

MEETING THE MOVEMENT MOMENT

Field insights and learning on what it will
take to implement historic climate laws

APRIL 2024



I. INTRODUCTION

In the wake of monumental legislative strides in 2021 and 2022, including the passage of the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA), the Bipartisan Infrastructure Bill (BIL), the Justice 40 Initiative (J40), and the 30x30 Initiative (30x30), (collectively referred to as IRA+ in this document), there is a remarkable surge in the potential to significantly advance core environmental, climate, and environmental justice goals in a short period of time.

While the passage of the IRA and BIL offers a potentially once-in-a-generation opportunity, enacting the legislation is merely the beginning. The critical phase lies in implementing and channeling funding to communities, which is pivotal to unlocking the full promise of these laws in a short window of opportunity (as highlighted below). As the private sector has surpassed expectations and capitalized on IRA+ incentives, it is imperative to ensure nonprofit, frontline, and grassroots groups are equipped to attain similar success.

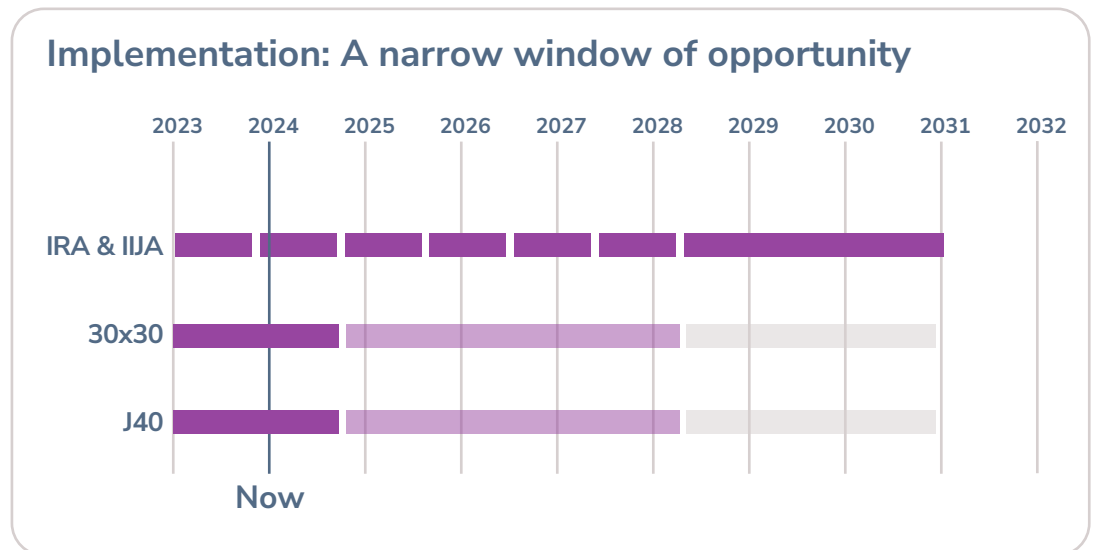


Figure 1: Timeline showing window of opportunity for IRA+ policy. The shaded purple above represents the potential impact of a change in administration due to the fact both 30x30 and J40 are executive orders.

Nearly two years since the passage of these policies, this paper examines the current landscape around IRA+ implementation to date by consolidating various public sources, engaging with field leaders in deep learning, and analyzing research. The analysis aims to identify key gaps, needs, and actionable recommendations crucial for supporting robust implementation, as perceived by the field.

As will be outlined in greater depth throughout the report, our thorough field engagement and research highlights the importance of addressing the following six capacity gaps and needs for IRA+ implementation:



1. Regional Coordination, Mobilization, and Connection Around Funding Opportunities



2. Tools and Training to Access Funding



3. Communication, Messaging, and Education About Opportunities



4. Leadership and Workforce Development for Next Generation Skills and Jobs



5. Funding Accessibility and Consistency to Complement Federal Funding



6. Data for Advocacy and Accountability for Promises of the Laws

II. METHODS

In developing this report, we completed deep listening and learning with a wide cross-section of the movement. Our insights are drawn from (a) analysis of the latest data and information provided by federal agencies deploying IRA+ funds; (b) field surveys and polls to understand the gaps and needs as identified by the movement (including 90+ survey responses and 300+ webinar poll responses); and (c) dozens of informal interviews with partners and experts involved in the implementation of these priorities. The synthesis of data from these sources culminated in the insights outlined below.

III. A HISTORIC MOMENT: IRA, BIL OVERVIEW

The IRA, BIL, J40 and 30x30 are a sprawling and comprehensive suite of policies and initiatives that touch all corners of environmental and justice work. The IRA aims to reduce carbon emissions by roughly 40% by 2030, through a wide range of federal grants and unprecedented tax credits to spur sustainable innovation across the country. Initially projected to allocate a total of \$391 billion from 2022-2031, the IRA is now estimated to be closer to \$1.2 trillion, with the notable increase due to an unexpected amount of participation in the tax credit scheme¹. As of April 2024, approximately \$478 billion in IRA+ grant funding has been announced (excluding IRA tax credits), with approximately \$43 billion slated to be available throughout the entirety of 2024. Meanwhile, the BIL earmarks an estimated \$1.2 trillion over ten years to revamp the country's aging infrastructure, focusing on extensive upgrades to roads, bridges, public transport, and EVs².

This unprecedented influx of capital in green technology and infrastructure comes hand in hand with tens of billions of dollars in grants and loans aimed at bolstering climate, environmental justice, conservation, and resilience programs. Although not federally funded, both the Justice 40 and 30x30 Executive Orders play significant roles. The former aims to allocate at least 40% of overall benefits from federal investments to disadvantaged communities, while the latter establishes a national goal to conserve 30% of U.S. lands and freshwater, along with 30% of U.S. ocean areas by 2030.

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1. Michele Della Vigna, Yulia Bocharnikova, Brian Lee, Neil Mehta et al; "Carbonomics The third American energy revolution"; Goldman Sachs; March 22, 2023
 2. Justin Badlam, Tony D'Emidio, Rob Dunn, Adi Kumar, and Sara O'Rourke; "The US Bipartisan Infrastructure Law: Breaking it down"; McKinsey & Company; November 12, 2021

% Share of Announced IRA+ Funding by Region to Date

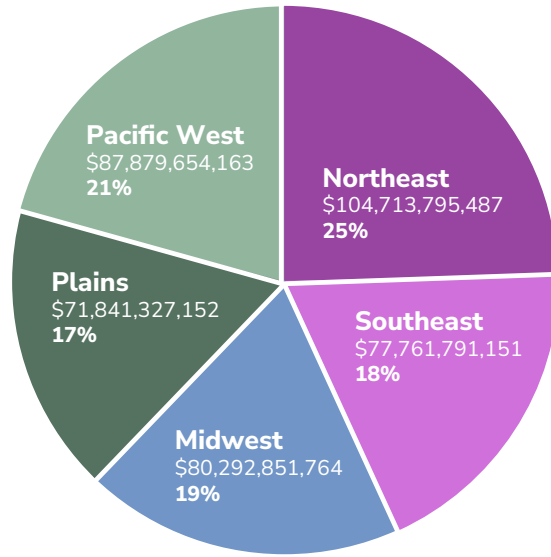


Figure 2: Pie chart of % share of announced IRA+ funding by region to date.

Announced IRA+ Funding to Date

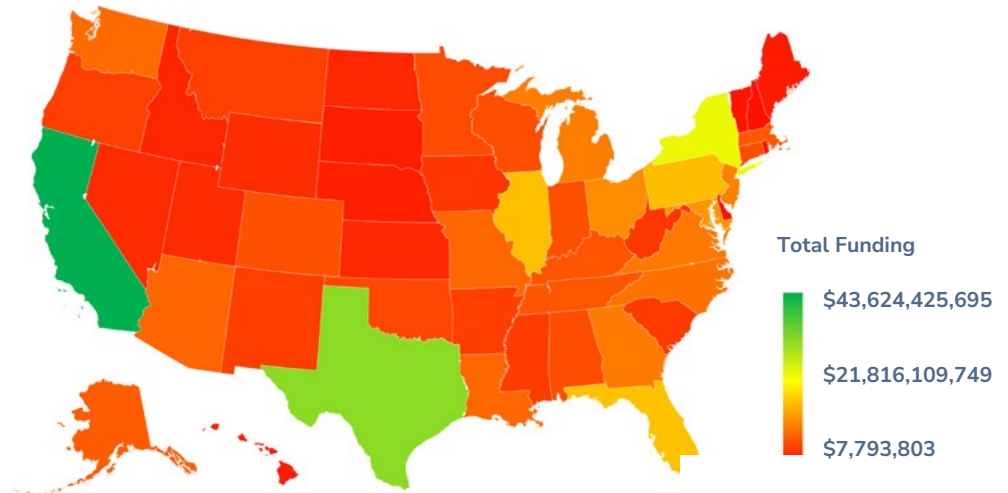


Figure 3: Map of announced IRA+ funding to date, with an additional \$2.3 billion allocated to Puerto Rico and approximately \$1.8 billion distributed among remaining US territories.

"Investing in America"; The White House; February 6, 2024

Certain states, highlighted in green to yellow in the map above, are accessing significant federal grant funds (~\$148M amongst 6 states), which is a positive step in reducing GHG emissions in major polluting states. However, this also highlights the untapped potential in regions and states with less funding tapped to date, shown in red (~\$269M amongst 44 states).

IV. MAKING THE MOST OF THE MOMENT: MOVEMENT GAPS AND NEEDS ANALYSIS

To gain a better understanding of the current needs of the movement in the 20-months since the IRA passed, we asked 90+ advocates and NGOs, ranging from small local organizations to larger regional and national nonprofits, what is required to accelerate progress on the precipice of a decisive year for environmental action.

The following figures illustrate the responses from both surveys and our webinars on the current largest gaps and needs in the field. There were 6 key needs consistently identified for effective implementation, as outlined in the below list and ranked by frequency of needs. We have also included illustrative quotes on challenges and opportunities from nonprofits and grassroots groups actively engaging with these initiatives.

1. Regional Coordination, Mobilization, and Connection Around Funding Opportunities

Implementation of federal funds requires the involvement of numerous federal and state agencies in fund distribution and understanding of a dizzying array of grant opportunities available. We heard a strong need to ramp up coordination and mobilization efforts to identify and connect with federal opportunities. Current attempts to establish regional coordination offices or task forces dedicated to fostering collaboration are relatively robust; however, for initiatives like the Thriving Communities Technical Assistance Centers (known as TCTACs), our respondents indicate that they are often at capacity with current demand and support is still being established or not yet reaching all parts of the field. For instance, according to the EPA, an interim organization is currently filling the role in EPA Region 1 until “a Region 1-focused EJ TCTAC is selected, expected in early 2024”⁵. Given a replacement has not yet been announced, there remains unmet demand for comprehensive support and navigation to existing resources.

According to a recent report by the Center for American Progress, “the lack of timely place-based regionalized federal support creates a gap where states and local governments are left on their own to apply for and implement these investments”⁶, an outcome our research also supports. Survey respondents shared the critical need for “regional infrastructure hubs” to support stronger relationships between stakeholders, and that by strengthening those connections, grassroots partners as well as local governments would ultimately be better served. By amplifying communities’ ability to effectively coordinate, these organizations can knit together and navigate the vast ecosystem of agencies, grant opportunities, and public information required to make the most of this moment.

5. “The Environmental Justice Thriving Communities Technical assistance Centers Programs”; EPA; February 22, 2024

6. Chris Bast, Hannah Argneto-McCurdy, Elisia Hoffman; “4 Ways the Federal Government Can Enhance Technical Assistance to States and Cities”; Center for American Progress; January 4, 2024

“ [There is a need for] state or regional coordination for IRA implementation efforts. For instance, we’ve **engaged with more than thirty leaders in twenty-two J40 communities** across WV and southwest PA, but have had to try to find different potential partners (including technical assistance support) for each individual community. ”

- Common Defense

“ The **IRA+** and other federal funding, technical support, and capacity building programs are **taking a scattershot approach** with overlapping opportunities, which creates **significant confusion for under-resourced communities that need to quickly ascertain what programs are most likely to work** for them and invest their limited capacity in pursuing those efforts. ”

- Geos Institute

2. Tools and Training to Access Funding

The complexity and time consuming nature of current federal funding processes presents significant challenges for organizations. The required resources and hours to identify, organize, and apply for funds often strain teams, forcing them to prioritize between applying for funding and maintaining their usual workload. As noted in a recent article by Professional Grant Writers “the writing process is a concerted effort among multiple parties, all of whom will need to dedicate significant amounts of time. For the grant writer’s part, shorter federal grants may only take 20-30 hours, but longer ones will need 50, 60, 80, or 100 hours”⁷. Consequently, community-based and under-resourced groups encounter heightened difficulty accessing funding opportunities even when tailored to them.

The TCTACs have proven to be a solid start to addressing these challenges, but to achieve success on a larger scale, there is greater need for broader technical assistance support across the field and federal agencies. Survey respondents repeatedly highlighted that due to the complexity and time-consuming nature of current federal grants, frontline communities can only benefit from this

7. PGWAdmin; “How long does it take to write a grant”; Professional Grant Writers; October 18, 2022

opportunity with added support in “finding funding and technical assistance”. Technical support, such as one-on-one grant writing assistance as well as the open sourced sharing of application resources, is essential for organizations to effectively assess and pursue federal opportunities.

“ We have been unable to submit proposals to some of the larger “diversity” climate rounds with USDA - for multi-year grants of between \$2 million and \$5 million, because we lacked the staff time needed to do that. ”

- *Alianza Nacional de Campesinas, Inc*

“ Assistance and technical support for small nonprofits to access these funding opportunities (is needed).(There has been) much confusion about how to even approach these opportunities. ”

- *The Imani Group, Inc*

“ Funding for grant writers and technical assistance (is critical) to be properly positioned for these grants. ”

- *Restore the Delta*

3. Communication, Messaging, and Education About Opportunities

Even two years in, it is clear from survey respondents that there is still limited public awareness of the purpose of the IRA+. At the same time, eligible organizations for IRA+ initiatives are facing challenges in determining the availability and alignment of grants as well as their eligibility status. Respondents repeatedly brought up the need for “better communication between individuals, organizations, developers, and municipalities”. Addressing these communication gaps is essential to ensure effective and equitable access to funding opportunities and maximizing the programs’ impact.

Additionally, a lack of compelling success stories being shared nationally presents a significant challenge to its widespread implementation. As stated by the International Monetary Fund, “economic reforms are more likely to fail or even be reversed unless they are understood, believed, and accepted by those whom they affect”⁸. Sharing success stories with a broader audience not only fosters greater understanding of the program’s effectiveness but also inspires confidence and participation among potential beneficiaries and stakeholders as well as future policymakers.

“We believe the **biggest challenge to advancing movement infrastructure priorities in 2024**, and the 30x30 initiative in particular, is that the **vast majority of the public** outside of the environmental sector continues to have little to **no idea** what “30x30” is or why they should care.”

- EarthShare

“In the communications space we’re seeing a **big need for multimedia narratives** across groups to be united in messaging to be able to **go up against the full force of fossil fuel company/ energy industry communications campaigns** around issues like Carbon Capture & Storage, Hydrogen mining, **false solutions** like biofuel plants to name a few.”

- Tikkun Olam Productions

“**Outreach and communications capacity is critical for our network** to ensure that federal funding opportunities such as the EPA Thriving Community Grantmaker program reach environmental justice organizations and that we can **lift up successful projects** of these organizations to **tell the story of the impact of this funding in our communities.**”

- The Minneapolis Foundation/ Midwest EJ Network

8. Gerry Rice, Olga Stankova; “Communications as a Policy Tool”; The IMF BLOG; May 22, 2019

“While funding is available, there is little knowledge in how to access it. There are several pots of federal dollars being provided to benefit local communities of color.”

- We the People of Detroit

4. Leadership and Workforce Development for Next Generation Skills and Jobs

The absence of dedicated funding for workforce development within the IRA+ poses a critical challenge to ensuring the people power needed to build our clean energy future. A consistent concern in our survey analysis showed that “gaps exist in all parts of the climate workforce” particularly around the training of green skills across all industries. Only four programs, totaling \$260 million, are exclusively dedicated to green workforce development in the IRA+⁹ compared to the trillions of dollars focusing on other priorities.

Stakeholders across the climate workforce, from volunteers to professionals with specialized skills and roles, face critical gaps, such as limited training opportunities and not enough connection with tradespeople, that require attention. A recent report by LinkedIn highlighted that the number of U.S. profiles in 2022 with “at least one green skill grew around 8.4%, compared with a 20% rise in green job postings”¹⁰ and that there is a “notable deficiency in green talent”¹¹.

Collaboration between general education, workforce development, and professional development ecosystems is essential to craft new career and education pathways that support the full spectrum of roles essential to the implementation of the IRA+ and other climate solutions.

9. Joseph W. Kane, Adie Tomer, Anna Singer; “Unlocking new federal infrastructure to drive green workforce development”; Brookings; October 12, 2023

10. Diester Holger; “America’s Green Skills Gap Raises Concerns About Energy Transition”; The Wallstreet Journal; July 6, 2023

11. Benjamin Laker; “COP28 Focus: Huge Green Skills Shortage Says LinkedIn Study”; Forbes; November 21, 2023

“ There is a marked increase in **efforts to develop the climate workforce**. These are **critically important** programs, but many are based on service programs (AmeriCorps, etc.) that **require** the local government to provide a **funding match** – often between \$25K and \$30K – which **prices out under-represented communities**. ”

- Geos Institute

“ We **critically need more trainings and organizing** on climate and water issues in California and to be **stronger and more strategic**. ”

- Restore the Delta

“ We’ve **identified through the two collaborative events** that there are many ongoing support needs and many gaps that need to be addressed in order for funding to effectively flow. Among them are: **staff capacity needs within local governments**. ”

- Southern Alliance for Clean Energy

5. Funding Accessibility and Consistency to Complement Federal Funding

Federal funding, while essential, was noted as repeatedly falling short of covering the full scope of program costs and often having related “administrative burdens”. Respondents noted that campaign-style funding organized around short-term wins creates a sense of instability among organizations and advocates, hampering ongoing coordinating networks and impeding their longer term capacity to aid underserved communities in accessing federal funding.

As demonstrated in a recent report by The Funders Network, “for frontline communities to see the full benefits of federal funding, investments—both federal and philanthropic—must be made to span generations, not administrations”¹². Additionally, a considerable group of respondents mentioned “state-level laws and policies that prevent needed action” and purposefully “hinder federal

12. TFN, HEFN, NFG; “Tip Sheet for Philanthropy”; Investing At The Frontlines Of Climate Change

funding”, further exacerbating obstacles to effective program implementation. Philanthropic dollars can provide critical support for the multi-year engagement requirements presented by the IRA+.

“**Multi-year funding helps stabilize our outlook for strategy and outcomes.**”

- *Bioneers Indigeneity Program*

“**One partner said that their organization had received a Justice 40 grant and technical assistance to learn how to access funding and resources. However, they said that Congress is considering to use funds for purposes that go contrary to helping local communities.**”

- *Alianza member*

6. Data for Advocacy and Accountability for Promises of the Laws

Monitoring capacity is pivotal in tracking and ensuring the equitable and effective distribution of funds, especially in alignment with the goals of transformative initiatives like Justice 40¹³. Access to data and information about where and how dollars have been spent provides necessary transparency to organizations across the field working on drawing dollars down, while also acting as a safeguard against any potential misuse or detrimental practices. Many survey responses found that “strong systems of record, data management, reporting, and partnership collaboration technologies are lacking”.

There is a pressing need for the development of enhanced, open source, methods to oversee the intricate web of regional and local implementation. The Sierra Club reported that “more than 175 groups urge equitable oversight of Inflation Reduction Act Funds”. In addition, if access to data is not drastically increased and additional safeguards put in place the IRA “may end up doing more harm than good”¹⁴.

13. Carolyn Morrisroe; “More Than 175 Groups Urge Equitable Oversight of Inflation Reduction Act Funds”; Sierra Club; February 15, 2023

14. Carolyn Morrisroe; “More Than 175 Groups Urge Equitable Oversight of Inflation Reduction Act Funds”; Sierra Club; February 15, 2023

“ One big gap is the lack of capacity to monitor use of IRA funds, challenge projects that are creating more harm than good, research alternative uses of taxpayer dollars that maximize climate, biodiversity, and community benefits, and engage with decision makers.”

- Forest Carbon Coalition, Center for Sustainable Economy

“ We have heard from various stakeholders that states, utilities, and communities are actively working to implement the HEEHRA and HOMES rebates in an equitable manner, but are struggling to do so due to a lack of data and methods.”

- PSE Healthy Energy

V. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTIVATING THE MOVEMENT

Based on the insights and lessons from the field outlined above, the following recommendations can help funders, nonprofits, and government agencies better support the movement in addressing the identified gaps and needs highlighted by experts and field partners.

Funders

Funding organizations play a critical role in supporting the implementation of policies. The ability to provide financial resources, convene key stakeholders, and influence discourse is an asset in addressing barriers felt across the field. Funders can support and enhance effective and equitable implementation through several activities:

- Accelerate existing regional coordination efforts and bridge gaps in federal technical assistance infrastructure by providing general operating and capacity building grants to networks, alliances, and coalitions in their region(s) of focus as well as supporting state and local governments in need of additional capacity support.
- Bolster essential organizational capacity amongst partners by providing matching funds, funding grant writers, and providing pro-bono technical assistance to support organizations navigating complex federal funding processes successfully.
- Convene organizations and leaders in key regions and states to share best practices, learnings, and effective approaches across the wide range of the implementation ecosystem.
- Raise public awareness by facilitating media connections across grantee partners and promoting IRA+ topics in philanthropic spaces.
- Provide increased amounts of accessible, multi-year support for organizations and networks on the frontlines of implementation to help grow long term power.

Nonprofit Organizations

Non-profits, particularly larger and historically well-resourced ones who have advantages in accessing funding from IRA+ programs, can play an important role in effective and equitable implementation by:

- With mutually agreed-to guardrails and assurances of equitable interaction, supporting less-resourced counterparts to pursue grant opportunities, maximizing dollar drawdown.
- Offering pro-bono grant writing assistance and legal advice to community-based and under-resourced groups, thereby supporting equitable and effective use of federal resources by smaller organizations.
- Raising awareness and showcasing success stories to garner support for IRA+ programs while also countering misinformation.
- Growing ongoing advocacy for additional climate legislation and policy reforms and helping eliminate barriers to federal funding, ensuring sustained progress and advancing environmental equity.

Agencies and Local Government

The federal government and key agencies play an essential role in implementation and have already made large strides in improving accessibility of funding through IRA+ initiatives. Other important opportunities for government agencies to accelerate effective and equitable implementation include:

- Further streamlining the grant application process, reducing or eliminating administrative requirements, and transitioning as feasible to direct payments, thereby enhancing accessibility for community-based groups and frontline organizations.
- Taking opportunities to reinforce and expand existing inter-agency regional coordination structures, such as the TCTACs, and establish a more localized, place-based network to address any emerging local gaps effectively.
- Partnering with funders and nonprofits to share learnings with each other such as through MOUs to proactively improve the implementation process.

At Mosaic, we have set up such a partnership with the Department of Transportation to share data and information from the field.

Collectively, these measures offer the potential to significantly advance ongoing progress, address identified gaps and needs, and proactively prepare for future IRA+ implementation opportunities ahead.

VI. CONCLUSION

This analysis aims to share insights gleaned from our engagement with the field, drawing from hands-on experience and thorough desk research on the current state of the environmental movement in the United States. Our intent is twofold: first, to highlight identified gaps and needs within the movement; and second, to provide actionable recommendations to help address them.

The landscape of environmental and sustainability efforts in the United States has been fundamentally altered by the passage of landmark climate legislative initiatives. While these initiatives offer unprecedented opportunities to tackle pressing challenges, their successful implementation hinges on addressing critical gaps and needs. By taking decisive action, we can unlock the full potential of these transformative initiatives and accelerate progress towards a more sustainable and just future.

We are grateful to the many field leaders and funders who provided critical input and insights into this open learning process. We remain eager and open to continue learning; if you or your organization is interested in helping further develop this resource and discuss additional ways to meet this critical movement moment, please contact us at info@mosaicmomentum.org.

Finally, this analysis sits alongside so many other amazing resources in the field. We have linked here just a shortlist of other useful resources related to IRA/BIL+ implementation:

- [Bridgespan- How Philanthropy Can Support Systems-Change Leaders](#)
- [Center for American Progress- 4 Ways the Federal Government Can Enhance Technical Assistance to States and Cities](#)

- [Global Center For Climate Justice- The federal Funding Primer on Climate Justice](#)
- [INVESTING AT THE FRONTLINES OF CLIMATE CHANGE: A Funder Toolkit on Climate, Health and Equity- Understanding the role philanthropy can play in the current movement](#)
- [Investing in America- BIL and IRA allocation data](#)
- [McKinsey- Bipartisan Infrastructure Bill Overview](#)
- [McKinsey- Inflation Reduction Act Overview](#)
- [The Climate + Clean Energy Equity Fund- Five Ways Funders Can Accelerate Equitable Climate Action](#)
- [WE ACT- 8 Ways Environmental Organizations Can Support the Movement for Environmental Justice](#)