

## Case Study: Energy Outreach Colorado Using CODI for Partner Engagement to Enable Statewide Outreach

### Background

Energy Outreach Colorado (EOC) provides financial support to limited-income Coloradans to help them meet their home energy needs. Demand for assistance consistently exceeds available resources, so EOC must strategically target its efforts to maximize impact. With a grant from the Colorado Energy Foundation and technical assistance from the Colorado Futures Center, EOC used the Colorado Disproportionate Impact Indicator (CODI) to gain a comprehensive view of communities across the state. This approach ensures that limited resources are used as efficiently and effectively as possible.

### The Challenge

As energy rates continue to rise, a growing number of Coloradans struggle to afford their monthly utility bills. EOC posed the following question:

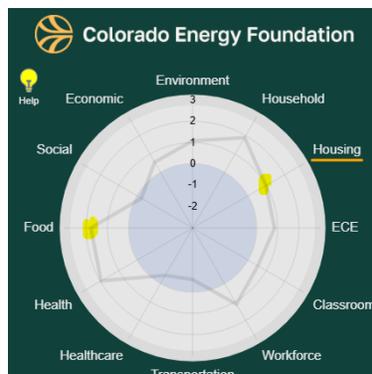
***Can we ensure that we are targeting Coloradans who need energy the most by correlating energy burden with other economic, socio-demographic, and environmental indicators?***

Energy burden is generally defined as the percentage of household income spent on energy-related utilities, such as electricity and gas. Understanding where energy burden intersects with other community challenges plays a role in EOC's targeting strategy.

### The CODI-Informed Approach

Using CODI, EOC identified census tracts with high levels of energy burden and analyzed correlations with other indicators. One relationship emerged as particularly significant: **a strong correlation between households receiving Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits and those with high energy burden.**

The graphic below represents one census tract in Pueblo County that reflects this overlap: high energy cost burden and a high percentage of households receiving SNAP benefits.



## Implementation of Solutions

Once this relationship was identified, EOC began identifying and exploring partnerships with organizations that address food insecurity. These partnerships help ensure that households receiving SNAP benefits are aware of and connected to energy-related support.

In addition to the SNAP-based outreach, CODI also helped EOC to explore or strengthen collaborations with early childhood education providers and healthcare organizations.

## Why Use CODI

- **Visualization:** The geo-spatial mapping format captures the diversity of the state.
- **Comprehensiveness:** CODI's 12 community dimensions offer a broad lens of community needs, including but extending beyond energy burden.
- **Accessibility of data:** The visual, map-based interface makes complex data easy to understand and actionable for planning, outreach, and partnership building.

## Conclusion

In a time of constrained resources, CODI offers a powerful lens through which EOC can identify the communities most in need. By collaborating with other service providers, EOC can efficiently extend its reach in order to accomplish its mission.

