



5 winning strategies for Leveraging BIL and IRA Funds for Climate-Friendly Infrastructure Projects

The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) and the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) will be implemented concurrently in the coming years. [Braiding and blending](#) these funds – which occurs when multiple funding sources are combined to support a single project or program – provides an opportunity for mayors to design and execute projects that address multiple community needs at once. Braiding and blending can demonstrate that a city is thinking holistically about how different funding opportunities intersect with its strategic goals, and can therefore improve the strength of grant applications through BIL and IRA. Federal grant applications are stronger when they demonstrate that the project is part of a coherent strategy that has buy-in from a diverse cross-section of stakeholders, including state governments, regional economic development organizations, the private sector, and/or philanthropic organizations.

Below are 5 ways BIL and IRA funds could be combined to create climate-friendly infrastructure projects:

#1 For improving transportation access and safety

The [Reconnecting Communities](#) (BIL) and [Neighborhood Access and Equity Grants](#) (p. 88, IRA funding) are complementary competitive grant programs, with the former designed to reconnect communities cut off from economic opportunities by transportation infrastructure and the latter intended to improve walkability and safety, provide affordable transportation access, or remediate negative impacts from a surface transportation facility on disadvantaged communities. Additionally, [Safe Streets and Roads for All](#) (BIL) is a competitive grant program to develop action plans and carry out interventions to improve road safety. These grants could be blended and braided with formula funds like the [Federal Transit Administration Urbanized Area Formula Grants](#) or [Formula Grants for Rural Areas](#), which can be used for projects that improve public transportation, transportation safety, or job access, especially for those making reverse commutes.

#2 For reducing carbon emissions in the built environment

The [Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant Program](#) (EECBG, BIL) and the [Federal Income Tax Credits and Incentives for Energy Efficiency](#) (IRA) can be used together for projects that decrease energy use and boost efficiency. EECBG provides grants to develop and implement strategies that improve [energy efficiency in buildings](#). Meanwhile, the tax incentives for energy efficiency under the IRA provide homeowners, home builders, and commercial building owners with tax credits and deductions to incentivize building upgrades that reduce energy costs. Capital that will be available through the [Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund](#) (IRA) can also be used to finance energy efficiency upgrades or green construction. The [Alternative Fuel Refueling Property Credit](#) (IRA) will also allow for EV charging station deployment (up to \$100,000) in low income urban and rural communities, with additional guidance forthcoming. For Communities taking a more holistic approach to electrification and building emission reduction programs, the [Environmental Justice Collaborative Problem-Solving](#)



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[Cooperative Agreement Program](#) (EJCPS) provides financial assistance to eligible organizations working to address local environmental or public health issues in their communities. The program assists recipients in building collaborative partnerships with other stakeholders to develop solutions to environmental or public health issues at the community level.

#3 For addressing environmental justice

The [Environmental and Climate Justice Block Grants](#) (IRA) and the [Brownfields program](#) (BIL) can both be used to improve environmental quality in disadvantaged communities and can be used in conjunction with formula funds to advance environmental justice goals. Environmental and Climate Justice Block Grants include funds for community-based nonprofit organizations working in partnership with local governments to tackle air and climate pollution in marginalized regions; the [Brownfields program](#) provides [grants](#) for assessment, cleanup, worker training, and other activities to repurpose polluted, contaminated, or hazardous sites. [The Community Charging Grant Program](#) (BIL) will also allow incorporation of EV charging planning into community projects, prioritizing increased EV charging access in underserved and overburdened communities. Combined, these programs could be used, for example, to transform a Brownfield site into a new energy efficient building whose design and purpose are decided through a collaborative process with the local community.

#4 For creating opportunities for equitable workforce development

Both the BIL and the IRA [include](#) several workforce development programs and tax incentives to train workers for green energy manufacturing and infrastructure jobs. For example, the BIL includes new flexibilities for surface transportation funding, allowing a portion to be used for [workforce training programs](#), including apprenticeships, pre-apprenticeships, on-the-job training, and increased coordination with workforce boards. It also provides funding for workforce development in the solar industry via the [Advancing Equity Through Workforce Partnerships Program](#). This funding could be blended and braided with new [workforce development](#) tax benefits under IRA – for example, those that incentivize the construction of energy efficient buildings. Other federal funding programs, such as the [FTA Low-No Emission Vehicle Program](#), have seen expanded funding through BIL investment, with addition of new requirements to incorporate workforce development and training into project proposals.

#5 For improving education infrastructure

Both the BIL and IRA contain funding to address K-12 public school infrastructure in low-income areas. The [Renew America's Schools](#) grants (BIL) fund energy improvements at low-income schools, and [Funding to Address Air Pollution at Schools](#) (IRA) finances projects to address air pollution and lower greenhouse gas emissions at disadvantaged schools. BIL also funds a [Clean School Bus Program](#) and [removal of lead pipes](#) in schools.