

What is the Better Communities Alliance?

The Better Communities Alliance (BCA) is a partnership that brings together public and private sector leaders to deliver energy efficiency, sustainable transportation, and renewable energy solutions that create cleaner and more prosperous communities for all Americans. Led by the U.S. Department of Energy, the BCA will provide local governments with integrated expertise, resources, and peer-networking opportunities from across the government, nonprofit, philanthropic, and private sectors.

What are the goals of the BCA?

- ▶ Support local governments in achieving their energy, climate, and economic goals through energy efficiency, sustainable transportation, and renewable energy;
- ▶ Advance integrated clean energy planning, technologies, and solutions within communities;
- ▶ Streamline community access to new resources from DOE and the private sector;
- ▶ Facilitate actionable dialogues with local governments that enable DOE to take strategic steps to meet local needs and opportunities; and
- ▶ Recognize public and private sector leaders achieving innovative and impactful clean energy outcomes in communities.

Why is DOE launching a new initiative focused on local governments?

By 2030, 87% of US energy will be consumed in cities, up from 80% in 2006.¹ City and county leaders are responding to this opportunity by setting ambitious energy and carbon reduction targets and taking action to improve the energy efficiency of buildings and infrastructure. Many local governments are also working to expand renewable energy and sustainable transportation options for their residents and businesses, harness innovative technologies that make their communities smarter about reducing energy, and invest in resilient power systems and community infrastructure. Yet many city and county governments lack key resources to plan and fully achieve their goals. And even where clean energy outcomes are being achieved,

local governments need common platforms that make place-based innovation and best practices transferable to peer communities nationwide. DOE is committed to work with local governments to overcome these challenges.

How is the BCA organized?

The BCA is part of DOE's Better Buildings Initiative, a national leadership program calling on companies, state and local governments, manufacturers, universities, and schools to make substantial commitments to improve the energy usage in buildings, homes, and plants to save money and increase competitiveness.

Who can be a partner in the BCA?

The BCA partners with local governments (known as Partners) and with organizations in the public and private sectors that work with local governments to catalyze clean energy opportunities (known as Affiliates). BCA Partners are municipal or county governments that demonstrate a commitment to clean energy by working with DOE on at least one qualifying program and opting in to participate in the BCA to deepen their clean energy impact. BCA Affiliates are companies, foundations, nonprofit groups, and other organizations that make specific commitments in support of BCA objectives and outcomes.

What does DOE offer to BCA Partners and Affiliates?

Partners receive customized data-related technical assistance, a portfolio of curated DOE tools, resources, and program offerings, opportunities to apply for resources made available by BCA Affiliates, access to forums for peer networking and expert dialogue, and federal recognition of clean energy achievements.

Affiliates receive increased visibility of their local clean energy work, opportunities to strategically leverage and further the impact of their work, enhanced value to members in their networks/associations, access to national forums for thought leadership and collaboration, and federal recognition of their contributions.

How do I join the Better Communities Alliance?

Local governments can join the BCA by signing a BCA partnership agreement (which includes several commitments) and committing to participate in a DOE qualifying leadership initiative. Local governments already participating in a qualifying leadership initiative may opt-in to the BCA by signing the agreement form.

Public and private sector organizations – such as businesses, philanthropic foundations, nonprofit and research groups, and local government networks and associations – are eligible to join the BCA as Affiliates by committing to provide outreach, support, resources, or expertise that advance clean energy progress in communities. BCA Affiliate commitments will vary and are intended to align with the core capabilities of each organization. Affiliates have the option of committing specific resources to BCA Partners through *Commitments for Better Communities*, a new initiative that connects private sector services and expertise with local governments.

As a local government, is there anything else I need to do to participate in the BCA?

No. The BCA is intended to be simple and easy for local governments to join.

My local government is already participating in one or more initiatives with DOE. Which leadership initiatives qualify my local government for BCA partnership?

Current participation in the following DOE initiatives qualifies local governments for partnership in the BCA:

- ▶ Climate Action Champions
- ▶ Better Buildings Challenge (as a local government partner)
- ▶ SolSmart
- ▶ Clean Cities Coalition
- ▶ Workplace Charging Challenge (as a local government partner)
- ▶ SMART Mobility Lab Consortium
- ▶ EV Everywhere - Best Drive Ever Campaign
- ▶ Cities-LEAP awardee
- ▶ Outdoor Lighting Accelerator
- ▶ ESPC Accelerator

- ▶ Clean Energy for Low-Income Communities Accelerator
- ▶ Combined Heat and Power for Resiliency Accelerator
- ▶ Wastewater Infrastructure Accelerator
- ▶ Combined Heat and Power for Resiliency Accelerator
- ▶ SEED Collaborative
- ▶ Building Life-Cycle Energy Performance Framework

The list of qualifying initiatives will evolve over time as DOE's program offerings for local governments change. The most up-to-date list of qualifying initiatives can be accessed at the BCA website – www.betterbuildingsinitiative.energy.gov/bca

My local government is not currently participating in an initiative with DOE. Which leadership initiatives can I join to become eligible for BCA partnership?

Local governments may join the following DOE initiatives and become eligible for partnership in the BCA:

- ▶ Wastewater Infrastructure Accelerator
- ▶ Combined Heat and Power for Resiliency Accelerator
- ▶ Clean Energy for Low-Income Communities Accelerator
- ▶ Zero Energy Districts Accelerator
- ▶ SEED Collaborative
- ▶ SolSmart
- ▶ Clean Cities Coalition
- ▶ Workplace Charging Challenge (as a local government partner)
- ▶ SMART Mobility Lab Consortium
- ▶ EV Everywhere - Best Drive Ever Campaign

Does my local government need to set a new goal to join the BCA?

Local governments only need to work with DOE on at least one qualifying program and opt in to BCA to join as Partners. Some of the qualifying programs involve specific goals, but BCA Partners are not required to set additional quantifiable goals beyond their own commitment to deepen their clean energy impact.

What is the relationship between a Better Buildings Challenge Community Partner and a Better Communities Alliance Partner?

The Better Buildings Challenge (BBC) and Better Communities Alliance (BCA) are distinct but complementary efforts. Both the BBC and BCA are part of the Better Buildings Initiative. BBC Community Partners are a subset of local government participants in the BBC which have pledged to reduce the energy intensity across their building portfolios by at least 20 percent within 10 years and work with the private sectors in their jurisdictions.

The BCA is a broader gateway that connects all of the DOE initiatives and related opportunities available to local governments, including BBC Community Partners. All local government Partners in the BBC may also opt-in to the Better Communities Alliance as a Partner. Partnership in BCA affords new opportunities for local governments to accelerate their clean energy efforts through solutions across energy efficiency, sustainable transportation, and renewable energy.

What information will DOE ask for from BCA Partners and Affiliates?

BCA Partners will be asked to share information on the current status and future target areas of their clean energy achievement within two months of joining. This information will help DOE curate a customized portfolio of technical assistance tools, resources, and engagement opportunities available to support Partners' clean energy goals. Partners will be asked to update this information annually to track achievements and receive recognition.

BCA Affiliates will be asked to provide DOE with information about the support they propose to commit to the program and the outcomes of those commitments. This will enable DOE to acknowledge Affiliate contributions and provide national recognition.

Does BCA partnership come with federal grant funds?

The BCA is a voluntary partnership program and is not directly associated with federal grants.

Where can I find additional information on the BCA?

Visit www.betterbuildingsinitiative.energy.gov/bca or send an email to betterbuildings@ee.doe.gov for further information.

What's the role of state governments?

The BCA is exploring ways to partner with state governments and associated entities, particularly related to partnerships between state and local governments to advance clean energy progress.

What's the role of other federal agencies?

The BCA is led by the U.S. Department of Energy and may expand in the future to partner with other federal agencies in areas where the priorities of those agencies align with the goals of the BCA.

1. IEA (International Energy Agency). 2008. World Energy Outlook 2008. Paris: International Energy Agency. <http://www.worldenergyoutlook.org/media/weowebsite/2008-1994/weo2008.pdf>.