

Climate Across AFN's Issue Areas: Potential Opportunities



The well-being and wealth of households, communities, and the broader economy are deeply tied to the physical environment and its resources.

The growing impacts of climate change are increasingly jeopardizing household economic security and racial and gender wealth equity, highlighting the urgent need for grantmakers to join communities, the private sector, and public agencies in reducing climate and economic impacts now and for the long term while ensuring that the transition to clean energy is inclusive and affordable.

Households and communities face challenges and opportunities in addressing climate change—dealing with the immediate impacts of climate disasters and extreme weather, planning for the future amidst increasing climate pressures, and transitioning from fossil fuels to clean energy. Climate-related financial strains on households deplete savings, increase debt, strip assets, and disrupt wealth-building opportunities such as buying or protecting a home, starting or growing a business, saving for retirement, or transferring wealth to future generations. Together, these impacts destabilize and drain local and regional economies.

Grantmakers can mitigate challenges and amplify opportunities so that people enjoy economic security and live in affordable, climate-resilient homes, remain rooted in their communities despite extreme weather, and contribute to thriving local and regional economies. By prioritizing communities and households of color and those with low wealth or incomes—those disproportionately affected by climate impacts and wealth disparities—grantmakers can increase equitable access to resources through on-the-ground solutions and systemic reforms. For example, a grantmaker could combine operating funds to support a small community lender's daily operations with a program-related investment (PRI) to provide capital for expanding climate-focused lending. This strengthens the lender's ability to offer affordable financial products, delivering lasting benefits to the community.

For households and communities with low wealth, two key climate strategies—**climate mitigation** and **climate resilience**—can be combined to increase economic security while preserving health and wealth.

Climate mitigation focuses on helping households and communities transition from fossil fuels to clean energy tools such as electric vehicles or energy efficient appliances. Clean energy tools not only reduce climate change impacts and pollution but also lower housing and energy costs, build economic security faster, and support wealth building.

Climate resilience helps people and communities prepare for and recover from the effects of extreme weather and climate events, such as hurricanes, heatwaves, wildfires, and flooding. Resilience tools include emergency savings and home weatherization (pre-climate events) and emergency assistance (post-climate events).

Across both strategies, grantmakers can invest in policies, products, capital, and community-driven solutions.



This document outlines a wide range of intersectional opportunities for philanthropic grants, investments, and actions across AFN's seven issue areas to advance economic security and climate resilience for households and communities, nationally and locally.







































Grantmakers can maximize these opportunities by partnering with the private sector to bridge gaps, scale solutions, and collaborate with local, state, or federal agencies to advocate for policy change, secure funding, and drive systemic transformation.


There is a unique opportunity to leverage unprecedented federal funding¹ already deployed for a just transition to address climate change's threats and transform the climate resilience of households and communities. Taking climate actions aligns with the chance to create a more sustainable and just economy for everyone. While the federal funding is a start, it's not enough on its own. To leverage this opportunity, grantmakers can build on their current efforts by focusing locally, listening to and building trust and power in the community, supporting trusted community organizations and anchors, developing local ecosystems, and facilitating equitable access to the resources and assets people need.

By working together, philanthropy, the private sector, public agencies, and communities can address immediate climate and economic challenges while reimagining solutions and systems for a just, sustainable, and clean economy in the long term.


[1] The Inflation Reduction Act committed \$400 billion in federal funding to support the clean energy economy and create opportunities for a just and equitable transition through the White House Justice40 initiative, which dedicated 40% of federal investment benefits to flow to disadvantaged communities that are marginalized, underserved, and overburdened by pollution.

ISSUE AREA	CLIMATE STRATEGY	OPPORTUNITIES / POTENTIAL	IMPACT AREA	LEVERAGE
 <p>FINANCIAL HEALTH</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trusted, relevant, and accessible information, financial resources, and supports for increased climate resilience and economic security for homeowners and renters with low wealth or incomes Equitable access to preparation and recovery resources for climate impacts from shocks and long-term stressors Short- and long-term economic security against climate effects and energy costs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leveraging economic development funding, such as through the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund for community clean energy projects and assets (including electronic vehicle infrastructure for high-density multifamily dwellings, solar for household and community wealth building, and any associated housing repairs with clean energy upgrades) 	 	 
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Funding or influencing flexible, responsive, and affordable emergency assistance (direct cash, grants, loans) that is aligned with equitable Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) distributions based on needs 	 	 
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investing in emergency savings and other financial products to prepare for climate impacts 		
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Building capacity, leveraging, and investing in community development financial institutions (CDFIs), community development credit unions (CDCUs), and other community financial institutions for affordable financing and other tailored financial products for households to enable broad access to clean energy technology 	 	 
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Building capacity and investing in climate resilience hubs, education, and trust building efforts of community-based organizations that support communities and residents with climate-related resources year-round 	 	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investing in the development or expansion of tools, such as a universal online application for households and community organizations to more easily access existing clean energy incentives, refundable tax credits, and rebates 	 	 
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investing in advocacy organizations and influencing protections against predatory climate-related financing 	 	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Influencing expansion of programs to reduce energy cost burden, like Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) 		
 <p>EMPLOYMENT AND INCOME</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New and equitable job opportunities in the climate-related and clean energy sectors and increased economic security through livable wages and asset-building benefits 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leveraging and influencing climate-related and clean energy employment sectors with livable wages and comprehensive benefits to increase economic security 	 	 
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leveraging deployed federal funding to remove barriers to accessing the quality jobs pipeline in the climate-related and clean energy sectors 	 	 
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supporting narrative change to shape new public discourse, debate, and imagery related to equitable employment and the just energy transition 		 
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investing in guaranteed income programs, with supplements like refundable tax credits for those most impacted by climate change 	 	

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 <p>BUSINESS OWNERSHIP</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equitable access to resources for small business sustainability and climate resilience • Climate-forward small business support and growth based on needs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investing in, leveraging, and strengthening CDFIs, CDCUs, and other community lenders to provide climate-friendly capital to small businesses for sustainability, resilience, and/or growth opportunities 	 	 
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing capacity-building support and technical assistance to contractors, small businesses, and nonprofits led by people of color to attain federal grants, procurement and other opportunities related to climate transition projects 	 	 
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supporting community-owned climate solutions, such as for cooperatives for clean energy generation, transmission, and storage 	 	 
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investing in employee-owned carbon neutral and climate-forward companies, especially those offering clean energy solutions 	 	 
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incentivizing, providing technical assistance, and investing in climate-forward companies to move toward clean energy solutions (e.g., conversion of fleets or appliances to electric or installing solar and profit-sharing with the community) 	 	 
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investing in local farms and small businesses for sustainable agriculture and food systems 	 	
 <p>EDUCATION</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Affordable and equitable access to preparation, trade retraining, and employment pathways for climate-related jobs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investing in post-secondary education (PSE) pipeline for climate-related jobs, including inspectors for code work, builders, and service jobs 	 	 
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engaging in and supporting partnerships with community colleges, public universities, and Minority-Serving Institutions (MSIs) for climate and energy transition, including innovation pathways, research, and influencing state and local policy related to community colleges and public universities 	 	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing support to and aligning vocational and workforce training with incentives for climate and clean energy-related jobs 	 	 
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investing or influencing institutions such that education for energy sector jobs receive free tuition and coverage of extra fees via scholarships or 0% interest, forgivable loans if recipients remain in the clean energy sector for at least 2 years 		 

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 <p>HOUSING</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equitable asset protection • Equitable access to a wide range of climate-related financing for homeowners and renters (including purchase, weatherization, decarbonization, and habitability), aligned with local housing markets • Equitable access to affordable, climate-resilient homes and household economic security to avoid displacement and incurring greater costs when extreme weather hits, helping localities and states thrive in the long term 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Influencing and investing in the design, development, and retrofit of high-quality single-family homes and multifamily housing that are climate resilient, energy efficient, weatherized (e.g., more insulation for extreme temperatures, added air conditioning or supplemental heating, upgraded higher R-value windows), and aligned with community priorities 	 	 
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing grants and impact investment tools and increasing access to affordable financing through community lenders, combined with tax incentives, for habitability (with riders on loans that account for disasters and more frequent income disruptions) and clean energy upgrades to homes (e.g., heating, ventilation, air conditioning, water heating, other appliances, solar) and communities (e.g., EV chargers for multi-unit buildings and public stations) 	 	 
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investing in building heirs' property preparedness and resilience to retain wealth and assets against disasters (e.g., property tax relief, free or low-cost legal services, public awareness to administrators and policy makers, equitable deployment of resources, and federal policy and advocacy) 		
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Influencing expansion of local and state regulations aimed at landlords to improve climate resilience and ensure home safety for renters while not adding to affordable housing landlords' financial burdens 		
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advocating for systemic change built around social insurance or shared risk and/or regulatory changes to expand affordable and efficient insurance coverage for climate risks, including state-sponsored programs and parametric insurance to bridge private gaps for a wide range of climate risks 		 
 <p>HEALTH</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equitable health and wealth improvements for people and communities along the social determinants of health (SDoH) • Healthier environments, with reduced risks from heat and pollution 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prioritizing people with underlying health conditions in climate impact solutions 		
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investing in green spaces, parks, urban trails, and tree canopy 		
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increasing access to healthy foods and local produce 	 	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increasing access to clean water, air, and land 	 	

[2] JPMorganChaseandCo Policy Center, Supporting Heirs Property Owners Through Natural Disaster and Resiliency Programs, June 2024.

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 <p>A JUST ECONOMY</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Just transition from fossil fuels to clean energy that furthers economic opportunity and ensures that wealth is created and distributed equitably from the clean energy green economy Just and clean economy with better jobs, stronger infrastructure, and lower energy cost 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prioritizing people and communities of color, or those with limited economic opportunities and high pollution burdens, in climate solutions, using a targeted universalism approach 	 	 
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investing in and building organizational, community, and market capacity via CDFIs, other community lenders, and community-based organizations for financing for weather preparation, expanded access to energy efficiency products, and the development of high-quality energy efficiency homes in communities that are historically disadvantaged 		 
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Influencing clean energy investments in infrastructure, transportation and mobility, and community facilities (community centers, health clinics, schools) 	 	 
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Disinvesting from fossil fuels and carbon emissions and making other internal changes (e.g., reducing own emissions and aligning with community-level efforts for decarbonization or renewable energy) 		
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Influencing and investing in climate migration support programs and policies 	 	 
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supporting power building to increase decision-making power and advance system change related to climate and economic security 		
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accelerating equitable practices, policies, and system change (finance, energy, health, water) 		 
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investing in narrative change to shape new public discourse, debate, and imagery related to climate, economic security, and justice (e.g., tax policy) 		