



American agriculture – and small and mid-sized farmers in particular – has an enormous opportunity to build new revenue streams and community wealth through the clean energy transition. Siting of wind turbines, agrivoltaic arrays, and other clean energy investments can bring significant new investment to disinvested rural communities. In a [2020 report](#), the Rocky Mountain Institute projected that potential wind power revenue could outpace corn and soybeans generated as soon as 2027. This transition is rapidly underway thanks to the historic investments made in the clean energy transition through the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) and the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL).

However, in the past, federally supported projects have not always accomplished the intended community benefits. Federal agencies—such as the Department of Energy—have created the Community Benefit Plan framework to ensure federally funded projects deliver community benefits in alignment with administration priorities.

Community Benefit Plans, Community Benefit Agreements, and Project Labor Agreements are all valuable frameworks to help deliver equitable, positive, and community-informed benefits from a project receiving funding from a federal program. However, no similar framework regarding the clean energy transition's positive impacts on agriculture exists.

To ensure small and midsized farmers benefit from the clean energy transition, federal agencies should introduce a Farmer Benefit Plan and Farmer Benefit Agreement framework for projects that win awards from federal programs. Like a Community Benefit Plan, a Farmer Benefit Plan framework would ask project developers how they engage with farmers impacted by a project and what benefits would be delivered to farmers through project development. Similarly, a Farmer Benefit Agreement, like a Community Benefit Agreement, would be a legally enforceable document outlining a negotiated set of benefits between a project developer and impacted farmers. The Farm Benefit Plan process and final agreement could be carried out between a developer and an individual farmer, group of farmers, or farm organization.

Potential Components of a Farmer Benefit Plan:

- Transparent price negotiations
- Commitment to not use aggressive land acquisition practices or eminent domain
- Developer support of ag education programs
- Developer support of community infrastructure – local meat processing, grain elevator
- Integration of agrivoltaics
- Revenue sharing with farmers
- Farmer ownership of energy generation
- Surrounding community lease payments
- Transparent engagement plan
- Clear decommissioning, site restoration plan
- Conservation and/or soil health plan
- Other priorities, as identified through engagement with farmers and farm organizations