

# STRATEGIC ADVISING FOR COMMUNITY-CENTERED CLIMATE POLICIES

*Community engagement services for governments and non-profits*

## Challenge

Amid political volatility and deepening distrust in institutions, states and cities face rising urgency to implement equitable climate policies—and the role of community-rooted engagement is essential for durable, effective, and just climate action.

## Solution

The [Institute for Market Transformation](#) (IMT)'s [Community Engagement](#) team provides essential services to ensure that the government and its institutional partners create effective policies that build trust, especially with low- and moderate-income residents. Our team has extensive experience working in partnership with CBO-serving frontline communities (those who experience the first and worst effects of climate change). Our past engagements have led to stronger community relationships and policies aligned with equitable climate outcomes.

We offer specialized tools, trainings, and frameworks to:

- **Facilitate** conversations and approaches by designing processes that honor community expertise while avoiding artificial “box-checking” exercises
- **Shift** and share power to scale solutions that place high-performing buildings at the center of an equitable, climate-resilient future
- **Translate** complex technical processes into community-ready formats so community members can shape the policy process

# Our services

We offer the following custom services, which can be combined to fit project needs.



## 1. Translation of Technical Assistance to Community Organizations

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We transform complex technical language, policy documents, and program requirements into accessible formats for community-based organizations and the communities they serve. We solicit resident feedback in coordination with these organizations to ensure materials resonate.

### Scope:

- Develop or adapt resources that can include plain-language guides, infographics, recorded webinars for a community audience
- Facilitate community and government conversations to foster common understanding of technical concepts and their on-the-ground impacts



## 2. Facilitation & Educational Workshops

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We design and lead interactive, culturally responsive workshops that build shared understanding between organizations, community-based organizations, and residents. Workshops cover topics like building decarbonization, energy efficiency, policy basics, and how to apply [IMT's Community Engagement Framework](#).

### Scope:

- Lead educational workshops to build long-term local facilitation capacity
- Offer coaching on how to facilitate comprehensive, person-centered facilitation to meet community learning and discussion needs





### 3. Stakeholder & CBO Ecosystem Mapping

We map the ecosystem of stakeholders—government agencies, community connectors, informal leaders, and trusted institutions—to inform strategic engagement. This service helps identify not just who to engage, but how and why—crucial for governments, funders, and other partners seeking authentic collaborations over transactional input.

#### Scope:

- Assess equity impacts regarding how new policy initiatives will change peoples’ day-to-day lives
- Share equity-focused recommendations on how to sequence engagement to collect and analyze a wide variety of community perspectives



### 4. Community Accountability Board (CAB) Governance & Facilitation

We support the creation and operation of **Community Accountability Boards (CABs)** that are legally enforceable and community-led. CABs are one of several mechanisms by which frontline communities and residents can have ownership over the funds generated by a **building performance standards policy**. We work to ensure CABs reflect local demographics, operate transparently, and can truly shape decisions.

#### Scope:

- Provide model law language to codify a CAB, including role clarification between CAB and government leaders
- Evaluate CAB impact and governance transitions, then suggest best practices
- Thought partnership on how to develop and implement other co-governance models.

[LEARN MORE](#)

March 2025

**HOW CAN COMMUNITY ACCOUNTABILITY BOARDS TRANSFORM CLIMATE GOVERNANCE?**

A community accountability board (CAB) is a community-led government board that ensures equitable, transparent, and responsive policies serve frontline communities' needs. They empower local voices and foster collaboration between community members and governments. CABs are designed to support your community's priorities, particularly in addressing the impacts of climate change and pollution from buildings.

**What does it take to start a CAB?**

- Community Governance**
  - **Important features:** CABs must reflect your diverse community (age, race, economic status, neighborhood/ location) and prioritize the lived experiences of frontline communities.
  - **Possible challenges:** Selecting board members and dividing their roles and responsibilities can be hard. Community groups will have different interests and perspectives. Ensuring fair representation across diverse community stakeholders can be a complex and ongoing process.
- Capacity Building**
  - **Important features:** Training, resources, and money for CAB members are important to ensure effective participation and prevent burnout.
  - **Possible challenges:** Funding for staffing, training, research, and community engagement initiatives may be limited. Insufficient resources can hinder the board's ability to conduct thorough investigations, provide meaningful oversight, engage with the community, and hold entities accountable.
- Legal Framework**
  - **Important features:** CABs must operate within city and state laws, with clear delegation of authority and transparency requirements.
  - **Possible challenges:** Even a straightforward legal process for establishing a CAB can still be challenging when there are significant political and power barriers. Individuals and entities may attempt to sway the decisions or actions of the board, either overtly or covertly, to protect their own interests.
- Transparency and Accountability**
  - **Important features:** Regular public reporting, open meetings, and community feedback mechanisms are critical for maintaining trust.
  - **Possible challenges:** Engaging community members in decision-making processes and fostering meaningful dialogue takes time. Deliberations within the board, community consultations, and the need to reach consensus on important matters can be time-consuming.

strengthen the advocacy efforts for a CAB that truly represents diverse community interests.

agencies are informed about the CAB initiative and are engaged in the process. This includes planning joint activities and sharing responsibilities for different aspects of the CAB's setup.





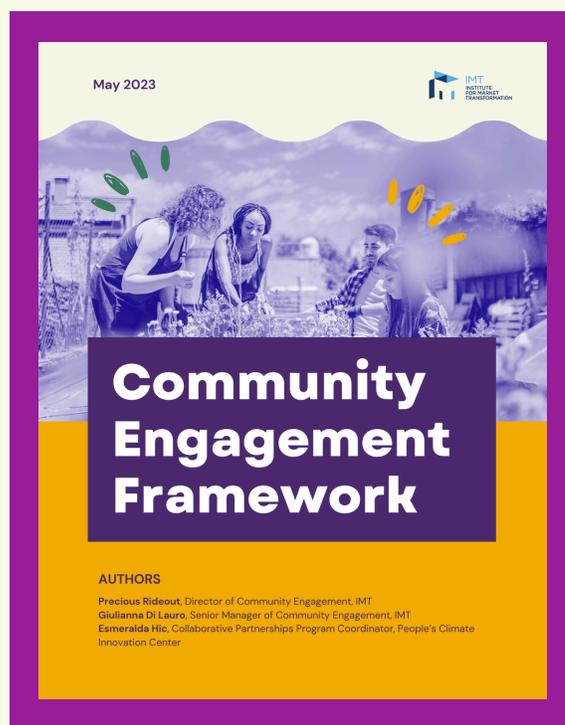
## 5. Application of Equitable Frameworks (e.g. IMT's CE Framework)

We guide jurisdictions in applying [IMT's Community Engagement Framework](#)—or other equity-first models—to their policies, programs, or internal operations. By pursuing this model, organizations can unlock creative and effective solutions by incorporating frontline community expertise.

### Scope:

- Teach our CE framework and offer coaching on how to apply it to your work.
- Provide guidance on how to develop and integrate other equitable frameworks and co-governance bodies (e.g., CAB, steering committee, etc.) into project timelines and decision points

[ACCESS THE FRAMEWORK](#)



## 6. Peer Learning Cohorts

We design and facilitate cohorts of peer jurisdictions, community-based organizations, or mixed networks to build shared learning and field-wide coordination. Each cohort is designed with mutual exchange in mind—not top-down teaching. Topics may include community-centered policy design, anti-displacement strategies, or equity in decarbonization.

### Scope:

- Share case studies of organizations who successfully facilitated peer learning cohorts
- Lead strategy sessions to advance shared understanding of challenges and collectively explore solutions
- Offer educational modules specific to the local context and ecosystem





# Collaborate with us!

Reach out to Precious Rideout, IMT's Director of Community Engagement, at [precious.rideout@imt.org](mailto:precious.rideout@imt.org) to explore how IMT's Community Engagement team can support your community's progress towards **equitable decarbonization.**