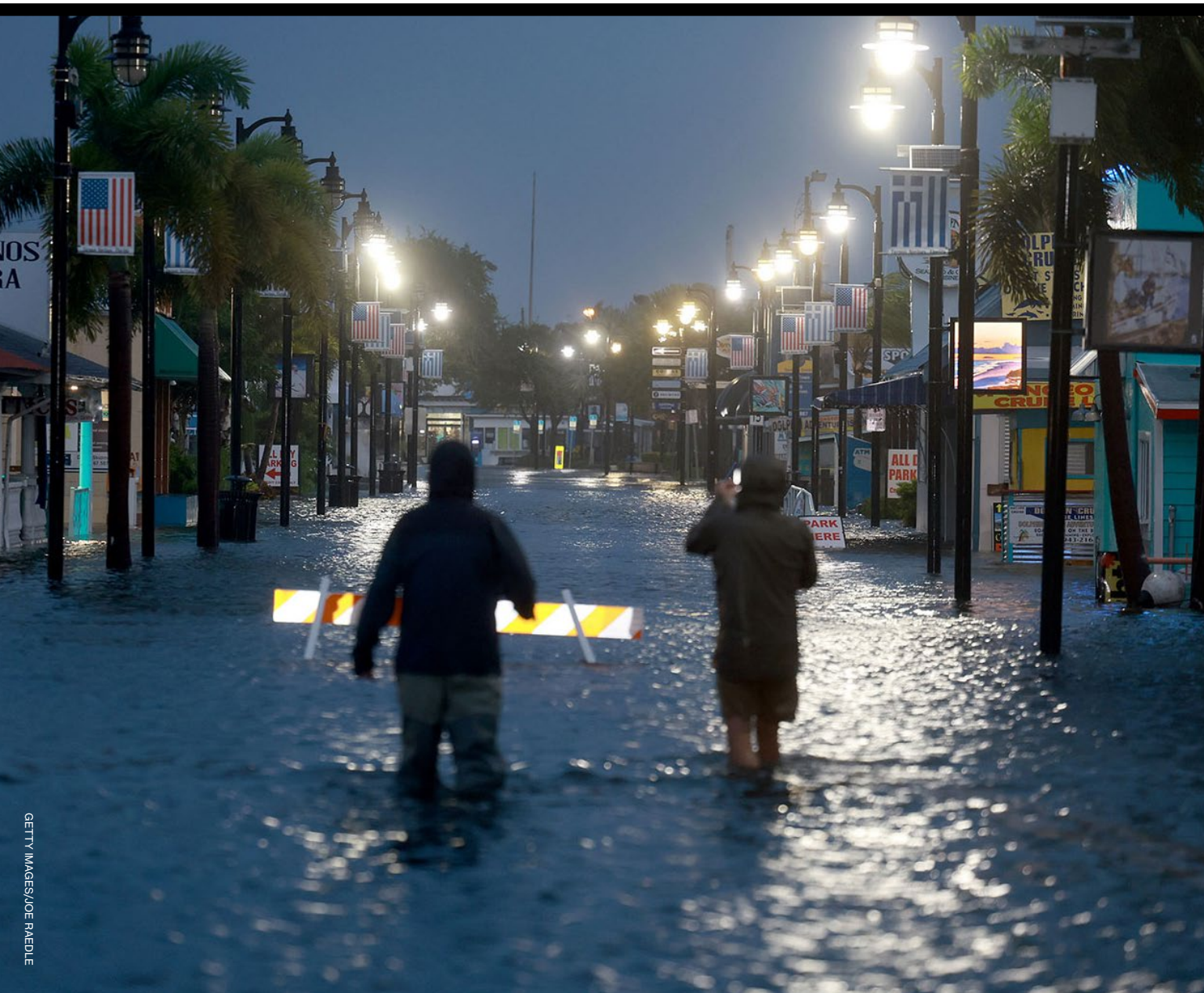




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How the Inflation Reduction Act Can Improve Lives and Livelihoods in Florida

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Contents

- 1 Introduction and summary

- 6 How climate change threatens lives and livelihoods in Florida

- 11 Inflation Reduction Act investment opportunities for Florida

- 35 How Biden’s “Investing in America” agenda is already helping Florida

- 36 Conclusion

- 36 Acknowledgements

- 37 Endnotes

** Corrections, October 3, 2023: This report has been updated to clarify that, contrary to some recent reporting, no governor—including Gov. DeSantis—has formally submitted a letter to the administration rejecting IRA funding. In some cases, states have not applied for noncompetitive grants or other funding allocated to their state; in these cases, governors may still have time to apply for the funds.*

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Introduction and summary

Florida residents are already experiencing the devastating and costly effects of climate change through sea level rise, hotter and longer heat waves, red tides, coral and seagrass die-offs, and more powerful hurricanes, including Hurricane Idalia, with winds topping 125 mph that tore through the state and caused widespread flooding in late August 2023. These effects are threatening public health and safety and the livelihoods of Floridians, all while disproportionately harming low-income communities and communities of color.

For Florida to be future-ready in ways that safeguard its economy, its wildlife, and the health and well-being of all its residents, it must be climate-ready. Fortunately, the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA), signed into law by President Joe Biden in August 2022, provides \$369 billion to accelerate the U.S. transition to a clean energy economy that will create good jobs, reduce household energy costs, and build climate resilience, including in disadvantaged communities. In fact, IRA investments are projected to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by roughly 40 percent below 2005 levels by 2030.¹

This summer served as a searing reminder of how sorely Florida needs IRA investments. In June, July, and August, blistering temperatures baked cities and states across the United States as an oppressive and dangerous “heat dome”—a sprawling blanket of hot air—broke more than 2,400 high-temperature records and skyrocketed the risk of heat-related illnesses in cities across the country.² June registered as the hottest June ever recorded globally, while July was the hottest month ever recorded on the planet, putting 2023 on pace to become the hottest year ever globally.³ This scorching heat has been particularly persistent and intense in Florida, where Miami’s “heat index”—the combination of air temperature and humidity and how that feels to the human body⁴—climbed to at least 100 degrees Fahrenheit for a record-breaking 46 days.⁵ This summer is set to become the hottest ever documented in Key West, Miami, Sarasota, Tampa, Pensacola, and other Florida cities, with parts of the state under heat advisory almost daily between June 23 and August 11.⁶

The Inflation Reduction Act provides \$369 billion to accelerate the U.S. transition to a clean energy economy that will create good jobs, reduce household energy costs, and build climate resilience.

Notably, extreme heat and humidity substantially elevate the risk of heat-related illnesses, especially for outdoor workers, children, people ages 65 and older, and those with preexisting medical conditions.⁷ Extended periods of extreme heat also elevate health care costs. According to a report by the Center for American Progress, health care costs for extreme heat-related illnesses currently amount to more than \$1 billion every summer nationally.⁸

Florida also experienced an unprecedented marine heat wave, with ocean temperatures climbing to 94 to 98 degrees Fahrenheit in mid-July⁹ and hot-tub-like temperatures of more than 101 degrees Fahrenheit in Manatee Bay at Florida's southern tip the week of July 24.¹⁰ Weeks of heat stress and water temperatures hotter than ever recorded in the region have caused widespread coral bleaching and marine mortality throughout the Florida Keys, the most severe ever experienced in the state's history.¹¹

Over the next decade, Florida's state and local leaders have a historic opportunity to take advantage of the clean energy, clean transportation, and climate resilience investments in the Inflation Reduction Act to improve the lives and livelihoods of Floridians. It is imperative that state and local leaders act now to secure and direct IRA investments to the most vulnerable communities, including those overburdened by pollution and climate change and facing racial injustice and economic inequality. However, despite the need, Gov. Ron DeSantis (R-FL) vetoed an initial federal grant that would have helped the state set up a home energy rebate program for Floridians to access \$346 million in home energy rebates to lower their electric bills.¹² In addition, the governor's administration declined to apply for federal funds that would have enabled low-income households in Florida to access affordable and clean solar energy and would have supported the development of a state plan to reduce climate and local pollution.¹³ (see list below for more details on the funds declined)

The lack of movement on this front must be counteracted by bold action from other leaders across the state. In the wake of likely the hottest summer on record, state, local, and Tribal leaders must press Gov. DeSantis to seek out and apply for IRA funding so that Floridians can use the rebates to upgrade their home energy efficiency and reduce their energy bills and so that state leaders can develop a plan to transition to a clean energy future. In addition, by tapping into other IRA investments, city, county, and Tribal leaders can accelerate clean energy deployment, reduce local pollution and greenhouse gas emissions, and build safe, healthy, climate-resilient communities across the state.

These IRA investments, along with the Biden-Harris administration's Justice40 commitment to deliver at least 40 percent of specified investment benefits to disadvantaged communities,¹⁴ also offer an unprecedented chance for state and local leaders to create high-quality jobs and improve public health and economic security for Floridians, particularly in communities historically left behind. The Inflation Reduction Act is estimated to create more than 1.3 million high-quality, fair-wage jobs nationally and approximately 85,000 jobs in Florida by 2030.¹⁵

This summer is set to become the hottest ever documented in Key West, Miami, Sarasota, Tampa, Pensacola, and other Florida cities, with parts of the state under heat advisory almost daily between June 23 and August 11.

This report identifies the most pressing climate change threats to Florida and highlights opportunities for state and local leaders to take advantage of IRA investments to reduce the negative effects of climate change and deliver real and lasting benefits to households and communities. Specifically, the report highlights five areas where IRA investments can be most beneficial for Floridians:

1. Reducing pollution and climate change threats and accelerating clean energy
2. Building climate-ready coasts and communities
3. Lowering energy costs with clean energy and climate-resilient homes and buildings
4. Protecting Florida's rural communities with climate-resilient energy infrastructure investments
5. Supporting pollution-free ports and transportation for more livable communities

More detail on the investment opportunities in these areas is provided below. In some cases, Florida state and local leaders need not compete for IRA funds but simply apply to receive them. In other cases, they must go through a competitive application process to obtain funding. When IRA incentives are offered directly to households and energy consumers, state and local leaders in Florida have a responsibility to help raise Floridians' awareness of these incentives and how they can secure them and their cost-saving benefits. For each of the five areas, this report includes figures that summarize the types of IRA funding available, who is eligible to receive the funds, and how to apply.

It is imperative that state and local leaders act now to secure and direct IRA investments to the most vulnerable communities, including those overburdened by pollution and climate change and facing racial injustice and economic inequality.

IRA funding passed over by Gov. DeSantis and his administration

As noted above, several IRA funding opportunities were passed over by Gov. DeSantis and his administration, as well as other governors, including the following:

- **Home energy rebates:** Gov. DeSantis rebuffed an initial \$5 million federal grant that would have helped provide low- and middle-income Floridians access to more than \$346 million in home energy efficiency and electrification rebates to lower their energy bills. These funds were part of the nearly \$9 billion that the Inflation Reduction Act provided to states and Tribes through the U.S. Department of Energy's (DOE) home energy rebate programs.¹⁶ Florida is still eligible to receive the \$346 million for home energy rebates that it was allocated but must notify DOE of plans to apply for the funds by August 2024 or they will be reallocated to other states.
- **Solar for All:** Gov. DeSantis, along with Govs. Doug Burgum (R-ND), Greg Gianforte (R-MT), Brad Little (R-ID), Joe Lombardo (R-NV), and Kristi Noem (R-SD), did not apply for funds from the \$7 billion Solar for All program under

the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) \$27 billion Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund created by the Inflation Reduction Act. These funds would have helped low-income households access affordable and clean solar energy.¹⁷

- **Climate pollution reduction grants:** Gov. DeSantis, along with Govs. Kristi Noem (R-SD), Kim Reynolds (R-IA), and Gov. Andy Beshear (D-KY), each declined \$3 million grants from EPA's Climate Pollution Reduction Grants program to develop statewide plans to reduce climate and local pollution. The Inflation Reduction Act provides \$5 billion for grants to state and local leaders to develop and implement climate action plans. By spurning the planning funds, these states are now ineligible to receive Phase 2 grants that would have supported plan implementation.¹⁸

It is important for state and local leaders not only to understand what federal funding opportunities created by the Inflation Reduction Act are available to them so they can apply for them, but also to urge Gov. DeSantis and his administration, as well as the governors of Idaho, Iowa, Kentucky, Montana, Nevada, North Dakota, and South Dakota, to reconsider their decisions to pass up IRA funding that would reduce household costs, create jobs, and provide other benefits for their constituents.

How climate change threatens lives and livelihoods in Florida

According to scientists, climate change is caused primarily by burning fossil fuels and has far-reaching effects on nearly every sector and aspect of society in Florida.¹⁹ For example, scientists have concluded that hurricanes are becoming more intense and dangerous as climate change heats up the planet.²⁰ In September 2022, Hurricane Ian made landfall as one of the most powerful and deadliest storms to hit Florida, destroying 5,000 homes and damaging 30,000 more, dismantling roads, cutting off power to 2.7 million people, and exacerbating poverty in the Sunshine State. According to National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), “Ian was responsible for over 150 direct and indirect deaths and over \$112 billion in damage, making it the costliest hurricane in Florida’s history and the third costliest in United States history.”²¹ With one climate change disaster often compounding the effects of another, especially for low-income and disadvantaged residents, those left houseless by Hurricane Ian struggled to cope with this summer’s dangerous heat in makeshift housing without air conditioning.²² Just a year later, in late August 2023, Hurricane Idalia battered buildings and homes with dangerous Category 3 winds, causing power outages for roughly 220,000 Floridians and historic flooding that polluted waterways with sewage, chemicals, and toxic fuels.²³

Extreme heat is the number one weather-related killer in the United States, causing more deaths than hurricanes, tornadoes, and floods.²⁴ Climate change is fueling even hotter, longer, and more dangerous heat waves, which is damaging roads, runways, bridges, and railways; elevating human health threats; and threatening worker safety and aspects of daily life.²⁵ By mid-century, counties along Florida’s Gulf Coast are expected to experience extreme heat temperatures above 125 degrees Fahrenheit.²⁶

Extreme heat is the number one weather-related killer in the United States, causing more deaths than hurricanes, tornadoes, and floods

More intense extreme heat will increase energy costs, threaten public health and safety—particularly among outdoor workers, those without access to air conditioning, and low-income communities—and lower agricultural productivity in the region. For example, in Miami-Dade County, this summer’s intense heat caused the death of a 29-year-old farmworker and saw both heat stroke and heat exhaustion emergency calls increase by 41 percent, compared with 2022.²⁷ Recognizing extreme heat as a major threat, the county appointed the world’s first chief heat officer in 2021 to develop strategies and boost the county’s capacity to manage and mitigate extreme heat risks.²⁸ This capacity could also help Miami-Dade secure IRA funds available to help reduce extreme heat threats. (see “Building climate-resilient coasts and communities” section below)

In addition, climate change is causing more harmful and costly algal blooms in Florida. These events, also known as “red tides,” are triggered by warm water temperatures and high levels of water pollutants such as agriculture fertilizers and stormwater and wastewater runoff after flooding. Red tides have caused massive fish kills, death of other marine life, and respiratory problems for beachgoers. In addition, a 2018 algal bloom event alone is estimated to have cost Florida’s tourism economy \$184 million.²⁹ Climate change will continue to intensify extreme weather events in Florida and across the country, with high costs and consequences for communities, households, businesses, state and local governments, public health, and the economy.

By mid-century, counties along Florida’s Gulf Coast are expected to experience extreme heat temperatures above 125 degrees

Similarly, climate change is threatening Florida’s coral reef—a critical ecosystem that provides outsize benefits for Florida and the planet. Florida’s coral reef is among the largest in the world—stretching roughly 350 miles long—and is the only coral reef system in the continental United States.³⁰ Roughly a quarter of marine life rely on coral reef at some stage during their life cycle for food or shelter, making Florida’s reef crucial for biodiversity and the survival of marine life both in the Gulf of Mexico and more broadly.³¹ For this reason, the spike in ocean temperatures along the Florida Keys this summer and the widespread bleaching of the coral reef have raised alarm bells.³² Every year, Florida’s coastal reefs provide more than \$675 million for the state’s buildings and economy in the form of protection from hurricanes, tropical storms, erosion, and flooding. The reef is also a major draw for tourists looking to snorkel and scuba dive and sustains commercial and recreational fishing in the state. Florida’s coral reefs support 71,000 jobs in South Florida and deliver roughly \$1.1 billion annually in tourism value alone.³³

Climate change is threatening Florida’s coral reef—a critical ecosystem that provides outsize benefits for Florida and the planet.

FLORIDA’S CORAL REEFS: BY THE NUMBERS

350

Length, in miles, of Florida’s coral reef – the only coral reef system in the continental United States

\$675M

Annual cost savings provided by Florida’s coral reefs in the form of protection from extreme climate events

71K

South Florida jobs supported by Florida’s coral reefs

\$1.1B

Annual tourism value of Florida’s coral reefs

Flooding from climate change-driven sea level rise is also an ongoing challenge threatening health, damaging homes, upending commutes, threatening water quality, and disrupting tourism; and it is only projected to worsen as global temperatures rise.³⁴ By 2050, sea levels in the United States are projected to rise, on average, by 10 to 12 inches.³⁵ Specifically, Florida’s Gulf coast could see 14 to 18 inches in sea level rise by 2050 and its Atlantic coast could see 10 to 14 inches in sea level rise over the same time frame.³⁶

Like in many other states, low-income communities and communities of color in Florida are hit first and worst by the effects of climate change. For example, heat waves are responsible for more deaths each year than any other extreme weather event, and Black, brown, and Indigenous communities are at the greatest risk since they often lack access to air conditioning, or cannot afford to run it, and live in neighborhoods that lack parks, green spaces, and tree cover, which help to cool temperatures.³⁷

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, extreme heat also poses the greatest risk to individuals with chronic illnesses, such as heart disease, obesity, high blood pressure, and diabetes.³⁸ In neighborhoods such as Parramore in Orlando, where the population is predominantly Black, more than 70 percent of the residents take medication to treat chronic illnesses.³⁹

Florida’s Gulf coast could see 14 to 18 inches in sea level rise by 2050 and its Atlantic coast could see 10 to 14 inches in sea level rise over the same time frame.

Communities, including Black, brown, and Indigenous communities, are also on the front lines of Florida’s most harmful sources of pollution, including Superfund sites, ports, highways, power plants, and other industrial facilities, which reduce air and water quality and lead to higher rates of cancer, asthma, and other life-threatening health problems. For example, the majority-Black towns of Belle Glade, Pahokee, and South Bay—also known as “Muck City”—in Palm Beach County, Florida, are exposed to high concentrations of soot and other pollutants from sugar cane burning on agricultural lands owned by large sugar corporations that cause asthma and other respiratory illnesses.⁴⁰

Goldsboro,⁴¹ a historically Black community in the city of Sanford, Florida, has long grappled with pollution challenges, including proximity to Superfund sites and industrial and water pollution.⁴² These environmental issues have posed health risks to residents, including respiratory illnesses and exposure to carcinogens.⁴³

Communities of color are 3.6 times more likely than white communities to live in neighborhoods with high levels of air pollution.

Roads and highways, some intentionally built through communities of color, bring pollution from gas-powered cars and diesel-fueled trucks to surrounding neighborhoods. In 2020, trucks represented 6 percent of total cars on major road arteries but emitted more than 55 percent of greenhouse gases in the environment. Notably, low-income communities and communities of color are more often located near major highways, ports, truck hubs, and warehouses. In fact, the EPA reported that more than 75 million people of color live near traffic corridors.⁴⁴ Furthermore, these communities of color are 3.6 times more likely than white communities to live in neighborhoods with high levels of air pollution.⁴⁵

For example, Liberty City in Miami—a predominantly African American community—sits alongside the heavily trafficked I-95 highway as well as near major rail lines and PortMiami, one of the largest cargo ports in America.⁴⁶ Given the community's proximity to these transportation hubs, residents face poor air quality from vehicle emissions, noise pollution, safety concerns due to high traffic, and economic disadvantages, as the mobility benefits of these transportation hubs often bypass the community.⁴⁷

Inflation Reduction Act investment opportunities for Florida

The clean energy, climate resilience, and environmental justice investments provided by the Inflation Reduction Act create critical opportunities for Florida’s state and local leaders, community groups, and households to secure desperately needed funds to improve the public health, lives, and livelihoods of Floridians, especially in disadvantaged communities. IRA investments are part of President Biden’s “Investing in America” agenda and can deliver real and lasting benefits to Florida communities and households in five specific areas, each of which is described in more detail below.

1. Reducing pollution and climate change threats and accelerating clean energy

Transitioning to clean, renewable energy is essential to avoid the worst impacts of the climate crisis. An International Energy Agency (IEA) analysis concluded that there can be no new investments in fossil fuel infrastructure after 2021 if the world is to achieve the goal of net-zero emissions by 2050 and stay below 1.5 degrees Celsius of warming above preindustrial levels, which scientists agree is essential to avoid the most dangerous effects of climate change.⁴⁸

Despite the Sunshine State’s vast solar power potential, many of Florida’s investor-owned and municipal utility companies plan to continue investing in the buildout of natural gas infrastructure, undermining energy efficiency programs that can benefit already energy-burdened Floridians. Roughly two-thirds of Florida’s total net electricity generation comes from fossil fuels—specifically, volatile natural gas.⁴⁹ Utility companies must take immediate steps to transition to clean renewable energy to avoid prolonging Florida’s reliance on fossil fuels, which exacerbates climate change, creates local pollution, risks creating millions of dollars of stranded assets, and causes an undue burden on ratepayers through repeated rate hikes.

Yet some of Florida’s major utility companies have pushed efforts to limit rooftop solar expansion and maintain a status quo that continues to favor fossil fuel use.⁵⁰

In contrast, many Florida cities are committed to transitioning to clean energy—including Orlando, which aims to power the city with 100 percent renewable energy sources by 2050.⁵¹ Orlando has also launched innovative projects such as floating solar panels and is expanding its network of electric vehicle (EV) charging stations.

As of January 2023, more than a dozen Florida cities have committed to moving toward 100 percent clean energy. These include Tallahassee, Gainesville, Orlando, Tampa, Cocoa, Satellite Beach, Dunedin, Largo, Safety Harbor, St. Petersburg, Sarasota, South Miami, and Pinellas County.⁵²

Fortunately, the Inflation Reduction Act can support these cities and the overall transition to clean renewable energy while creating good jobs and reducing household energy costs and local pollution. The act offers roughly \$60 billion to increase access to clean energy and improve public health, climate resilience, and economic security in disadvantaged communities, including communities of color and low-income areas exposed to disproportionate levels of pollution and climate threats.

Several key Inflation Reduction Act clean energy and climate funding opportunities include:

Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund

The Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund (GHGRF) is a \$27 billion program created by the Inflation Reduction Act to mobilize financing and provide grants, loans, and other forms of financial assistance for clean energy and climate resilience projects that reduce local and climate pollution. The fund also supports economic revitalization in communities that have historically been left to shoulder the burden of harmful pollution.⁵³

The Inflation Reduction Act is estimated to create more than 1.3 million high-quality, fair-wage jobs nationally and approximately 85,000 jobs in Florida by 2030.

The EPA is implementing the GHGRP's three funding competitions, which include the following:

- **The \$14 billion National Clean Investment Fund competition** supports two to three national nonprofit organizations that will partner with private capital providers to deliver financing to businesses, communities, community lenders, and others, launching tens of thousands of clean energy and climate resilience projects in the process.⁵⁴ The deadline for submitting applications is October 12, 2023. The EPA will award funding by March 2024 and anticipates awardees will begin funding projects by July 2024.⁵⁵
- **The \$6 billion Clean Communities Investment Accelerator competition** supports two to seven hub nonprofit organizations to build the clean financing capacity of networks of public, quasi-public, and nonprofit community lenders, including community development financial institutions, credit unions, green banks, housing finance agencies, and minority depository institutions, among others. The funds will help households, small businesses, schools, and community institutions in low-income and disadvantaged communities access financing for clean energy projects that will lower household costs and climate and local pollution.⁵⁶ Potential hub organizations must apply for the funds by October 12, 2023. The EPA plans to make funding awards by March 2024 so that awardees can begin funding projects by July 2024.⁵⁷
- **The \$7 billion Solar for All competition** will “provide up to 60 grants to states, Tribal governments, municipalities, and nonprofits to expand the number of low-income and disadvantaged communities that are primed for investment in residential and community solar.”⁵⁸ The EPA accepted applications through September 26, 2023, to begin delivering funding to millions of low-income households by July 2024 so they can access affordable, resilient, and clean solar energy.⁵⁹ Unfortunately, Florida’s state government did not submit a notice of intent to apply for Solar for All funding by the July 2023 deadline, leaving it up to other entities in the state to apply to distribute these funds to Floridians.⁶⁰ Nine nonprofit entities in Florida have indicated that they will apply, including the Black Farmers’ Collaborative, GreenSky Gives, the Institute for Equitable Development, Noah’s Ark of Central Florida, the North Tampa Housing Development Corporation, Solar for All Initiative Inc., the Tallahassee Food Network, and Urban Progress Alliance.⁶¹

The GHGRF is a \$27 billion program created by the Inflation Reduction Act to mobilize financing and provide grants, loans, and other forms of financial assistance for clean energy and climate resilience projects.

The GHGRF will support progress toward the Biden-Harris administration's Justice40 commitment by delivering at least 40 percent of investment benefits to disadvantaged communities. Florida can use GHGRF investments to support community solar and storage projects to prevent power disruption during and after extreme weather events, which threaten public health and create hardships for residents and businesses. While the EPA must distribute program funding to eligible hubs, nonprofit organizations, and state, local, and Tribal governments by September 2024, those entities can further distribute those funds to eligible projects well into the future with no set distribution deadline.

Environmental and Climate Justice grant program

The Inflation Reduction Act also created the Environmental and Climate Justice (ECJ) grant program, housed at the EPA, to provide \$3 billion in funding and technical assistance to address environmental and climate injustice by reducing pollution and improving public health, the environment, and climate resilience in disadvantaged communities.⁶² According to the Equitable and Just National Climate Forum, “The ECJ program provides a critical opportunity to protect the fundamental right of all people in America to a clean and healthy environment.”⁶³ These grants will support community-based nonprofit organizations and their partners, including local governments and academic institutions, in implementing projects that advance environmental and climate justice.

The Inflation Reduction Act also created the ECJ grant program to provide \$3 billion in funding and technical assistance to address environmental and climate injustice.

The following projects are among those that could be supported by the ECJ grant program:

- Community-led air pollution monitoring
- Home weatherization and electrification improvements to reduce energy bills, improve indoor air quality, and build resilience to climate change—for example, extreme heat events
- Rooftop solar, renewable battery storage facilities, and community solar
- Improvements to reduce traffic-related greenhouse gas and local pollution
- Education and outreach activities that raise awareness and prepare communities for climate emergencies and climate resilience
- Purchase and distribution of emergency home kits for vulnerable residents to help protect them from extreme heat, flooding, fires, and other climate-related emergencies
- Development of community emergency preparedness and climate adaptation plans

The EPA is designing the ECJ program and is expected to launch it this fall. Grants will be for periods of up to three years. The EPA will issue these grants through September 2026.⁶⁴

Climate Pollution Reduction Grants program

The Inflation Reduction Act also provides \$5 billion through the EPA’s Climate Pollution Reduction Grants (CPRG) program to municipalities, air quality control agencies, states, and Tribes. These funds support the design and implementation of climate action plans to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and other harmful air pollution. The program will award grants in two phases, with Phase 1 providing \$250 million for noncompetitive planning grants and Phase 2 awarding \$4.6 billion for competitive implementation grants.⁶⁵

Under Phase 1, the CPRG program offers states, as well as the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico, \$3 million each to develop climate plans to reduce climate and local pollution and accelerate the transition to a clean energy economy. The program will also give \$1 million each to 67 of the nation’s most populous metropolitan areas.⁶⁶ U.S. territories, meanwhile, will receive \$500,000 each, while a total of \$25 million is set aside for Tribes. The EPA began announcing planning grant awards to states, municipalities, and Tribes in August and September 2023.⁶⁷ If a state, municipality, or Tribe already has a climate plan, they can use the planning grant to update or expand their existing plans in anticipation of receiving an implementation grant in Phase 2—as described below.⁶⁸ IRA funding for CPRG planning grant funds will be available through September 2031.⁶⁹

Despite the dangerous extreme heat that Floridians experienced this summer and the destruction and loss in the wake of Hurricane Idalia, the DeSantis administration did not apply for the \$3 million noncompetitive planning grant the CPRG program offered to Florida this year.⁷⁰ These funds could have been used by the state to develop much-needed strategies to lower climate and local pollution and transition to a clean energy economy.⁷¹ According to the EPA, if a state does not apply for the \$3 million planning grant it is offered, the funds will be made available to the three most populous metropolitan areas in the state.⁷² Florida’s five biggest metro areas—Miami-Fort Lauderdale-Pompano Beach, Tampa-St. Petersburg-Clearwater, Orlando-Kissimmee-Sanford, Jacksonville, and North Port-Sarasota-Bradenton—all of which are on the list of 67 metro areas eligible for CPRG planning grants, applied for and were awarded these grants.⁷³

If the funds passed over by the DeSantis administration were to go to Florida's three most populous metro areas—Miami-Fort Lauderdale-Pompano Beach, Tampa-St. Petersburg-Clearwater, Orlando-Kissimmee-Sanford—those cities would not be eligible for grants from the city funding pool according to EPA guidance. The EPA also advised that “additional areas may become eligible for funding if a state declines funding.”⁷⁴ If this does not happen for Florida, the Sunshine State may only receive a total of \$5 million in CPRG planning grants, instead of the \$8 million it could have secured had the DeSantis administration not declined to apply for this support.⁷⁵ Moreover, Floridians who live outside of the metropolitan areas that receive the funds will effectively be left out of any federal funding for climate planning. Since the CPRG planning grant funds are available through September 2031, state, local, and Tribal leaders must urge the DeSantis administration to apply for these funds next year, as they will allow Florida to develop a strong climate action plan to reduce pollution and transition to a clean renewable energy economy.

Under CPRG Phase 2, states, air pollution control agencies, municipalities, Tribes, and other eligible entities covered by a climate plan developed with a Phase 1 planning grant are eligible to receive competitive grants to support their plan's implementation. In awarding the Phase 2 grants, the EPA will prioritize support for implementing climate plans that maximize overall greenhouse gas reductions while delivering significant benefits to low-income and disadvantaged communities. In September 2023, the EPA announced two competitions for \$4.6 billion in implementation grants, with applications due on April 1, 2024, except for Tribes and territories, which are due on May 1, 2024.⁷⁶ IRA funding for CPRG implementation grants will be available through September 2026.⁷⁷

Until the DeSantis administration applies for a planning grant to develop a statewide climate action plan, state agencies, Tribal governments, and cities not covered by a climate plan—such as those that will be developed by the five metropolitan areas noted above—will not be eligible to receive the CPRG implementation grants.

Florida's five biggest metro areas applied for and were awarded these grants.

Methane Emissions Reduction Program

Additionally, the Inflation Reduction Act provided the EPA and DOE \$1.55 billion to support financial and technical assistance to reduce methane emissions and improve methane monitoring for fossil fuel operations.⁷⁸ This is in addition to the \$4.7 billion provided in the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), also known as the bipartisan infrastructure law, to address methane emissions and clean-up of orphaned fossil fuel wells.⁷⁹ Funding for this program is available for Tribal, federal, state, and private lands. In July 2023, both departments released a notice of intent announcing the first funding opportunity of \$350 million in grants for state governments through DOE’s National Energy Technology Laboratory.⁸⁰ Although the August 2023 deadline to apply for this funding has passed, IRA funding for this program will remain available through September 2028.

Clean electricity incentives

The Inflation Reduction Act modifies and extends tax credits for clean electricity investment and production, accelerating the deployment of renewable energy and cleaning up the electricity grid.⁸¹ Notably, the act created bonus incentives for renewable energy projects that pay prevailing wages and hire registered apprentices, are in communities historically reliant on fossil fuels, and use domestically manufactured resources. These bonus structures ensure that the clean energy projects create high-quality, good-paying jobs; invest in communities; and bolster domestic supply chains. The Inflation Reduction Act also allows direct pay for these clean energy tax credits, which grants state and local governments, nonprofits, and other tax-exempt entities—such as schools, hospitals, places of worship, and more—direct access to federal clean energy incentives for the first time.⁸²

Low-income community bonus tax credits

In addition to the clean energy investments, the Inflation Reduction Act ensures federal dollars go a lot further in communities facing underinvestment—often due to historical and ongoing racial discrimination—including low-income and disadvantaged communities that face the most significant effects of climate change.⁸³ The 48(e) bonus tax credit provides up to a 10 to 20 percent bonus for solar, wind, and storage facilities that are placed in “low-income communities” or on “Indian land” or that benefit low-income residents.⁸⁴ These projects can include community solar projects, which can help both homeowners and renters save money on electric bills.⁸⁵

Reducing air pollution in schools

The Inflation Reduction Act provided \$50 million to the EPA to offer grants and other support to monitor and reduce air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions in and around schools in low-income and disadvantaged communities.⁸⁶ So far, the EPA has released \$37.5 million in competitive grants for states, Tribes, territories, local governments and educational agencies, and nongovernmental organizations. Another \$12.5 million is provided for technical assistance to schools to address environmental issues, develop environmental quality plans, and mitigate ongoing air pollution.⁸⁷ In addition to supporting access to these funds, Florida's state and local leaders must invest in education and outreach efforts to ensure that schools in low-income communities across the state are aware of these funds to improve air quality and create a healthy learning environment at schools.

Clean Air Act grants

The Inflation Reduction Act provides \$25 million in grant funding through the EPA for research, development, and planning of state air pollution control agencies. States, local governments, and Tribal agencies are eligible for this funding, and Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, Guam, and American Samoa are included in the definition of eligible states. The Inflation Reduction Act also provides \$5 million in grants to states for adopting and implementing California's greenhouse gas and zero-emission standard for on-road vehicles. Funding for both grants are available until September 30, 2031.

Air pollution monitoring

The Inflation Reduction Act includes \$117.5 million for the EPA to support competitive grants for community monitoring and to build Tribal monitoring capacity. These funds will also help to strengthen air monitoring programs for pollutants such as ozone and particulate matter and to expand air toxics monitoring sites.⁸⁸

The Inflation Reduction Act includes \$117.5 million for the EPA to support competitive grants for community monitoring and to build Tribal monitoring capacity.

TABLE 1

Pollution reduction and clean energy acceleration

Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund

A \$27 billion program of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) that provides competitive grants, loans, and other forms of financial assistance to national nonprofit organizations and state, local, and Tribal governments. This assistance is intended for clean energy and climate projects that reduce local pollution and greenhouse gas emissions and support climate resilience, with a focus on historically disadvantaged communities.

FUNDING AVAILABILITY AND WHO CAN APPLY:

The EPA must distribute program funding to intermediaries by September 2024, who will further distribute funds to eligible projects with no distribution deadline.

Environmental and Climate Justice Program

\$3 billion for EPA competitive grants and technical assistance to address environmental and climate injustice and climate resilience in disadvantaged communities.

FUNDING AVAILABILITY AND WHO CAN APPLY:

Community-based organizations and federally recognized Tribes, local governments, and institutes of higher education. Available through September 2026.

Climate Pollution Reduction Grants program

\$5 billion in EPA noncompetitive and competitive grants to support the design and implementation of climate action plans. The program provides phase-one noncompetitive planning grants and phase-two competitive implementation grants.

FUNDING AVAILABILITY AND WHO CAN APPLY:

Phase-one planning grants are for states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico and are available through September 2031. Note: The DeSantis administration declined to apply for 2023 funds for Florida.* Phase-two implementation grants are for states, air pollution control agencies, municipalities, Tribes, and other eligible entities. The EPA announced two competitions for \$4.6 billion in phase-two implementation grants in September 2023. Phase-two grants are available through September 2026.

Methane Emissions Reduction Program

\$1.55 billion in EPA and Department of Energy grants and rebates to plug, remediate, and monitor orphaned oil and gas wells on Tribal, federal, state, and private lands.

FUNDING AVAILABILITY AND WHO CAN APPLY:

States, counties, cities/townships, special districts, territories, Tribal governments, and other eligible entities. Available through September 2028.

Clean electricity investment tax credit

"Technology-neutral tax credit for investment in facilities that generate clean electricity. Replaces the investment tax credit for energy property (\$48) for property placed in service in 2025 and later."

FUNDING AVAILABILITY AND WHO CAN APPLY:

Available through December 31, 2032.

Clean electricity production tax credit

"Technology-neutral tax credit for production of clean electricity. Replaces the production tax credit for electricity generated from renewable sources (\$45) for facilities placed in service in 2025 and later."

FUNDING AVAILABILITY AND WHO CAN APPLY:

Available through December 31, 2032.

Low-Income Communities Bonus Credit Program

Bonus tax credit of 6 percent of qualified investments (basis of energy property) in small-scale solar and wind facilities on Indian land and in low-income communities.

FUNDING AVAILABILITY AND WHO CAN APPLY:

Solar and wind facilities with a maximum net output of less than 5 megawatts, including associated energy storage technology. Available through December 31, 2032.

Residential clean energy credit

Credit covers "30 percent of the costs of new, qualified clean energy property for your home installed from 2022 through 2032. The credit percentage rate phases down to 26 percent for property placed in service in 2033 and 22 percent for property placed in service in 2034."

FUNDING AVAILABILITY AND WHO CAN APPLY:

See cell above.

Funding to address air pollution at schools

\$37 million in competitive EPA grants to monitor and reduce pollution and greenhouse gas emissions at schools in low-income and disadvantaged communities.

FUNDING AVAILABILITY AND WHO CAN APPLY:

States, Tribes, territories, local governments, educational agencies, and nongovernmental organizations. Available through September 30, 2031.

* **Correction, October 4, 2023:** This figure has been updated to clarify that, contrary to some recent reporting, no governor—including Gov. DeSantis—has formally submitted a letter to the administration rejecting Inflation Reduction Act funding.

Source: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, "Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund" (last accessed August 2023); U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, "Inflation Reduction Act Environmental and Climate Justice Program" (last accessed September 2023); U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, "Climate Pollution Reduction Grants" (last accessed September 2023); U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, "CPRG Implementation Grants Information" (last accessed September 2023); U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, "CPRG Planning Grants Information" (last accessed September 2023); The White House, "Building a Clean Energy Economy: A Guidebook to the Inflation Reduction Act's Investments in Clean Energy and Climate Action" (Washington: 2023); The White House, "Clean Energy Tax Provisions in the Inflation Reduction Act" (last accessed September 2023); IRS, "Low-Income Communities Bonus Credit" (last accessed September 2023); IRS, "Residential Clean Energy Credit" (last accessed September 2023); Inflation Reduction Act Tracker, "IRA Section 60106 – Reducing Air Pollution at Schools" (last accessed September 2023).

The Inflation Reduction Act also provides \$50 million for multipollutant monitoring. The EPA will use these funds to support grants to state, local, and Tribal air agencies to upgrade and expand the national ambient air quality monitoring network, including by adding new multipollutant monitoring stations. These funds will also improve the Clean Air Status and Trends Network (CASTNET) to measure toxic and emerging pollutants.⁸⁹

The EPA will also use \$3 million from the Inflation Reduction Act to support grants and loans to purchase air quality sensors for use in low-income and disadvantaged communities.⁹⁰ IRA funding for these pollution monitoring programs is available through September 2031.

2. Building climate-resilient coasts and communities

As demonstrated by this summer’s extended and record-breaking extreme heat event in Florida and the costly and devastating impacts of hurricanes Idalia and Ian, Florida is on the front lines of more extreme weather fueled by climate change. Fortunately, Florida’s state and local leaders have an opportunity to take advantage of the Inflation Reduction Act’s historic investments in building climate resilient communities, including those described in more detail below.

Urban and Community Forestry Assistance Program

The Inflation Reduction Act provides \$1.5 billion in grants through the Urban and Community Forestry Assistance Program to improve access to tree cover and green spaces in urban areas, where nearly 85 percent of Americans live.⁹¹ According to U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack, “Whether it’s reducing heat stress or creating jobs in tree-planting and maintenance, this grant funding will support local communities and partners who are working on the ground to advance environmental justice by mitigating the impact of climate change on communities who lack tree cover in urban spaces while giving kids more safe spaces to play outdoors.”⁹² The funds will support community-based organizations, Tribes, state and municipal governments, nonprofit partners, universities, and other eligible groups in expanding tree cover in cities to build resilience to climate change—including by cooling neighborhoods during extreme heat events—and improve quality of life, public health, and access to nature. These funds will also help to maintain and manage urban forests, engage local community members in urban forest planning, and create jobs.⁹³

This year, Florida has received more than \$32 million in IRA funding to expand tree cover and parks in neighborhoods, reduce heat stress, and create jobs—including a \$3.75 million grant to the state and roughly \$29 million in grants to 23 localities, including the cities of Cape Coral, Hollywood, Homestead, Kissimmee, Margate, and Miami, among others.⁹⁴ IRA funding for this program is available through September 2031.⁹⁵

Climate-ready coasts and communities

Florida's coastal economy employs 6.2 million people who contribute almost \$760 billion to the state's total gross domestic product (GDP).⁹⁶ In addition, as described above, Florida's coastal reefs provide more than \$675 million in storm and flooding protection to Florida's communities and local economies each year.⁹⁷ Yet Florida is on the front lines of coral bleaching and sea level rise driven by climate change. Of the 19.6 million people in Florida, approximately 15 million live along the state's coast and face flooding and storm surge risks from climate change-induced sea level rise and more powerful hurricanes.⁹⁸ The highest number of deaths from Hurricane Ian came from storm surge inundation in low-lying areas.⁹⁹

The Inflation Reduction Act provides a total of \$3.3 billion in funding to build climate-ready coasts and communities. In June 2023, NOAA and the U.S. Department of Commerce announced a framework for investing \$2.6 billion of these funds to support coastal resilience and protections for communities and people on the front lines of climate change.¹⁰⁰ These funds will be available through September 2026,¹⁰¹ with roughly \$400 million dedicated specifically for Tribal priorities that will benefit coastal communities and advance environmental justice. These funds will help vulnerable communities prepare, adapt, and build resilience to extreme weather events, flooding, and climate change disasters. They will also support workforce development, nature-based solutions, coastal conservation, and protection of marine resources through the following programs:

- **Climate Resilience Regional Challenge:** NOAA will provide \$575 million for a new competitive grant program to support collaborative coastal resilience at regional scales.
- **Tribal Priorities:** NOAA will provide \$390 million to Tribes for habitat restoration, fish passage, capacity building, science, fish hatcheries, and more.

- **Climate-ready fisheries:** NOAA will offer \$349 million for projects to conserve fisheries and protected species in U.S. coastal regions.
- **Ocean-Based Climate Resilience Accelerators:** NOAA will provide \$100 million for a new competitive business accelerator program to back businesses with coastal and ocean-based resilience products and services to build climate-resilient communities.
- **Climate-ready workforce:** NOAA will provide \$60 million to support training and other services and to place workers in high-quality jobs that enhance climate resilience.

Leveraging coastal resilience funds from both the Inflation Reduction Act and Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, NOAA recommended in April 2023 that \$78.7 million be used for projects in Florida to strengthen the resilience of communities and the state's economy to climate change threats, including by restoring coral reef and other natural areas to reduce the risks of sea level rise and flooding and to improve fish habitat.¹⁰²

The Inflation Reduction Act provides a total of \$3.3 billion in funding to build climate-ready coasts and communities.

Tribal climate resilience

The Inflation Reduction Act provides \$225 million to the U.S. Department of the Interior's Bureau of Indian Affairs to support Tribes in developing climate resilience plans to sustain Tribal ecosystems and natural and cultural resources, economies, infrastructure, health, and safety. The act also provides \$10 million to extend the life of Tribal fish hatcheries and to support hatchery rearing and stocking programs. Funds for both programs are available through September 2031.¹⁰³

In addition to the funds described above, the Inflation Reduction Act includes funds for NOAA to improve its climate and data services for the private sector, including the insurance and health industries for federal, state, and local leaders to make informed decisions as they plan for and respond to extreme heat, drought, and other extreme weather events made worse by climate change.¹⁰⁴

The IRA resilience funds will bolster the \$3 billion the bipartisan infrastructure law provides for coastal resilience and weather forecasting infrastructure.¹⁰⁵

The Inflation Reduction Act provides \$225 million to the U.S. Department of the Interior’s Bureau of Indian Affairs to support Tribes in developing climate resilience plans.

TABLE 2

Climate-resilient communities

<p>Clean Air Act grants \$25 million in noncompetitive grants from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) "for air pollution control agencies in support of activities under Clean Air Act Section 103." No open opportunities at this time.</p>	<p>FUNDING AVAILABILITY AND WHO CAN APPLY: "Eligible entities include state, local, Tribal, and territorial air pollution control agencies. Eligibility will be limited to air agencies currently receiving Clean Air Act Section 105 grants. The EPA will award these grants noncompetitively to air pollution control agencies, and no cost sharing will be required."</p>
<p>Urban and Community Forestry Inflation Reduction Act grants \$1.5 billion in competitive Department of Agriculture grants to increase equitable access to urban tree canopy and associated human health, environmental, and economic benefits in disadvantaged communities.</p>	<p>FUNDING AVAILABILITY AND WHO CAN APPLY: State agencies and local governmental entities. Available through September 30, 2031.</p>
<p>Coastal resilience \$2.6 billion from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) for direct federal spending, contracts, grants, cooperative agreements, or technical assistance to support coastal resilience; coastal communities; and conservation, restoration, and protection of coastal and marine habitat and resources, including fisheries.</p>	<p>FUNDING AVAILABILITY AND WHO CAN APPLY: States, Tribes, localities, and institutions of higher learning. Available through September 30, 2026.</p>

Source: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, "Clean Air Act Grants under the Inflation Reduction Act" (last accessed September 2023); U.S. Forest Service, "Urban & Community Forestry Inflation Reduction Act Grants" (last accessed September 2023); Inflation Reduction Act Tracker, "IRA Section 40001 – Investing in Coastal Communities and Climate Resilience" (last accessed September 2023).

3. Lowering energy costs with clean energy and climate-resilient homes and buildings

Floridians spend about \$281 a month, or \$3,372 a year, on electricity bills—29 percent higher than the national average.¹⁰⁶ Fortunately, the Inflation Reduction Act includes the incentives described below to help homeowners and energy consumers purchase energy-efficient appliances and upgrade their homes to lower energy costs. State and local leaders must invest in public education and outreach to ensure Floridians are aware of these incentives to lower household bills.

Home energy efficiency and electrification rebate programs

The Inflation Reduction Act provides DOE nearly \$9 billion to give to states and Tribes to set up home energy rebate programs for consumers to upgrade to

electric home appliances, make energy efficiency improvements, and cut energy costs.¹⁰⁷ For instance, the Home Electrification Rebate program offers households up to \$14,000 in rebates for switching to electric appliances, covering 50 to 100 percent of the cost for low- to moderate-income households.¹⁰⁸ And the Home Energy Efficiency Rebate program covers more than 50 percent of the cost of whole-home energy efficiency retrofit or more than 80 percent of the cost for low- or moderate-income households.¹⁰⁹

Floridians spend about \$281 a month, or \$3,372 a year, on electricity bills—29 percent higher than the national average.

DOE made more than \$346 million in home energy rebates available to Floridians this year to substantially lower their energy costs through weatherizing their homes, installing heat pumps, and switching to energy-efficient appliances.¹¹⁰ Yet much to the dismay of some state leaders and consumer advocates,¹¹¹ Gov. DeSantis vetoed a \$5 million federal grant in the state budget to set up programs that would have helped deliver up to \$14,000 in home energy rebates per household in Florida.¹¹² Fortunately, Florida is still eligible to apply for the \$346 million in rebate funding allocated to the state. Local and state advocates now must convince the governor and his administration to notify DOE by August 2024 that the state plans to apply for the funds to give Floridians much-needed relief on their energy bills; otherwise, that funding will be allocated to other states.¹¹³

Energy Efficient Home Improvement Credit

With the Inflation Reduction Act, millions of Florida homeowners are eligible for a \$1,200 tax credit annually to upgrade and retrofit their home heating and cooling systems through the energy-efficient home improvement credit.¹¹⁴ This credit is available for installing new doors, windows, skylights, insulation, and heat pumps that more efficiently regulate the temperature of an existing home. Switching to a heat pump alone could save a household \$500 to \$1,000 per year, on average, in heating and cooling costs.¹¹⁵ The credit also covers the cost of a home energy audit, an energy-efficient water heater, and upgrades to electrical systems necessary to install new electric equipment. In addition, contractors who perform energy-efficient home energy retrofits may be eligible for other tax credits and rebates. The credit limit for heat pumps is an exception and is set at \$2,000 annually.¹¹⁶

For Tribal communities, the Inflation Reduction Act provides an additional \$145.5 million for Tribal electrification through the U.S. Bureau of Indian Affairs—funding that may be used for repairs, retrofits, energy transition, and electrification of Tribal homes into zero-emission energy systems.¹¹⁷

Residential Clean Energy Credit

Florida homeowners are also eligible for a tax credit to install residential solar, small-scale wind, geothermal heat pump, home battery storage, and fuel cell energy systems in new or existing homes.

Tenants often live in buildings that are flood-prone, energy-inefficient, and not designed to withstand the impacts of climate change, driving up energy bills during extreme heat events and home repair and rebuilding costs in the wake of flooding. This can lead to high costs and unsafe living conditions and health risks, particularly for low-income renters who may not have the resources to relocate or make necessary adaptations to their homes. The Inflation Reduction Act helps to address these risks by investing in climate-resilient affordable housing and green infrastructure and by promoting energy efficiency measures that can reduce housing costs for renters. By prioritizing the needs of renters and other vulnerable communities, the Inflation Reduction Act can help build healthy and climate resilient communities for all.¹¹⁸

New Energy Efficient Homes Credit

Florida residential home builders are eligible for up to \$5,000 in tax credits for each new energy-efficient home and up to \$1,000 for each new unit in a multifamily building that they build.¹¹⁹ This tax credit aims to incentivize the construction of energy-efficient single and multifamily homes while also making it cost-effective for the builder.

In Hillsborough County, some residents spend more than 12 percent of their income on electricity bills.¹²⁰ That energy burden—the amount of household income used to pay energy bills—is five times the national average.¹²¹ The various IRA tax credits described above could go a long way in encouraging homeowners to improve the energy efficiency of their homes and shift toward renewable energy, offering tangible savings for households, as seen in cities such as Tampa, where solar adoption has led to reduced electricity bills.¹²²

By prioritizing the needs of renters and other vulnerable communities, the Inflation Reduction Act can help build healthy and climate resilient communities for all.

Indeed, the IRA funds for home energy rebates would help residents in the Sunshine State substantially lower their energy bills and improve their economic security, which is why it is imperative that the DeSantis administration apply for the \$346 million for home energy rebates allocated to Florida and give DOE notice of its plans to do so by August 2024.

TABLE 3

Energy efficient and climate-resilient homes and communities

<p>Home Energy Performance-Based Rebate and Whole-House Rebate \$4.3 billion in Department of Energy (DOE) grants to develop a whole-house energy-saving retrofits program that will provide rebates to homeowners and aggregators for whole-house energy-saving retrofits of up to \$8,000. Incentives for low-income households are doubled, or up to 80 percent of project costs.</p>	<p>FUNDING AVAILABILITY AND WHO CAN APPLY: State energy offices. Available through September 30, 2031.</p>
<p>High Efficiency Electric Home Rebate Program \$4.5 billion (\$2.25 million allocated to Tribes) in DOE grants for states and Tribal entities to develop and implement high-efficiency electric home rebate programs. Up to \$9,750 for heat pumps, \$840 for electric stoves, \$4,000 for upgrades to electric panels, \$2,500 for updates to electric wiring, and \$1,600 for weatherization. Maximum allowable rebate amount for qualifying upgrades is \$14,000.</p>	<p>FUNDING AVAILABILITY AND WHO CAN APPLY: 100 percent purchase and installation rebate for low-income households and 50 percent rebate for moderate-income households. Available through September 30, 2031.</p>
<p>Energy efficient home improvement credit Tax credit for owners of existing homes. Up to \$2,000 for heat pumps and up to \$1,200 for weatherization installs and energy efficiency improvements – including up \$150 for a home energy audit, \$500 total for all exterior doors, \$600 for new exterior windows and skylights, \$1,200 for insulation, and \$600 for an upgraded electrical panel.</p>	<p>FUNDING AVAILABILITY AND WHO CAN APPLY: Available through December 31, 2032.</p>
<p>Residential clean energy credit Tax credit for the purchase of residential clean energy equipment, including battery storage with capacity of at least 3 kilowatt hours.</p>	<p>FUNDING AVAILABILITY AND WHO CAN APPLY: Homeowners and renters. Available through December 31, 2032.</p>
<p>New energy efficient home credit Tax credit for the construction of new energy efficient homes.</p>	<p>FUNDING AVAILABILITY AND WHO CAN APPLY: Homebuilders. Available through December 31, 2032.</p>

Source: U.S. Department of Energy Office of State and Community Programs, “About the Home Energy Rebates” (last accessed September 2023); U.S. Department of Energy, “Biden-Harris Administration Announces State and Tribe Allocations For Home Energy Rebate Program,” Press release, November 2, 2022; IRS, “Home Energy Tax Credits” (last accessed September 2023); U.S. Office of the Law Revision Counsel, “26 USC 45L: New energy efficient home credit” (last accessed September 2023).

4. Protecting Florida’s rural communities with climate-resilient energy infrastructure investments

Rural communities in Florida were among those hit hardest by Hurricane Ian’s devastating winds and flood waters. In the rural counties of Highlands, DeSoto, and Hardee, 100 percent of residents lost power, and they were also among the last people in the state to have their power restored.¹²³ Florida’s rural communities and infrastructure are also affected by more extreme heat, flooding from sea level rise, and other climate change effects.¹²⁴

The following IRA investments support agricultural producers and small businesses, rural electric cooperatives, and state and local governments in securing resilient, reliable, and clean renewable energy systems and in improving energy efficiency.

Rural Energy for America Program (REAP)

The Inflation Reduction Act provides more than \$1.7 billion in grant funding for rural small businesses and agricultural producers for renewable energy systems. Funds may also be used to make energy efficiency improvements—such as high efficiency heating, insulation, and cooling as well as diesel switching—or to install energy-efficient systems for agricultural production or processing.¹²⁵

Electric loans for renewable energy

The Inflation Reduction Act provides \$1 billion through the U.S. Department of Agriculture in loans and loan forgiveness for state and local governments, federally recognized Tribes, nonprofit organizations, and for-profit businesses to finance the construction of electric distribution, transmission, and generation facilities in rural areas as well as on-grid and off-grid renewable energy systems.¹²⁶

TABLE 4

Rural communities

<p>Rural Energy for America Program (REAP) More than \$1.7 billion for U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) loan guarantees and grants for renewable energy systems, energy efficiency improvements, equipment, and production and processing.</p>	<p>FUNDING AVAILABILITY AND WHO CAN APPLY: Agricultural producers and rural small businesses. Available through September 30, 2031.</p>
<p>Electric loans for renewable energy \$1 billion in loans and loan forgiveness through the USDA to finance the construction of electric distribution, transmission, and generation facilities in rural areas, as well as on-grid and off-grid renewable energy systems.</p>	<p>FUNDING AVAILABILITY AND WHO CAN APPLY: State and local governments, federally recognized Tribes, nonprofit organizations, and for-profit businesses.</p>

Source: U.S. Department of Agriculture, "Rural Energy For America Program (REAP)" (last accessed September 2023); U.S. Department of Agriculture, "Electric Infrastructure Loan & Loan Guarantee Program" (last accessed September 2023).

5. Supporting pollution-free ports and transportation for more livable communities

The Inflation Reduction Act includes substantial funding to reduce pollution at ports and from cars to improve public health, air quality, and quality of life in communities. Examples of the funding opportunities available to Florida state and local leaders and households are highlighted below.

Healthy ports

Florida is home to two of the biggest ports in the Southeast, with PortMiami serving as the largest passenger port in the world and one of the largest cargo ports. Florida's ports contribute \$117.6 billion to the state's economy and generate nearly 900,000 direct and indirect jobs.¹²⁷ Communities located near ports are often disproportionately affected by the hazardous air pollutants emitted by diesel-burning equipment, vehicles, and marine vessels, including particulate matter, nitrogen oxides, carbon monoxide, sulfur oxides, and other air toxins.¹²⁸

To address this, the Inflation Reduction Act provides \$3 billion in grants through the EPA for port authorities to purchase zero-emission equipment or technology and develop climate action plans to reduce air pollution.¹²⁹ These investments can help to significantly reduce pollution from the diesel-powered equipment, vehicles, and marine vessels at ports. Additionally, 25 percent of clean ports funding—\$750 million in total—is set aside for nonattainment areas, or areas that do not meet air quality standards. This funding will be available to port authorities; state, regional, local, or Tribal agencies with jurisdiction over ports; and local air pollution control agencies through September 2027.¹³⁰

The Inflation Reduction Act provides \$3 billion in grants through the EPA for port authorities to purchase zero-emission equipment or technology and develop climate action plans to reduce air pollution

For example, PortMiami can apply for these funds to support its partnership with Miami-Dade County and Miami Mayor Daniella Levine Cava (D) to reduce pollution from cruise ships and improve the port's sustainability and climate resilience.¹³¹

Diesel emission reductions

In addition, the Inflation Reduction Act provides \$60 million to supplement the EPA's Diesel Emissions Reduction Act (DERA) program to reduce harmful pollution and improve public health in communities disproportionately exposed to diesel pollution from goods movement facilities and vehicles servicing those facilities.¹³² The EPA is accepting applications for DERA funding through December 1, 2023, and expects to award up to \$115 million during this grant period.¹³³ These funds will be available to regional, state, local, or Tribal agencies or port authorities with jurisdiction over transportation or air quality through September 2031.

Select private entities with eligible fleets of diesel-powered vehicles and non-profit groups that provide pollution reduction services are also eligible for these funds. Program participants can use DERA funding to retrofit or replace existing diesel engines and vehicles, including school buses, heavy-duty trucks, locomotive engines, equipment for construction, moving cargo, agriculture, and energy production, among others.¹³⁴

Electric vehicles

To make electric vehicles more accessible to households, the Inflation Reduction Act provides a credit of up to \$7,500 to purchase a new electric vehicle or up to \$4,000 for a used electric vehicle.¹³⁵ Low- and medium-income consumers are prioritized in these tax credits. Because electric vehicles cost, on average, \$800 to \$1,000 less to fuel and operate per year than gas-powered vehicles, using electric vehicles can create serious cost savings over time.¹³⁶ To check eligibility, interested applicants can go to [fueleconomy.gov](https://www.fueleconomy.gov).¹³⁷

Clean Heavy-Duty Vehicle Program

The Inflation Reduction Act provides the EPA \$1 billion in grant funding to Tribal, state, and local governments to offset the costs of replacing heavy-duty Class 6 and 7 commercial vehicles with zero-emission vehicles and deploying related infrastructure. Of this funding, \$400 million will go to communities in nonattainment areas.¹³⁸ Funding availability is anticipated later this year.

To make electric vehicles more accessible to households, the Inflation Reduction Act provides a credit of up to \$7,500 to purchase a new electric vehicle or up to \$4,000 for a used electric vehicle.

The government must recognize the importance of simplifying the application process and creating programs that can compete with private sector loans. For example, the U.S. Government Accountability Office reported in 2013 that the Advanced Technology Vehicles Manufacturing Loan Program for light EVs was burdensome and costly.¹³⁹ These challenges have been attributed to low application submissions, resulting in a good portion of the funds remaining untouched for more than a decade.

Reconnecting communities to improve neighborhood access and equity

Transportation is a major source of Florida's air pollution and greenhouse gas. Investing in affordable and reliable public transportation in Florida can significantly improve air quality and public health, reduce traffic congestion and commute times, and mitigate climate change.

To support projects that improve community walkability and access to safe, clean, and affordable transportation, the Inflation Reduction Act provides \$3.2 billion through the U.S. Department of Transportation's (DOT) Neighborhood Access and Equity (NAE) grant program.¹⁴⁰ These funds are available through September 2026 and include \$1.3 billion for economically disadvantaged communities to improve community health and connectivity, for example, by removing transportation infrastructure previously built alongside or through communities that has created barriers to economic opportunities, mobility, and quality of life. NAE also offers \$50 million for technical assistance activities and capacity building for local governments.

DOT released a joint notice of funding opportunity¹⁴¹ for the NAE program and the Reconnecting Communities Pilot grant program,¹⁴² which received \$1 billion from the bipartisan infrastructure law. These two programs share common goals—including prioritizing disadvantaged communities; improving access to jobs, education, health care, recreation, and other services; and

reconnecting communities—and, together, they are known as the Reconnecting Communities and Neighborhoods (RCN) program. Applications for this joint notice of funding opportunity are due by September 28, 2023. The program will support community planning, capital construction, and regional partnership challenge grants.

To support projects that improve community walkability and access to safe, clean, and affordable transportation, the Inflation Reduction Act provides \$3.2 billion through DOT’s Neighborhood Access and Equity grant program.

Eligible grant recipients include states, local governments, U.S. territories, Tribes, public transportation authorities, and metropolitan planning organizations. In addition, nonprofit organizations and institutions of higher education that partner with other eligible applicants can receive grants for planning and capacity-building grants in disadvantaged communities.

Grant recipients can use RCN funds to support a wide range of activities, including building or improving complete streets, multiuse trails, regional greenways, and transportation networks. The funds will also support projects that provide affordable access to essential destinations; create public spaces or transportation hubs; reduce transportation-related climate and other air pollution; build parks and use other green infrastructure to mitigate urban heat-island hot spots and stormwater runoff tied to transportation infrastructure; and improve transportation safety. The funds will also support planning and capacity building in disadvantaged communities, including by monitoring and assessing local air quality and transportation climate pollution and extreme heat hot spots and by developing local anti-displacement policies and community benefits agreements, among other activities.¹⁴³

Hillsborough County

Public transportation in Hillsborough County – which, according to the latest census data, is home to 1.5 million people¹⁴⁴ – remains grossly underfunded, creating a nonnegotiable reliance on gas-powered cars for those lucky enough to afford them. In addition to extreme heat, working-class bus riders are continuously subjected to long wait times, closed restrooms, and inconvenient routes. Hillsborough Area Regional Transit is one of the nation’s most underfunded transit agencies, with per-person spending rivaling that of Sheboygan, Wisconsin – a city with a population of less than 50,000.¹⁴⁵

Community members reliant on public transit in Florida’s fourth-most populous county are clamoring for improved service reliability, frequency and safety. Yet as COVID-19 relief funds rapidly dwindle, additional funding is desperately needed to improve existing public transportation infrastructure and offer a true alternative to car dependency. The \$3.2 billion in IRA funding available through DOT’s Neighborhood Access and Equity grant program and the \$108 billion in IIJA funding available from DOT for public transit are potential sources of funding to help address the county’s public transit funding gap.¹⁴⁶

Sustainable aviation

The Inflation Reduction Act also provides the Federal Aviation Administration with more than \$297 million in grant funding for the Alternative Fuel and Low-Emission Aviation Technology Program, which aims to significantly improve aircraft fuel efficiency and reduce greenhouse gas emissions during the operation of civil aircraft.¹⁴⁷ This funding will be available to state and local governments; air carriers or sponsors; and select nonprofits.

Additionally, IRA funding will incentivize the production of sustainable aviation fuels through a new sustainable aviation fuel credit. To qualify for the \$1.25 per gallon credit, the fuel must have a minimum reduction of 50 percent in lifecycle greenhouse gas emissions.¹⁴⁸ An additional 1 cent credit will be given for each percent of emissions reduction above the 50 percent minimum.

TABLE 5

Clean ports and transportation

Clean Ports Program

\$3 billion in U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) rebates and competitive grants to purchase and install zero-emission port equipment and technology, conduct associated planning or permitting activities for this equipment and technology, and develop climate action plans to further address air pollution at ports.

FUNDING AVAILABILITY AND WHO CAN APPLY:

Port authorities; state, regional, local, or Tribal agencies that have jurisdiction over a port authority or a port; air pollution control agencies; private entities; and nonprofit groups. The EPA anticipates this new funding opportunity will become available for application through a notice of funding opportunity released in late winter 2024.

Diesel emissions reductions

\$60 million in EPA grants, rebates, and loans to identify and reduce diesel emissions resulting from goods movement facilities and vehicles servicing goods movement facilities in low-income and disadvantaged communities to address the health impacts of such emissions on such communities.

FUNDING AVAILABILITY AND WHO CAN APPLY:

A regional, state, or local agency; Tribal government; or port authority that has jurisdiction over transportation or air quality. School districts, municipalities, metropolitan planning organizations, cities, and counties are all generally eligible entities under this assistance agreement program to the extent that they fall within this definition. Nonprofit organizations or institutions are also eligible. Available through September 30, 2031.

Credit for new clean vehicles

A credit of up to \$7,500 for the purchase of a new clean vehicle.

FUNDING AVAILABILITY AND WHO CAN APPLY:

In order for a vehicle to be eligible, it must meet sourcing requirements for critical minerals and battery components. Available through December 31, 2032.

Credit for previously owned clean vehicles

A transferable credit of up to \$4,000 for the purchase of a used clean vehicle.

FUNDING AVAILABILITY AND WHO CAN APPLY:

Available through December 31, 2032.

Commercial clean vehicle credit

A credit of up to \$7,500 for the purchase of a commercial clean vehicle less than 14,000 pounds or \$40,000 for the purchase of a commercial clean vehicle more than 14,000 pounds. The credit can be monetized by certain not-for-profit entities that do not have tax liability.

FUNDING AVAILABILITY AND WHO CAN APPLY:

Available through December 31, 2032.

Clean Heavy-Duty Vehicle Program

\$1 billion in competitive EPA grants and rebates to offset the costs of replacing heavy-duty Class 6 and 7 commercial vehicles with zero-emission vehicles; deploying infrastructure needed to charge, fuel, or maintain these zero-emission vehicles; and developing and training the necessary workforce.

FUNDING AVAILABILITY AND WHO CAN APPLY:

States, municipalities, Tribes, and nonprofit school transportation associations. Available through September 30, 2031.

Sustainable aviation fuel credit

Tax credit to producers and blenders of mixtures of sustainable aviation fuel (SAF) and kerosene fuel for aviation for the sale or use of SAF that achieves a life cycle greenhouse gas emissions reduction of at least 50 percent when compared with petroleum-based jet fuel.

FUNDING AVAILABILITY AND WHO CAN APPLY:

Qualified SAF mixture must be made in the United States, and fueling of the aircraft must occur in the United States. Available through January 1, 2025.

Neighborhood Access and Equity Grant Program

More than \$3.2 billion in competitive U.S. Department of Transportation grants to implement projects that improve walkability and safety, provide affordable transportation access, and mitigate negative impacts of past transportation infrastructure in disadvantaged or underserved communities.

FUNDING AVAILABILITY AND WHO CAN APPLY:

States, local governments, Tribes, public transit authorities, or nonprofit groups. Available through September 30, 2026.

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How Biden’s “Investing in America” agenda is already helping Florida

In response to the Biden-Harris administration’s “Investing in America” agenda—a suite of path-breaking legislation, including the American Rescue Plan, Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, CHIPS and Science Act, and Inflation Reduction Act—Florida has already seen private companies commit to invest a total of \$666 million in manufacturing across the state, including \$431 million for clean energy manufacturing.¹⁴⁹ In addition, the federal government has announced a total of \$10.5 billion in public infrastructure and clean energy investments for Florida, including \$6.9 billion for roads, bridges, public transit, and electric vehicles; \$1.4 billion for climate resilient communities; and nearly \$800 million for clean water infrastructure across the state.¹⁵⁰ Under the Biden-Harris administration, more than 1 million new jobs in total have been created in Florida.¹⁵¹

Examples of these investments are detailed below:

- In Alachua County, \$263,000 from the IIJA will improve the safety of roads and streets through implementation of its Safe Streets and Roads for All action plan.¹⁵²
- Miami-Dade County’s Department of Transportation and Public Works received nearly \$2 million in IIJA funding from DOT’s Strengthening Mobility and Revolutionizing Transportation (SMART) grant program to strengthen transportation efficiency and safety in the county.¹⁵³ In addition, Florida’s Lakeland Area Mass Transit District received \$2.58 million in IIJA funding from DOT to support public transit services in the city of Winter Haven.¹⁵⁴
- The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers announced the largest-ever federal investment in the Florida Everglades and the largest environmental restoration project in U.S. history—\$1.1 billion in IIJA funding for ecosystem restoration projects.¹⁵⁵ The investment will help preserve and restore this critical wetland habitat and freshwater source in the state.

Conclusion

Florida’s state and local leaders, community groups, and households have a critical opportunity to take advantage of investments available through the Inflation Reduction Act to reduce climate threats across the state, lower local pollution, and energy bills; create good-quality jobs; and improve the health, lives, and livelihoods of Floridians. By tapping into the \$369 billion provided by the Inflation Reduction Act, decision-makers in the Sunshine State can build resilience to more dangerous and costly extreme weather events, such as Hurricane Ian and Idalia as well as this summer’s record-breaking and oppressive extreme heat. Only then, can they ensure that all people and communities in Florida can breathe clean air and share the benefits of a prosperous and vibrant clean energy economy.

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