



GROWING THE CLEAN ENERGY SECTOR REQUIRES STATE INVESTMENTS IN SKILLS TRAINING



In 2022, our country made once-in-a-generation investments in infrastructure and clean energy through the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA), and the Chips and Science Act (CHIPS). Together, these laws will boost the U.S. economy and global competitiveness by providing roughly \$2 trillion to expand broadband, build roads and bridges, and bolster our climate resilience. These projects will rely on a skilled workforce, but labor shortages, and insufficient access to quality skills training programs threaten their success. States can strengthen the infrastructure workforce, especially when they hear business leaders advocate for policies that build quality skills training programs.

In April 2024, Business Leaders United for Workforce Partnerships and National Skills Coalition convened 50 business leaders and other stakeholders in the clean energy sector to discuss how to build a clean energy talent pipeline. Considering current and projected labor shortages, attendees talked about the need to intentionally open the door to millions of workers – particularly women and people of color – who have long been underrepresented in the infrastructure sector. They identified several policy solutions that states can implement to achieve these goals.

Here's what we heard.

ACCESS TO SKILLS TRAINING IS CRITICAL TO INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS:

19 million total jobs will be created.

69% of jobs created will not require a bachelor's degree.

48 occupations expected to experience increases in demand.

20 occupations will likely experience significant labor shortages.

1.1 million jobs will go unfilled.

\$26.20 median hourly wage of jobs created.¹

¹ National Skills Coalition, Unprecedented Opportunity: Meeting the Workforce Demands of New Clean Energy, Manufacturing, and Infrastructure Investments. https://nationalskillscoalition.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/DataBrief_infrastructure_NSC_BGA_final.pdf



All policymakers need to hear from green small businesses about what skills are needed for these sustainable jobs. Our advocacy can ensure there's a pipeline of trained, skilled workers for the clean energy and transportation sectors – in particular, women, people of color, and people who are struggling but want an opportunity in these sustainable, good paying careers.

Tina White, TINA's Green Energy Solutions and TINA's Tires

Businesses need more pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship programs to maximize clean energy tax credits.

WHY IT'S IMPORTANT FOR BUSINESSES: The IRA included a range of tax credits to incentivize the growth of clean energy. To draw down the maximum credit, companies must meet specific registered apprenticeship and prevailing wage thresholds.

SKILLS TRAINING BEST PRACTICE: Registered apprenticeships help employers build a skilled workforce and boost employee productivity and retention. Pre-apprenticeship programs provide people with foundational skills, industry specific knowledge, and mentoring to support them in apprenticeship programs. They also diversify the apprenticeship pipeline.

HOW STATE POLICYMAKERS CAN SUPPORT IT: Provide financial support to registered apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship programs that have a track record of training and placing people of color and women into registered apprenticeships.

Access to Quality Transportation and Childcare is Important for Growing the Clean Energy Workforce and Industry

WHY IT'S IMPORTANT FOR BUSINESSES: Lack of access to reliable transportation and quality childcare can hinder people from pursuing skills training and employment in clean energy and infrastructure.

SKILLS TRAINING BEST PRACTICE: Access to support services can help people overcome barriers to skills training, boost productivity, and allow them to keep working once hired. This is especially true for people of color and women who are more likely to face barriers due to a range of structural, historic inequities that decrease their ability to pay for the non-tuition costs of training.

HOW STATE POLICYMAKERS CAN SUPPORT IT:

- **Transportation:** States can cover costs such as bus passes, vehicle repairs, gas, and mileage vouchers; integrate transportation support into project plans; and reduce barriers to reinstating driver's licenses that are suspended because of fines.
- **Childcare:** States can use federal funds and update state policies to expand access to childcare for people in training programs. Public funds can be used to incentivize childcare during nonstandard hours, and states can end "benefits cliffs." Many state policies force families to lose public assistance once a training program begins, including childcare assistance.



The Clean Energy Industry Needs to Expand and Diversify the Talent Pipeline and Industry Sector Partnerships (ISP) Can Help

WHY IT'S IMPORTANT FOR BUSINESSES: ISPs can ensure that training funds are efficiently used to address the specific skills needs of the clean energy industry and help workers be successful in training programs.

SKILLS TRAINING BEST PRACTICE: ISPs bring together local businesses, labor organizations, community colleges, training providers, and community organizations to identify workforce challenges and create a more diverse talent pipeline. Businesses work with training providers and/or unions to develop training programs for in-demand jobs that provide a career ladder for workers. Community organizations provide insight and expertise about the supports that help workers succeed. Engaging workers in the design of training programs and credentials can refine curriculum to ensure worker success. ISPs can also expand the apprenticeship pipeline.

HOW STATE POLICYMAKERS CAN SUPPORT IT:

- **Fund partnerships with clean energy industries.** This may include IRA and IJJA funds and other federally funded workforce programs like the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA).
- **Provide capacity building and technical assistance to industry partnerships.** This can include counseling from state staff in forming and sustaining local partnerships, customized labor market information and economic analysis, and information on career pathways, worker training resources, skill standards, and industry-based certifications.
- **Promote diverse talent pipelines:** States can provide funding incentives for industry partnerships that expand access to education and training programs for women and people of color, improving completion of training programs and helping to connect workers to quality clean energy jobs.

GREEN BUSINESS LEADERS CAN HELP BUILD A CLEAN ENERGY WORKFORCE by contacting their elected officials to advocate for investments in high-quality skills trainings programs that expand and diversify the talent pipeline. To get help with policymaker outreach and learn more about Business Leaders United go to businessleadersunited.org

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