

Realizing Equitable Community-based Climate and Clean Energy Investments

Angelina Benson-Glanz, Elevate

ACEEE Summer Study on Energy Efficiency in Buildings

August 24, 2022



Justice40

Accelerator

Communities at the frontlines of the climate crisis have wisdom and sustainable solutions to mitigate the impacts of climate change.

www.justice40accelerator.org

Justice40 Accelerator Core Partners



ELEVATE is a national nonprofit that designs and implements programs focused on co-creating a just and equitable world in which everyone has clean and affordable heat, power, and water in their homes and communities—no matter who they are or where they live.



PARTNERSHIP FOR SOUTHERN EQUITY advances policies and institutional actions that promote racial equity and shared prosperity for all in the growth of metropolitan Atlanta and the American South.



GROUNDSWELL builds community power with community solar projects and resilience centers, clean energy programs that reduce energy burdens, and pioneering research initiatives that help light the way to equitable clean energy futures for all.



THE SOLUTIONS PROJECT is a national nonprofit promoting climate justice through grantmaking and through amplifying the stories of front-line community leaders—especially women of color—in the media.

Hummingbird



HUMMINGBIRD FIRM is a community-engagement consulting firm specializing in face-to-face and digital public involvement, environmental communications, climate action, and cultural competency training.

Justice40 Initiative

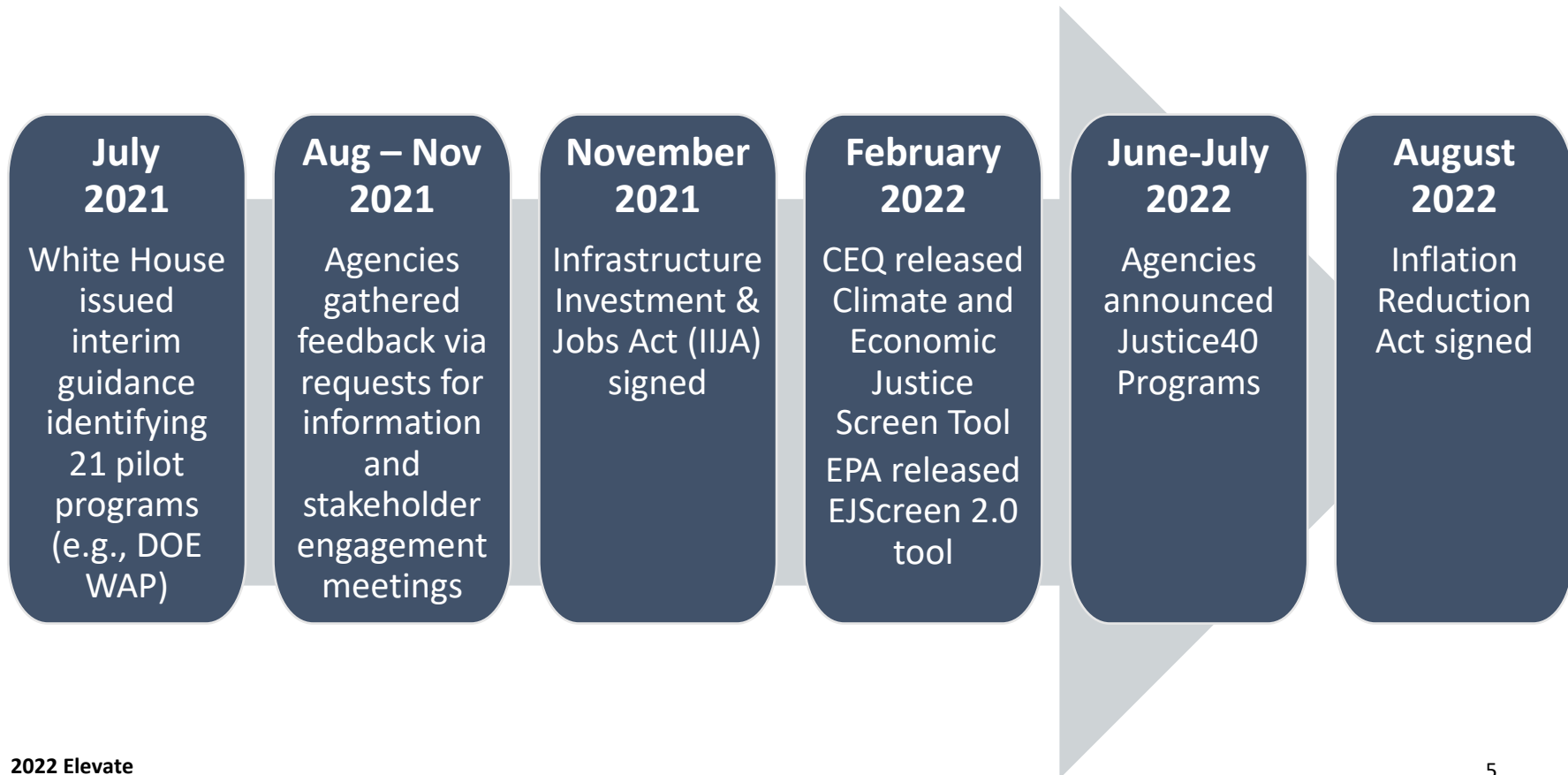
January 27, 2021: President Biden signed Executive Order 14008 “Tackling the Climate Crisis at Home and Abroad”, which created the Justice40 Initiative.

The Justice40 Initiative is a whole-of-government approach to **deliver 40% of the “benefits”** of federal climate and clean energy investments **to “disadvantaged” communities** —including investments in:

- clean energy and energy efficiency
- clean transit
- affordable and sustainable housing
- training and workforce development
- remediation and reduction of legacy pollution
- clean water & wastewater infrastructure



»» Federal Justice40 Initiative Timeline



A community meeting is taking place in a large brick hall. A woman stands at the front, addressing a group of people seated in folding chairs. The room is decorated with colorful Mexican paper flags (papel picado) hanging from the ceiling. A banner on the left reads "Bowlathon LUCKY STRIKE LA LIVE NOVEMBER 4 FROM 11:00AM-3:00PM". A sign on the wall says "FIX OUR HOMES". Whiteboards with handwritten notes are visible in the background. A large white circular graphic on the right contains the text: "The Federal Justice40 Initiative is a pivotal opportunity for investment, reparation, and restoration of communities."

The Federal Justice40 Initiative is a pivotal opportunity for investment, reparation, and restoration of communities.

Justice40 Accelerator


The Justice40 Accelerator directly supports climate and environmental justice organizations in building their **capacity, partnerships, and readiness to access government funding** to implement community-designed solutions.




Photo: Shelterwood Collective, Inaugural 2021 Cohort

»» Approach


LISTEN & LEARN through a national listening series (19 sessions) to hear from frontline leaders on their community goals and share information about the Justice40 Initiative. *(May – June 2021)*



FORM A COHORT OF LEADERS from 52 organizations selected from 320 applicants based on their ability to benefit and accountability to community. *(June – August 2021)*



DESIGN AND IMPLEMENT A RESPONSIVE PROGRAM by meeting one-on-one with cohort organizations to understand their needs and design an emergent and responsive program – now underway. *(September 2021 – Ongoing)*



GATHER FEEDBACK from cohort organizations through a mid-program survey and regular check-ins to ensure needs are met, technical assistance is high quality, and understand emergent needs. *(Feb 2022 – Ongoing)*

»» Program Offering & Initial Implementation

Phase 1

- \$25,000 in Unrestricted Grant Funding
- Tailored Funding Opportunities
- Federal Agency Listening and Learning Sessions

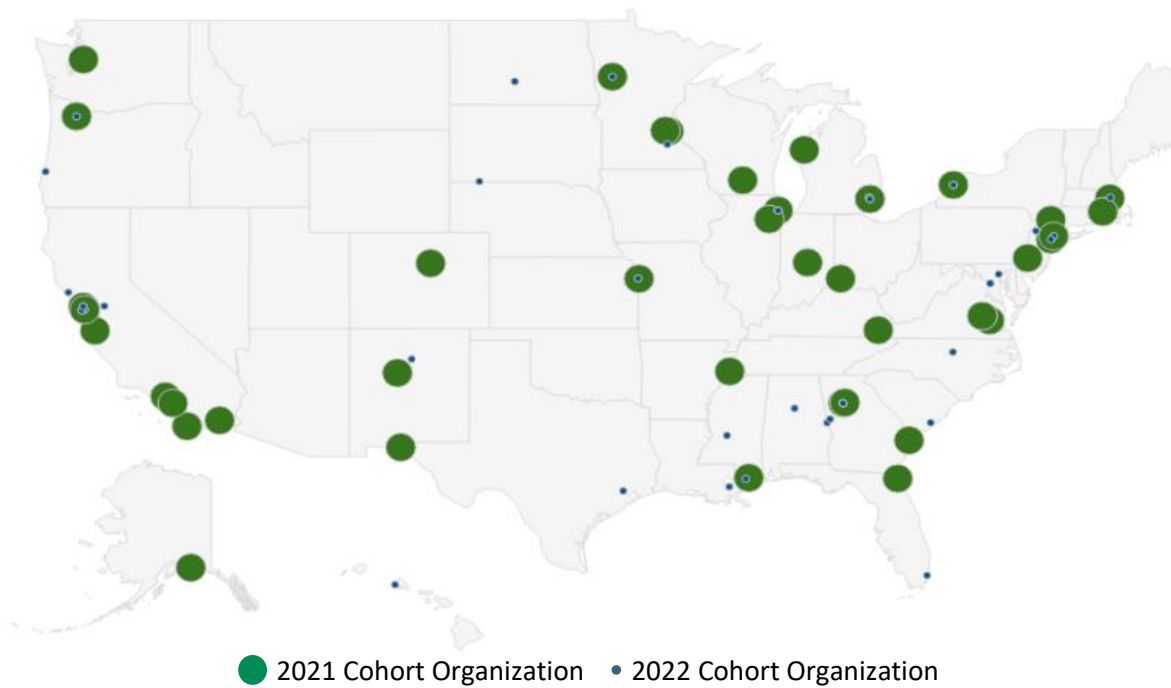
Phase 2

- Monthly Workshops & Trainings (e.g., State & Federal Grant Management)
- Peer Learning Opportunities

Phase 3

- One-on-one Program Navigator Support
- Technical Assistance (e.g., grant advisors, subject-matter experts)

» Inaugural 2021 Cohort of 52 Organizations + Recently Announced 2022 Cohort of 49 Orgs



Projects intersect climate, environmental, racial, economic, and social justice:

- Agriculture/Food Systems
- Climate Resilience Hubs
- Energy
- Green Infrastructure
- Sustainable Housing
- Toxins
- Transit
- Workforce Development

»» Early Successes - \$10.8 million in awards to date

- 27 organizations have received / are receiving technical assistance.
(The technical assistance network consists of 17 approved providers with conversations underway with 20 additional providers.)
- 19 organizations have been awarded over \$10.8 million in federal, state and philanthropic funding and technical assistance over the past year.
- 10 organizations are awaiting news of their applications, totaling over \$3,000,000.
- 4 organizations are working on applications currently.

Justice40 Accelerator Cohort Highlight: Green Door Initiative (Detroit, MI)

- **Award:** DOE Inclusive Energy Innovation Prize – \$200,000 + Technical Assistance
- **Project Focus Areas:** Increase access to solar energy in affordable housing and create jobs installing and maintaining solar panels particularly for those who are formerly incarcerated and reentering into society



Photo Credits: AP Photo by Carlos Osorio and Green Door Initiative

»» Learnings So Far

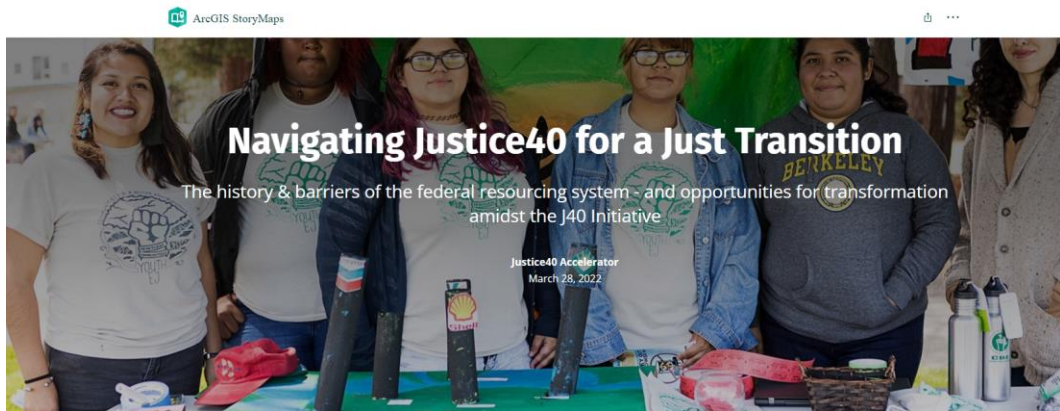
Barriers

- Identifying funding opportunities
- Eligibility
- Application requirements
- Required matching funds
- Administrative policies, processes, and procedures
- Negotiating awards
- Covering start-up costs
- Resources for financial systems to manage reporting and audits

- Organizations are at different starting points.
- Technical assistance is highly valued.
- Partnerships and collaborations are key.
- State funding opportunities and engaging with state agencies is even more important now as IIJA and IRA funding flows.

“Transformative investments must be made in capacity building, technical assistance, and consultation, and creating a user-friendly federal process for the administration of funding and other support.” -WHEJAC (2021)

Resource: Justice40 StoryMap



Partnership for Southern Equity developed the [Navigating Justice40 for a Just Transition StoryMap](#) to share:

- Barriers faced when accessing government funding
- Why the Justice40 Initiative is necessary
- Opportunities for overcoming systemic barriers in order to effectively address environmental injustice

"The Justice40 StoryMap recognizes the long history of systemic barriers that BIPOC community-led organizations fighting for environmental justice face in navigating the federal funding system. The Justice40 Initiative and the Justice40 Accelerator are both major moments in the long movement we have ahead to ensure the commitment of resources made to our organizations are fully realized."

**Michelle Luu,
Development Coordinator
Faith in Place**

»» Recommendations: Energy & Climate Professionals

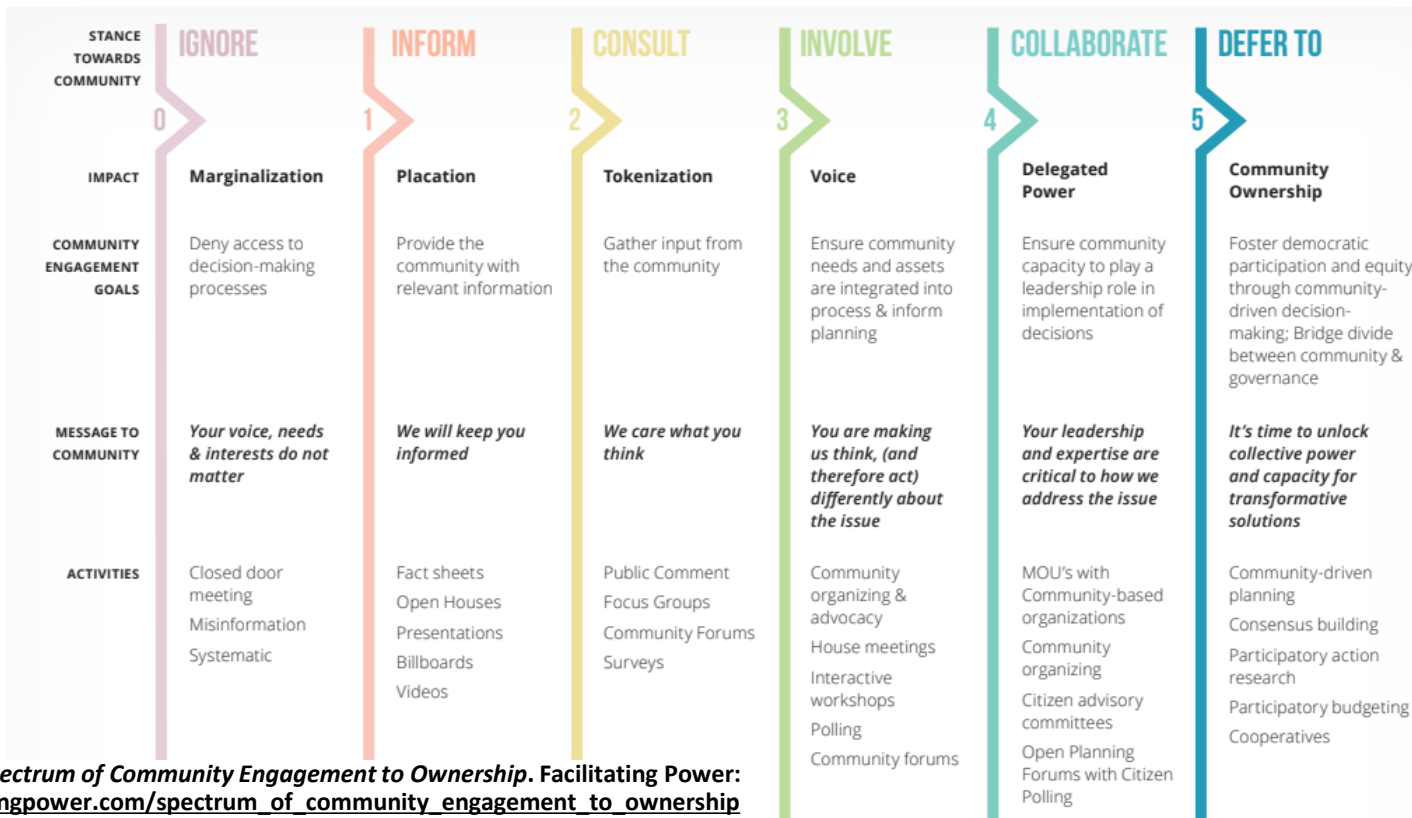
- Engage communities authentically and build non-extractive, trust-based relationships.
- Support community-driven planning processes and decision-making to develop solutions that meet the needs of the community.
- Leverage social and political capital to uplift community voices and share power, resources, relationships, and expertise while honoring the lived experience of community members and leaders.
- Design and implement energy programs with communities and centering community needs.

Authentic Community Engagement

THE SPECTRUM OF COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT TO OWNERSHIP



2



Source: *The Spectrum of Community Engagement to Ownership*. Facilitating Power:
www.facilitatingpower.com/spectrum_of_community_engagement_to_ownership

»» Recommendations: Government

- Build authentic, on-going relationships and partnerships with organizations in communities, leveraging regional office leadership.
- Deepen community engagement to move towards community driven planning and decision-making.
- Eliminate cost share requirements for nonprofits serving historically disinvested communities and address other administrative barriers.
- Create capacity-building, technical assistance, and funding opportunities tailored specifically for community-based organizations.

»» Recommendations: Philanthropy

- Increase visibility of community-driven projects.
- Invest in organizational capacity-building and technical assistance.
- Provide project predevelopment and match funding.

»» Thank you!

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Imagine: What might we restore, learn, create and accomplish together by supporting and investing in communities?