



# Go all in for climate jobs: Making the most of federal funds in your community

The U.S. is on the brink of a major energy, economic and environmental transformation. Ohioans have the skills and passion to put our communities at the center of it. For too long, corporations like FirstEnergy and American Electric Power have used their influence to rig the rules. They have profited by polluting our air and water — targeting under-resourced, segregated communities where Black and brown people are more likely to live. Meanwhile, too many jobs don't pay enough to support a family.

During the pandemic, Ohioans came together across race and place to demand that our elected leaders step up for us. We pushed Congress to pass a series of bills that are sending billions of dollars to our communities. Now that the funds from the “federal climate infrastructure package” are flowing, we can push our local officials to use the funds to heal damage to the climate, create good-paying union jobs and expand opportunities for people who have been excluded due to their race, gender, or background.

## What's the “Climate Infrastructure Package?”

This is how we refer to the of federal laws passed over the last two years that together dedicate unprecedented resources for addressing climate change and expanding opportunity.

These laws include:

### [American Rescue Plan Act \(ARPA\) \(passed March 2021\)](#)

ARPA allocated \$350 billion in largely flexible funding to state and local governments that must be spent by 2024. Governments can use the funds in ways that include:

- Funding basic services
- Directing resources into areas where residents were hit hardest by COVID.
- Upgrading and expanding water, sewer, and broadband infrastructure

### [Bipartisan Infrastructure Law \(BIL\) \(passed at the end of 2021\)](#)

Local governments can apply for more than \$60 billion in federal funds through competitive grants to cities, towns and municipalities for climate-friendly projects.

### [Inflation Reduction Act \(passed August 2022\)](#)

The Inflation Reduction Act dedicates more than \$300 million for things like weatherization programs, subsidies for wind and solar power, and incentives for electric vehicles.

### [CHIPS Act \(passed July 2022\)](#)

Known mostly as a tax incentive bill for the semi-conductor industry, the CHIPS Act also dedicates nearly \$70 million to climate research and growing zero-carbon industries.

## Recommendations:

Ohio communities can secure significant federal resources to modernize the electrical grid, upgrade our transportation system, grow clean and efficient manufacturing and repair damaged lands, all while creating good union jobs for groups historically excluded due to race, gender or background. You can push your local officials to follow these steps to help build a brighter future for your community.

### 1. Lay the groundwork and engage the community

Push local leaders to undertake greenhouse gas assessments for your communities.

This assessment can be used to develop a climate action plan to show the best ways your community can reduce climate-damaging emissions. The Biden administration prioritizes community input, so make sure officials engage key stakeholders like organized labor, racial justice groups, environmental organizations, disability rights groups and faith organizations.

### 2. Develop community benefit principles to leverage the Good Jobs Initiative

When all the key stakeholders are gathered, this group can build a set of community benefit principles that public officials can include in federal project applications. The most effective community benefit agreements with project developers include things like family-sustaining wages, paid on-the-job training opportunities for apprentices and pre-apprentices, targeted hiring from high-poverty areas, and public transit for workers.

Most Ohio communities have started to make plans for their ARPA funds. The Biden Administration's [Good Jobs Initiative, created under the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law](#), gives local governments a template for spending ARPA funds (and other public funds) that not only maximizes benefits to the community, but also will help secure competitive funding under the other climate package programs. The initiative incorporates community, environmental and labor standards into how the federal government awards project funding.

The BIL encourages local governments to use on-the-job training to create opportunities for residents with low incomes and people who are often excluded. Central Ohio's [Building Futures](#) pre-apprenticeship program is a great example. Developed by the Columbus/Central Ohio Building and Construction Trades Council, Columbus NAACP, and the Columbus Urban League, the 12-week program helps Black and brown people from low-income communities pursue careers in the union trades. Using ARPA dollars to fund similar programs will help communities win competitive BIL grants.

### 3. Use funds to seed programs that will have high impact

Each community will have different areas where they can reduce carbon emissions, but in Ohio, there are generally a few places where intervention can make a big difference:

- **The electrical grid.** Our antiquated electric grid causes many people to lose power during storms or during heat waves. Half of the \$27 billion the federal climate infrastructure package allocates to reduce greenhouse gases will be targeted toward disadvantaged communities – the same places most affected by outages and most in need of a grid upgrade.
- **Clean and efficient manufacturing:** For years, manufacturing has offered good union jobs in our state, but it can be dirty and energy inefficient. Ohio communities can push manufacturers to conduct industrial energy audits to see where they can reduce emissions. Loans, grants, rebates, and tax credits through the federal climate infrastructure package can then help manufacturers implement the recommendations.
- **The transportation system:** Ohio's transportation system over-relies on fossil-fuel powered cars. The federal climate infrastructure package includes resources for improving public transit, making neighborhoods more walkable, and expanding the use of electric vehicles.
- **Energy efficiency:** We can stem damage to the climate and lower our bills by weatherizing our homes and buildings. The federal climate infrastructure package provides credits to residents for home improvements and rebates for low-income households. Commercial businesses can get funding for efficiency measures through a new national green bank.
- **Repairing damaged lands and promoting green space:** Resources from the federal climate infrastructure package can repair some of the lands damaged by overdevelopment and pollution. Restoring wetlands, planting trees and embracing regenerative agriculture will absorb carbon while creating good jobs. Federal resources can also be used to clean up brownfields, for mine land reclamation, for sustainable farming, and to plug orphaned oil and gas wells.

