

DREAM.ORG

AUGUST 2023

One Year of Impact for Climate Equity

IMPLEMENTING THE INFLATION REDUCTION ACT



We dream of a world beyond **poverty** & **pollution**

Communities of color are most impacted by climate change and least likely to be a part of the solutions. The Green For All team at Dream.Org is changing that by uplifting those most impacted by poverty and pollution – so that as the green economy grows, all communities will benefit from good jobs, better health, and increased opportunities. Now that billions of federal climate and infrastructure dollars are being made available, we need to make sure that money goes to where it is needed most.

Together, we can make the solutions to climate change an opportunity to invest in the communities most impacted by it.



An equitable future for our communities is a sustainable future for our planet.

The Inflation Reduction Act of 2022 (IRA) provides a historic \$369 billion opportunity to tackle the climate crisis and build a healthier, more sustainable future for all. As these funds roll out, not all communities will know how to tap into these resources – especially disadvantaged communities who already lack support. Minority-owned green businesses will also not be well-positioned to compete for project awards.

That's why we're implementing a holistic approach to shape federal programs while partnering with disadvantaged communities to maximize historic Inflation Reduction Act investments.



Over the next 10 years, we are going to make history for climate equity FOR EVERYONE TOGETHER

OUR 10 YEAR GOALS

40%

of U.S. climate investments benefitting disadvantaged communities

15%

of federal climate contracts awarded to minority-owned green businesses

2050

support programs & projects that get us on track to reach carbon neutrality by 2050

Leading the charge for climate equity on Capitol Hill and beyond

Congress approved billions of dollars to address the climate crisis, but that was only the beginning. To ensure 40% of those dollars benefit disadvantaged communities, we need robust advocacy that holds decision-makers accountable.

That's why we **launched our Climate Investments program** to help federal agencies design programs that put equity first, creating healthier communities and promoting economic inclusion. Through regulatory advocacy and reform, we are a leading voice for climate equity nationally.



Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool

Dream.Org provided critical guidance to the White House Council on Environmental Quality in developing the **Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool (CEJST)** – a mapping interface used by government agencies to **determine which communities qualify as disadvantaged**. This tool informs all qualified government spending and helps us measure how much funding is going to disadvantaged communities.

86% of our recommendations for how to define disadvantaged communities were integrated into the final version of the tool. Some of our key adopted recommendations were to use race and ethnicity data by census tract for analysis and include disadvantaged areas that would have missed thresholds by a slim margin. Dream.Org will use the CEJST to hold the federal government accountable for delivering at least 40% of IRA benefits to disadvantaged communities; **40% is the floor, not the ceiling**.

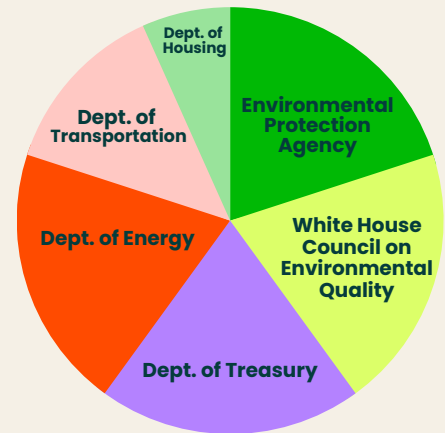


Thought Leaders for Equitable IRA Implementation

Dream.Org championed equity-focused programs and robust community engagement programs at the federal level by developing responses to **more than 15 official Requests for Information (RFI) from federal agencies**, conducting research, soliciting stakeholder feedback, and developing leading recommendations.

As a result, we helped shape **9 programs, 8 tax incentives, and 6 agency initiatives and equity strategies, impacting \$41 billion in program dollars** with more to come as agencies continue to release program guidelines. Our comments have led to the **adoption of key equity principles across agencies** including robust community engagement & technical assistance requirements, economic inclusion targets, data transparency, and best practices for partnership and outreach.

RFI Responses by Agency



Creating an Equitable National Green Bank Network

The Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund is one of the first IRA programs to roll out and the largest – totaling \$27 billion in federal investment, **with \$18.6 billion of the total \$27 billion slotted for disadvantaged communities**. It's a first-of-its-kind opportunity to reduce financing barriers that currently keep low-income communities from accessing clean energy.

Through education and outreach, we mobilized **thousands of our supporters to advocate for the creation of a national green bank** that prioritizes equity. We also provided guidance directly to the EPA on how the program should be structured to maximize community benefits. Our efforts paid off – **a national green bank network was created in accordance with many of our recommendations**. In addition, Dream.Org has launched a partnership with the Coalition for Green Capital to pursue government funding to implement a national green bank serving low-income and disadvantaged communities.



Our partnership with Dream.Org represents the type of multi-organizational effort that will be necessary to ensure we deploy energy investments by and with communities to address the multi-faceted challenges they face.

– William J. Barber III, Chief Consultant of Environmental Justice & Equity, Coalition for Green Capital





Empowering communities to shape solutions for a greener future

On Earth Day, we launched our new **Transformative Communities program** to help local stakeholders draw down federal climate funding to support equity-focused, community-driven climate projects. We are piloting our work in **10 disadvantaged communities** across the country, helping them identify community-supported infrastructure projects that meet their unique needs. Through a robust screening process, Dream.Org identified the following ten priority communities:

- Fresno, CA
- Washington D.C.
- Denver, CO
- Miami-Dade, FL
- Detroit, MI
- Riverside / San Bernardino, CA
- Las Vegas, NV
- Lumbee River, NC
- Savannah, GA
- Richmond, CA

2023 Priority Communities



Since the launch of this program, we have engaged in **over 140 conversations** with local leaders, community organizations, minority entrepreneurs, and community development stakeholders to implement a place-based approach that amplifies community voices and prioritizes equity.

“

It takes a village to launch a climate project. Working with Dream.Org has been invaluable in connecting us to resources and helping us build our village as we plan for our EV Accelerator in Fresno.”

– Dr. Cassandra Little, Fresno Metro Black Chamber of Commerce

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Building Bridges Locally

Local leadership drives climate action on the ground. By bringing together local government and community leaders into the planning conversations early, the Transformative Communities team facilitates discussions that build trust, define shared goals, and shape a more sustainable future that meets the community's unique needs.

In Detroit, we acted as a thought partner to the City of Detroit's Sustainability Office in launching their city-wide solar initiative. We worked together to bring our shared dream of **meaningful community engagement** and **\$25,000 of economic and environmental benefits** for neighborhoods that opt-in for community solar projects.



In Fresno, we are partnering with the EPA Region 9, Fresno Council of Governments, and the City of Fresno to draw down federal funding such as the **\$1 million EPA Climate Pollution Reduction Planning Grant** that will build bridges between local government, the community, and the EPA.



“ **Dream.Org has been an important partner to federal government agencies like the U.S. Environment Protection Agency, helping us make our programs more inclusive of low-income communities and communities of color.** ”

– Martha Guzman, U.S. EPA Region 9 Administrator

Capacity Building for Community-Based Organizations

In March, Dream.Org developed a **rapid response grantmaking initiative to help six community-based organizations** pursue federal funding for specific projects. Without our support, these small but powerful organizations would not have the capacity they needed to compete for funds.

We also launched a new monthly partner newsletter to notify **nearly 200 community-based organizations about over 35 Inflation Reduction Act funding opportunities** and helpful resources, giving them more time to focus on serving their communities.

Uplifting current and future leaders of the green economy

For too long, low-income communities and communities of color have shouldered disproportionate environmental impacts. The IRA provides the greatest opportunity to date to heal these communities and improve public health, but we have an even bigger dream: **BIPOC talent will innovate, create, and deploy cutting-edge climate solutions that will transform their communities and their world.**

At Dream.Org, we're pursuing that vision by **uplifting minority-owned green businesses, providing opportunities for career development and training, and unlocking the genius in these communities.**

Dream Business Council

The **Dream Business Council** was founded by **seven Black CEOs** who are leading innovators in renewable energy, energy efficiency, and clean transportation. Together, they are **shifting the narrative** on what Black & Brown genius looks like in the climate space.

We have also helped the council make **dozens of connections** to new companies, funders, and local government entities, resulting in a **variety of new projects**. Earlier this year, the Dream Business Council also won the **Department of Energy's American Made Challenge** for their collaborative, community-based approach to green projects.



Diversity in Cutting-Edge Climate Tech

The **Dream Climate Tech Launchpad** is an initiative to support Black and Latinx-led climate tech startups. We selected **10 startups** to be a part of the final cohort, where participants will have access to professional development programming and networking opportunities. The top 2 startups will be selected by their peers this fall and **receive \$25,000 to further scale their solutions.**



More Opportunities for Minority-Owned Businesses



In partnership with the **U.S. Minority Contractors Association (USMCA)**, Dream.Org developed a strategy for **helping minority-owned businesses compete for government grants**. We sponsored the USMCA National Policy Forum, uplifting the stories of other minority business owners and offering networking opportunities. Our vision is for these businesses be prime applicants for IRA grants.

Career Pathways for an Inclusive Green Economy

This year, Dream.Org launched the **Dream Business Council Fellowship** to **award 9 BIPOC professionals** job opportunities with our business council companies, creating invaluable opportunities for mentorship and professional growth.

We also awarded **553 scholarships** to help BIPOC individuals pursue training, education, and professional development to advance their careers in the clean energy and climate tech sectors. **More than half of recipients are justice-impacted**. By creating opportunities for Black and Brown talent to become leaders in the green economy, **we are building generational wealth for communities of color**.



The scholarship is a blessing for me...I am forever grateful for the opportunity and will use it to create the changes we so desperately need in my community and beyond.

- Alcia Shaw, Scholarship Recipient



Coming together for lasting change

The most durable policy solutions are built on common ground. At Dream.Org, we are willing to work with anyone who wants to build a future that's green for all.

In December 2022, we held a **bipartisan policy convening** with 18 organizations from across the political spectrum to find common ground on climate. Nearly all of the participants identified **racial equity and IRA Implementation** as their top priority. **94%** of those in attendance identified **permitting reform** – the process of getting permission to build energy projects – as essential to addressing the urgency of climate change.

In coalition and deep partnership with local advocacy groups, we introduced legislation in **three purple states** – Nevada, Michigan, and North Carolina – to create community-centered climate programs across the country, replicating California's Transformative Climate Communities program and lifting up the needs of communities of color.

Working in coalition with **more than two dozen organizations**, we established partnerships across the aisle to advocate for **permitting reform** for clean energy projects. In July, our staff along with supporters from across the country met with 20 congressional offices and shared their vision for a clean, inclusive energy future.

“ When I asked Senator Manchin how we could promote environmental change in West Virginia, he told me to find more people like me... I hope that people regardless of their title continue to push for a West Virginia that they want to live in, one that benefits us all in the end.

– Tiara Brown, Dream.Org supporter (on right)



SPANNING THE
POLITICAL DIVIDE



Bridging knowledge gaps

According to several studies released this year, **only 1 in 3 people know about the Inflation Reduction Act**. That knowledge gap widens even further for people of color & people who don't have college degrees.

We launched our **Live Green or Die Tryin'** campaign to educate people about the IRA, elevating the importance of community-driven climate solutions. Because of our campaign, these communities will be better equipped to engage with projects as they roll out.

Using influencer content to drive social media engagement, we collaborated with key opinion leaders with a **total reach of over 2 million, totaling more than 13 million social media impressions**. Over **45,000 individuals** sought more information about the Inflation Reduction Act through our website, **increasing website traffic by more than 6,000%** during the peak of the campaign.



Changing the narrative



The Green For All team participated in **over 30 speaking engagements** and events nationally and internationally, elevating our expertise on climate equity and sharing strategies for maximizing community benefits for those who are most impacted by climate change.



Contact Jessie Buendia, Green For All National Director at jessie.buendia@dream.org for partnership opportunities.

Visit [Dream.Org](https://www.dream.org) to learn more and get involved!