Community Considerations for IIJA Funding

President Joe Biden made it a goal of the Federal Government that 40 percent of the overall benefits of certain Federal investments flow to "disadvantaged communities that are marginalized, underserved, and overburdened by pollution" when he signed Executive Order 14008 creating the Justice40 Initiative.

Much of the funding and programs created by the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) will fall under the Justice40 Initiative. Even if it doesn't, or if the funding is coming from the State and not explicitly covered by Justice40, the Federal Government and many States are particularly interested in ensuring that funding is benefiting economically, geographically, and demographically diverse communities. As you begin to consider applying for funds, APPA encourages you to consider including information on the following categories:

- Make it clear that you are a not-for-profit, community-owned utility providing affordable, reliable electric service to every member of your community.
- Include detailed information on your community's demographics and customer characteristics such as:
  - What percentage of your community/customers are living below the poverty line?
  - What percentage of your community/customers live in rural areas?
  - What is the racial makeup of your community/customers?
  - What is the average energy burden of your customer?
- Not sure where to start? The U.S. Census Bureau can provide helpful data on Rural America, Poverty Status, Local Employment Dynamics, and Local Demographics.

- Is your community considered a Justice40 Community? Click here to find out.
  - You can also see which programs are covered under the Justice40 initiative at the Department of Energy (DOE), Department of Transportation (DOT), Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and across all the federal agencies.

Moreover, DOE and other Federal departments and agencies are particularly interested in directing resiliency and cybersecurity funding to communities and utilities that serve military bases. If your utility provides electric service to a military installation or if the community hosts any other national defense installation or nationally-economically significant customer (a port, for example) that is very important to mention.

If your utility serves one or multiple of the categories listed above, consider if you already have examples of how you've engaged or worked with them on prior projects. Many grant applications may ask for or be bolstered by examples of how you have engaged with these underserved or national defense-related customers groups in the past.