanic, Latino, or linguistically isolated.
<b>Environmental Justice Community</b>	Any low-income community or community of color
<b>Percent Population of Color in the Commonwealth</b>	(Total State Population minus the Population White Only) divided by the Total Population) = 38.27%. From Census table B02001 Race at the state level
<b>Virginia Community of Color</b>	When either of the following is true: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) The percentage Population of Color by Census Tract is greater than the percent Total Population of Color of the Commonwealth. The Census Tract Population of Color is greater than 38.27%</li> <li>2) Individual Population of Color composing the largest share of the Population of Color by Census Tract divided by the Census Tract's population is greater than the same Individual Population of Color's statewide population divided by the total statewide population</li> </ol>

Term	Definition
<b>Percent Population of Color</b>	Total Census Tract Population minus Total Census Tract Population White Only, then divided by the Total Census Tract Population, then multiplied by 100
<b>Primarily</b>	Individual Population of Color composing the largest share of the Population of Color for each Census Tract
<b>Percent Primarily</b>	Percent of the Individual Population of Color composing the largest share of the Population of Color by Census Tract
<b>Individual Population of Color</b>	A Community of Color where the largest share of the Population of Color in that area exceeds that same group's statewide population as a percentage

## Data Dictionary / Field Information

Field Name	Field Alias	Field Explanation
<b>OBJECTID</b>	OBJECTID	ArcGIS unique identifier for each feature in a feature class or table.
<b>Shape</b>	Shape	ArcGIS feature geometry
<b>GEOID</b>	GEOID	Geographic identifiers assigned to geographic entities by the Census Bureau to facilitate the organization, presentation, and exchange of geographic and statistical data
<b>COUNTYNAME</b>	County Name	County Name as approved by the Virginia General Assembly
<b>COUNTYFP</b>	COUNTY FIPS	5-digit Federal Information Processing <i>Series</i> (FIPS) codes, assigned and maintained by the Census Bureau.
<b>TRACTCE</b>	TRACTCE	Census Tract Identifier; Included in GEOID
<b>BLKGRPCE</b>	BLKGRPCE	Census Block Group Identifier; Included in GEOID
<b>ALAND</b>	Area Land (m <sup>2</sup> )	Area of land measured in square meters
<b>AWATER</b>	Area Water (m <sup>2</sup> )	Area of water measured in square meters
<b>LI_Threshold</b>	Low Income Threshold Type	The low-income threshold type, either HUD or FPL; selected according to whichever is greater for each county.
<b>PctPopLI</b>	Percent Population Low Income	Percent of the population of a census block group for whom income is less than or equal to the low-income threshold for the county in which it is located
<b>LI_YN</b>	Low Income Community Y/N	Affirms, or negates whether a census block group is a low-income community
<b>COC_StatusType</b>	Community of Color Status Type	Labeled as either VACOC or INDVPOC because it meets one of the statements below: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) The percentage Population of Color by Census Tract is greater than the percent Total Population of Color of the Commonwealth. The Census Tract Population of Color is greater than 38.27% (VACOC)</li> <li>2) Individual Population of Color composing the largest share of the Population of Color by Census Tract divided by the Census Tract's total population is greater than the same Individual Population of Color's statewide population divided by the total statewide population (INDVPOC)</li> </ol>
<b>COC_Primarily</b>	Primary Population of Color	Individual population of color composing the largest share of the population of color by Census tract
<b>COC_PctPrimarily</b>	Percent Primarily Population of Color	By census tract for each individual population of color: Individual population of color composing the largest share of the census tract's population of color divided by the census tract's population x 100
<b>COC_PctPOC</b>	Percent Population of Color	By census tract for each listed population of color take: (Total Census Tract Population – Total Census Tract Population White Only)/Total Census Tract Population) x 100
<b>COC_YN</b>	Community of Color Y/N	Affirms, or negates whether a census tract is a community of color
<b>EJStatus</b>	EJ Community Status	Qualifying criteria for block groups identified as EJ: Low Income, Community of Color, Both, or Not EJ
<b>EJCommunity</b>	EJ Community Y/N	Affirms, or negates whether a census block group is an EJ Community

Field Name	Field Alias	Field Explanation
Shape_Length	Shape Length	ESRI Geometry Length – calculates the distance of a line for a polygon
Shape_Area	Shape Area	ESRI Geometry Area - calculates the distance of an area for a polygon

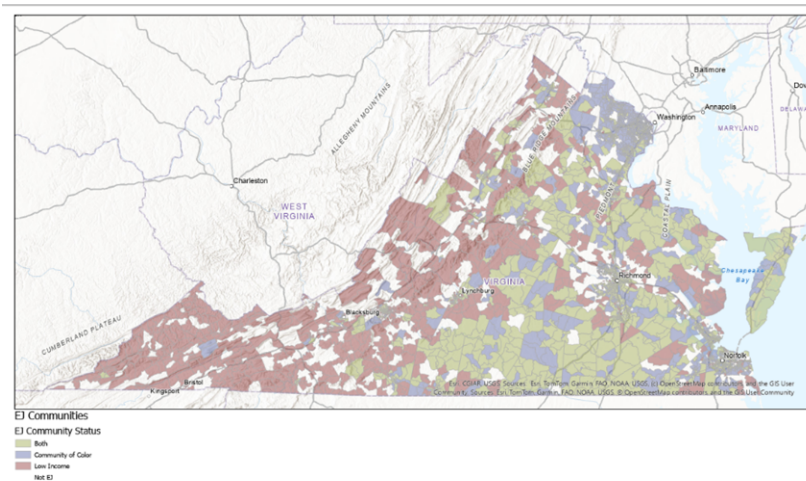


Figure 1 - Map of Virginia EJ Communities identified by EJ Community Status