

# THE PILLARS

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**The Office of African American Affairs**



## OBCE Justice40 initiative, How Can the NM Black Diaspora Will Benefit?

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In a historic announcement, Albuquerque became the first city in the nation city (take/out) to take action through an Executive Order to advance the Justice40 Initiative, a Biden-Harris Administration initiative to deliver 40 percent of overall benefits from certain federal investments to disadvantaged communities. The City's Executive Order also calls for the establishment of the Albuquerque Justice40 Oversight Coordinating Committee (J40 OCC) to prepare and implement a five-year CABQ Justice40 Equitable and Just Administration Plan. This is a groundbreaking effort in which the community and City will come together to prioritize investment in historically under-resourced communities.

The 60,000 Black/African Americans, that were identified through several state and federal census data collections, are enough to determine what policies, regulations, laws, etc. will have an impact on their community. Gathering a consensus of our community's economic needs is very important. Equity in accessibility to programs that can create positive change cannot be obtained through continued community division and/or a lack of accountability and transparency in government programs. Our small black businesses and community developers need equity in accessibility in order to accomplish specific program outcomes. For example, in 2021 Senate Bill 84, or SB 84 passed expanding solar access to all New Mexicans. Please see below:

*55TH LEGISLATURE - STATE OF NEW MEXICO - FIRST SESSION, 2021  
INTRODUCED BY Elizabeth "Liz" Stefanics and Linda M. Lopez and Patricia Roybal  
Caballero*

*"AN ACT RELATING TO UTILITIES; ENACTING THE COMMUNITY SOLAR ACT;  
PRESCRIBING REQUIREMENTS FOR COMMUNITY SOLAR FACILITIES,  
SUBSCRIBER ORGANIZATIONS AND SUBSCRIPTIONS; PRESCRIBING  
REQUIREMENTS FOR ADMINISTRATION OF A COMMUNITY SOLAR PROGRAM;  
DIRECTING THE PUBLIC REGULATION COMMISSION TO ADOPT RULES TO  
IMPLEMENT A COMMUNITY SOLAR PROGRAM."*

Many Black/African Americans in low income or low socio-economic communities may not have the opportunity to participate in programs that are available to help with energy usage costs. This bill includes families that may be renting and is not specific to single family homeowners. The Justice 40 oversight committee was implemented to make sure that proposals that are being proposed include Black/African American communities and other BIPOC, under-represented, and/or historically disadvantaged communities. They will provide reviews and critical feedback to ensure equity in those proposals. Based on stakeholder engagement, priorities identified by White House Environmental Justice Advisory Council (WHEJAC), and additional research, the Office of Economic Impact and Diversity identified eight policy priorities to guide DOE's implementation of Justice40:

- 1. Decrease energy burden in disadvantaged communities (DACs).**
- 2. Decrease environmental exposure and burdens for DACs**
- 3. Increase parity in clean energy technology (e.g., solar, storage) access and adoption in DACs.**
- 4. Increase access to low-cost capital in DACs.**
- 5. Increase clean energy enterprise creation and contracting (MBE/DBE) in DACs.**
- 6. Increase clean energy jobs, job pipeline, and job training for individuals from DACs.**
- 7. Increase energy resiliency in DACs.**
- 8. Increase energy democracy in DACs.**

The Office of African American Affairs is committed to making sure that we continue to study, identify, and provide change through supporting and advocacy for programs that will have a positive impact on the Black African American communities of New Mexico. Please stay tuned for events and engagements for community development and proposals that will spark positive growth in Black/African American Communities.