



**OCED**  
Office of Clean Energy Demonstrations

# REGIONAL CLEAN HYDROGEN HUBS PROGRAM

## APPALACHIAN HYDROGEN HUB (ARCH2)



### COMMUNITY BENEFITS COMMITMENTS SUMMARY

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## Phase 1 Summary

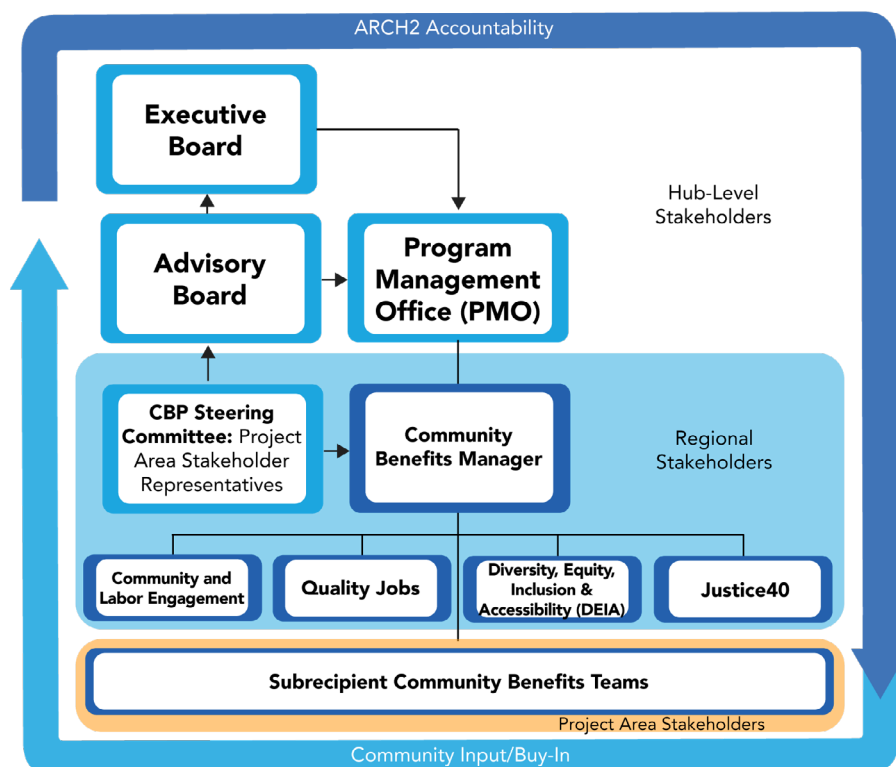
This Community Benefits Commitments fact sheet describes how the Regional Clean Hydrogen Hubs (H2Hubs) Program’s Appalachian Hydrogen Hub—also known as the Appalachian Regional Clean Hydrogen Hub (ARCH2), led by Battelle—will engage community and labor stakeholders during Phase 1 of the project. These commitments will be updated at the end of each phase to reflect key learnings and developments as the project continues to grow in specificity and as community feedback is collected and incorporated.

## Community Advisory Mechanisms

The Appalachian Hydrogen Hub’s Community Engagement is organized to enable stakeholder participation and communication at all projects. At the Hub level, an Advisory Board and an inclusive Community Benefits Steering Committee, composed of regional governments, labor/trades organizations, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), academia, and regional community groups, will keep communities first.

The Steering Committee will provide recommendations to the Hub’s leadership on a range of topics across the scope of the Hub through the Appalachian Hydrogen Hub Advisory Board. The chair of the Advisory Board will hold one voting seat on the Hub’s executive board. The by-laws and structure of both mechanisms will be finalized in Phase 1, and the Hub will be seeking additional input in Phase 1 from communities regarding the recruitment process for members of these bodies. The Hub’s goal for these entities is to ensure representation across local communities and organization types from each state. More information will be made available as the process solidifies.

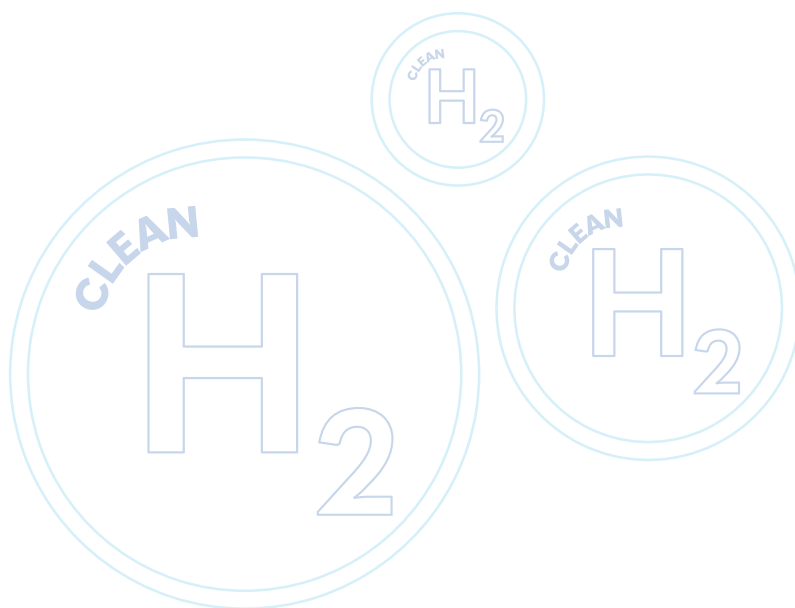
## Appalachian Hydrogen Hub Community Advisory Mechanisms



## Community Advisory Bodies

Each project will establish a site-specific community advisory body. The following activities have already been established, with additional work to be completed in Phase 1:

- EQT is identifying important voices and stakeholders, culminating in the establishment of a community advisory committee (CAC), host community listening sessions, and a community survey and preliminary Justice40 Assessment.
- Independence Hydrogen (IH) is engaging the Ohio State Economic Development Corporation and the Growth Partnership for Ashtabula County, which includes a functioning Community Advisory Panel (CAP). IH will host a public meeting with presentations, and an open invitation for organizations to participate in a CAP Working Group that will consider the development of a Community Benefits Agreement (CBA) and potential Project Labor Agreement (PLA). If desired by the local community, IH will pursue good faith negotiations towards the CBA. IH will actively seek out representation from underserved communities.
- KeyState is implementing both local and regional advisory mechanisms in North Central PA. The KeyState Local Advisory Committee will be comprised of the elected Township Supervisors, and will focus on nearby impacts, costs, and benefits to the township. The KeyState Regional Advisory Committee will be comprised of a representative of the County Commissioners for each of the principal counties (Clinton, Clearfield, and Centre), who will focus on regional impacts, costs, and benefits to the counties.
- Throughout the community engagement and outreach process, Plug Power intends to collect comprehensive data and input from the local and regional communities through workgroups within the project's community advisory body.



# COMMUNITY & LABOR ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

The Appalachian Hydrogen Hub is committed to learning from the community—the true local experts—so that stakeholders, particularly those in disadvantaged communities or belonging to underrepresented populations, have direct, meaningful input into the Hub’s community benefits and receive their share of these benefits. Additional information on local engagement opportunities will be announced soon after the award is finalized.

The Hub will work to integrate community input into its plans to maximize the benefits for the project community. The first regional open forums are expected to occur in 2024, with local-level engagements occurring as each project is ready. At the site level:

- Air Liquide will work with EQT to systematically gather community and labor feedback through focus group discussions and other engagement events.
- CNX has publicly committed to fostering relationships with the building trades and involving them in project development. CNX intends to remain in close contact with local, regional, and national organized labor regarding project development.
- During Phase 1, in coordination with Growth Partnership, IH will conduct a social characterization assessment of Ashtabula, OH, and the surrounding area and an initial stakeholder analysis. With the parties identified, IH will collaborate with stakeholders to identify shared opportunities and risks, refine stakeholder lists, and prepare for further outreach—including outreach to labor and disadvantaged communities. IH will then commence engagement with the broader list of community advocates, interest groups, neighborhood groups, and community leaders leveraging ARCH2’s relationships with building trades unions.





# WORKFORCE & COMMUNITY AGREEMENTS

During Phase 1, the Appalachian Hydrogen Hub will expand its community engagement and develop plans demonstrating how the Hub will collaborate with its local communities, taking the form of a Community Benefits Agreement, Memorandum of Agreement, or other documents, as agreed upon by the project team and community leaders and approved by DOE. By the end of Phase 1, each project will either sign its own Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with labor organizations representing both construction and operations employees to work towards a PLA and/or Collective Bargaining Agreement or sign a Hub-level MOU with labor organizations. The Hub is committed to ensuring equitable pathways to employment for local workers and providing employment opportunities for communities that have borne the loss of employment associated with the clean energy transition.

Several projects have begun discussions with unions to establish workforce agreements:

- In Phase 1, EQT will engage labor, industry, and other workforce leaders to ensure a sufficiently skilled and trained workforce to support project construction and operations.
- Enbridge Gas' strategy for workforce development involves identifying key high school and post-high school trades programs and developing partnerships with the faith-based community and grassroots organizations. Enbridge has also already engaged with local and national labor union representatives, an effort which will continue in Phase 1.
- Empire Diversified Energy is negotiating a MOU with the construction trades and is planning to develop workforce development programs with West Virginia Northern Community College. The company will develop quantitative targets in Phase 1 to ensure a skilled, local, and diverse workforce.
- The KeyState Workforce Development Advisory Committee will be comprised of representatives of the regional and state building trades associations and of the regional education community including high schools, vocational-technical schools, and universities. They will focus on apprenticeships, internships, and technical certifications.



# QUALITY JOBS & WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

ARCH2 is currently working to define the specific skillsets needed for the Hub and with labor/trades organizations to ensure workers possess these skills. Workforce development programs, informed by the analysis of current capabilities and project needs, will build local capacity and expand opportunities for local workers. Additionally, train-the-trainer programs will be in place to ensure appropriate safety and Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) training resources are available and accessible to partners throughout the region and within each proposed project area.

Ongoing activities include:

- CNX is recruiting high school graduates with an interest in energy or the trades. Through the CNX Mentorship Academy developed in 2021, CNX is training them on the opportunities in their industry of interest and preparing them with the professional skills and funding necessary to apply for and win jobs.
- Fidelis is committed to establishing targets in Phase 1 that will create registered apprenticeship programs, high school-level vocational-technical programs, and local job offerings.
- Plug Power is working with the National Institute for Industry and Career Advancement (NIICA) to build a national apprenticeship program, identifying the types of jobs that align with apprenticeship training and assessing if existing approved trade titles exist can be utilized. Given many of these roles are in a new and emerging sector of advanced manufacturing, Plug may need to develop new programs with NIICA and the U.S. Department of Labor.



# EQUITABLE IMPACTS

The Hub's Community Benefits Plan includes a Justice40 Implementation Plan through which the Hub will work to ensure that projects deliver benefits to communities and mitigate potential impacts, with a focus on existing conditions and burdens experienced by disadvantaged communities (see Justice40 policy priorities [here](#)). The Justice40 framework is designed to be responsive to community concerns identified through engagement and the Hub will track progress towards Hub-level goals, taking into consideration community priorities and ensuring that benefits are flowing to disadvantaged communities in the project areas.

Throughout the Phase 1 planning process, the Hub will identify opportunities for communities to contribute to project planning and decision-making. The subrecipients will engage with their local communities for feedback on initial project goals and plans and seek input on local community priorities. The opportunities to engage with the Hub will be unique to each project but are expected to include a variety of mechanisms such as public forums, workshops, surveys, and web forms.

The impact of community feedback on plans and decisions will also be unique to each project. As Phase 1 planning progresses, the Hub will communicate with communities regarding the impact of engagement activity. Potential impacts may include project design, environmental considerations, infrastructure, safety/health, community benefits, or public awareness/education.

Specific benefits may include, but are not limited to:

- Improved air quality from switching heavy-duty vehicles and buses to clean hydrogen
- Energy savings for end-users
- Remediation impacts on surface water, groundwater, and soil in disadvantaged communities
- An increase in clean energy jobs, job pipeline and access, and career-track job training
- Increase in community resilience from the transition to hydrogen infrastructure and uses (e.g., clean backup power)
- Reduction of legacy contaminated waste



The Hub is also working to implement Justice40 principles at the site level:

- Community input, gathered via various engagement methods (including through the CAC, listening sessions, community surveys, townhalls, etc.), will enable EQT to understand how best to develop an action plan for Justice40.
- During Phase 1, the Enbridge project's Environmental Justice priorities will be determined based on assessment data and community input, along with key or significant burdens and associated mitigation strategies.
- Clean Fuel Services Depot's Justice40 plan will include collecting and modeling data around emissions from existing operations at the Hog Lick Aggregates Quarry, interactions between the local community and operations at the Hog Lick Aggregates Quarry, and workforce participation by the local community in Hog Lick Aggregates operations.
- Hope Gas has existing programs that help customers pay utility bills and serve underserved communities. These will be expanded to the Fuel Cell Program.
- During Phase 1, Independence Hydrogen will develop a model to identify and assess benefits and burdens with the intent to maximize benefits and minimize burdens. The model will identify and assess different levels of project benefits and burdens for each, such as worker salaries and benefits, direct product transportation CO<sub>2</sub> reduction, increased truck traffic, H<sub>2</sub> release and fire risk, and reduction in Global Warming Potentials from the off-gas facility.
- KeyState is located in a community in which the impact of the decline of coal is pervasive. KeyState will utilize a former coal mining site and former coal rail loading facility and help counteract the local decline in coal and rail jobs that has occurred over the past 20 years.
- In Phase 1, Plug Power will partner with local universities and/or technical colleges as well as leverage the other educational partners outside the region to conduct an energy equity assessment to measure the overall impact of the project.
- In 2023, CNX and Pennsylvania Governor Josh Shapiro engaged in a first-of-its-kind public-private collaboration, the Radical Transparency program, through which CNX will carry out intensive air- and water-quality monitoring and make real-time data available via a public website.

## Tribal Engagement

The Appalachian Hydrogen Hub stands ready to support OCED in any consultation with affected federally recognized tribal nations that express an interest in engaging with the Hub. ARCH2 will support DOE's government-to-government consultation with affected tribes as requested.





# DATA REPORTING & PLATFORM(S) & APPROACH

The creation of a centralized public data-sharing platform is a key component of the Appalachian Hydrogen Hub's community benefits commitments. During Phase 1, the Hub will create and finalize a public dashboard to inform stakeholders about efforts related to community engagement; workforce development; Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Accessibility (DEIA); and Justice40.

Public reporting in Phase 1 will focus on Hub status updates; information about the community advisory mechanisms (Hub-level Advisory Board and Steering Committee, project-level community advisory mechanisms); and engagement mechanisms and events. More detailed reporting will come in future phases as the Hub continues to grow in specificity and as community feedback is collected and incorporated.

