



Interagency Working Group on  
Coal & Power Plant Communities  
& Economic Revitalization

<https://energycommunities.gov/>

# The Energy Communities Interagency Working Group - Four Corners Rapid Response Team

# The Energy Communities Interagency Working Group (IWG)

The President has taken a place-based approach to economic revitalization, targeting federal engagement and investment to the most hard-hit communities.

*The President honored the coal, oil, natural gas, and power plant workers who “drove the industrial revolution and the economic growth that followed and have been essential to the growth of the United States.”*

The Energy Communities IWG reviewed domestic and international models for economic revitalization, compiled recommendations from advocacy groups and academics, and sought guidance from representatives of energy communities.

Stakeholders included labor unions; community development organizations; local, regional, and tribal governments; the private sector; and philanthropic interests.

**Initial Report to the  
President on  
Empowering Workers  
Through Revitalizing  
Energy Communities**

Interagency Working Group on  
Coal and Power Plant Communities  
and Economic Revitalization

APRIL 2021

<https://energycommunities.gov>

# Agencies in the Energy Communities IWG



Office of Management  
and Budget/Domestic  
Policy Council



U.S. Department of  
Energy



U.S. Department of  
Treasury



U.S. Department of  
the Interior



U.S. Department of  
Agriculture



U.S. Department of  
Commerce



U.S. Department of  
Labor



U.S. Department of  
Health and Human  
Services



U.S. Department of  
Transportation



U.S. Department of  
Education



U.S. Environmental  
Protection Agency



Appalachian  
Regional  
Commission

# Why Now?

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The historic passage of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, CHIPS and Science Act, and Inflation Reduction Act has greatly increased the amount of federal funding available to meet the needs of energy communities across the nation

Existing federal programs with potentially available funding totaling billions could be used to provide immediate investments in energy communities.



# The Energy Communities Interagency Working Group (IWG) – website (<https://energycommunities.gov>)

We are delivering federal resources to help  
revitalize America's energy communities

[EXPLORE FUNDING CLEARINGHOUSE](#)

Learn about new Inflation Reduction Act funding and tax credits ↗

**\$212B<sup>+</sup>**

Open/Planned Competitive  
Funding

**\$412B<sup>+</sup>**

Open/Planned Formula  
Funding

**142**

Open/Planned  
Opportunities Currently  
Available

**49**

Opportunities That Don't  
Require Matching Funds

**22**

Inflation Reduction Act Tax  
Credits

(Last updated: 12/21/23)

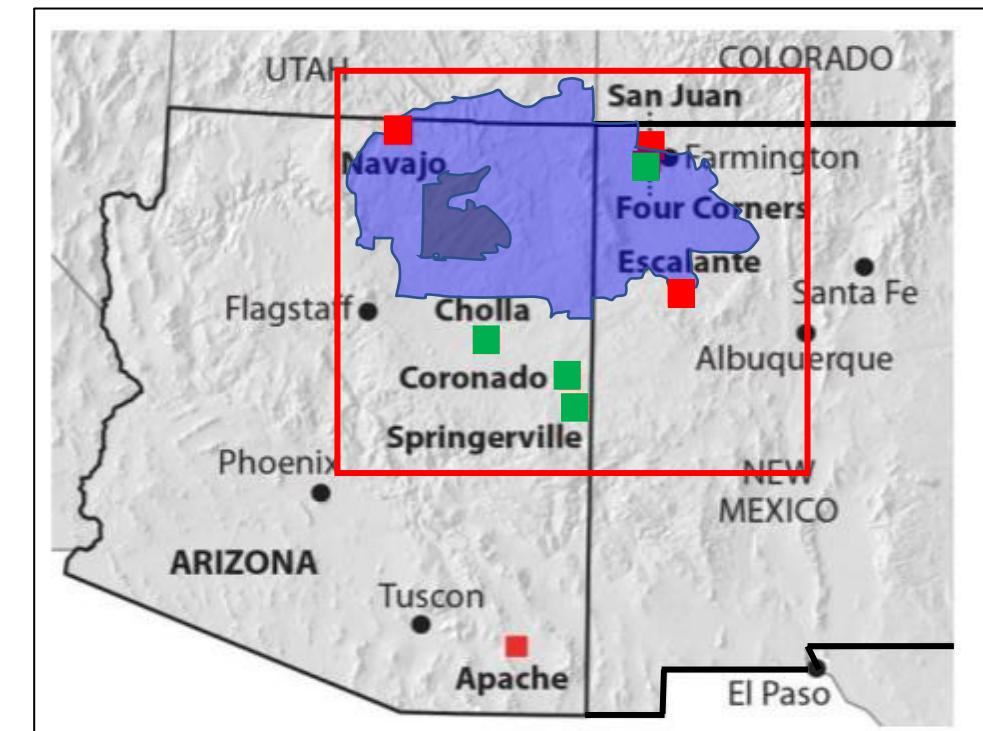
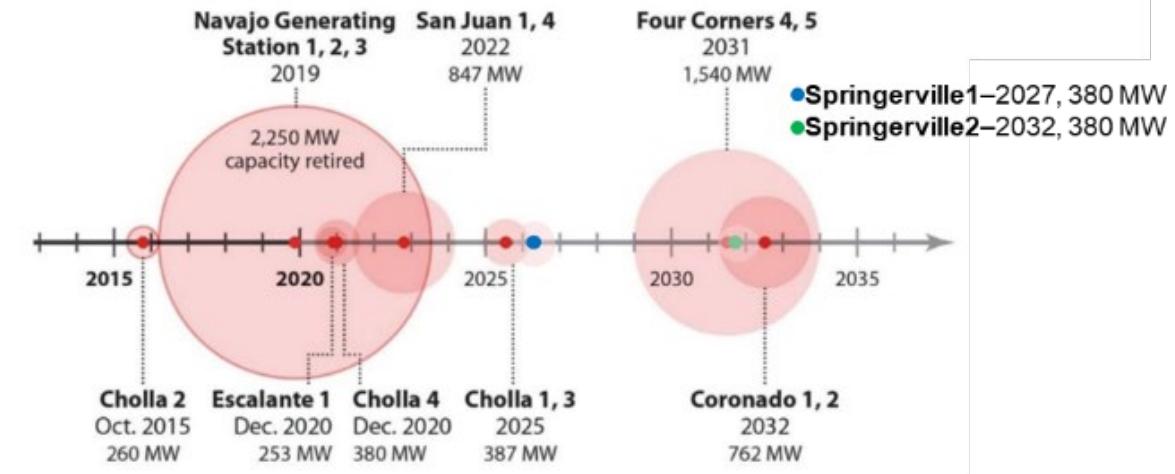
# Priority energy communities have been identified by the IWG

The IWG has published a ranked list of 25 communities for near-term investment using existing federal agency programs

- #10 Arizona (Non-Metropolitan Area)
- #16 Farmington, NM

Eight coal plants exist in this area, seven of which sit in the four corners area – 3 have closed since 2019, remaining plants/mines will close by 2032

Complex interfaces in terms of state and tribal governments/communities as well as regional agency representatives



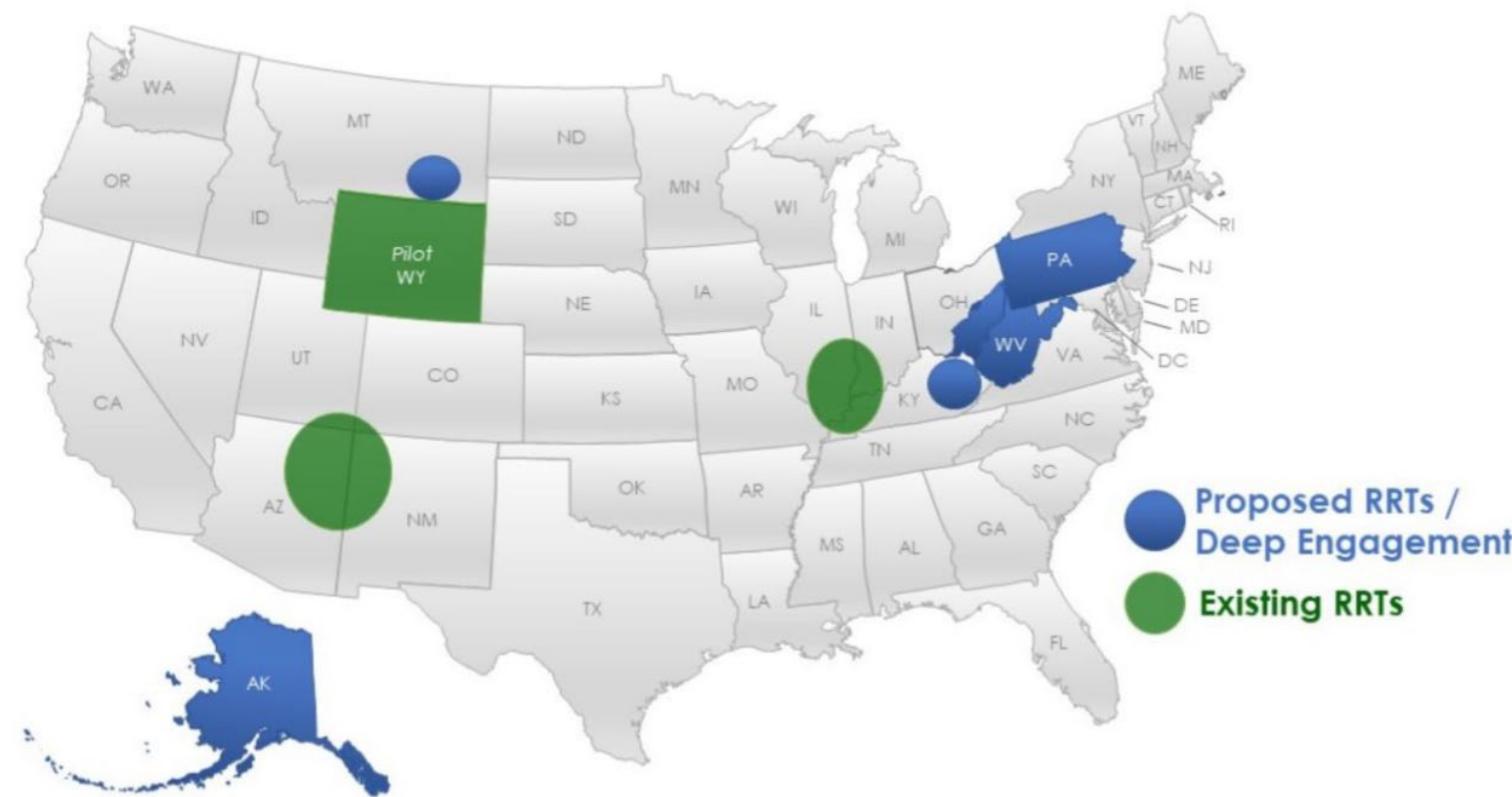
[https://ieefa.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/The-Case-for-Utility-Company-Reinvestment\\_AZ-Coalfield-Communities\\_March-2020.pdf](https://ieefa.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/The-Case-for-Utility-Company-Reinvestment_AZ-Coalfield-Communities_March-2020.pdf)

# Establishment of Rapid Response Teams (RRTs)

RRTs work within energy communities at the time of a past or approaching fossil fuel facility closure to address worker and community needs using existing federal resources.

The RRT framework is unique in the way it learns about and addresses fossil energy-related economic, environmental, community, and health challenges in each energy community.

Each RRT is led by one key federal agency, which will then develop an interagency team to coordinate funding streams and technical assistance for the regions.



# 4C-RRT Kickoff Meeting in Farmington

August 25, 2022 - San Juan College, School of Energy

- Strong representation from federal agencies
  - Kate Gordon, Senior Advisor to the Secretary of Energy
  - David Turk, Deputy Secretary of Energy
  - Deb Haaland, Secretary, Department of Interior
  - Brian Deese, Director of National Economic Council
  - Ali Zaidi, Deputy National Climate Advisor
- New Mexico State and Tribal representation
  - Alicia Keyes, Secretary, NM Economic Development
  - President Nez, Navajo Nation
  - Timothy Nuvangyaoma, Hopi Tribe of Arizona
- Regional stakeholders
  - 4C Economic Development
  - Navajo Technical University
  - San Juan College
  - Residents of the Navajo Nation and Farmington communities
  - Numerous clean energy project leaders



Deb Haaland



David Turk

# Kickoff Objective, Discussion Points and Follow-Up

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**Heard directly from stakeholders about challenges, opportunities, and expectations—to help guide 4C-RRT**

- How do communities see themselves developing economically in the future?
- What are key projects/initiatives/etc. that are important to the development of the region?

**Addressed key concerns after the kickoff**

- Followed up with regional community members/stakeholders that were not able to participate in the kick-off events
- Followed up with kickoff participants who raised specific questions/concerns

# Developed a Phased Approach



**Stage 1** – listening, learning, building a network and earning community trust

**Stage 2** – connecting community issues and projects with IWG resources

**Stage 3** – executing actions that address short-term emergency need as well as building longer-term foundational strategies

# Stage 1: What we've heard thus far: Workforce development (colleges, universities, secondary schools)

- Access to broadband is major obstacle for students and faculty
- Timelines are too long to receive federal funding when awards are granted (several months)—funds are urgently needed now
- Grant writing is labor/time intensive; few have dedicated grant writers on staff; application processes are not easy to navigate
- Technical assistance is needed for proposals to develop programs related to new economies (e.g. hydrogen, IT, bioenergy)
- Students travel long distances (up to 2 hours) to schools, often just to access Internet, with no public transport available
- Unclear what types of jobs new energy economies will bring and what skills will be needed (e.g. hydrogen)
- Federal opportunities require workforce reskilling within one year—this is not feasible and needs to be extended

## Regional Outreach

### NTU Provost

- Spec sheets for labs and instrumentation
- List of recent grant applications

### Aztec Superintendent

- List of recent grant applications
- Entrepreneurial seminar

### SJC Trades & Technology

- List of recent grant applications

### Diné College

- List of recent grant applications

# Stage 1: What we've heard thus far: Industry and economic development

- Long timelines for **permitting and workplan approvals** (up to 2 years) are delaying new job opportunities for the region—these must be expedited to enable rapid economic transition
- Access to **broadband** is an obstacle for attracting new businesses
- Lack of **infrastructure**/space to house new businesses is an obstacle
- Cost sharing is burdensome for local companies struggling to keep the lights on
- **Technical assistance** is needed for independent reviews and economic impact assessments
- 4C is unique; multiple jurisdictions make economic development extremely difficult; help is needed at the federal level to coordinate amongst various agencies to expedite processes
- Need help interpreting new legislation on 45Q (tribes vs non-tribes)
- Regional grant writing expert is needed to support numerous priority areas

## Regional Outreach

Farmington Economic Development

- List of recent grant applications

4CED

- Competitive asset map
- Request for tech assist on hydropower

SJC (4CED board members)

- PNM impact analysis
- 3<sup>rd</sup> party economic impact study
- BIL/IRA assessment
- Energy Transition Act plan

NW NM COG

- Discussed need for bringing local, federal and state teams together

# Stage 1: What we've heard thus far: Environmental Community

- Significant need to address legacy of fossil fuels (**orphan wells**, mine site reclamation) and energy (uranium mine sites)
- Strong desire for clean energy industries like **solar**
- Need for environmentally-focused workforce and associated training, internship opportunities
- Broad need for **capacity** to organize project teams and efforts
- Community center infrastructure needs to assist in communication and organization of community environmental concerns
- Need for information related to mine/plant site repurposing opportunities – how can we influence these plans?

## Regional Outreach

San Juan Citizens Alliance  
-regional orphan well issues

Western Environmental Law Center

-connection to tribal/non-tribal NGOs

Just Energy Transition Team

-questions on community benefit plans/agreements

New Mexico Env. Dept.  
-broad workforce need

Grand Canyon Trust

-community infrastructure

# Stage 2 - Communicating What We Need

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## Key messages communicated to agency leads and White House staffers

- **Capacity** – we need funding to support integrators, navigators, consolidators at community and agency levels in order to take full advantage of BIL/IRA opportunities
- **Information** – we need to develop a refined understanding of IRA provisions (i.e., “stacking”) in order to help communities to make informed decisions
- **Collaboration** – we need to build upon our engagement of IWG-supported Communities of Practice for their knowledge, know-how and assistance

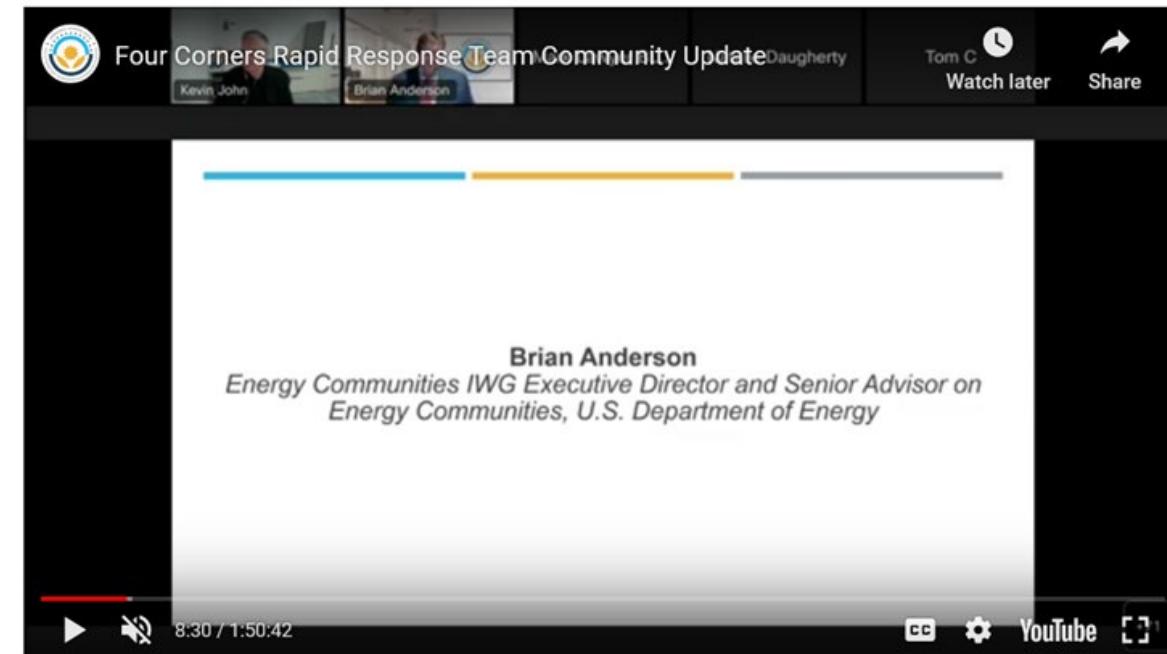
# Stage 2 - Additional Focus

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Facilitated an early 2023 NACo/NADO virtual event that included input/discussion from NWNMCOG, 4CED and Navajo Nation

Hosted a July 26<sup>th</sup> 4C-RRT Public Update virtual event (please see <https://energycommunities.gov/past-event/four-corners-rapid-response-team-community-update/> for event recording and slide deck) that included presentations on:

- salient Tribal/non-tribal community topics
- broadband,
- displaced workforce planning,
- regional environmental perspectives,
- major infrastructure initiatives,
- capacity building and
- details on a recently initiated 200 MW solar project



# Stage 3 Focus

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Engage IWG agencies in community capacity-building/technical assistance events in planning for Four Corners coal communities in NM and AZ

Provide DOE-IE and WHCNA with support on established MOU with Navajo Nation and new MOU with Hopi Nation

Field questions and provide briefings to WH, Congressional/Senate staffers and agency leads as requested

Serve as regional resource for technical information on key regional issues by using SME network to engage on regional community outreach (e.g., townhalls, workshops, etc.) – see <https://iwest.org/events/>

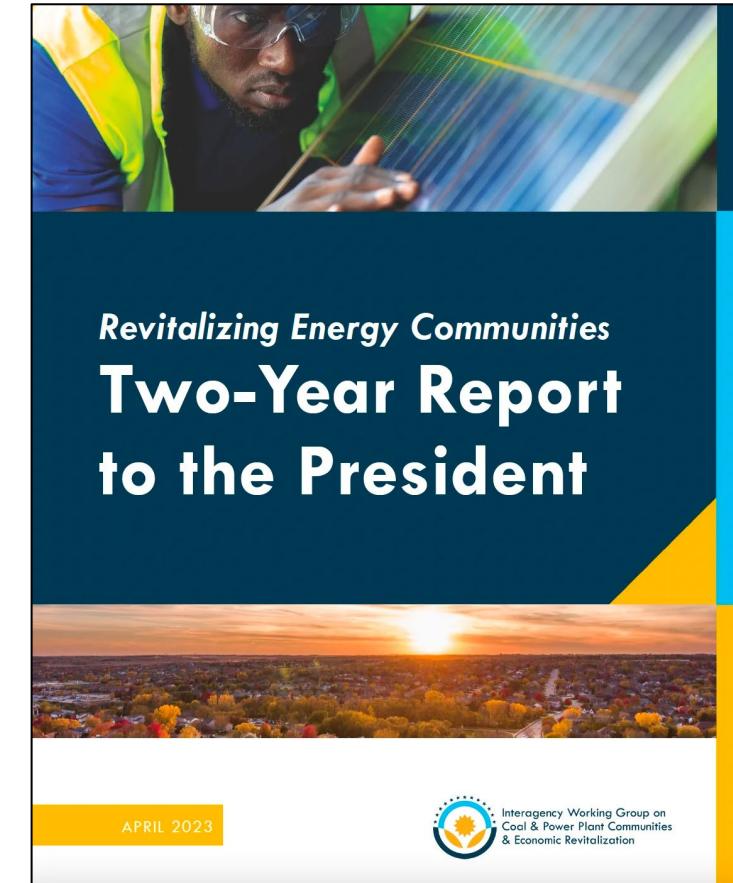
Provide SME support (as needed) for pre-proposal preparation, proposal review, etc. – building retiree network for additional support

Develop portfolio of regionally relevant communication mechanisms (e.g., web presence, newsletters, project catalogs, etc.)

# The Energy Communities Interagency Working Group

The historic passage of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, CHIPS and Science Act, and Inflation Reduction Act has greatly increased the amount of federal funding available to meet the needs of energy communities across the nation.

The *Revitalizing Energy Communities: Two-Year Report* previews the Administration's path forward to ensure the nation sustains momentum in building a clean energy future made in America and powered by American workers. The report outlines the transformative activities the Biden Administration has taken since January 2021 to provide robust outreach and engagement with energy communities, and to ensure real investments continue flowing to those communities through strategic agency efforts and implementation of the major legislation signed during the Administration's first two years.



<https://energycommunities.gov>

# Looking Forward

Continue to focus on San Juan Generating Station displaced workers and plant, mine-site repurposing opportunities – apply lessons to other 4C communities

Continue to stay active in listening, learning and regional networking modes as well as connecting community, regional project leads to the IWG – connect communities with technical assistance to build capacity and bring in funding to support regional projects

Build our learning network with current (WY, IL-Basin) and growing number of RRTs to establish best practices and strategies for success

Facilitate community events that bring together community leaders, regional/federal agency resources and critical stakeholders



**Escalante Station – Prewitt, NM**



**Coronado Station – St. Johns, AZ**

