

2024

**IMPLEMENTING
PRESIDENT BIDEN'S
CLEAN ENERGY
PLAN IN YOUR
STATE OR CITY**

**CLIMATE
POWER**



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President Biden's clean energy plan is an unprecedented investment in climate action—in building a more prosperous, just, and secure American economy that runs on clean energy. State and local governments have an important role to play in realizing the full benefits of this plan for their communities, companies, consumers, and the climate. State and local leaders should take steps to maximize this opportunity and—using these federal funds to leverage even greater private sector investments that cut energy costs and climate pollution, support good-paying union jobs, and advance environmental justice and equitable economic growth. As [one governor said](#), these new federal initiatives are “not the culmination of climate action, but the inspiration for further climate action.”

State and local leaders should commit to a whole-of-government implementation plan. They should deploy federal funding to achieve the greatest reductions in climate pollution and energy costs. They should prioritize investments in impacted communities and support good-paying union jobs. And they should address siting and permitting barriers that could impede investments in their communities and clean energy progress for the country.

Below are five key recommendations on how to implement the clean energy plan in your state or local jurisdiction:

1 *Commit to a Whole-of-Government Implementation Plan*

State and local leaders should ensure their administration has a whole-of-government implementation plan, with dedicated staff and key partnerships, to maximize their investment opportunities from President Biden's clean energy plan.

- **Appoint dedicated staff** to lead your implementation agenda. For example, in early 2022, the Biden administration [asked all governors](#) to appoint an ‘Infrastructure Czar’ to lead the implementation of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, some of whom have since taken on implementing the broader clean energy plan. Others have appointed [lead climate staff](#) with the authority to coordinate all relevant federal funding. If your staff capacity is limited, pursue budgets for additional staff resources. Also, take advantage of [capacity-building federal funds](#) and non-governmental partnerships to ensure your jurisdiction has the personnel and technical assistance necessary to fully seize new opportunities.
- **Involve all agencies** and focus across economic sectors to derive maximum benefit from President Biden's clean energy plan. This includes agencies that traditionally

work with federal energy and environmental funding, like state energy offices, departments of environmental protection, and municipal sustainability offices. It also includes [public utility commissions](#), departments of transportation, economic development organizations, [green banks](#), budget and finance departments, housing and infrastructure finance agencies, and others. Every state and local agency can play a role in building the clean energy economy.

- **Build partnerships** to help your constituents maximally benefit from the plan. State leaders should [engage local governments](#), including cities, counties and metropolitan planning organizations. State and local governments and [tribal nations](#) should work together in their regions. And state and local leaders should work with communities, businesses, academic institutions, NGOs and others in civil society to leverage their networks, capacity, and expertise to [maximize new investments](#).

2 Use Federal Funding for the Greatest Climate Action Opportunities

State and local leaders should prioritize federal investments that complement their own policy agendas and achieve the largest climate and economic benefits for their jurisdictions. They have a responsibility to turn new federal funding into the policies, programs and projects that deliver the greatest climate impact.

- **Maximize clean energy tax credits** that are [the most significant](#) new climate investments in President Biden’s clean energy plan, providing unprecedented policy certainty and opportunity for entities that manufacture, install, and produce clean energy over the next decade. This includes game-changing new provisions that enable tax-exempt and governmental entities—such as states, local governments, tribes, territories, and nonprofits—to take an active role in building the clean energy economy, lowering costs for working families, and advancing environmental justice. Thanks to this [“direct pay”](#) or (or “elective pay”) provision, these entities will, for the first time, be able to receive a payment equal to the full value of tax credits for building qualifying clean energy projects. Unlike competitive grant and loan programs, in which applicants may not receive an award, direct pay allows entities to get their payment if they meet the requirements for both direct pay and the underlying tax credit. Applicable entities can use direct pay for [12 tax credits](#), including for generating clean electricity through solar, wind, and battery storage projects; building community solar projects that bring clean energy to neighborhood families; installing electric vehicle (EV) charging infrastructure; and purchasing clean vehicles for state or city vehicle fleets. State and local governments can seize this opportunity now by integrating direct pay into [local](#) and [state](#) capital planning to help deliver on their climate, operational, and financial goals. And by convening community roundtables to communicate this historic opportunity to [the many stakeholders](#) who are now eligible – including school districts, colleges and universities, nonprofits, houses of worship, and more. Read

more about a great example of this in action in Phoenix, Arizona in **the 2024 State & Local Clean Energy Implementation Messaging Guide**.

- **Ensure federal grants reduce the most climate pollution** by using them for state and local programs and policies that transform markets and leverage additional investment. Some federal grants are designed for this purpose, like the [EPA's Climate Pollution Reduction Grants](#) program. Others, like the U.S. Department of Transportation's (USDOT) massive surface transportation programs, provide state and local leaders with [significant flexibility](#) to determine how hundreds of billions of dollars are spent—and if and how much those investments reduce climate pollution. State and local leaders should ensure that all of these federal funds deliver on climate action to provide the greatest economic and public health benefits for their constituents.
- **Educate consumers** about the new credits and rebates available directly to them for clean energy technologies, including electric vehicles and electric appliances that will [reduce their energy costs](#) and contribute to climate action. State and local leaders can play a major role in helping [educate consumers](#) about these opportunities and providing [complementary incentives](#) to make these technologies even more widely available.

③ **Prioritize Investments in Implicated Communities**

President Biden's clean energy plan includes a prioritized focus on communities most impacted by pollution, high energy costs, increasing climate change impacts, and long-standing dependence on fossil fuels. To address a legacy of disinvestment and ensure that these communities thrive in America's clean energy future, this plan both borrows from successful state and local leadership in these areas and empowers more state and local leaders with additional tools to support their communities.

- **Prioritize investments in disadvantaged communities**, consistent with President Biden's clean energy plan. The president's [Justice40 initiative](#) guarantees that disadvantaged communities receive at least 40% of the benefits from covered programs. State and local leaders should follow this commitment by partnering with disadvantaged communities identified in the new [Climate & Economic Justice Screening Tool](#). They can do this by pursuing funds from new programs that can especially benefit these communities, like direct pay clean energy tax credits, the [Low-Income Communities Bonus Credit](#), USDOT's [Reconnecting Communities](#) program, and EPA's [Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund](#) and [Community Change Grants program](#). And state and local leaders can adopt their own [Justice40 policies](#).
- **Prioritize support for energy communities** that have borne a legacy of fossil fuel industrial impact and whose workers and communities are now in the midst of a fast-moving energy transition. President Biden's clean energy plan includes unprecedented support for energy communities. Your jurisdiction can match this commitment by helping these communities access new bonus clean energy tax credits for [projects](#)

[located in energy communities](#), targeted incentives for [advanced manufacturing and industrial decarbonization projects](#) in these communities, and new [financing tools](#) for replacing retiring coal power plants with clean energy infrastructure.

- **Include impacted communities in decision-making processes** to ensure they can determine their own destinies. Along with prioritizing programs that support disadvantaged communities and energy communities, state and local leaders should involve community members in their policy and decision-making processes. Some state and local leaders have created [Justice40 advisory committees](#) and [new offices](#) focused on a [‘just transition’](#) for workers and communities.

4 Support Creation of Good-Paying Union Jobs

President Biden’s clean energy plan is [supporting good jobs](#) and more inclusive prosperity in America. But actions taken by state and local leaders are critical to realizing this full vision—in helping prepare workers and businesses to fill jobs in [fast-growing clean energy industries](#) that will dominate the global 21st century economy, and by ensuring clean energy jobs are good-paying union jobs.

- **Plan for the clean energy workforce** to help companies find workers and help workers gain new skills to thrive in fast-growing clean energy industries. You should engage with labor unions, businesses, academic institutions, and community-based organizations. [Create a plan](#) for the clean energy and infrastructure workforce. And invest in workforce training and support in your own budget and by [earmarking portions](#) of new federal funds.
- **Support good-paying union jobs** by tying clean energy and infrastructure investments together with labor standards. President Biden’s clean energy plan did this by borrowing from [innovative state policies](#). Now, more state and local leaders should focus on supporting union jobs in this clean energy transition by ensuring federal tax incentives flow to projects that pay prevailing wages and employ registered apprentices, by supporting projects that use project-labor and [community benefits agreements](#), and by protecting free and fair access to collective bargaining.
- **Create a climate corps** program to put young people to work building climate solutions and high-demand skills in the clean energy economy. President Biden launched [the American Climate Corps](#) (ACC) in 2023, which aims to involve 20,000 corps members in its first year. Already, [10 states](#) have new or existing climate corps programs that are partnering with the ACC. Local governments and community-based organizations can partner together on [climate corps](#) programs and projects, including Community Change Grants funding.

5 Address Siting and Permitting Barriers

In order to deploy the necessary clean energy technologies to meet America’s climate commitments, federal, state, and local governments must take steps to expedite the siting and permitting of clean energy and transmission infrastructure. This is especially critical at the

state and local level, where most siting decisions are made and where arbitrary barriers and bureaucratic inertia are blocking renewable energy projects.

- **Commit staff to address the siting challenge** and create new state and local offices and [programs](#) dedicated to this task. State leadership on siting is critical, regardless of the permitting framework. State and local leaders should work together, share information that’s grounded in science to dispel misinformation, and create best practices for developers and communities seeking to build renewable energy projects.
- **Cut ‘red tape’ with streamlined siting processes**, especially in states where counties or municipalities are granted decision-making power over large-scale renewable siting. Conduct [programmatic environmental assessments](#) to expedite permitting where clean energy infrastructure can be built with minimal impact. Where they exist, [override or repeal](#) unduly restrictive siting and permitting barriers. And set timelines in which environmental reviews must be completed.
- **Build trust-based community engagement**, including with local and municipal officials, businesses, and community-based organizations. This is critical for success. Provide local governments and other partners with [funding for greater capacity](#)—and additional incentive—to approve clean energy projects. And support [community benefit plans](#), which are “[strategic vehicles](#) for community improvement.”

Resources:

- America is All In: [Federal Climate Funding Hub](#)
- Atlas Public Policy: [Clean Economy Tracker](#)
- Center for American Progress: [Implementing America’s Clean Energy Future](#)
- Center for Public Enterprise: [Elective Pay Model](#)
- C40 Cities, Climate Mayors & Urban Sustainability Directors Network: [Maximizing Impact of Federal Climate Investments: Unique Role of Cities](#)
- Clean Energy States Alliance: [IRA and BIL Implementation](#)
- Conveners Network: [States Deployment Initiative](#)
- EPN: [Capacity-Building Technical Assistance Program](#)
- Evergreen Action: [Implementing the Inflation Reduction Act](#)
- Hua Nani Partners: [State Funding Readiness Project](#)
- Lawyers for Good Government: [Elective Pay and IRA Tax Incentives Resources Page](#)
- Local Infrastructure Hub: [A Roadmap for Maximizing IRA Opportunities & Community Benefits](#)
- National Caucus of Environmental Legislators (NCEL): [IRA Briefing Book](#) & [BIL Briefing Book](#)
- Natural Resources Defense Council: [Act Locally: An Equitable Investment Resource Guide](#)
- RMI: [Guide to Federal Clean Energy Incentives](#)
- S2 Strategies: [The State Support Center](#)
- US Climate Alliance [Climate Policy Database](#)
- White House: [Inflation Reduction Act Guidebook](#)
- White House: [Bipartisan Infrastructure Law Guidebook](#)