



5 Winning Strategies for Implementing Justice40

Solutions to climate change and equity are inextricably linked, as communities that have historically received the least investment have also suffered disproportionately from the impacts of climate change. The Administration's Justice40 Initiative seeks to address this challenge by working to ensure that 40 percent of the benefits of federal climate investments are targeted towards disadvantaged communities that have been disproportionately impacted by climate change. Given the unprecedented funding for cities under the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) and the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL), local governments play a key role in operationalizing this initiative; listed below are five winning strategies for cities as they seek to leverage Justice40.

#1 Identify Underserved Communities Overburdened by Pollution

It is important for cities to take a data-driven approach to identifying populations that the Justice40 initiative intends to reach. This can be achieved by utilizing the White House's [Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool](#), which identifies census tracts that are underserved and/or overburdened by pollution across eight categories. (See this [explainer](#) from the National League of Cities on the screening tool.) It is also important that city leaders coordinate with frontline stakeholders throughout this process to ensure their projects are well-targeted and impactful to their communities.

#2 Engage Your Community

It is crucial for cities to [engage](#) frontline stakeholders both in the development of equity-focused climate action plans, and throughout the course of planning and implementing specific projects. Not only does community engagement help to generate buy-in, but it can also promote critical feedback loops, providing information and perspectives that may otherwise go unnoticed. For [example](#), Austin, TX's [Climate Equity Plan](#) was developed in conjunction with 120 community stakeholders and includes goals that are tailored towards promoting climate equity. Additionally, Washington, D.C.'s [Solar for All](#) program partners with local organizations to provide no-cost solar panel installation to low-income households. To help forge community engagement around specific projects, local governments can develop [community benefit agreements](#) (CBAs), which are legal agreements between private entities and community groups that articulate the benefits that the private sector will provide in exchange for community support.

#3 Align City's Climate and Equity Goals

Because Justice40 sits at the nexus of climate and equity, city leaders should assess how these two concepts are intertwined and set their goals accordingly, such as addressing equity in climate action plans. For example, Washington D.C.'s [climate and energy action plan](#) was reviewed by energy equity experts and community stakeholders [to ensure](#) that actions would benefit disadvantaged communities and be unlikely to spur "green gentrification," which occurs when climate and conservation initiatives price lower-income residents out of their neighborhood.



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#4 Build Equity Into Your Project's Program Design - and Track Impacts

One important way to ensure that your city's climate projects are addressing equity is to build these considerations directly into the program design (as well [the federal grant application](#)), and ensure that all impacts are tracked using data. This will ensure that climate and equity goals are aligned, and that processes are in place to meet those goals. [For example](#), Ann Arbor, MI's carbon neutrality framework has different weightings that prioritize interventions for disadvantaged communities, and Portland, OR established a [Clean Energy Fund](#) that provides grant funding for target populations, with funding recommendations made by community stakeholders. The city of [Denver](#) has also developed a \$40 million per year climate action fund that includes equity goals and a process to track impacts and measure success.

#5 Explore the Landscape of Justice40 Programs

The breadth and scope of Justice40 can make it difficult for cities to navigate, especially in the context of BIL and IRA, which include complex and unprecedented funding opportunities. In order for cities to navigate the landscape, they should explore Justice40's [covered programs](#), and assess which are best-suited to advance their strategic goals. (This [funding finder](#) from the Equitable and Just National Climate Platform allows users to search and filter specific Justice40 grant opportunities.)