

IMPACT Community Action and partners City of Columbus, Homeport, AEP Ohio and Columbus residents have set a bold, environmental justice focused vision for the historic African American neighborhood of American Addition in Columbus, Ohio. The American Addition+ project will be the creation of the first net zero energy neighborhood in Ohio – and the first BIPOC net zero energy neighborhood in the country. This goal will be achieved through a five stage process of equitable community engagement; deep energy efficiency retrofits for existing historic homes; net zero energy building design and construction; and workforce development – all in the American Addition neighborhood.

DOE WAP Enhancement and Innovation funds will support deep energy efficiency retrofits for the existing 60 historic homes built before 2010. These primarily one-story and bungalow style homes date back to the early 1900s and are in varying states of repair, though most have not benefited from substantial update or renovation in decades. The funding will support limited structural and home repairs to prepare homes for weatherization and provide deep energy efficiency retrofits. The retrofit options will be based on audit analysis and will include measures such as insulation upgrades, air sealing technology, smart thermostat installation, efficient appliance replacement, and heat pump installation in order to reduce energy consumption and energy burden for residents.

This funding also provides support for workforce development efforts connected to the deep energy efficiency retrofits. IMPACT administers the City funded Empowered! clean energy workforce development program, which blends classroom learning and community education on clean energy and energy efficiency, with a linkage to home weatherization and deep energy retrofits in Opportunity Neighborhoods. Successful graduates will be onboarded with a clean energy career that is high road and family sustaining.

Prior to beginning the deep energy efficiency retrofit work in the neighborhood, IMPACT will host recruitment events in the American Addition area for the Empowered! program. The goal being to provide American Addition residents the opportunity to work or train on projects happening in their own community, and setting them on a path for a high road career and future economic security.

The American Addition+ project will be managed by a Project Director in collaboration with the American Addition Steering Committee, which consists of the aforementioned partners and more. IMPACT Community Action will manage the weatherization and deep energy retrofits supported by this funding, which supports a key phase of the American Addition+ vision. This project seeks to realize the vision of the Justice 40 initiative by centering racial equity, and provide environmental justice by reducing energy burden and providing career opportunities for a historically marginalized black community in Columbus, Ohio.