Pathways for Hiring People with Disabilities into Clean Energy Jobs

July 24, 2024
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BUILDING AN EQUITABLE, DIVERSE, AND UNIONIZED CLEAN ENERGY ECONOMY
WHAT WE CAN LEARN FROM APPRENTICESHIP READINESS
The Climate Jobs Institute (CJI) at Cornell University’s ILR School is guiding New York’s and the nation's transition to a strong, equitable, and resilient clean energy economy by tackling the climate crisis; creating high-quality union jobs; confronting race and gender inequality; and building a diverse, equitable and unionized clean energy workforce. CJI is the educational partner to the Climate Jobs National Resource Center.
OUR IMPACT

- Develop worker and equity-centered climate jobs action plans
- Help establish union-led climate organizations to advance a bold climate jobs agenda
- Deliver educational programs that inform our transition to a strong, equitable climate-safe economy
OUR REACH
We face dual crises in climate change and inequality. Working people, frontline communities of color, and other disadvantaged communities are hurt first and worst by climate change.

Tackling the climate crisis has enormous job creation potential. The best path to high-quality jobs runs through the labor movement.

We must grow the number of unionized climate jobs and expand access to jobs for underrepresented and marginalized communities.

Our current political and economic moment presents an opportunity to build a diverse, equitable, and unionized clean energy economy.
1. The construction industry is central to a clean energy transition

2. Organized labor is central to a healthy construction industry

3. The industry has a history of exclusion and limiting opportunities for marginalized groups

4. Apprenticeship readiness is a critical tool to expand access to construction careers
WHAT IS APPRENTICESHIP READINESS?
APPRENTICESHIP READINESS

“Recruit and orient new workers, help them identify the apprenticeship program most suited to them, prepare them to take the test, and support their initial career efforts”

- Partnership for Working Families

“A gateway for local residents - focusing on women, people of color, and transitioning veterans - to gain access to building trades/registered apprenticeship programs.”

- NABTU
Building an Ecosystem to Prioritize Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion

- Policymakers invest in clean energy development
- Private sector invests in clean energy development
- Unions commit to welcoming new, diverse sets of members
- Public & private funders invest in Apprenticeship Readiness
- Community organizations recruit diverse candidates
- Apprenticeship Readiness programs prepare candidates for apprenticeship
- Joint apprenticeship programs accept new, diverse recruits

Private sector invests in clean energy development

Community organizations recruit diverse candidates

Public & private funders invest in Apprenticeship Readiness

Unions commit to welcoming new, diverse sets of members

Apprenticeship Readiness programs prepare candidates for apprenticeship

Joint apprenticeship programs accept new, diverse recruits

Policymakers invest in clean energy development
Common Elements of Apprenticeship Readiness Programs (1)

- Basic construction training skills
- Visits to apprenticeship training centers and active construction sites
- Construction math, tool identification, and basic blueprint reading
- Test preparation services
- An introduction to various trades
Mentorship and connections with tradespeople from similar backgrounds

Industry specific, focused on union construction

Financial support such as stipends and travel vouchers

Certifications like OSHA, CPR, & MC3

Case management services to help participants
BEST PRACTICES IN OPERATING SUCCESSFUL APPRENTICESHIP READINESS PROGRAMS (1)

- Industry-driven programming, tied to demand
- Shared infrastructure amongst partners
- The right people at the table
- Clarity about populations served
BEST PRACTICES IN OPERATING SUCCESSFUL APPRENTICESHIP READINESS PROGRAMS (2)

- Credible messengers
- Clear metrics of success and data tracking
- Funding that best serves participants’ needs
- Sustainable funding models
KEY PARTNERS

GOVERNMENT
LABOR
PRIVATE FUNDERS
COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS
CONSTRUCTION EMPLOYERS
LESSONS FOR GOVERNMENT

- Invest in growing key industries like clean energy
- Include strong labor and equity standards on all Publicly Funded Projects
- Require “labor voice” on workforce development and other public boards
- Provide adequate, flexible funding for programs
LESSONS FOR FUNDERS

- Make longer-term commitments to fund work
- Institute flexible metrics for success
- Help programs to build capacities in key areas
LESSONS FOR LABOR

Establish “direct entry” relationships with apprenticeship readiness programs

Work with apprenticeship readiness programs to better track apprenticeship and career outcomes

Incorporate apprenticeship readiness into an overall organizing strategy
LESSONS FOR CONSTRUCTION EMPLOYERS

- Prioritize local, high-quality job creation
- Create employment pathways for graduates
- Support community workforce agreements
LESSONS FOR COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS

Enter new partnerships

Advocate for clean energy policies

Center strong labor and equity standards
WHAT IS ACCESSIBILITY?

“Being an accessible employer means that you have removed barriers within your workspaces, employment practices and workplace culture, and are inclusive and accommodating of all employees and candidates with disabilities.”

- University of Waterloo
WHAT KINDS OF ACCOMMODATIONS ARE NEEDED?

For pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship programs, accommodations that may be needed include extra time for testing, closed-captioning/ASL interpretation, program design tailored towards those with learning disabilities, and structural accommodations for those with physical disabilities.
WHY IS ACCESSIBILITY ADVOCACY NEEDED?

• Around 1 in 4 American adults have some kind of disability, and only around 1 in 5 of them are employed.

• For those looking for a job, the unemployment rate is double the national average.

• Accessibility in pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship programs would provide those with disabilities greater opportunities to succeed in a career.
THANK YOU!
Questions?

Please take a moment to share feedback on today’s event:
The Employer Assistance and Resource Network on Disability Inclusion (EARN) is a resource for employers seeking to recruit, hire, retain, and advance qualified employees with disabilities. This publication is fully funded by the U.S. Department of Labor’s Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP) under cooperative agreement No. 23475OD000002-01-00 with Cornell University. The total five-year cost of this agreement amounts to $10,000,000. This document does not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the U.S. Department of Labor, nor does mention of trade names, commercial products, or organizations imply endorsement by the U.S. Government.
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