

# The Path to Achieving Justice40

*By Shalanda Young, Brenda Mallory, and Gina McCarthy*

President Biden has made historic commitments to use every lever at his disposal to advance environmental justice and spur economic opportunity for disadvantaged communities. And within his first weeks in office, he established the [Justice40 Initiative](#).

Justice40 is a whole-of-government effort to ensure that Federal agencies work with states and local communities to make good on President Biden's promise to deliver at least 40 percent of the overall benefits from Federal investments in climate and clean energy to disadvantaged communities. Today, we are taking a key step toward achieving the President's ambitious goal and issuing [interim guidance](#) that will help Federal agencies deliver on the Justice40 Initiative.

The interim guidance issued today by the Office of Management and Budget, the Council on Environmental Quality, and the White House Office of Domestic Climate Policy introduces measures to guide agencies on their path to implementing Justice40, launches the Justice40 Pilot Program, and includes accountability and transparency tools to ensure agencies are working to reach the Justice40 goal.

The pilot identifies 21 priority programs to immediately begin enhancing benefits for disadvantaged communities. These priority programs will provide a blueprint for other agencies to help inform their work to implement the Justice40 Initiative across government. This initial set of programs was selected following extensive consultation with environmental justice stakeholders and the recently established [White House Environmental Justice Advisory Council](#) and the [White House Environmental Justice Interagency Council](#). The programs include the:

- Department of Homeland Security [Flood Mitigation Assistance Program](#), which provides funding to states, local communities, tribes and territories for projects that reduce or eliminate the risk of repetitive flood damage to buildings
- Environmental Protection Agency [Drinking Water State Revolving Fund](#), which provides funds to improve drinking water quality, prevent water contamination, and support water systems
- Department of Housing and Urban Development [Lead Hazard Reduction and Healthy Homes Grants](#), which

assist states, local communities, tribes and territories in identifying and controlling lead-based paint hazards

- [Department of Agriculture Rural Energy for America Program](#), which provides guaranteed loan financing and grant funding to agricultural producers and rural small businesses for renewable energy systems or to make energy efficiency improvements

The guidance also directs all relevant Federal agencies to identify the benefits of programs beyond this initial list and included in the Justice40 Initiative, propose methods to calculate and report on reaching the 40-percent goal, and develop plans to engage with communities. As we learn from the pilot program and develop the initiative further, additional guidance will be provided to agencies, including to inform an Environmental Justice Scorecard for communities to monitor our progress toward the Justice40 goal and hold their government accountable for delivering results. We are also working on a Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool that will provide additional information to agencies about disadvantaged communities and help inform their work on the Justice40 Initiative. Over the coming months, we will be providing additional details on the progress of the Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool, gathering feedback, and engaging communities and stakeholders.

For far too long, environmental policy decisions have failed to adequately account for environmental injustice, including the disproportionate, disparate and cumulative impacts pollution and climate change have on low-income communities and communities of color. President Biden has made clear that his Administration will chart a new and better course, one that puts environmental and economic justice at the center of all we do. The [President's Budget for Fiscal Year 2022](#), for instance, includes historic investments to replace lead pipes and service lines and rehabilitate and retrofit affordable, resilient housing. The President will also continue advancing environmental justice through his legislative agenda, such as making the largest investment in American history to address legacy pollution as part of the [Bipartisan Infrastructure Framework](#) and integrating equity throughout all the investments of his Build Back Better agenda.

Through the steps we're taking today, we're committing to continuing to listen to and learn from impacted communities and those who have been on the front lines as part of our whole-of-government approach to delivering President Biden's promise to make environmental justice a national priority.

*Shalanda Young is the Acting Director of the Office of Management and Budget.*

*Brenda Mallory is the Chair of the Council on Environmental Quality.*

