COMMUNITY BENEFITS AGREEMENTS

Community Benefits Agreements for Transformational Development

A local government framework for securing durable community value before project approvals

Local governments should establish the CBA framework before a major proposal arrives. Every qualifying project should begin the process at pre-application and, where legally authorized, complete an enforceable agreement before final discretionary approval or a binding public subsidy commitment.

01 · WHY LOCAL GOVERNMENT SHOULD ACT EARLY

Transformational development can create durable local value while also increasing housing, infrastructure, public-service, and environmental pressures. An early CBA process gives affected residents a defined role and gives officials a clearer basis for aligning incentives, approvals, and implementation. It supplements existing public requirements.

02 · WHAT EVERY AGREEMENT SHOULD COVER

Representation + scope Signatories, affected geography and populations, project phases, material changes, successors, and approvals.	**Jobs + workforce** Job quality, local and targeted hiring, apprenticeship, career pathways, goals, and reporting.
Housing + displacement Affordability, preservation, tenant and homeowner protections, relocation, tax pressures, and funding.	**Local business + wealth** Local and disadvantaged-business contracting, prompt payment, technical assistance, leasing, and investment.
Environment + infrastructure Health and environmental mitigation, transportation, utilities, public space, accessibility, and resilience.	**Accountability + durability** Milestones, responsible parties, funding, reporting, oversight, dispute resolution, remedies, and succession.

03 · DEFINE ROLES AND TIMING

Local government sets the trigger, timeline, transparency rules, responsible departments, and link to approvals. A representative community coalition negotiates with the developer. Start early enough to influence the project, not document decisions already made.

PRE-APPLICATION > PRIORITIES > NEGOTIATION > AGREEMENT > MONITORING

04 · PREPARE BEFORE THE PROJECT ARRIVES

- **Adopt the policy.** Define triggers, timing, roles, transparency, and the connection to approvals.
- **Build the table.** Maintain relationships with affected constituencies before negotiations begin.
- **Build the evidence.** Track housing, workforce, procurement, infrastructure, and environmental conditions.
- **Fund capacity and tools.** Secure independent expertise and prepare intake, term sheet, monitoring, and reporting templates.

05 · ADOPT AN ENFORCEABLE STANDARD

- **Start early.** Require the process at pre-application for each qualifying project.
- **Set the deadline.** Complete the agreement before final approval or subsidy execution, where authorized.
- **Make terms measurable.** Name the promise, responsible party, timeline, funding, verification, and remedy.
- **Preserve durability.** Apply obligations to material project changes, transfers, successors, and assigns.

THE STANDARD

Every qualifying transformational development should be accompanied by an early, representative, and enforceable CBA process that converts negotiated priorities into measurable commitments.

Legal and source note A CBA binds its signatories. Local counsel should confirm authority, procurement, land-use, ethics, and enforcement requirements. Sources: U.S. Department of Energy CBA FAQ and Wind Energy Community Benefits Guide.