

Disproportionately Impact Areas: Choosing a Geographic Unit of Analysis

The subgroup focused on the spatial mapping of DIAs recommends DIAs be calculated at the Census tract-level with the possibility of a second step prioritizing applicants within specific Census blocks embedded within tracts to be identified as DIAs.

The boundaries of Census tracts are defined by the U.S. Census as geographic regions, embedded within counties and often cities, where between 1,400-8,000 individuals reside. These tracts allow researchers and policy makers to track population change over time with finer detail, often to allocate financial and community resources.

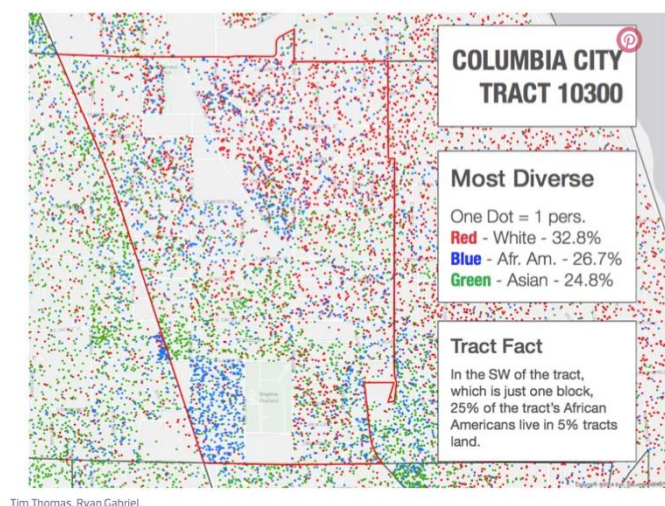
The rationale behind using the tract is that it provides a small unit of analysis within cities and counties that enable us to target communities likely to be DIAs.

For example, while 6-9 % of individuals living in King County were at or below the federal poverty-line, there are quite a few Census tracts clustered together in several neighborhoods of Seattle where over 15 % of residents live in poverty. Poverty is one of the required criteria for defining DIAs and conducting our analysis at the county or even city level may cause us to miss these communities.

Therefore, at this stage in our analysis, we do not want to discount these areas by choosing a geographic region too broad like a city or county, particularly because community input during our meeting as well as the expertise of task force members indicates that many of these neighborhoods within cities and counties are known to have been overpoliced during the War on Drugs.

Further, we do not know the extent to which micro-segregation will be an issue and recommend we do not start at the block-level. Census blocks are even small areas than Census tracts. Micro-segregation describes certain Census tracts that are highly segregated. Drs. Tim Thomas and Ryan Gabriel illustrate this point by examining the racial segregation embedded within Census Tract 10300, which is located in Columbia City in South Seattle ([link](#)). While the Black residents in this Census tract make up about 25 % of all residents in this tract, they only live on 5 % of the land (see image from their work on to the right).

While this examines racial segregation, income-based micro-segregation is likely also possible. However, the extent to which micro-segregation is an issue and how many individuals would be eligible for equity licensing that are not the primary targets of the program due to micro-



segregation is likely a small number and may be mitigated by other aspects of the application process.

Therefore, for the time being, the sub-workgroup recommends defining DIAs at the tract-level while considering the possibility to add a prioritization process for applicants where a block-level analysis within DIAs may play a role.