

JOB CREATION FROM ECONOMY-WIDE INVESTMENTS

ECONOMIC RENEWAL PLAN: OVER 15.5 MILLION GOOD JOBS

The Problem

Due to the COVID-spurred crises of mass unemployment and public health, millions of people currently lie awake at night wondering how to make rent, put food on the table, or afford medical bills. The pandemic also has laid bare the links between the longstanding, mutually reinforcing crises that our society faces, such as racial, economic, and gender injustice; economic insecurity; toxic pollution; health vulnerability; crumbling infrastructure; and climate change.

Those links have long been a lived reality for communities across the country. In the Gulf South the intersection between systemic racism and climate impacts is no more theoretical than the five storms that battered Louisiana's Black and Indigenous communities in last year's record-breaking hurricane season. Or look to the industrial cities of the Midwest, where racist redlining has led to lower wages and higher air pollution for many Black communities — air pollution that is [increasing the risk of death](#) from COVID-19 while contributing to the climate crisis. For millions, the connections between systemic racism, economic injustice, environmental crisis, and public health have been just as real as the air we breathe.

Chronic underinvestment in our communities has exacerbated these interconnected crises. For example, after decades of inadequate and inequitable investments in our buildings infrastructure, today millions of people live in substandard and overcrowded housing that [makes it difficult to shelter at home](#) to prevent COVID infection. Meanwhile, the low energy efficiency of these buildings saddles low-income families with high energy bills that exacerbate income inequity, while contributing to the climate pollution that is feeding increasingly intense storms — storms that the same substandard buildings are not equipped to withstand.

The lesson for policymakers is clear: The crises we face are interlocking and thus our solutions must be as well.

The Solution

We cannot and need not choose between addressing job creation or climate change, public health or racial inequity, toxic pollution or crumbling infrastructure. All of



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these are false choices. With a holistic economic renewal plan such as the [THRIVE Agenda](#), we can put millions of people back to work while tackling the overlapping crises we face. Backed by over 100 members of Congress and hundreds of union, racial justice, climate, and other grassroots groups, the THRIVE Agenda offers Congress an [eight-pillar blueprint](#) for economy-wide investments to build an economy that fosters justice, not crisis.

For example, hiring workers to upgrade our water, energy, transportation, and natural infrastructure would support cleaner air and water, and thus, improved public health, for millions of people — particularly for communities of color and working class families. It also would diminish climate pollution and increase climate resilience, which could support greater equity by reducing the disproportionate climate threats that low-income families and communities of color face.

We can only achieve such deep infrastructure upgrades by creating millions of jobs — jobs that span the construction, manufacturing, services, agriculture, and care sectors from coast to coast. Properly designed, these jobs would raise wages and expand healthcare benefits and access to unions for working class households, curbing income inequality. Properly targeted, these investments would expand economic opportunities and slash pollution in communities of color, helping to counteract environmental racism and close the racial wealth gap. To “build back better” instead of reverting to the unjust

status quo, Congress needs to pass a THRIVE-aligned economic renewal plan that is as comprehensive as the crises we face.

The Jobs

A [new economic analysis from the Political Economy Research Institute](#) shows that a THRIVE-aligned economic renewal plan would provide over **15.5 million good jobs for 10 years**. The plan includes economy-wide public investments totaling \$954 billion per year, or \$4.77 trillion for the first five years. The plan has four primary components:

- ▶ **5.2 million jobs to upgrade our infrastructure:** This economic renewal plan starts with a much-needed infrastructure upgrade. The American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE) currently gives an [overall grade of “D+”](#) to our ailing transportation, energy, water, and natural infrastructure. ASCE estimates that upgrading our infrastructure to a “B” grade would take a public investment of \$2 trillion over 10 years. With additional upgrades (e.g., [expanding broadband access](#) and [fixing leaking gas pipes](#)), the total infrastructure investment becomes \$3.2 trillion over 10 years. These upgrades would support improved health, climate, equity, and jobs outcomes, as spelled out above and in the “Job Creation from Specific Investment Programs” section.
- ▶ **4.1 million jobs to transition to a clean energy economy:** The second component of the economic renewal plan is a comprehensive investment to meet science-based targets for reducing climate pollution, because our response to one crisis must not leave us vulnerable to another. This investment includes expanding renewable energy, increasing energy efficiency, and investing in electric vehicles.



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A \$3.6 trillion public investment over 10 years in these sectors, when coupled with an equal amount of private investment, would yield an estimated 45 percent reduction in U.S. carbon emissions by 2030, in line with the global emissions reductions goal established by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. This investment covers two areas:

- A \$2.4 trillion investment over 10 years in renewable energy, providing 2.8 million jobs for a decade, and
 - A \$1.2 trillion investment over 10 years in the energy efficiency of our buildings, industries, and vehicles, providing 1.3 million jobs for a decade.
- ▶ **3.9 million jobs to restore our lands and expand regenerative agriculture.** The economic renewal plan invests \$1.9 trillion over 10 years to clean up toxic pollution, restore ecosystems, and transition from a highly polluting, unsustainable food system dominated by a handful of exploitative corporations toward a regenerative agriculture model that ensures fairness for family farmers and workers, supports rural economic security and racial equity, and boosts climate resilience and access to healthy food.
 - ▶ **2.3 million jobs to expand public services and care for children, people with disabilities, and the elderly.** As families struggle to access essential healthcare, child care, and adult care services, those who provide critical care work — disproportionately women of color— are all too often unpaid, underpaid, and systematically undervalued. This plan lays out investments totaling \$845 billion over 10 years to increase access to — and the quality of — child care, healthcare, and public services, while creating millions of good, family-sustaining jobs that honor the value of care and public service workers.
 - ▶ Of the over 15.5 million total jobs created by this economic renewal plan, nearly **1.6 million jobs would be in the manufacturing sector**. This manufacturing growth would support greater income equity, as manufacturing jobs tend to pay higher wages than construction or service-sector jobs and union density in the manufacturing sector is higher than in the private sector overall.

Below is a breakdown of the 30 categories of investment included in this economic renewal plan, with the dollars invested and jobs created for each category, as reflected in the modeling conducted by the [Political Economy Research Institute](#).

OVER 15.5 MILLION JOBS FROM \$1 TRILLION PER YEAR IN INVESTMENTS

Sector	Annual investment (billions USD)	Jobs sustained each year	10-year investment (billions USD)
Infrastructure: 5.2 million jobs			
Surface transportation	110.1	2,268,060	1,101
Water / wastewater	32.2	473,340	322
Electricity	42.7	448,350	427
Airports	4.2	43,260	42
Inland waterways / marine ports	1.5	19,200	15
Dams	3.9	72,540	39
Hazardous and solid waste	0.3	4,590	3
Levees	7	131,600	70
Public parks and recreation	10.2	216,240	102
Rail	20.9	234,080	209
Schools	38	790,400	380
Gas pipelines leak repairs	18.3	157,380	183
Broadband	35	353,500	350
Clean, renewable energy and energy efficiency: 4.1 million jobs			
Wind	108	1,274,400	1,080
Solar	108	1,220,400	1,080
Geothermal	24	280,800	240
Building retrofits	56.5	757,100	565
Industrial efficiency	6.3	89,460	63
High-efficiency autos	56	481,600	560
Agriculture and land restoration: 3.9 million jobs			
Regenerative agriculture	41	975,800	410
Farmland conservation	25	482,500	250
Organic farming	1.5	35,700	15
Resources for marginalized farmers	91	1,965,600	910
Agricultural R&D	2.5	40,500	25
Pollution cleanup	12.6	204,120	126
Closing orphaned wells	12	190,800	120
Ecosystem restoration	1	23,000	10
Care economy, public health, and Postal Service: 2.3 million jobs			
Care economy	77.5	2,216,500	775
Public health	4.5	76,950	45
Postal Service	2.5	40,000	25
TOTAL	954.2	15,567,770	9,542