

Community Benefit Plans – Guidelines and Tips

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What is a Community Benefit Plan?

Community Benefit Plan (CBP)

A *non-legally binding roadmap* for how a developer and/or government will engage with communities during a project.

While they do not always include designated funding or enforcement mechanisms, CBPs can help pave the way for future, legally binding community benefits agreements by laying some of the groundwork and bringing stakeholders together early on.

CBPs have required components but the details will vary based on project type and funding opportunity.

All DOE funding from the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) and Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) requires a CBP



Making sense of community benefits

Community Benefit Agreement

A voluntary but legally binding agreement between a developer or company and nearby community organizations that directs benefits from new development projects to local people.

Community Benefit Plans

May, but don't necessarily, include these agreements

A PLA that includes community-oriented commitments relating to equitable workforce development, social justice, small business support and/or other issues.

Community Workforce Agreements

Project Labor Agreements (PLA)

A pre-hire collective-bargaining agreement with one or more labor organizations that establish the terms and conditions of employment for a specific project.

Components of a Community Benefit Plan

1. Project overview
2. Engaging communities and labor
3. Investing in America's workforce
4. Advancing diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility
5. Implementing Justice 40

Every FOA will specify *which CBP components are required*. You **DO NOT** always have to include all elements listed in this guidance. Applicants and reviewers should always refer and defer to published guidance for the program to which they are working with.

In this presentation, for each component you'll find:

1. **Objective** – the purpose of the section for a CBP
2. **Contents** – elements that are suggested for this section of the CBP
3. **Process** – steps to gather information and develop an action plan to be recorded within the CBP
4. **Evaluation of Section** – questions to evaluate execution of section objective & contents
5. **Extras** – definitions, tips, examples

1. Project Overview

EVALUATING THE OVERVIEW

- ✓ Does it demonstrate a clear understanding of project scope along with the processes and resources necessary for successful completion?
- ✓ Does it thoroughly consider and describe potential impacts which may be experienced as positive (“benefits”), neutral or ambiguous (“neutral/uncertain impacts”), or negative (“negative impacts”) by different groups?
- ✓ Does it demonstrate due diligence in understanding community needs?
- ✓ Does it provide quantitative and qualitative data to characterize impacts?
- ✓ Does it include community input to ensure key stakeholders are included in outreach efforts?

Section Contents

1. Scope and Objectives

- Project location(s) and project phases
- Technical specifications
- Developer and community goals

2. Context & Involvement

- Parties involved at each stage
- Parties responsible for implementing and regulating project and CBP activities
- Environmental and socioeconomic trends influencing and influenced by this project

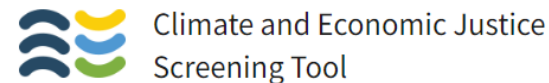
3. Potential Impacts – direct and indirect

- Service to community at each project phase (positive)
- Labor and/or public health risks due to development (negative)
- Impacts from proximity to construction / alteration activities at each location (negative)
- Impacts along the entire supply or waste life cycle (positive or negative)

Project Overview Best Practices

- All CBPs include general information; specific info varies by project or funding program
- Parties & benefits vary by technology, host community, types of jobs necessary, negotiated agreements between parties
- Utilize relevant data sources to enhance quantitative information on impacts

See reference slide for links to tools listed at right



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY

2. Engaging with Communities and Labor

Section Objective

Describe specific plans and actions to engage with stakeholders and groups representing communities impacted by the project, directly and indirectly.

Tips

- Engage early and often
- Demonstrate existing progress communicating with impacted communities
- Specify types of engagement encouraging community buy-in
- Where applicable, identify Tribal project partners
- Lay groundwork for negotiation of formal, legally enforceable agreements with labor unions and community partners (NOTE: CBP process does not create legally binding agreements, but agreements may be one outcome of CBP process)



Section Contents

1. Community Description

- Community profile; Stakeholder analysis; Social and environmental vulnerabilities

2. Engagement Planning & Strategy

- Existing engagement; Strategy for overcoming obstacles; Plan for further engagement

3. Workforce & Community Agreements

- Community Benefits Agreement(s); Collective Bargaining Agreement(s); Project Labor Agreement(s)

4. Other workforce/community engagement goals or milestones

- Evaluation strategy; Accountability mechanisms; Other relevant relationship information

5. Resource Summary

- Project resources dedicated to implement plans, strategy, agreements – include staff, budget, time

Process for CBP (1)

The following steps guide development of a thoughtful, detailed engagement plan and promote a thorough completion of the "engaging with communities and labor" requirements within a CBP.

Perform a Social Characterization Analysis

- Build an understanding of current and historical social, cultural, economic, workforce, and environmental context that could affect community assets, underlying vulnerabilities, and decision-making processes and power dynamics.
- **TIP:** Share findings with the community, and be sure not to rely solely on data to understand the community

Identify impacted stakeholders and groups

- Include any relevant methods or metrics used to identify stakeholders that may represent underserved, overburdened, or disadvantaged communities.
- Consider aspects of social or environmental vulnerability that may be exacerbated or mitigated by project activities.

Specify goals for engagement

- Informed by prior information, identify key groups to engage and name what specific outcome(s) the project team aims to accomplish through engagement.

Examples of engagement by type:

- **Workforce Outreach** – relate the mission, priorities, concerns of local labor unions to project goals
- **Employment Impacts** – classify labor needs of project and proactively reach out to job sectors
- **Tribal Engagement** – locate sacred lands and culturally significant sites; consult Tribal traditions, expectations, and policies

Process for CBP (2)

Select goal-specific methods of engagement

- Decrease barriers to and increase benefits of participation for stakeholders.
- Employ culturally competent communication and outreach.
- Prioritize two-way communication and allow for meaningful community input on project

Specify roles on project team

- Identify individuals or entities that will be responsible for conducting engagement activities, managing relationships, and ensuring accountability to stakeholders in the long-term

Outline feedback and evaluation strategies

- Define metrics and milestones to measure the success of engagement in the eyes of the project team, community members, and stakeholders.
- Develop guidelines to adjust or course-correct engagement efforts throughout the project.

Record resource needs

- Consider financial, human, infrastructural, institutional, or other types of resources needed at each stage in the engagement plan.

Examples of engagement activities include:

- Public Hearings
- Town Hall Meetings
- Open House
- Informal, Targeted Chats
- Focus Groups
- One-On-One Meetings
- Mediated Discussion
- Virtual Workshop

Types of Community Organizations

Illustrative Local Community Organizations

Type of Organization	Potential Role(s)
Workforce Development Boards	Outreach Support, Recruitment for Education/Training
Government	Initiative Awareness, Support, Marketing to Broader Community
Economic Development	Build Employer Coalition and Support
Institutions of Higher Education	Training Partner, Content/Curriculum Development, Source for Job Candidates

Type of Organization	Potential Role(s)
Labor Organizations	Training Partner, Employment Opportunities
Tribes	Targeted Outreach, Marketing, Recruitment for Education/Training, Employment Opportunities
Community-Based Organizations	Targeted Outreach, Marketing, Recruitment for Education/Training
Disadvantaged Business Enterprises	Targeted Outreach, Marketing, Recruitment for Business Opportunities
Employers	Training Needs, Employment Opportunities

Community Benefits Plan Toolkit,
NREL & ICF

EVALUATING THE ENGAGEMENT PLAN

- ✓ Does the section identify a comprehensive list of people, groups, and organizations impacted throughout the full project life-cycle, directly and indirectly, with particular attention to those that may often be overlooked or ignored?
- ✓ Do engagement goals match different project goals? Are there timelines for engagement specific to development phases?
- ✓ Does the plan incorporate a mix of engagement methods to capture a diverse range of voices and perspective?
- ✓ Does the plan facilitate communication and collaboration between invested entities external to the project group, i.e. relationship building between developers-communities-tribes?
- ✓ Are evaluation strategies developed with iterative incorporation of feedback and process improvement?
- ✓ Is the schedule, personnel, and budget for all proposed engagement activities, including involvement of specific community and labor partners, well-defined?
- ✓ Does the engagement plan meet any funding-specific criteria? (e.g. Two-Way Engagement Statement, plans to negotiate binding Community Benefits Agreements or Good Neighbor Agreements, or an Environmental Impact Statement)

Tips for Engaging With Community Orgs

- Distinguish between participation and inclusion
- Prioritize two-way communication and communicate how community input has been used
- Invest time & resources to understand the audience
- Leverage existing networks
- Seek to understand who should be involved, how best to get them involved
- Engage target populations throughout the process



Tips for Engaging with Tribal Nations

1. Identify federally recognized tribes; DOE is responsible for government-to-government consultation with Tribes
2. Every tribe is unique.
3. Be authentic. Learn by asking and listening.
4. Be aware of biases and “telling” tribes what needs to change
5. Engage a tribal liaison or tribal advocate.
6. Show up and follow through.

Resources to locate local tribes in your area

- Map of Federally recognized tribes by region, Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA):
<https://www.bia.gov/sites/default/files/dup/assets/bia/ots/webteam/pdf/idc1-028635.pdf>
- To locate state recognized tribes in your region, conduct a Google search or contact the BIA.



Photo by Werner Slocum / NREL

Additional tips for CBP administrators and reviewers

- Consider historical context and existing dynamic of/between developers, communities, local governments, and tribes prior to project initiation.
- Recognize that local governments may be the best representatives for some communities.
- Encourage collaborations between developers, communities, and tribes.
- Encourage project team discourse and evaluation of engagement strategy.
- Use language in proposal & feedback which encourages collaboration between stakeholders, including beyond direct project involvement.
- Provide incentives to support genuine, long-term relationship building and enduring channels of communication.

EXAMPLE

COMMUNITY BENEFITS PLAN (CBP)

[LEAD ORG] will improve rural energy outcomes and farm and rural cooperative profitability. Our project will result in diverse revenue streams, reduced energy costs, increased resilience, job creation, and workforce development (WFD) opportunities associated with solar deployment.

Our project's three agrivoltaic sites will provide the catalyst for improving the lives of rural citizens using a regionwide campaign. The goal of this project is to unlock the potential for a robust, rural clean energy economy while reducing energy and environmental burdens and achieving the DOE's Justice40 initiatives. We will achieve this goal through implementation of our CBP, which includes:

- Engagement with rural landowners and farmers, the rural workforce, and rural electric cooperatives
- Inclusive training of the rural and disadvantaged workforce so they can take on project, solar, and battery jobs
- Demonstration of economic opportunities by pairing solar and farming together
- Training rural landowners to diversify their income through the application of solar technology
- Training rural electric cooperatives to use the new [ORGANIZATION] flexibility program to increase resilience and reduce the energy burden on communities

1.0 COMMUNITY AND LABOR ENGAGEMENT PLAN

Under the oversight of our Community Benefits Manager, [NAME], [LEAD ORG] will perform outreach to stakeholders (Figure 1) in the communities near our project's three sites and throughout the [REGION]. We will gain an understanding of the myriad challenges faced by these communities as well as their perceptions on solar deployment. Georgia is a lifelong farmer and has been working on community energy projects for more than a decade.



Figure 1: Community and Labor Engagement. Our engagement will lay the groundwork for improving rural energy outcomes.

SHARED PROSPERITY IN THE CLEAN ENERGY TRANSITION

Decreased energy burden
Cost of solar and storage reduced over 60% for [LOCATION].

Decreased environmental burdens
Avoids 71,000 tons of CO₂ emissions over the project lifetime.

Increased contracting for MBEs/DBEs
40% of total subcontracting dollars to MBEs/DBEs

Increased quality jobs
140+ jobs created.

Increased energy resiliency
Reduced outages resulting from reduction in transmission distance to generator.

She leads [LEAD ORG's] [PROGRAM], overseeing 14 projects that use technology and data-related solutions to address community challenges.

1.1 Background and Experience

[ORGANIZATION] identified stakeholders such as [STAKEHOLDER] and [STAKEHOLDER]; [STAKEHOLDER]; agricultural/rural landowner stakeholders, such as [STAKEHOLDER]; universities and governmental agencies, such as [STAKEHOLDER] (critical for outreach to local governments); the [STAKEHOLDER], and [STAKEHOLDER]; and community-based organizations (CBOs) and non-profits such as [STAKEHOLDER], [STAKEHOLDER], [STAKEHOLDER], and [STAKEHOLDER].

1.2 Community History, Dynamics, and Stakeholders

Figure 2 summarizes the history and dynamics of the communities impacted by our three project sites. As shown in Section 4.0, two of these sites are located within disadvantaged communities (DACs) as defined by DOE's BETA and the Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool.

Initial Community History and Dynamics Assessment	
Site 1: [SITE], [LOCATION]	
Decision-Making Structure	Governed by Mayor and 12-member City Council; [CONSERVATION DISTRICT] is USDA's Natural Resource Conservation Service office, participates in sustainability-related education.
Policy	[STATE] is increasing attention to solar development; [POLICY OFFICE] tracks solar development proposals and ordinances; No known regulations in [LOCATION] that would restrict solar development.
Economic	Median income for [LOCATION] residents is \$XX,XXX and \$XX,XXX in agriculture.
Cultural	97% of farms are designated by the USDA as family farms; ~30% are new and beginning farmers.
Labor	[UNIVERSITY] and [COUNTY TECH CENTER] can support ag education/WFD.
Site 2: [SITE], near [LOCATION]	
Decision-Making Structure	Governed by a Mayor and nine-member City Council; dedicated Sustainability Director (who participates on the [INITIATIVE] Steering Committee).
Policy	No regulations against solar development, five solar arrays used to power city's facilities.
Economic	Median income for residents working in the ag industry is \$51,538; high income volatility.
Cultural	98% of farms are designated by the USDA as family farms; 25%+ are new and beginning farmers.
Labor	[UNIVERSITY]'s engineering school can support local WFD, with access to ORNL, which can teach agrivoltaic design. [COMMUNITY COLLEGE] provides training for skilled labor and can supplement the workforce using their [PROGRAM].
Site 3: [SITE], in [LOCATION]	
Decision-Making Structure	Governed by a Mayor and five-member City Council; [COUNTY] is governed by 14 commissioners across 8 districts; USDA Farm Service Agency office in [COUNTY].
Policy	No restrictions on solar development within the county, though they have been discussed.
Economic	Median income for county residents working in the ag industry is \$29,602; high income volatility.
Cultural	96% of farms are designated by the USDA as family farms; 33%+ are new and beginning farmers.
Labor	[LABOR ORG] in [COUNTY] can become a major stakeholder in WFD for the agrivoltaic site through its Industrial Electricity certification program.

Figure 2: Community History and Dynamics. We assess affected areas to better understand benefits and impacts.



COMMUNITY BENEFITS MANAGER

[NAME]

15+

Years experience in collaborative energy and environment projects

30+

Years farming experience

EXAMPLE

1.3 Strategies, Methods, and Timeline

[ORGANIZATION] will create a Community Advisory Committee that ensures local priorities are reflected in project goals and activities. The Committee will recommend other community members and organizations to engage with, share information, and build relationships. The Committee will be comprised of members from the regional farm communities, regional rural electric cooperatives, county government, solar development community, regional public power utility, development district representatives, agricultural cooperative leaders, educational institutions,

Community Engagement Roles	
[UNIV]	Overall engagement, convener and independent voice to address societal tradeoffs
[ORG]	Community engagement lead
[ORG]	Outreach to farmers and landowners; TSU labor engagement
[ORG]	Local outreach to community and coops
[ORG]	Labor engagement
[ORG]	Outreach to rural coops
[ORG]	Supports labor engagement

Figure 3: Community Engagement Roles.

and members of rural economy non-profits, environmental groups, and CBOs. Our committee will solicit input from the community through online surveys and public forums to verify our engagement methods are inclusive all groups and stakeholders.

[ORGANIZATION]'s outreach (Figure 3) will include two-way engagement (Figure 4) and training to the regional rural electric cooperatives, landowners, government, and workforce (e.g., construction, electrical). We describe the workforce and training activities in Section 2.0.

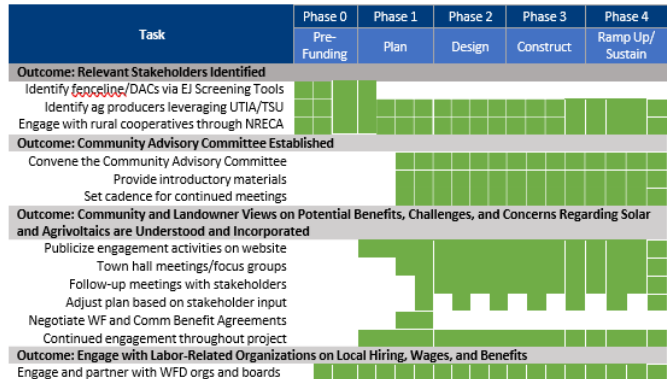


Figure 4: Engagement Methods and Timelines. Two-way engagement activities will be held in multiple languages and virtually to encourage participation by all stakeholders, including those not initially identified by the Board.

1.4 Workforce and Community Agreements Statement

[ORGANIZATION] is committed to negotiating Workforce, Community, and Project Labor Agreements (PLAs), where applicable, during Phase 1. We will leverage [ORGANIZATION]'s experience with PLAs and their long-held partnerships with Building Trades unions to negotiate Collective Bargaining Agreements, where desired by each partner's workforce.

1.5 Resource Summary

Seven personnel across [ORGANIZATION]'s organization will support engagement with rural co-ops, landowners, government, and WFD partners (see Section 2.0 of our Technical Proposal).

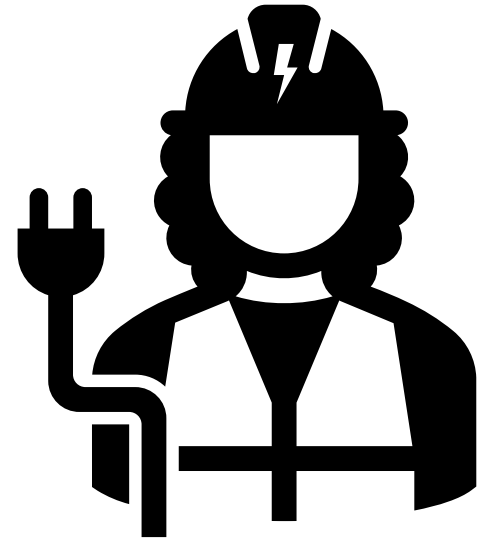
3. Investing in America's Workforce

Section Objective

Characterize quantity and quality of jobs that will be offered and describe how the project team will increase access to quality jobs and support workers' rights and workplace safety.

Tips

- Treat labor as an investment – not a cost
- Attract, train, and retain a skilled, diverse workforce
- Foster safe and healthy work environments
- Align investments with the economic and workforce priorities of the community and workers affected by the project
- Plan for resource demand and ensure effective use of taxpayer funds



Section Components

1. Background and Experience

- Previous and planned effort to create jobs, support worker's rights and safety

2. Commitments to Job Quality

- Competitive wages, benefits, working conditions, worker training & retention

3. Labor Agreements

- Collective Bargaining (National Labor Relations Act); Union Support

4. Workforce Development

- Types & level of investment for education; Partnerships to recruit, re-skill, retain

5. Timeline & Milestones

- Accountability measures; Implementation timeline; Roles & responsibilities

6. Resource Summary

- Staff support, experience, budget, facility details to implement plan



Process for CBP (1)

The following steps guide development of a specific, structured workforce plan and promote a thorough completion of the "investing in America's workforce" requirements within a CBP.

Characterize efforts

- Describe the project team's previous and planned efforts to provide above-average pay and benefits; properly classify employees in both construction and ongoing operations phases; support workers' rights; invest in equitable workforce development; engage with community and labor organizations.

Characterize job quality potential

- Discuss what strategies will be used to hire local workers, mechanisms in each job category to ensure quality, and how these jobs will be made sufficiently attractive to skilled local workers.

Identify support for workers' rights

- Consider assurances to enable workers to organize, labor unions to engage in planning construction activities, and the project team to mitigate labor disputes.
- Apply Project Labor Agreements or Community Workforce Agreements as appropriate.

Describe workplace health and safety

- Engage workers in the design and execution of workplace safety and health plans.
- Detail actions, policies, and procedures to ensure operational and personal safety, create a workplace free from harassment and discrimination, and offer safeguards for worker well-being.

Example metrics for job quality:

- Family-sustaining wages
- Health insurance; retirement
- Family or medical leave, paid sick leave, mental health support
- Training: safety and health mgmt., hazard prevention and control, anti-harassment
- Caregiving support: telework, childcare facilitation
- Predictable scheduling
- Permanent employee status

Process for CBP (2)

Establish goals, outcomes, and implementation plan

- State goals (aspirational description) and outcomes (product when goal is accomplished)
- Timelines, aligned with overall workplan, may be presented as a narrative, table, or graphic

Describe how to track and address retention

- Describe how the project team will invest in and support local workers to ensure they have the skills and resources needed for the jobs that will be created

Determine investments for workforce training

- Ensure local workers have the skills needed for the jobs that will be created and engage worker representatives in designing and implementing trainings
- Provide supportive services to train, place, and retain individuals from underrepresented communities in good-paying jobs and career-track training opportunities.

Identify partnerships critical to goals and outcomes

- Consider existing or new partners who may conduct outreach with underrepresented groups; reduce barriers to employment; identify displaced fossil energy workers and help them transition to project-related jobs.

Record resource needs

- Document financial, infrastructural, institutional, or other types of resources needed at achieve workforce goals.



EVALUATING THE WORKFORCE PLAN

- ✓ Are there commitments for local hiring? Is the project capable of putting agreements in place?
- ✓ Is there workforce training in the area? Does the project provide it or increase awareness?
- ✓ Does the workforce plan agree with and complement strategies for engagement & DEIA?
- ✓ Does the workforce plan align with the economic and workforce priorities of the community and workers who will potentially be affected by the project?
- ✓ Have local labor unions, community colleges, and other organizations been consulted to understand potential challenges the team may encounter in efforts to create quality jobs?
- ✓ Does data, in addition to stakeholder input, inform the short-, mid-, long-term milestones?
- ✓ Does the plan demonstrate the team's long-term commitment to transparency and accountability to worker and union reps, developing binding agreements as appropriate?

See slide notes for additional examples of strategies

EXAMPLE

2.0 INVESTING IN THE AMERICAN WORKFORCE (IAW)

[LEAD ORGANIZATION] integrates our labor engagement, WFD, and DEIA activities to develop a skilled and inclusive workforce. Our approach will create quality jobs as part of project implementation and a skilled labor pipeline to support the future adoption of solar.

2.1 Background and Experience

[LEAD ORGANIZATION]'s member organizations have an extensive legacy in providing quality jobs for the local workforce. [ORGANIZATION] is the top employer of [UNION] in the Southeast, with a relationship that spans 80+ years. [SOLAR COMPANIES] pay solar technicians approximately \$60,000 a year—approximately \$15,000 above the average salary of a solar technician as reported on the Bureau of Labor and Statistics.

2.2 Quality Jobs

Our project will result in construction, installation, and supply chain jobs, and solar and battery operations and maintenance (O&M) support. We will use an integrated approach that recognizes the importance of monetary and non-monetary benefits. Our approach incorporates: 1) focused local recruiting, with emphasis on DACs, 2) upgrading basic skills to make workers eligible for new positions, higher paid jobs, and advanced training opportunities, and 3) good pay, benefits, and advancement.

Focused Local Recruiting with Emphasis on DACs. [LEAD ORG] will work with our solar developers and grid operators to ensure jobs created are equitable and inclusive. Candidates will be sourced from the disadvantaged areas surrounding our sites, as described in Section 3.0. This recruiting will be performed with assistance through existing relationships with [NUMEROUS REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ORGANIZATIONS].

Upgrading Basic Skills to Make Workers Eligible for Higher-Paid Jobs and Advanced Training Opportunities. We discuss our approach to upgrading basic skills on the following page.

Establishing Commitments to Good Pay, Benefits, Job Safety, Inclusivity, and Advancement. The project team is committed to improving the lives of people in the region through good jobs that support families and the unique needs of workers. In addition to comprehensive job safety programs and higher wages, [SOLAR COMPANIES] offer medical benefits, paid time off, retirement planning, and apprenticeship programs to support WFD.

2.3 Workforce Development

Our workforce development approach supports long-term career pathways in solar, batteries, microgrids, and the emerging technology of agrivoltaics (Figure 5). We will support pathways through training, apprenticeships, and STEM programs, with hiring opportunities to promising graduates. *In Fiscal Year 2022, 47.5% of [ORGANIZATION]'s interns were hired as full-time employees, and 56.2% of intern new hires were diverse candidates.*

COMMITMENT TO PROVIDE QUALITY JOBS

40% of [ORGANIZATION] employees represented by [UNION]

15 [UNION]-represented unions that supply [ORG] with skilled labor

\$15,000 approximate salary increase of [SOLAR COMPANY] solar photovoltaic installers over the median salary

jobs for long-term project importance of monetary and local recruiting, with emphasis

positions, higher paid jobs, job safety, inclusivity, and advancement.

EXAMPLE

PROGRAM	
Inverter-based Electrical Engineering Training	<p>Objective: Prepare graduates of [UNIVERSITY]'s (an HBCU) electrical engineering program for careers in inverter-based resources such as solar, wind, and batteries.</p> <p>College Program: [UNIVERSITY] will add a course to their catalog focused on inverter-based resources.</p> <p>Result: Annually, at least one student per year becomes an intern or entry-level hire.</p>
Solar Installer Training and Apprenticeship	<p>Objective: Develop a pipeline of solar installers sourced from DACs across [COUNTY].</p> <p>Trade School Program: [TECHNICAL COLLEGE] will lead an 8 month-full time solar installer curriculum that includes agrivoltaics and results in NABCEP certified Photovoltaic Installation Professionals (PVIPs). Instruction will be led by a NABCEP-certified instructor and include a small lab for the students to learn solar fundamentals.</p> <p>Result: Several trained technicians given priority for hiring as [SOLAR COMPANY] technicians.</p>
Solar O&M Technician Apprenticeship	<p>Objective: Create a pipeline of technicians sourced from DACs within the [REGION].</p> <p>On the Job Training Program: [SOLAR COMPANY] will dedicate a WFD Manager to train ongoing cohorts of 3-6 apprentices per year to operate and maintain solar facilities. The two-year curriculum will be developed in partnership with NABCEP and include a small lab at one of [ORG]'s existing facilities. The training will comprise virtual lectures, lab training, job shadowing, skill verification, and supervised independent work through internally qualified personnel and third-party partners.</p>
STEM Training for Younger Students	<p>Result: 3-6 trained technicians given priority for hiring into technician II positions (annually).</p> <p>Objective: Engage rural students and excite them towards a future career in clean energy.</p> <p>STEM Program: Introduces concepts underlying integrated food production and energy generation systems through a laboratory-based experiential learning process. The capstone will be the creation of a demonstrative agrivoltaics lab project incorporating a solar panel with a raised-bed vegetable garden. In the final three years of the project, we will disseminate the curriculum and labs by increasing the number of participating communities and providing materials, training, and pedagogical support, with a goal of 46 participating sites by the end of year five. The training will be led by [TECHNICAL COLLEGE], and delivered at the [UNIVERSITY] site, 4H camps near [COMMUNITY], and through [COUNTY] schools and schools region-wide.</p> <p>Result: ~1,000 high school students encouraged towards jobs in the clean energy industry.</p>
Landowner Training on Solar	<p>Objective: Prepare existing rural landowners to choose whether and how to use solar to support their livelihoods as farmers and/or landlords.</p> <p>Landowner Training Program: Landowners will be surveyed by their local agricultural extension agents who will develop materials to make them more sophisticated partners in solar deployments. Trainings will occur throughout the region, with tours of the project sites providing a full experience of how solar farms work. Landowners will learn how to perform a cost-benefit analysis on each potential mode of solar deployment. Strategies for designing and operating small on-farm microgrids will also be taught.</p>

Figure 5: WFD Opportunities. Our WFD approach will result in career pathways for the rural workforce.

2.4 Worker Rights

[LEAD ORG] will support the rights of workers to join or form unions of their choosing. Our two primary utility partners, [ORG & ELECTRIC CO-OP], have long and deep relationships with unions. For example, [CO-OP] has a 53-year history of working with unions, including a 50-year partnership with the [UNION]. The [UNION] supports [CO-OP] electricians, linemen, and mechanics. As a right-to-work region, the Southeast does not have the same prevalence of unions as compared to other parts of the country. However, [SOLAR COMPANIES] maintain above-average compensation, while competing in the highly competitive solar market. All members of the [LEAD ORG] team will provide opportunities for employees to coordinate, provide feedback to

management, and unionize if they have not already done so. The team will subcontract unionized labor when that labor can be incorporated within a competitive market offering.

2.5 Milestones and Timelines

Figure 6 illustrates our milestones and timelines for investing in the American workforce.

Task	Phase 0	Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3	Phase 4
	Pre-Funding	Plan	Design	Construct	Ramp Up/Sustain
Outcome: 1,000 landowners and community leaders given skills to make informed decisions regarding solar					
Interviews with rural landowners					
Develop publications on solar benefits/impacts					
Establish train-the-trainer programs					
Landowner bootcamp at each site					
County agents ready to train on solar, as needed					
Outcome: 80% of rural coops in the [REGION] are trained to optimize use of solar and battery resources					
Poll rural coops regarding attitudes about solar					
Meetings with rural cooperatives					
Develop guidebooks on solar deployment					
Rural coop bootcamp at each site					
[ORG] ready to assist members, as needed					
Outcome: 1,000 apprentices and students are trained for job opportunities in the clean energy sector					
Identify and engage WFD partners					
Develop curricula with partners					
Deliver [COLLEGE] solar installer program					
Deliver SR solar O&M tech apprenticeship					
Deliver STEM at high schools, 4H clubs, camps					

Figure 6: Timeline. Through engagement, quality job creation, and WFD, we will invest in the American WFD.

2.6 Resource Summary

[LEAD ORG] is investing over \$2.8M to support STEM and the development of educational programs including rural coops, landowners' extension, and electrical apprenticeships.

4. Advancing DEIA

Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, Accessibility

DEIA Explained

According to Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility in the Federal Workforce, U.S. President. 14035 of June 25, 2021 " Federal Register 86, no. 123 (June 30, 2021): 34593-34603.

Diversity means the practice of including the many communities, identities, races, ethnicities, backgrounds, abilities, cultures, and beliefs of the American people, including **underserved communities**, defined as populations sharing a particular characteristic, as well as geographic communities, who have been systematically denied a full opportunity to participate in aspects of economic, social, and civic life.

Equity means the consistent and systematic fair, just, and impartial treatment of all individuals, including individuals who belong to underserved communities that have been denied such treatment.

Inclusion means the recognition, appreciation, and use of the talents and skills of employees of all backgrounds.

Accessibility means the design, construction, development, and maintenance of facilities, information and communication technology, programs, and services so that all people, including people with disabilities, can fully and independently use them. Accessibility includes the provision of accommodations and modifications to ensure equal access to employment and participation in activities for people with disabilities, the reduction or elimination of physical or attitudinal barriers to equitable opportunities, a commitment to ensuring that people with disabilities can independently access every outward-facing and internal activity or electronic space, and the pursuit of best practices such as universal design.

Section Objective

Describe how the project team will improve diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility throughout the goals, strategies, and economic opportunities of the project.

Setting quotas for individuals in a protected class is expressly forbidden; DO NOT include quotas in DEIA plans & initiatives.

Tips

- Cultivate workplace culture that will attract and retain top talent
- Encourage participation of underserved and underrepresented groups
- Ensure equitable access to business opportunities, good-paying jobs, career-track training, and other economic opportunities
- Foster creativity and productivity by creating a diverse workplace
- Improve communication with clients and stakeholders



Section Components

The following steps will promote development of a considerate DEIA plan, integration for DEIA into prior sections, and fulfillment of "advancing DEIA" requirements within a CBP.

1. Background and Experience

- Previous and planned efforts relevant to DEIA based on initial assessments
- Efforts taken to advance DEIA related to suppliers, partners, workforce, economic opportunities

2. Strategy

- Plans to incorporate DEIA into objectives throughout project goals & prior sections
- Consider DEIA when sharing knowledge or results

3. Timeline & Milestones

- Plans and commitments to Minority Business Enterprises, Minority Owned Businesses, Woman Owned Businesses, Veteran Owned Businesses
- Accountability measures

4. Resource Summary

- Provide details on staff support, experience, budget, etc. to implement DEIA plan

Examples of DEIA benefits:

- Equitable access to business opportunities and good quality jobs
- Effective and inclusive workforce training
- Increased avenues for participation for underserved communities and underrepresented groups

Process for CBP

Outline anticipated benefits of DEIA to Project and/or Organizations

- How will DEIA plan reduce barriers to employment, jobs, and training; facilitate access to financing, insurance, development?
- Examples include: creating a workplace culture that will attract and retain top talent, boosting creativity and productivity with a more diverse workplace, or creating an organization that better reflects the populations and stakeholders it serves.

Assess the state of current DEIA

- Discuss current state of DEIA and consider economic opportunities created by project

Identify partnerships

- Conduct outreach and engagement with underrepresented and disadvantaged groups

Establish goals, outcomes, and implementation plan

- Reflect findings of the initial assessment to clearly demonstrate how DEIA plans and efforts will meaningfully improve on baseline conditions
- Consider leadership engagement, organizational structure and resources, and integration
- Detail required resources, accountability measures, milestones, and timeline for execution. Timelines should follow the same schedule as the overall project schedule and workplan, and may be presented as a narrative, table, or graphic.
- See notes for further detail

Guidance on DEIA assessments may cover:

- Representation and policies for hiring
- Recruitment, collaboration, and contracting with persons from underrepresented groups
- Policies and activities contracting with minority-, women-, and Veteran-owned businesses
- DEIA training and culture in the organization
- Retention and promotion to support DEIA goals
- Accessibility of information sharing and dissemination

EVALUATING THE DEIA PLAN

- ✓ Are there clearly identified steps to gain buy-in from all people who have responsibilities for enacting the DEIA plan?
- ✓ Does the DEIA plan consider commitments for hiring, retention, contracting, collaboration, and workforce development?
- ✓ Does the plan commit to implementing a plan to reduce barriers and improve access to jobs for local and underrepresented workers?
- ✓ Is there a plan to improve reporting processes for tracking DEIA milestones and metrics in the project and organization?
- ✓ Is DEIA integrated into strategic planning, mission, and communications?
- ✓ Has DEIA been woven into prior CBP sections for engagement and workforce development?

Examples of data-informed DEIA goals

- Include, collaborate, and contract with persons from underrepresented groups
- Identify minority business enterprises (MBEs) and minority-, woman-, and Veteran-owned businesses to solicit as vendors and sub-contractors for bids on supplies, services, and equipment.
- Identify workforce training programs hosted by the proposed project and/or nearby organizations to foster improved access to jobs for members of the community, including individuals underrepresented in relevant industries and those facing barriers to employment.
- Support quality pre-apprenticeship programs in the local community to improve access to career-track training and jobs for underrepresented workers, including returning citizens.
- Participate in High Road Workforce Partnerships that include community-based organizations, local government, and union programs that serve populations with barriers to employment.
- Plans to include information and commitments for hiring, retention, contracting, collaboration, and workforce development.



Tips for Advancing DEIA

1. Assess current state of DEIA from internal and external perspectives (within the community)
2. Integrate DEIA into the company's goals, mission, and strategic plan
3. Partner with local organizations that can attract, train, and support underrepresented populations and underserved communities
4. Consider DEIA when sourcing suppliers, vendors, and contractors
5. Ensure suppliers, contractors, and vendors are also advancing DEIA
6. Set specific, measurable goals for participating with MBEs and diversifying supplier base.



Photo by Werner Slocum / NREL

EXAMPLE

3.0 DIVERSITY, EQUITY INCLUSION, AND ACCESSIBILITY

[ORGANIZATION] will lead [LEAD ORG]'s DEIA approach, leveraging their DEIA strategic frameworks. Their commitment to social justice and racial equity is substantiated through multiple DEIA-related awards. [LEAD ORG] will seek innovative ways to strengthen DEIA throughout our workforce, supply chain, and the communities we serve.

3.1 Background and Experience

We will leverage [ORGANIZATION]'s DEIA program and their extensive outreach with partners, such as [DIVERSE COMMUNITY ORGS].

3.2 Strategies, Milestones, and Timelines

[LEAD ORG] will implement a DEIA culture by attracting, engaging, and retaining a diverse workforce; creating an inclusive workplace; and doing business with diverse suppliers.

Attract, Engage, and Retain a Diverse Workforce. Agrivoltaic Partners will also team with [UNIVERSITY], an HBCU, and [TECHNICAL COLLEGE], (located in a DOE-defined DAC) to attract, engage, and employ promising students in their electrical engineering and industrial electrician programs. We will widen the diverse hiring pool through [ORGANIZATION]'s agreement with the Trades and Labor Council which ensures diverse candidates are considered for Trades and Labor entry-level jobs.

and Labor Council which ensures diverse candidates are considered for Trades and Labor entry-level jobs.

Create an Inclusive Workplace Where Everyone is Empowered. To encourage an inclusive workplace, we will encourage participation in Employee Resource Groups (ERGs)—networks of employees formed around a common dimension of diversity aligned with the company's goals and objectives. The ERGs serve as a resource to the company for advocacy and improving customer service through innovation. We will also encourage all team members to provide employee diversity training and increase the visibility of DEIA through internal communications and meetings.

Doing Business with Diverse Suppliers. Our team is committed to awarding 40% of subcontracted dollars to local MBEs and DBEs, flowing this commitment down to subcontractors to ensure that the entire project focuses on enterprise diversity. We will leverage [ORGANIZATION]'s mature supplier diversity program through partnerships with [STATE] Urban League Affiliates, Chambers of Commerce, [STATE] Department of Economic and Community Development, [STATE] Chamber of Commerce and Industry, [STATE] Department of Economic and Community Development, [MINORITY-SERVING COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT ORGS]. [ORG]'s supplier diversity program will mentor team members to position local MBEs/DBEs to compete for contracting opportunities. [ORG]'s list of "Ready Now" small and minority-owned suppliers will be expanded through new supplier contracts. **Figure 7** illustrates our DEIA strategies and timeline. We will measure our small business and diverse business spend every six months and incorporate corrective actions if we are not meeting our goals.

[ORGANIZATION]: COMMITMENT TO DEIA

- 2022 – leading disability employer by the National Organization on Disability
- 2022 – top 10 military friendly employer
- 2022 – Diversity Impact Awards™ top 10
- Forbes America's Top 15 Employer – for the fourth consecutive year in [STATE]

3.3 Resource Summary

Under the direction of Georgia Caruthers, [ORGANIZATION] will assign an existing DEIA staff member to over-see DEIA activities. This resource will perform DEIA engagement activities, coordinate and communicate DEIA best practices with our partners and contractors, measure our success using metrics, and identify improvement opportunities.

Task	Phase 0	Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3	Phase 4
	Pre-Funding	Plan	Design	Construct	Ramp Up/Sustain
Outcome: 30% of employees hired come from disadvantaged or local rural areas					
Engage with diverse hiring organizations	█	█	█	█	█
Establish DEIA forums to identify hiring barriers	█	█	█	█	█
Establish diversity targets for team members	█	█	█	█	█
Measure Success, Incorporate Improvements	█	█	█	█	█
Outcome: 40% of subcontracted dollars awarded to MBEs/DBEs					
Engage with CBOs supporting supplier diversity	█	█	█	█	█
Flow down subcontracting goals	█	█	█	█	█
Establish small business set-asides	█	█	█	█	█
Hold Supplier Diversity Info Forums	█	█	█	█	█
Measure Success, Incorporate Improvements	█	█	█	█	█

Figure 7: Timeline. Through intentional strategies, we will encourage diverse hiring and contracting.

5. Implementing Justice40

Justice40 Explained

Established by Executive Order 14008, a goal was set that **40% of the overall benefits of certain federal investments flow to disadvantaged communities (DACs).**

The 40% requirement is not on a per-project basis, but successful applicants should demonstrate how their project will advance the intent of the Justice40 initiative.

Disadvantaged communities (DACs), also referred to as "Justice40 communities," are defined by the Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool (CEJST)

This tool characterizes indicators of burden for each U.S. census tract and compares with national thresholds. Burdens are organized into categories:

• Climate change	• Legacy pollution
• Energy	• Transportation
• Health	• Water and wastewater
• Housing	• Workforce development

Methods: <https://screeningtool.geoplatform.gov/en/methodology#3/33.47/-97.5>

Projects should highlight positive impacts to DACs in these areas.

For a list of Justice40 covered programs in the Department of Energy, visit: <https://www.energy.gov/justice/doe-justice40-covered-programs>

Steps for Identifying Justice40 Communities

Refer to published FOA-specific guidance as the most relevant place to understand how to identify disadvantaged communities in the context of each funding opportunity.



1. Understand why communities qualify as DACs
2. Explore [CEJST Map](#)
3. Locate DACs near project site(s)
4. Identify burdens of those communities – health, environment, economic, etc.
5. Examine: how will the project benefit DACs and DAC neighbors?
 1. Decrease energy burden or exposure to environmental harms?
 2. Increase access to clean energy tech?

Section Objective

Note how the team will measure the project's impacts based on Justice40 indicators of burden and dedicate attention and resources to benefit DACs.

Tips

- Detail how and when anticipated benefits will flow to communities
- Indicate metrics and milestones of progress toward benefit delivery
- Involve community-based organizations in identifying, negotiating, or delivering benefits
- Plan for identifying and mitigating any anticipated negative impacts on DACs



Section Components

This section is dedicated to specifying how this body of work, including engagement, workforce, DEIA goals and plans, accounts for positive/negative project impacts on disadvantaged communities using the Justice40 framework.

Justice40 Initiative

- Assess all expected project impacts where and when these impacts will be felt
- Describe how these anticipated impacts will be distributed among different groups
- Define metrics to track and report on benefits and report burdens
- Identify stakeholders involved in executing Justice40 Initiative

Projects do not need to be located within a disadvantaged community to deliver meaningful benefits.

Project impacts can include a wide range of environmental, economic, health, or other social benefits that may accrue across many locations.

For a full list of federal programs covered by the Justice40 Initiative, refer to the [Justice40 Initiative Covered Programs List](#)

Process for CBP

Assess and describe how projects will impact Justice40 goals

- Describe all applicable impacted communities, groups, and Tribal Entities, including data or descriptors for each. Review the community history
- Identify any disadvantaged communities and characterize existing and cumulative burdens these communities or groups are currently facing.
- Assess potential project positive and negative impacts
- Assess how negative impacts interact with existing cumulative burdens
- Assess where / to whom benefits will flow
- Develop strategies and methods to maximize benefits and minimize or mitigate negative impacts

Align with Justice40 priorities:

- Decrease in energy burden
- Decrease in environmental exposure and burden
- Increase in access to low-cost capital
- Increase in quality job creation, clean energy job pipelines, and job training
- Increase in clean energy enterprise creation and contracting (e.g. minority-owned business)
- Increase energy democracy
- Increase parity in clean energy tech
- Increase in energy resilience

Consider impacts throughout lifecycle:

- Material inputs
- Waste stream
- Construction
- Operation
- Decommissioning

Know the Difference

DEIA: Reduces barriers to participation and access to benefits

Justice40: Ensures benefits are distributed to disadvantaged communities

Examples of Justice40 benefits

Climate change benefits:

- Reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions & local air pollutants
- Creation of community resilience plans that specifically include address needs of disadvantaged communities
- Increased technical assistance for disadvantaged communities
- Increased flood mitigation benefits (e.g., hectares of floodplain or wetlands restored, green stormwater infrastructure, urban flood risk mapping addressing socially vulnerable communities and risks)
- Increase urban heat island effect mitigation benefits (e.g., increased acres of greenspace, tree and vegetation cover, sustainable shade)
- Increased access to and advancement of public health warnings (e.g., weather and preparedness messages) in multiple languages

Clean energy and energy efficiency benefits:

- Increased energy efficiency programs and resources
- Deployment of clean energy, renewable community energy projects
- Establishment of community microgrids
- Reduction of energy burden (i.e., the share of household income spent on home energy costs)

Clean transportation benefits:

- Improvement in public transportation accessibility, reliability, and options
- Reduction of exposure to harmful transportation-related emissions
- Access to clean, high-frequency transportation
- Access to affordable electric vehicles, charging stations, and purchase programs
- Increased bicycle and walking paths

Affordable and sustainable housing benefits:

- Availability and access to affordable green housing
- Reduction in displacement
- Improved indoor air quality
- Improved housing quality and safety and enhanced public health
- Reduction in abandoned or vacant homes
- Reduced housing cost burden

EVALUATING THE JUSTICE40 PLAN

- ✓ Is there a clear assessment of communities and locations where anticipated impacts will flow and the degree to which they flow to disadvantaged communities over time?
- ✓ Are the benefits of training and workforce development considered? (see notes)
- ✓ How has remediation and reduction of legacy pollution been included? (see notes)
- ✓ Is there potential development of critical clean water infrastructure involved? (see notes)
- ✓ Does the plan detail specific methods to measure, track, and report impacts related to Justice40?
- ✓ Does the plan describe clear milestones, timelines, roles, and responsibilities?

See slide notes for expanded details of each category of benefits / impacts

4.0 JUSTICE40 INITIATIVE

4.1 Assessment of Impacted Communities and Groups

Site 1: [SITE] This location (Figure 8) serves [COMMUNITIES]. Located within a DAC, this site is also surrounded by DACs in [COMMUNITIES]. This site is also in a rural tract, as de-fined by the Rural-Urban Commuting Area Codes. This location, and surrounding locations, face burdens including coal employment, low income, energy burden, expected agricultural loss, renters, climate hazards loss of life, job access, single parent households, unemployment, disabilities, lack of health insurance, and no internet access.

[COUNTY] and surrounding counties are frequently affected by tornadoes.

Site 2: [SITE].

Although not located in a DAC, this site (Figure 9) is located near DACs in [COMMUNITIES] that face low income, unemployment, low life expectancy, lack of health insurance, flood risk, diabetes, poverty, disabilities, no internet access, housing costs, no vehicle, transportation barriers, and traffic proximity and volume. [COMMUNITY] is increasingly affected by flooding, despite the [ORGANIZATION] dams, due to heavier rainfall trends in the last decade. High-speed winds are also prevalent in [COMMUNITY] with roughly 500 instances of thunderstorm winds over the last 10 years.

Figure 9: [SITE] This site is located near multiple DACs.

Site 3: [SITE]. This site (Figure 10) is defined as a DAC, surrounded by additional DACs, and defined as a rural community by the Rural-Urban Commuting Area Codes. Burdens faced include high transportation costs, energy burdens, less than high school education, low income, transportation barriers, heart disease, high unemployment, and no internet access. [COUNTY] is historically affected by tornadoes, prevalent high wind speeds and frequent thunderstorms.

4.2 Assessment of Project Benefits

Across the three sites, our projects will deliver environmental, economic, and social benefits, many applicable to the DOE's Justice40 initiatives (Figure 11).

Key Benefit	Impact and Metrics
Decreased energy burden	For [COUNTY], the project will reduce the cost of solar and storage 60+%. [LEAD ORG] will also provide remote farmers options for self-generation, through training.



Figure 8: [SITE]. This site is designated as a DAC by the DOE's BETA and CEJST.



Figure 10: [SITE]. This site is designated as a DAC by the CEJST, and DOE's BETA.

EXAMPLE

Key Benefit	Impact and Metrics
Decreased environmental exposure and burdens	The project will result in approximately 71,000 tons of CO ₂ reduction over its lifetime. Reductions in NO _x and SO _x will also occur. Additionally, agrivoltaic concepts will reduce water usage and improve soil quality in all counties. This will be significant to [COUNTY] that has historically low levels of soil moisture and is affected by drought.
Increased parity in clean energy technology access/adoption	This project will place disadvantaged rural communities in a stronger position to deploy clean energy technologies such as solar and batteries. The workforce, landowner, and rural coop education will close the gap with more highly resourced urban communities.
Increased contracting for MBEs/DBEs	A minimum of 40% of total subcontracting dollars to local MBEs and DBEs.
Increased high-quality clean energy jobs, job pipeline, and job training	Our project will result in 140+ quality jobs in counties near our three project sites. As rural farmers adopt agrivoltaics, additional local construction and solar installation jobs will be created. The project will also result in the development of career pathways as local universities, community colleges, technical schools, unions, and industry incorporate agrivoltaics into their curriculum and training programs.
Increased energy resiliency	Battery and microgrid deployments will improve resiliency in [COUNTIES], where outages occur frequently due to long transmission and distribution lines.
Increased energy democracy	The Advisory Board will have a strong voice in project deployment and will help to grow grassroots capacity for organizing and influencing energy policy in the region.
Increased economic resilience	Co-location of solar power and agricultural production can increase and diversify returns to farmers and rural landowners. Agrivoltaics has the potential to supplement the income of farmers through Power Purchase Agreements and improved crop production outcomes, creating more financial stability for farmers. Additionally, improved reliability and power quality can attract industry and improve job prospects for rural workers.

Figure 11: Benefits. The benefits of our project will flow directly to rural and disadvantaged communities.

4.3 Assessment of Project Negative Impacts

The local potential impacts of the project are minimal (Figure 12). We will determine additional impacts as part of our NEPA review.

SITE	Impacts
[SITE]	Will not remove any adjacent forest or result in a significant change to the landscape. Dust suppression, sedimentation, and erosion control will minimize impacts to air and water quality. Existing transportation system is sufficient to support construction and operation. Construction noise levels will be consistent with local noise levels from adjacent industrial activity. Low risk of public controversy regarding the proposed project.
[SITE]	Does not contain or abut forested land. Land disturbance is anticipated to be minor and temporary. Dust suppression, sedimentation, and erosion control will minimize impacts to air and water quality. Construction noise levels will be isolated to the Agricultural Campus. Existing transportation system is sufficient to support construction and operation. Low risk of public concern.
[SITE]	[ORG] has performed fieldwork and is conducting an environmental assessment (EA) to consider purchasing power from the proposed [FACILITY]. All EA-identified biological and cultural resources will require avoidance. The EA will assess other environmental, social, and transportation related impacts. [ORG] will issue a 30-day public comment period for the draft EA. The proposed agrivoltaic actions would be tiered from the EA at the categorical exclusion level under NEPA.

Figure 12: Potential Impacts on Our Project Sites. With minimal negative impacts, our project will provide significant benefits as the solar panels displace fossil generation, and inter-row farming provides food and enables better soil, water, and wildlife outcomes.

4.4 Implementation Plan, Milestones, and Timelines

Figure 13 provides our implementation Plan, milestones, and timelines.

Justice40 Implementation Activities, Milestones, and Timelines	
SMART Milestone 1: Updated Phase 1 J40 Implementation Plan to maximize benefits and minimize negative impacts by aligning CBP section milestones and finalized project information.	Timeline: Months 1-3; Deliverable: Updated Phase 1 J40 Implementation Plan
Milestone Verification Method: Complete an updated J40 Implementation Plan based on finalized project information within 90 days of award date. Identify specific metrics for measuring positive and negative impacts including project, location, and community specific information, identify potential new J40 priorities, and identify, update, and align engagement, WFD, and DEIA milestones and metrics.	
SMART Milestone 2: Measure, track, and report J40 project impacts (positive and negative)	Timeline: Months 3-6; Deliverable: J40 impacts tracking process
Milestone Verification Method: Develop methodologies, standard operating procedures, and process for tracking J40 metrics; include community input to align J40 activities; launch process to continuously measure, track and report on J40 metrics and impacts.	
SMART Milestone 3: Reporting on Phase 1 impacts, benefit flows, and information gaps	Timeline: Months 11-12; Deliverable: Updated J40 Assessment for future phases
Milestone Verification Method: Receive and track updates on metrics, gather and analyze data and metrics for positive and negative impacts of project, develop flow diagram of positive and negative impacts, identify information gaps and activities to mitigate gaps, and report Phase 1 metrics.	
SMART Milestone 4: Measure, track, and report J40 project impacts (positive and negative)	Timeline: Months 12-13; Deliverable: J40 impact process launched
Milestone Verification Method: Reassess and verify J40 assessment info based on Phase 1 assessments.	
SMART Milestone 5: Update J40 Implementation Plan for Phase 2 (Continue for remaining phases)	Timeline: Months 12-13; Deliverable: J40 Implementation Plan for Phase 2
Milestone Verification Method: Collect updated strategies, milestones, and metrics based on Phase 1 progress, successes and lessons learned. Align updated community engagement, priorities, and project positive and negative impacts, and update J40 Implementation Plan.	

Figure 13: J40 Implementation Plan. Our plan includes milestones, metrics, and progress evaluation.

4.5 Addressing Barriers

Figure 14 illustrates potential barriers and [ORG's] mitigation approach.

Potential Barrier	Mitigation
Local solar moratoria	Some rural communities have enacted solar moratoria due to poor public opinion. This project is aimed specifically at finding win-win solutions. Strong and inclusive public engagement will overcome issues that have impacted other similar developments.
Interconnect queue issues	The [SITE] has gone through the [ORG] interconnection queue and has an interconnect agreement. The [SITE] is developed by a distributor and has no queue. The [SITE] will be added to the KUB interconnection queue upon grant award.
Supply chain issues	Both [SOLAR COMPANIES] have long-term relationships with panel suppliers that can help buffer shocks to the supply chain.
Conflicts between solar and agriculture	Several different panel configurations and cropping schemes are being deployed at the sites to discover the most practical and profitable agricultural treatment for the sites.

Figure 14. Potential Barriers and Mitigation. We will use community-driven strategies to identify mitigations.

4.6 Resource Summary

[ORGA] will contract with [SUBCONTRACTOR] for J40 oversight. [SUB] is a research non-profit that focuses on fostering equitable and sustainable futures for lower-income populations. Their focus is community-driven initiatives throughout the [REGION] that advance transformative social outcomes for historically underserved individuals and populations.

Recap:

Developing and Evaluating a CBP

Set SMART goals.

In all areas as possible, outcomes and implementation strategies should follow SMART goal criteria. **SMART** goals are Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-Bound. Using this framework will demonstrate that the project team is taking a structured approach to help ensure the effectiveness and goals—for the project as a whole and for each section— by providing specific methods to track and report progress. **SMART** goals are:

- **Specific**: Goals should be clear and unambiguous, and clearly answer the questions: What needs to be accomplished? Why is it important? Who is involved? Where will it happen?
- **Measurable**: Include quantifiable ways to measure progress and determine when the goal has been achieved. Use concrete criteria and metrics to track progress.
- **Achievable**: Goals should be realistic and attainable, challenging but not impossible.
- **Relevant**: Goals should align with broader objectives and established priorities. Efforts to achieve goals should contribute to the larger mission or strategy.
- **Time-Bound**: Set clear timeframes or deadlines to achieve goals and milestones to motivate action and effective time management.

Consider all impacts. Ask what can be done.

What is the context for the project? What work is already underway in the community impacted by the project?

- Who are the communities appropriate to engage with? Is anyone being overlooked?
- Is it clear which unions, labor groups, or job sectors should be involved in labor and project planning?
- What partnerships already exist? Which need cultivating?
- How are questions of impact discussed and addressed in the proposal?

What is the jurisdiction of the project team?

- Will staff be hired for the project?
- Does the project commit to a CBA or other labor agreements?

Is equity and inclusion woven throughout the project goals, implementation, and accountability strategies?

- Does this work serve the needs of disadvantaged communities?
- Is DEIA considered within specific engagement and workforce plans, along each project stage?

Every FOA will specify *which CBP components are required*. You **DO NOT** always have to include all elements listed in this guidance. Applicants should always refer and defer to published guidance for the program to which they are applying.

CBP Drafters: Get started!

- Build those relationships now – don't wait!
- Follow the criteria! Include every section and requested details listed in the FOA CBP requirements
- Focus on meaningful engagement with communities, considering the people, economies, and jobs impacted directly and indirectly at every stage of the process. Demonstrate that in the CBP format

CBP Reviewers: Get started!

- Familiarize yourself with FOA criteria!
- Understand what individual sections the FOA require and specific requirements under any or all major component(s)
- Make sure the CPB focuses on meaningful engagement with communities, considering the people, economies, and jobs impacted directly and indirectly at every stage of the process
- Provide CBP drafters and project teams with feedback and incentives which weave DEIA throughout project plans, promote long-term success for communities, and minimize harm



Thank You

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Appendix

Acronyms Guide

CBP	Community Benefits Plan
CBA	Community Benefits Agreement
PLA	Project Labor Agreement
DEIA	Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility
DOE	Department of Energy
BIL	Bipartisan Infrastructure Law
IRA	Inflation Reduction Act
FOA	Funding Opportunity Announcement
BIA	Bureau of Indian Affairs
MBE	Minority Business Enterprise
CEJST	Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool
DAC	Disadvantaged Community

Supplemental Materials

Links to tools:

Understand community impacts & enhance CBPs

EJ Mapping Tool – Disadvantaged Communities Reporter

<https://energyjustice.egs.anl.gov/>

- Explore and report on census tracts by Disadvantaged Community status

EJ Screen - Environmental and public health impacts:

<https://www.epa.gov/ejscreen>

- Preliminary step to consider environmental and public health impacts

LEAD – Low-income Energy Affordability Data Tool

<https://www.energy.gov/scep/slsc/lead-tool>

- Energy affordability baseline

SLOPE – State and Local Planning for Energy Platform

<https://maps.nrel.gov/slope>

- Broad set of data useful for CBP and holistic energy planning

American Community Survey - Census Bureau

<https://data.census.gov>

- Comprehensive, systematic socioeconomic demographic data for U.S. over time

Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy (CHAS) - HUD

<https://www.huduser.gov/portal/datasets/cp.html>

- Demonstrates the extent of housing problems and housing needs, particularly low income

Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool

<https://screeningtool.geoplatform.gov/en/#3/33.47/-97.5>

- Defines disadvantaged census tracts based off classifications of overburdened and underserved

Engagement Resources

Partnering for Inclusion: Recruitment Strategies for Deliberate Conversations, Colorado State University Center for Public Deliberation (2017): <https://cpd.colostate.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/48/2017/07/Stakeholder-Recruitment-McMonagle.pdf>

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Read more about Justice40, including the interim guidance from the White House:
<https://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/briefing-room/2021/07/20/the-path-to-achieving-justice40/> and <https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/M-21-28.pdf>