



# Fund our future

## The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law

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Congress passed the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) at the end of 2021 as a down payment on the nation's climate infrastructure needs. More than \$60 billion in federal funds will be awarded through [competitive grants to cities, towns and municipalities](#)\* for projects ranging from repairing damaged lands to reducing energy use, mitigating the risk of flooding from climate change, growing a more sustainable transportation system, modernizing our electric grid and making it smarter with broadband.

Local governments, advocates, and everyday people will need to work together to ensure priority climate infrastructure projects are in line for funding and that the jobs created pay living wages and offer new job opportunities for underserved communities. By advocating that publicly-funded infrastructure projects use [labor and community standards](#) — such as the project labor agreements, on-the-job training requirements and targeted hiring programs — we can maximize the benefits to communities from these climate infrastructure projects. With the right approach, we can simultaneously address the fundamental and structural issues of climate change, poverty, and race equity.

BlueGreen Alliance, a coalition of labor unions and environmental organizations, put together a [helpful user guide](#) to the legislation that

highlights a number of the policies and programs in the law, including manufacturing and industrial transformation, rail and public transit, labor and equity standards, drinking and wastewater, broadband, transportation electrification and electrical grid modernization.

To encourage state and local officials to maximize the benefits of these federal resources, the Biden administration's "[Good Jobs Initiative](#)" promotes the use of these resources in ways that create good union jobs and pathways into those jobs for underserved communities. With its [RAISE grant program](#), the federal Department of Transportation demonstrated how the good jobs initiative will be applied in awarding competitive grants, by giving priority to projects that reduce

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greenhouse gases, include strong community and labor standards, hire union workers, and build a more inclusive economy by bringing more working people of color and women into high-road jobs.

This likely means that for communities to be competitive under the guidelines of President Biden’s Good Jobs Initiative, state and local officials will need to work with union, racial justice and environmental leaders as they develop their project proposals. They would also do well to adopt procurement practices designed to [get the best value for their public dollar](#).

Best-value contracting practices are designed to help a community choose project proposals that deliver the overall best value to that community. The process typically involves a scoring system that accounts not only for project costs but also community benefits. For example, union contractors typically pay higher wages, offer better benefits, and do higher quality work than non-union contractors. That adds value to the community from the project over the long run. On-the-job training opportunities for [apprentices and pre-apprentices](#) will be essential to communities for building the future workforce to include people of all backgrounds, providing several community benefits over the long haul.

You can find best practices for maximizing community benefits [here](#) and [here](#).

Just as the Good Jobs Initiative is helping maximize the infrastructure bill’s impact, federal, state and local leaders can do even more by including “buy local” provisions in

funded projects. Doing so will help ensure Ohio continues to play a central role in the supply chain for new sustainable industries, like manufacturing electric vehicles and their component parts; producing alternatives to single-use plastics and growing the feedstock for bioplastics in the region; and playing a central role in battery technology development. Buying local also means creating good manufacturing jobs and a shorter supply chain, fewer points for disruption, and less need to transport goods across great distances—reducing associated transportation costs and greenhouse gas emissions.

Key areas of BIL funding include the following project areas:

- Sustainable Transportation
- Modernizing Energy Systems
- Growing Clean and Efficient Manufacturing
- Broadband
- Repairing Damaged Lands
- Clean Water Infrastructure
- Appalachian Development
- Regenerative Agriculture

**[Learn more in this comprehensive Guidebook to the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law for State, Local, Tribal, and Territorial Governments, and Other Partners.](#)**