

PRESIDENT JOE BIDEN

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Bipartisan Infrastructure Law Rural Playbook:

A roadmap for delivering opportunity and investments in rural America

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The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law will invest billions of dollars in rural communities across the country. Supporting Americans living in rural areas remains a top priority for the Biden Administration, and the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law delivers on the President’s promises to work toward delivering affordable, high-speed internet, safe roads and bridges, modern wastewater systems, clean drinking water, reliable and affordable electricity, and good paying jobs in every rural community. In an effort to deliver on these promises, the Biden Administration is committed to improving transparency into the availability of federal infrastructure resources to support rural communities’ ability to access these critical funds.

This playbook is intended to help rural communities understand the available funding for infrastructure provided by the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and other sources – offering information on the “what, where, and how” to apply for federal infrastructure dollars. Specifically, this playbook:

- (1) Identifies programs and sources of funds set aside for rural communities under the law.** Over 60 percent of the funding in the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law will be distributed via formulas to states and other recipients – while a subset of the remaining funds are available directly to communities via discretionary grants. A number of programs have specific portions of formula funds or competitive grants that are reserved for rural and disadvantaged communities, which the federal government either provides directly to communities or to intermediaries, like states, to distribute funding. The below list provides an overview of the key programs most relevant to rural communities with links to their application pages or department websites. Where able or applicable, the list also notes when funding opportunities will either become available or are already available.

- (2) **Provides an overview of key flexibilities and other benefits available to rural communities under the law** such as waivers for matching requirements. As part of this effort, 7 key federal agencies have published rural factsheets that highlight how to leverage agency resources and capabilities to help rural communities. Links to their factsheets can be found on [Build.gov/rural](https://www.build.gov/rural) for more information. The appendix of this document also includes a list of nearly 100 programs funded under the law where there are no matching requirements for communities who apply for or receive funding.

Provide high speed internet to every rural home and business

More than 35 percent of rural Americans and Tribal communities lack wired access to broadband at acceptable speeds. The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law invests \$65 billion to help make high-speed internet available to all Americans, to bring down high-speed internet prices across the board, to provide people with the tools they need to close the digital divide, and to provide technical assistance to rural and other communities seeking to expand broadband. Key programs include:

- *Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment Program* – This new \$42.5 billion program at the Department of Commerce (DOC), which is administered by the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA), provides states and territories with funds to plan and implement projects that will deliver high speed internet to unserved and underserved areas, including rural areas. The program guidelines (Notice of Funding Opportunity) will be released in the second quarter of 2022 and will provide instructions to States and Territories on how to participate in the program and request funding. Project matching requirements (25%) can be waived in certain cases. More information on this program is available [here](#).
- *ReConnect Program* – The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law provides \$1.9 billion to the ReConnect program at the Department of Agriculture (USDA) which offers loans, grants, and other funds directly to states, territories, local governments, Tribes, cooperatives, non-profits, and certain for-profit entities to build infrastructure and install equipment to provide high-speed internet service in rural communities. Tribes, Alaska Native Corporations, and projects serving persistent poverty counties and socially vulnerable communities receive waivers for matching funds requirement. Priority is given to projects based, in part, on the rurality of a proposed area, economic need of the community, and existing limited service. Funds cover the cost of construction, improvement, or acquisition of facilities and equipment needed to provide broadband service capable of delivering 100/20 Mbps service. Applications will open in the third quarter of 2022. Learn more about how to apply [here](#).

- *Middle Mile Grants Program* – This \$1 billion-dollar DOC program, administered by NTIA, funds the construction, improvement, or acquisition of middle mile infrastructure to reduce the cost of connecting unserved and underserved areas to the internet backbone. NTIA will release the Notice of Funding Opportunity and open up the application window for this program in the second quarter of 2022. More information about this competitive grant program is available [here](#).
- *Digital Equity Grants* - DOC's NTIA is administering three, sequenced, digital equity grant programs to fund initiatives that promote digital inclusion and equity to ensure that all individuals and communities have the skills, technology, and capacity needed to reap the full benefits of our digital economy. The goal of these programs is to promote the meaningful adoption and use of broadband services across the targeted populations in the Act, including rural communities. The first program, *State Digital Equity Planning*, is a \$60 million formula grant program to for states and territories to develop digital equity plans. This program will be launched in the second quarter of 2022. After states and territories develop their respective Digital Equity Plans, NTIA will launch the *State Digital Equity Capacity Grant Program*, a \$1.44 billion formula grant program for states and territories. These funds will be distributed via annual grant programs over 5 years to implement digital equity projects and support the implementation of digital equity plans. After NTIA makes awards in the State Digital Equity Capacity Grant Program, NTIA will release the Notice of Funding Opportunity for the *Digital Equity Competitive Grant Program*. This is a \$1.25 billion discretionary grant program distributed vial annual grant programs over 5 years to implement digital equity projects. Eligible applicants include specific types of political subdivision, agency, or instrumentality of a state; tribal governments; nonprofit entities; community anchor institutions; local educational agencies; and entities that carry out workforce development programs. More information on these programs can be found [here](#).
- *Tribal Connectivity Broadband Program* - Commerce's NTIA will administer an additional \$2 billion in funds to tribal governments to be used for broadband deployment on tribal lands, as well as for telehealth, distance learning, broadband affordability, and digital inclusion. The Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021 initially established this program with \$1 billion in grant funds.
- *Affordable Connectivity Program* – The Affordable Connectivity Program, administered by the Federal Communications Commission, provides eligible lower-income households with a discount of up to \$30 per month (up to \$75/month on Tribal lands) toward internet services – as well as a one-time discount of up to \$100 to purchase a laptop, desktop, or tablet. Eligible households include those with household income at or below 200% of the federal poverty level; those with at least one member eligible to participate in the National School Lunch Program, including through the USDA Community Eligibility Provision; and those with or at least one member that receives benefits

through SNAP, WIC, SSI, Medicaid, and other federal assistance programs, are eligible for the benefit. See more information on how families can obtain this benefit [here](#).

To get ready to apply for and deploy the Department of Commerce funding, rural communities should begin to work with their state legislators and state infrastructure coordinators to solidify partnerships required to improve connectivity across the state. (Please note that such a partnership is not required for the ReConnect Program and that any interested applicant can directly apply to USDA.) Communities can currently use American Rescue Plan (ARP) funds for broadband deployment to get started now, including:

- \$350 billion in State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds, administered by the Department of the Treasury (Treasury), which state, Tribal, and local governments can use to make internet more affordable and to fund deployment to new areas, helping rural communities respond to the negative economic impacts of the pandemic and meeting the necessary investments to expand affordable access to broadband. Learn more about this program via the Treasury's frequently asked questions resources [here](#).
- Broadband deployment projects and digital connectivity projects are eligible uses for funding from the \$10 billion Capital Projects Program, administered by Treasury and funded by the American Rescue Plan. Each State has been allocated more than \$100 million, each Territory has been allocated more than \$14 million, and each Tribal government has been allocated \$167,000 under the Capital Projects Program. Learn more about this program via Treasury's frequently asked questions resources [here](#).

Create good-paying jobs that clean up pollution in rural communities

We can create good-paying jobs in rural America, create space for new economic opportunities, *and* improve the health, safety, and quality of life of rural Americans by working to clean up hazardous sites and pollution. The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law funded four key programs that will create jobs cleaning up rural communities:

- *Orphan Oil & Gas Well Program* - The Department of the Interior (DOI) launched a \$4.7 billion program to plug, remediate, and restore polluted and dangerous orphan well sites across the country – places where industry extracted resources like oil and natural gas then abandoned the site. The program has already made \$1.15 billion available to states to clean up sites. States will have access to up to \$25 million in initial grants this spring and a larger tranche of formula funds later this year. Learn more about eligible states and the ways you can inform your state's decisions regarding which well sites to address [here](#).

- *Abandoned Mine Land Reclamation Program* - DOI has announced [nearly \\$725 million](#) in Bipartisan Infrastructure Law funding for 22 states and the Navajo Nation to reclaim abandoned coal mine lands, and create good-paying union jobs in the process. This funding is part of a total of nearly \$11.3 billion in funding that the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law will provide over 15 years to help communities reclaim old mines, clean up polluted streams, and rebuild on sites contaminated by past coal mining. The Administration is committed to ensuring that coal miners and other workers who lost their jobs due to the closure of mining operations in these areas have an opportunity to benefit from jobs created by reclaiming abandoned mine lands. Learn more about the program, which is housed within DOI's Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement, and how it will create jobs [here](#).
- *Superfund sites* - This past December, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) announced \$1 billion to initiate cleanup and clear the backlog of 49 previously unfunded Superfund sites and to accelerate cleanup at dozens of other sites across the country. [73 million Americans](#), including millions of Americans in small towns and rural areas, live near a superfund site.
- *Brownfields* - The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law invests more than \$1.5 billion through EPA's brownfields program that invests in assessment and cleanup. Potential applicants for brownfields grants should become familiar with application guidelines and determine which priority sites are eligible for funding. Learn more about EPA technical assistance opportunities for these grants [here](#). Of the overall investment, \$30 million will be invested into future Brownfields Job Training grants that will help trained individuals access jobs created through brownfields revitalization activities within their communities.

Potential applicants for these funds should begin to inventory sites and launch community-led stakeholder engagement sessions to determine eligibility for funding remediation work, as well as assess the needs of the local workforce from a training standpoint, so jobs created by these projects can employ members of affected communities.

For the Abandoned Mine Lands Reclamation program, consider starting discussions with communities, watershed groups, and recreation interests, such as fishing groups with knowledge of polluted local streams, to identify acid mine drainage problems that may be newly eligible for funding given the broader allowable uses of Bipartisan Infrastructure Law funding. And for orphan wells, communities should work with state geologic surveys and/or oil and gas regulators to identify other areas that may need to be inventoried for orphaned wells, as well as document and report any known sites to the agency in their state that is leading cleanup efforts (*Note: Agencies that administer funds vary by state – e.g. the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection, or the Texas Railroad Commission, which lead plugging, capping, and remediation work*

on orphaned wells in their respective states – learn more about who is responsible in your state at the Interstate Oil & Gas Compact Commission [website](#)).

Deliver a historic investment in improving rural Americans' transportation options

Limited access to transportation options in rural and remote areas impairs Americans' access to jobs, basic services, and their communities. The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law invests billions of dollars to make sure rural families can get where they need to go.

- *Formula Grants for Rural Areas* - The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law amends the Rural Area Formula Grant Program by establishing fixed percentages for the Public Transportation on Indian Reservations and the Appalachian Development Public Transportation Assistance programs. More than \$875 million is available in FY22 for Formula Grants for Rural Areas under the law, a 30 percent increase over levels in the final year of the Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act. This program provides capital, planning, and operating assistance to States to support public transportation in rural areas with populations of less than 50,000.. More information is available on the Federal Transit Administration's [website](#).
- *Rural priorities for rail investment* - The law includes a new competitive railroad crossing elimination grant to make improvements to highway and pathway rail crossings, such as eliminating highway-rail at-grade crossings that are frequently blocked by trains, adding gates or signals, relocating track, or installing a bridge. \$600 million is included for the Railroad Crossing Elimination program in FY22, and at least 20 percent of funds are reserved for projects in rural areas or on Tribal lands. This program will improve the safety of communities and the mobility of people and goods. Bipartisan Infrastructure Law also prohibits Amtrak from discontinuing, reducing the frequency of, suspending, or substantially altering the route of rail service on any segment of any long-distance route if Amtrak receives adequate funding for that route. Applications for this competitive funding will open in Summer 2022.
- *Ferry Service for Rural Communities* - Bipartisan Infrastructure Law includes \$200 million in FY22 and \$1 billion overall for a new rural ferry program to ensure that essential ferry service continues to be provided to rural areas by allocating funds to states to support this service. Applications for this competitive funding will open in summer 2022 – learn more about the program and application information [here](#).
- *Electric Vehicle Charging Network* - The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law invests in electric vehicle infrastructure with a focus on rural communities. Bipartisan

Infrastructure Law will provide up to \$300 million in FY22 in funding to establish convenient electric vehicle charging where people live, work, and shop through the new charging and fueling infrastructure grants program, on top of the \$1 billion in formula funding in FY22 dedicated to building out an electric vehicle charging network. These grants will be prioritized for rural areas, low- and moderate-income neighborhoods, and communities with low ratios of private parking, or high ratios of multiunit dwellings. The Department of Transportation has also released a [toolkit for rural communities](#) to plan and fund the infrastructure needed to build a rural EV network.

- *Clean school bus program* - State or local governments, eligible contractors, and nonprofit school transportation associations are authorized to receive grant funds from this new \$5 billion program. Fifty percent of the funds are authorized for zero-emission school buses, and 50 percent of the funds are authorized for alternative fuels and zero-emission school buses. Funds may be prioritized for rural or low-income communities and entities that have matching funds available. The EPA Administrator is authorized to provide funds to cover up to 100 percent of the costs for the replacement of the bus. Learn more about this program [here](#).

In addition to these programs, rural communities can now review all Federal Transit Administration Notices of Funding Opportunity for competitive grant programs [here](#) throughout the year. A list of Federal Transit Administration-sponsored technical assistance centers can also be found [here](#). Additionally, a list of various USDA Rural Development programs that can be used to support electric vehicle charging infrastructure and clean bus initiatives can be found [here](#).

Fix our rural roads and bridges – and make them safer

While Americans living in rural areas account for 19% of the population, they comprise nearly half of all roadway fatalities. The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law will deliver safer roads, bridges, and railway crossings for rural Americans.

- *Bridge Funding* – The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law significantly increases funding for bridges in rural areas to keep rural bridges in a state of good repair – making the single largest investment in repairing and reconstructing our nation’s bridges since the construction of the interstate highway system, with \$2.4 billion in competitive funding and \$5.5 billion in formula funding available for bridges in FY2022. The bridge formula program includes a 15% minimum set-aside for bridges located off of the Federal-aid highway system. 87% of off-system bridges are located in rural areas, so the law will provide substantially more federal funding to these bridges. Off-system bridges are also eligible for 100% Federal cost share. This will help fix smaller bridges that are not part of the Federal-aid

highway system but that provide important connections in rural communities and are traditionally harder to fund. Applications for the competitive funding will open in Summer 2022. \$5.5 billion for the bridge formula program has already been allocated to states and territories earlier for FY2022. A list of announced state allocations for formula funding is available at the Federal Highway Administration's [website](#).

- *Surface Transportation Block Grant Program* - The law creates a new set-aside for projects in rural areas within the \$72 billion Surface Transportation Block Grant Program, which will support rural communities via grants to states in preserving and improving their highways and bridges, bike and pedestrian infrastructure, and transit capital projects. Learn more about this Federal Highway Administration program [here](#).
- *Rebuilding America's Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE)* - The law increases the Rebuilding America's Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) grant program funding, providing \$1.5 billion in FY22 and \$7.5 billion overall, supporting surface transportation projects of local and/or regional significance. RAISE grants require an equal split between urban and rural areas. Applications for this competitive funding should be submitted by April 14th, 2022. More information is available on the Department of Transportation's [website](#).
- *Rural Surface Transportation Grant Program* - The law includes \$2 billion—including \$300 million in FY22—for a new rural surface transportation grant program which will provide competitive grants to state and regional transportation planning organizations, local governments, and Tribal governments to improve and expand the surface transportation infrastructure in rural areas. The goals of the program include increasing connectivity, improving safety and reliability of the movement of people and freight, and generating regional economic growth and improving quality of life. Are now open and more information on eligibility and guidelines can be found in a separate fact sheet on the Department of Transportation's [website](#).
- *Appalachian Development Highway System* - In January, the Department of Transportation [announced](#) \$1.2 billion in Bipartisan Infrastructure Law funding over 5 years for the timely completion of designated corridors in 11 states in the Appalachian region. The system is a network of 33 distinct corridors (about 3,000 miles) linking the region to interstates and providing access to regional and national markets. It includes 13 states connecting New York to northern Mississippi. By 2040, 100 percent of the network is expected to be complete and open to traffic.

- *Safe Streets and Roads for All* - In Fiscal year 2022, the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law invests \$1 billion in the new and first of its kind Safe Streets and Roads for All program will fund local efforts to reduce roadway crashes and fatalities through grants for planning and projects — especially for people who walk and bike who are disproportionately impacted by crashes. These funds will support existing safety efforts as well as establish new local data-driven efforts to reverse trends comparable to similar safety-oriented plans and programs such as Vision Zero and the Road to Zero Coalition.

To prepare to receive these funds and other transportation funding, you should contact your State Department’s of Transportation for additional information on how to access formula funds. For competitive grant programs, potential recipients should begin to work with community stakeholders, local planning organizations, federal agency field offices, and others to develop a list of priority projects in their communities. The Department of Transportation has also combined notice of funding opportunities for a number of their Bipartisan Infrastructure Law programs, so communities only need to apply once to be eligible for multiple pools of funding. On March 24th, the Department specifically published a combined Notice of Funding Opportunity for three discretionary grant programs with \$2.9 billion in funding available – including the Rural Surface Transportation Grants program – creating a single common application for these programs. Applications are due May 23rd of this year. Learn more about how to apply [here](#).

Ensure clean drinking water and basic sanitation in every home

Across the country, including in rural and Tribal communities, pipes and treatment plants are aging and polluted drinking water endanger public health. The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law’s transformative investment in our water and wastewater infrastructure will fundamentally change quality of life for millions of Americans by eliminating lead pipes, providing critical access to sanitation, and more:

- *Clean and Drinking Water State Revolving Funds* - The law contains nearly \$44 billion to strengthen the nation’s drinking water and wastewater systems, remove lead pipes and service lines, and eliminate harmful contaminants like PFAS chemicals through the EPA’s State Revolving Funds programs. These programs, administered by the states, make grants and loans eligible to communities for drinking water and wastewater infrastructure investments. To further aid states, tribes, local governments and water systems, EPA will provide technical assistance to help disadvantaged communities overcome barriers in applying for and receive loans and grants through their State Revolving Funds. To further aid states, Tribes, local governments and water systems, the EPA has already released Fiscal Year 2022 [state allocation tables](#) for the State Revolving Funds. Learn more about EPA funding for clean and safe drinking water programs [here](#).

Note: The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law allows states to use up to two percent of Clean Water State Revolving Fund dollars to fund nonprofit organizations that provide technical assistance to small, rural, and tribal publicly owned treatment facilities.

- *Rural Water Projects* - This existing Bureau of Reclamation program received \$1 billion dollars to support the seven rural water projects that have been authorized by Congress before July 1, 2021, in accordance with the Reclamation Rural Water Supply Act of 2006. Rural water projects get to the heart of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law by building resiliency and supporting local economies. The FY 2022 funding will result in significant progress toward completion of rural water systems in six Western States- MT, ND, NM, SD, IA, and MN. Construction activities will include pipeline connections, construction of water treatment plants and intakes, pump systems, and reservoir construction. Authorized projects include:
 - Eastern New Mexico Rural Water System
 - Fort Peck Reservation – Dry Prairie Rural Water System
 - Garrison Diversion Unit Municipal, Rural, & Industrial Program
 - Jicarilla Apache Rural Water System
 - Lewis and Clark Rural Water System
 - Musselshell-Judith Rural Water System
 - Rocky Boy’s/North Central Montana Rural Water System
- *Geographic Programs* - Geographic Program funding helps communities make on-the-ground improvements for clean and safe water, protected and restored habitat, thriving species, and a vibrant quality of life for all, while supporting local jobs. The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law includes \$1.717 billion to twelve geographic programs covering almost every part of the country. These include:
 - Chesapeake Bay Program
 - Columbia River Basin Restoration Program
 - Great Lakes Restoration Initiative
 - Gulf of Mexico
 - Lake Champlain
 - Lake Pontchartrain Restoration Program
 - Long Island Sound
 - Northwest Forest
 - Puget Sound
 - San Francisco Bay Water Quality Improvement Fund
 - South Florida Geographic Initiatives Program
 - Southeast New England Coastal Watershed Restoration Program
- *USDA Rural Development Circuit Riders Program* - The Circuit Riders program provides technical assistance to rural water systems that are experiencing day-to-day operational, financial or managerial issues. Rural water system officials may request assistance from the local Rural Utilities Service office. Circuit Riders

provide service in each U.S. State and Territory to rural communities. The services offered include technical assistance, workforce training, water treatment, disaster and emergency assistance. More information can be found [here](#).

- *Sanitation Facilities Construction* - This existing Indian Health Service (IHS) program received \$3.5 billion dollars to address sanitation needs across Indian Country. Based on recommendations from various Tribal consultations, this one-time funding will continue to support projects through the Sanitation Deficiency System (SDS) as well as special and emergency projects. The Indian Health Care Improvement Act (IHCIA) requires the IHS to update the SDS annually to account for changes to projects on the list that receive funding, refine cost estimates, and identify any new needs. More information can be found [here](#).

Note: The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law directs the IHS to use up to \$2.2 billion for “projects that exceed the economical unit cost,” also referred to as “economically infeasible” projects.

Public water authorities and other potential recipients should begin to work with rural stakeholders and state program contacts to identify potential projects. The EPA and other agencies will provide technical assistance to help these communities overcome barriers to receiving loans and grants for water improvements. Potential recipients of the lead service line funding are also encouraged to accelerate the development and use of lead service-line inventories, which can help guide the design of replacement projects eligible for these funds. More detail on EPA’s technical assistance can be found at the Water Infrastructure and Resiliency Finance Center [here](#).

Build communities resilient all hazards including climate change

Last year, the United States faced 22 extreme weather and climate-related disaster events with losses over \$1 billion – a cumulative price tag of nearly \$100 billion. These included damaging floods, fires, and wind storms across rural America. The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law will improve the resilience of rural communities via the following measures and programs:

- *Community Wildfire Defense Grant Program* - This new \$1 billion program at the Department of Agriculture, U.S. Forest Service, will provide grants to communities at risk from wildfire to develop or revise their community wildfire protection plans and carry out projects described within those plans. It will include a mix of formula and competitive funds. Applications are expected to open early in 2023.
- *Wildland Fire Slip-on Tanker Pilot Program* - This \$50 million pilot program at the Department of the Interior will provide financial assistance to local

governments to acquire slip-on tanker units to establish fleets of vehicles that can be quickly converted to respond to wildland fires.

- *Secure Rural Schools* - The law extends the existing Secure Rural Schools program for three years with critical funding for schools, roads, and other municipal services to more than 700 counties across the U.S. and Puerto Rico. Payments are expected in the second quarter of this year and more information is available on this U.S. Forest Service and Department of the Interior program [here](#).
- *Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities Program* - This existing Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) program will distribute fund to support communities undertaking hazard mitigation projects to reduce the risks they face from disasters and other natural hazards. Communities will apply as sub-applicants under their states. Federally recognized tribal Tribal Governments are also eligible applicants. Applications for Fiscal Year 2022 are expected to open no later than September 30, 2022. Learn more [here](#).
- *Flood Mitigation Assistance (FMA) Program* - annual competitive grant program that provides funding to state, local, tribal, and territorial governments to reduce or eliminate the risk of repetitive flood damage to buildings insured under the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP). FMA was chosen as part of the 21 programs that will undertake an initial implementation of the Justice40 Interim Implementation Guidance to maximize the benefits that are directed to disadvantaged communities. FMA has incorporated equity and climate considerations using Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Social Vulnerability Index (CDC SVI) and nature-based solutions as part of its point structure for project prioritization. The CDC SVI is a relative index of 15 different socioeconomic and demographic variables from the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey. The CDC SVI threshold is intended to aggressively award prioritization points to projects with high vulnerability.

Note: *Swift Current* is also a new initiative under the FMA program with the goal of making flood mitigation assistance available for repetitively flooded and substantially damaged buildings (insured under the National Flood Insurance Program) as quickly and equitably as possible after a disaster event to reduce disaster suffering. Swift Current aims to better align the delivery of FMA flood mitigation funding to better support disaster survivors by expediting FMA awards following a disaster, rather than through an annual grant application cycle.

- *Rural and Municipal Utility Advanced Cybersecurity Grant and TA Program* - Leveraging \$250 million in funding for this provision, DOE, in coordination with the DHS Secretary, FERC, NERC, and the Electricity Subsector Coordinating Council (ESCC) will create a new DOE Rural and Municipal Utility Advanced

Cybersecurity Grant and Technical Assistance Program to support eligible entities to protect against, respond to, and recover from cyber threats. The purpose of program is to deploy cyber technologies for electric utility systems, prioritizing critical facilities, and increase participation in cyber threat information sharing programs. DOE is seeking a waiver or reduction of cost share given this is a technical assistance effort and applications are expected to open in the 4th quarter of this year.

Rural communities should review the Federal Emergency Management Agency's Direct Technical Assistance resources [here](#) – which can help provide holistic planning support at the earliest stages to communities.

Upgrade electricity and transmission infrastructure

Power outages cost the U.S. economy up to \$70 billion each year, and rural communities can be without power for days during these outages. To make our grid more reliable for these communities the Biden Administration has launched a new “[Building a Better Grid Initiative](#)” to accelerate the deployment of new transmission lines that will connect Americans to cleaner, cheaper electricity, while improving the resilience and reliability of the grid. This initiative will leverage the ~\$16.5 billion in Bipartisan Infrastructure Law funding to reliably deliver clean, affordable power to more Americans, improving resilience of our grid infrastructure, and helping achieve the President's goal of 100 percent carbon pollution-free electricity by 2035.

In addition, Bipartisan Infrastructure Law provides more than \$700 million for upgrades to our existing hydropower fleet that will improve efficiency, maintain safety, and reduce environmental impacts. Key eligible recipients for much of this funding are states, tribes, communities, and utilities, including utilities that operate under regulatory supervision by local governments and State commission. Key rural-focused provisions under this set of activities:

- *Energy Improvement in Rural or Remote Areas* - This new DOE program will provide \$1 billion to entities in rural or remote areas (defined as cities, towns, or unincorporated areas with fewer than 10,000 inhabitants) to increase environmental protection from the impacts of energy use and improve resilience, reliability, safety, and availability of energy. Applications for funding will open by September 2022.
- *USDA Rural Development Electric Programs* - The Electric Program provides capital to maintain, expand, upgrade, and modernize America's vast rural electric infrastructure. The loans and loan guarantees finance the construction of electric distribution, transmission, and generation facilities, including system improvements and replacement required to furnish and improve electric service in rural areas, as well as demand side management, energy efficiency and conservation programs, and on-grid and off-grid renewable energy systems. Loans are made to cooperatives as well as to corporations, states, territories,

Tribes, and subdivisions and agencies such as municipalities, people's utility districts, and nonprofit, limited-dividend, or mutual associations that provide retail electric service needs to rural areas or supply the power needs of distribution borrowers in rural areas. The Rural Energy Savings Program (RESP) provides loans to entities that agree to make affordable loans to help consumers implement cost-effective, energy efficiency measures. RESP will help lower energy bills for rural families and businesses and will reduce barriers to investment in energy efficient projects or activities. More information can be found [here](#).

- *Weatherization Assistance Program* - This existing Department of Energy (DOE) program will provide over \$3 billion to improve home energy efficiency for low-income families, reducing energy costs, improving household comfort and safety, and cutting pollution. The funding flows first to state and Tribal governments, who in turn fund a network of local community action agencies, nonprofit organizations, and local governments that provide the weatherization services. [State allocations](#) were released on March 30th; learn more about how individuals can access these funds [here](#).
- *Clean Energy Demonstrations* - In December 2021, DOE established a new [Office of Clean Energy Demonstrations](#) to oversee the over \$21 billion in Bipartisan Infrastructure Law funding for clean energy demonstration projects for innovative technologies like clean hydrogen, carbon capture, grid-scale energy storage, advanced nuclear reactors, and more. Demonstration projects test the effectiveness of innovative technologies in real-world conditions at scale, often leveraging public-private partnerships to pave the way towards commercialization and widespread deployment. Much of this funding will go to large projects that can be significant engines of local and regional economic development and job creation. Key rural-focused provisions under this set of activities:
 - *Energy Improvement in Rural and Remote Areas*: Administered through DOE's Office of Clean Energy Demonstrations, the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law provides \$1B to carry out activities to improve the resilience, safety, reliability, and availability of energy and provide environmental protection from adverse impacts of energy generation in rural and remote communities with populations of 10,000 or less. Eligible projects may include: (A) Overall cost-effectiveness of energy generation, transmission, or distribution systems; (B) siting or upgrading transmission and distribution lines; (C) reducing greenhouse gas emissions from energy generation by rural or remote areas; (D) providing or modernizing electric generation facilities; (E) developing microgrids; and (F) increasing energy efficiency. DOE anticipates emphasizing grid reliability and resiliency for the funding, and will conduct stakeholder engagement over the next few months to inform the structure of the program. More information is available at the [program website](#).

- *Clean Energy on Mine Lands*: The \$500M in funding for this Bipartisan Infrastructure Law provision will lead to the deployment of up to five clean energy projects on mine lands. The projects will provide an opportunity for mining communities to benefit from the next generation of energy development. DOE is currently in the research stage, with community-level stakeholder engagement planned to start in the summer of 2022, a technical assistance and grant program in Fall 2022, and solicitations for demonstration projects in mid-2023.

To guide program design and help potential recipients prepare to apply for and receive funding, DOE – as well as other agencies -- will issue requests for information, notices of intent, webinars, and other stakeholder engagement opportunities. This is a long-term process, and rural communities can stay apprised of these opportunities and the latest announcements or upcoming engagements with DOE [here](#).

Regional Commissions and Other Place-based Development

- *Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC)* - The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law reauthorizes ARC and provides \$1 billion to ARC, doubling the Commission’s annual funding over the next five years. This will deliver much needed resources to support the economic success of the Appalachian region. The law also adds three new counties across North and South Carolina as eligible Appalachian Regional Commission counties and expands the Commission’s ability to fund broadband projects. Additional funding is also provided for enhanced training and research. Learn more about the Commission’s plans to expand their capabilities and impact [here](#) through their new strategic plan, “Appalachia Envisioned: A New Era of Opportunity.”
- *Delta Regional Authority* - The law provides \$150 million to the Delta Regional Authority. The Authority is in the planning stage for allocating Bipartisan Infrastructure Law funds, which will bolster existing programs for public infrastructure improvements, workforce development, and other efforts to expand economic opportunity across Alabama, Arkansas, Illinois, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, and Tennessee. Learn more [here](#).
- *Northern Border Regional Commission* - The law makes available \$150 million for the Commission to catalyze regional economic development. Project eligibility definitions are under development but may include transportation, broadband, and renewable or alternative energy infrastructure. Funds will be available for states, cities, Tribes, non-profits, educational institutions and others in November of this year. Learn more [here](#).
- *Denali Commission* - The law makes available \$75 million to the Denali Commission, which plans to allocate funds to village infrastructure protection projects, workforce development, broadband and other projects in Alaska. Learn more [here](#).

- *Southeast Crescent Regional Commission* - The law provides \$5 million to the Southeast Crescent Regional Commission (SCRC), which launched operations in 2021. SCRC is in the planning stage for allocating Bipartisan Infrastructure Law funds. Learn more [here](#).

In addition, as part of the Justice40 initiative, the Administration is committed to delivering at least 40 percent of the overall benefits from Federal climate, clean energy, affordable and sustainable housing, clean water, and other investments to disadvantaged communities that are marginalized, underserved, and overburdened by pollution; this includes many rural communities. The [Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool](#) will help Federal agencies identify communities to support everyone receiving the benefits intended from Federal programs.

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Disclaimer: This guide is designed to help users familiarize themselves with the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law. Nothing contained in this document constitutes guidance from the U.S. government on any law, program, policy, application process, or funding eligibility. Applicants for funding should consult official agency or program specific guidance for additional information.