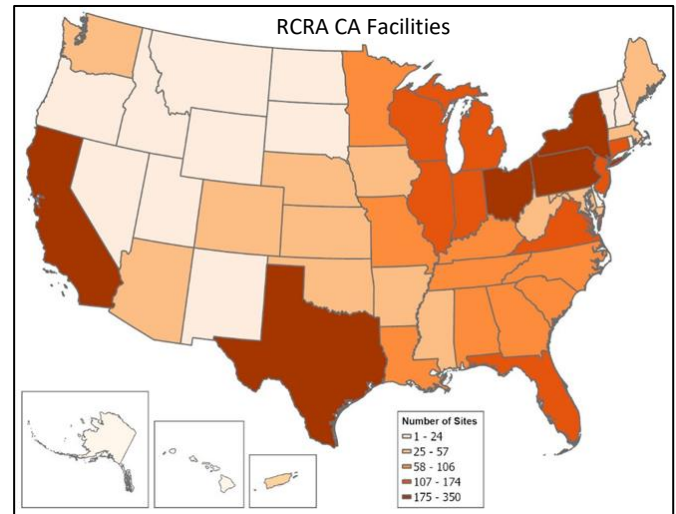# Population Surrounding 3,975 RCRA Corrective Action Facilities

RCRA Corrective Action (CA) facilities exist in thousands of communities across the U.S. ranging from remote to large urban settings. Many of these facilities are in economically distressed communities. To help describe who benefits from EPA's RCRA CA Program cleanup work, the Agency used **2017-2021 American Community Survey populations data and FY 2021 RCRA CA** to summarize the population living within 3 and 1 miles of RCRA CA facilities.

Population within 1 Mile of RCRA CA Facilities:

Approximately 31 million people live within 1 mile of a RCRA CA facility (roughly 9% of the U.S. population) including approximately:

- 10% of all children in the U.S. under the age of 5
- 9% of all children in the U.S. under 18
- 12% of all blacks in the U.S.
- 12% of all Hispanics in the U.S.
- 12% of all minorities in the U.S.
- 12% of all households in the U.S. below the poverty level
- 11% of all people with less than a high school education in the U.S.
- 12% of the linguistically isolated people in the U.S.

Population within 3 Miles of RCRA CA Facilities:

Approximately 118 million people live within 3 miles of a RCRA CA facility (roughly 35% of the U.S. population) including approximately:

- 36% of all children in the U.S. under the age of 5
- 35% of all children in the U.S. under 18
- 44% of all Black people in the U.S.
- 43% of all Hispanic people in the U.S.
- 43% of all minorities in the U.S.
- 41% of all households in the U.S. below the poverty level
- 39% of all people with less than a high school education in the U.S.
- 47% of the linguistically isolated households in the U.S.

Demographics of Near-Facility Populations:

While there is no single way to characterize communities located near our facilities, this population is *more minority, low income, linguistically isolated, and less likely to have a high school education* than the U.S. population as a whole.

TABLE 1: Proportions of Key Demographics in the Total Near Facility Population and the Total U.S. Population			
	Population within 1 mile of All Facilities	**Population within 3 miles of All Facilities**	**U.S. Population**
Minority	51.0%	49.9%	41.1%
Below poverty level	15.8%	14.4%	12.7%
Linguistically isolated	6.4%	6.3%	4.8%
Less than a High School Education	13.6%	12.6%	11.2%

TABLE 2: Detailed Data on the Population within 1 and 3 miles of RCRA CA Facilities

Below are data on the demographic characteristics of the population surrounding RCRA CA facilities. The table indicates whether certain population demographics near facilities are above (in bold) or below (in italics) the U.S. average.

Demographics	Population Within 1 Mile of Facilities (Approximate)		Population Within 3 Miles of Facilities (Approximate)		US Population (Approximate)	
	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number
Race						
White	*60.2%*	18,777,722	*60.5%*	71,434,033	68.0%	226,482,080
Black	**15.6%**	4,871,234	**15.6%**	18,431,734	12.5%	41,722,070
Asian	**6.8%**	2,122,083	**7.5%**	8,813,747	5.6%	18,789,170
Native American	*0.7%*	207,102	*0.6%*	710,781	0.8%	2,728,040
Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	**0.3%**	78,127	0.2%	261,452	0.2%	615,799
Other	**16.4%**	5,120,132	**15.7%**	18,500,423	12.8%	42,697,965
Ethnicity						
Hispanic (any race)	**24.9%**	7,748,311	**23.4%**	27,599,537	19.2%	64,076,906
Non-Hispanic (any race)	*75.1%*	23,428,089	*76.6%*	90,552,631	80.8%	268,958,218
Minority						
Minority	**51.0%**	15,911,038	**49.9%**	59,013,872	41.1%	136,996,867
Income						
Households below the poverty level	**15.8%**	1,863,553	**14.4%**	6,453,082	12.7%	15,909,129
Households with a ratio of income to poverty level of two and over	*64.6%*	19,420,240	*67.6%*	77,757,113	70.4%	228,790,916
Education						
Less than a high school education	**13.6%**	2,809,348	**12.6%**	10,070,575	11.2%	25,569,085
Linguistically isolated						
Linguistically isolated households	**6.4%**	753,581	**6.3%**	2,831,478	4.8%	6,055,968
Age						
Under 5 years of age	**6.2%**	1,924,117	**6.0%**	7,115,321	5.9%	19,545,536
Under 18 years of age	*22.2%*	6,926,288	*22.1%*	26,057,936	22.5%	74,831,323
Over 64 years of age	*13.8%*	4,296,983	*14.6%*	17,261,314	16.1%	53,592,470
Total		31,176,399		118,152,169		333,035,124

Note: This table indicates whether the percent of demographic characteristics near facilities are above (bold) or below (italics) that of the US population.

Methodology:

A circular facility boundary, equal to the facility acreage, was modeled around the latitude/longitude for each facility and then a 3- or 1- mile buffer ring was placed around the facility boundary. American Community Survey (ACS) 2017-2021 census data was then identified for each block with a centroid that fell within the 3- or 1- mile area. Population characteristic data was not available for census blocks but was available for block groups. To calculate the block population characteristics, the population percentage of the block within the block group was calculated and then that weight was applied to the respective block group characteristic of interest to estimate a value for the block.

Data used includes: (1) RCRA CA facility information as of the end of FY2022; and (2) American Community Survey 2017-2021 population data. Facility data from FY2022 included 3,975 RCRA CA facilities in the 50 U.S. states and Puerto Rico with accurate locational data.

IMPORTANT Caveats:

- Data collected represent a <u>national look</u> at the characteristics of the population in communities surrounding our facilities. While some of the data point to possible environmental justice related characteristics of the population, this is not an environmental justice analysis.
- Proximity to a facility does not necessarily represent risk of adverse health effects. The risk of exposure to contamination <u>varies significantly</u> across all facilities.
- Data are a snapshot in time only, the facility and population information will change over time (can be updated every year when new census data comes out and compared over time in 5-year intervals).
- Used best available information, but data collected are estimates only, for the following reasons:
  - ❖ Used a single latitude/longitude location to model facility boundaries based on acreage, not the actual facility boundaries.
  - ❖ Used centroid points of the census blocks to determine inclusion in the estimates. This may under-estimate the population in some cases, and over-estimate in others.

Footnote to Use When Citing Data:

U.S. EPA, Office of Land and Emergency Management 2023. Data collected includes: (1) RCRA CA facility information as of the end of FY2022; and (2) population data from the 2017-2021 American Community Survey.