

Panel 13: Energy Efficiency and Equity: Urgency, Action, and Our Legacy

The climate crisis is rapidly accelerating. Heatwaves, polar vortexes, hurricanes, flooding, and wildfires are devastating families and communities across the United States with increasing frequency and intensity, even as the public health and economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic continue.

Since the last ACEEE Summer Study in 2020, both the urgency and opportunity to address the climate crisis have grown. Just and equitable energy and climate solutions are being elevated as *the* pathway forward. The focus of the 2022 Summer Study Equity Panel is to push boundaries on energy efficiency and decarbonization solutions in a way that centers the impact of this work on communities. What happens over the next decade will draw from our legacy.

With collective action, we can achieve the large-scale transformation this moment calls for. Cross-agency investments at the federal level—such as the Justice40 initiative—and national, regional and state-based movement building—around the Green New Deal, the American Jobs Plan, and so on—are opportunities for us to act and ensure equitable deployment of resources. A key question this panel will endeavor to answer is how we can collectively work to change systems—not just tweak fundamentally inequitable existing systems.

This panel will reframe who is considered an expert on energy and climate. We will uplift the leadership of people working on the frontlines of environmental justice, especially those who are Black, Indigenous, or People of Color.

This panel welcomes priority topics being elevated by frontline communities in order to achieve resilient and sustainable energy systems. Topics for consideration include but are not limited to equitable electrification and the removal of fossil fuels from homes; indoor air quality and outdoor clean air in the built environment and impact on community health; COVID response; clean energy finance ensuring that communities can access funding and finance mechanisms; energy and housing security, including eviction and utility shutoff moratoria; community-based approaches for local energy workforce development and entrepreneurship including workforce training and access to pathways for greater economic mobility; climate advocacy and community and youth-led climate action; and climate refugees and migration. This panel welcomes a wide-range of geographic diversity, including urban-focused and rural submissions. Co-creation of submissions is strongly encouraged. Finally, the panel will consider different ways to capture these topics within and beyond traditional summer study paper submissions, including video tours, storytelling, music, art, murals, poetry, short films, and so forth.