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New Reports on Green Collar Jobs Provide Cities and States a Pathway to the Clean Energy Economy

PITTSBURGH – A coalition of non-profit environmental and economic research organizations from across the country today released a first-of-its kind guide to cities and states to enhance one critical component of America’s shared prosperity: Training and employing people for the higher wage, family-supporting careers in the new clean, green, energy efficient job sectors.

The new guide, “*Green-Collar Jobs in America's Cities,*” was made public at the start of the two-day national *Good Jobs, Green Jobs* conference in Pittsburgh. It makes a strong case that pursuing a four-step strategy—essentially a metropolitan green business and jobs development plan—provides a wealth of environmental, economic, and social benefits, including what it calls “a pathway out of poverty” for thousands of unemployed, under-employed, and hard to employ people in disadvantaged neighborhoods. The report was prepared by the Apollo Alliance, Green For All, Center for American Progress and the Center on Wisconsin Strategy.

“The movement to make American cities more sustainable, efficient and livable is perhaps the greatest new engine for urban economic growth, innovation, and job creation in decades,” said Phil Angelides, Chairman of the Apollo Alliance Board of Directors.

The state report, “*Greener Pathways,*” outlines a plan of action for state policy makers, highlighting reform opportunities to embrace the greener and more equitable promise of the new energy economy. It was prepared by the Center on Wisconsin Strategy, the Workforce Alliance, and the Apollo Alliance.

“A greener American economy can and will create jobs,” said Joel Rogers, Director of the Center on Wisconsin Strategy. “To make real progress on economic and workforce development in the new energy economy, we must focus more carefully on key clean energy sectors and seize the opportunities in leading industries, like: energy efficiency, wind, and biofuels.”

According to both reports, a job qualifies as green-collar if it provides high enough wages and good benefits to support a family, opportunity to advance and build a career, and reduces waste, pollution, and other environmental risks. Among the green-collar jobs that are gaining in number and popularity, said the studies, are machinists, technicians, service workers, equipment and installation specialists, construction workers, and managers of all kinds.

The business sectors seeking such employees span alternative transportation and fuels, green building and energy efficient retrofitting, renewable energy production and installation, and hundreds of related industries and occupations.

Partner Organizations

Apollo Alliance, based in San Francisco, is a national research and advocacy organization working to catalyze a clean energy economy and prompt the development of millions of green collar jobs. Contact: Keith Schneider, keith@apolloalliance.org, 231-920-0745, 415-371-1700 ext. 206, www.apolloalliance.org

Center for American Progress, based in Washington, is a nonpartisan research and educational institute dedicated to finding and promoting progressive and pragmatic solutions to significant domestic and international problems. Contact: Benjamin Goldstein, bgoldstein@americanprogress.org, 202-481-8175, www.americanprogress.org

Center on Wisconsin Strategy, based at the University of Wisconsin, is a national policy center and field laboratory for high-road economic development – a competitive market economy of shared prosperity, environmental sustainability, and capable democratic government. Contact: John Kraus, jkraus@cows.org, 608-263-7956, www.cows.org

Green For All, based in Oakland, Calif., advocates for a national commitment to job training, employment, and entrepreneurial opportunities in the emerging green economy – especially for people from disadvantaged communities. Contact: Jeremy Hays, jeremy@greenforall.org, 503-333-2343, www.greenforall.org

The Workforce Alliance, based in Washington, is a national coalition of community-based organizations, community colleges, unions, business leaders and local officials advocating for policies that invest in the skills of America's workers, so they can better support their families, and help American businesses better compete in today's economy. Contact: Rachel Unruh, rachelu@workforcealliance.org, 773-336-6078, www.workforcealliance.org

FACT SHEET BACKGROUNDER

“Green-Collar Jobs in America's Cities”

Building Pathways out of Poverty and Careers in the Clean Energy Economy

With gathering momentum, many of the America's largest cities and metropolitan regions are defying national trends in housing foreclosures, unemployment, and income stagnation, and instead have become new engines of job growth and prosperity. Underlying this remarkable transformation in the well-being of cities is an entirely new economic development strategy that is firmly based on being more efficient in using energy, being more sensitive to natural resources, more thoughtful about housing and transportation, and much smarter about developing businesses and jobs that meet the environmental conditions and market needs of the 21st century.

“Green-Collar Jobs in America's Cities,” a first-of-its-kind guidance manual, was months in the making and came at the request of a number of big city mayors. It recommends a four-step strategy to recruit, train, and place thousands of workers in the new service, maintenance, installation, technical, and construction jobs that employers are seeking.

“Green-Collar Jobs in America's Cities” also includes 14 case studies of successful green-collar job training and placement projects in 11 communities on both coasts, the Midwest, and the South. The 21-page report was prepared and published by The Apollo Alliance and Green For All, both based in the San Francisco Bay Area, the Center for American Progress in Washington, D.C., and the Center on Wisconsin Strategy, a national policy group at the University of Wisconsin in Madison.

The four-step strategy recommended by the authors embraces the bottom-up, collaborative principles of public engagement, policy making, and economic development that distinguishes the 21st century from the 20th. In every case that the authors studied, cities convened broad and untraditional alliances to take the time necessary to meet, break down barriers and build trust, reach consensus on green collar development programs, and then pursue goals collaboratively. Moreover, the local programs were never intended to be massive, but instead are scaled to fit neighborhoods, the growing business sectors that settle in them, and tight public and private budgets.

Case Studies From Across the Country

Among the 14 green-collar job programs that the report highlights are these:

Milwaukee, with the help of the Center on Wisconsin Strategy, has organized a major project to retrofit residential, commercial, and institutional buildings in order to significantly reduce energy consumption. Milwaukee Energy Efficiency, or Me2, is raising both public and private capital to finance the retrofit work. Building occupants pay back the funds through charges on their utility bills, and they will realize immediate savings from reduced energy costs. For more information: Joel Rogers; Director, Center on Wisconsin Strategy, 608-262-4266, jrogers@cow.s.org, http://www.cows.org/collab_projects_detail.asp?id=54

In Richmond, California, a non-profit group, Solar Richmond, forged a partnership with the city to provide low-cost and free installations of energy producing solar systems while simultaneously training low-income residents from the community to do the work. One of the project partners, Build Richmond, a city project, established a 10-week training program for construction and solar installation skills. Last year 32 residents completed the program and as of late last year, all but five program graduates were working for local solar and building companies.

For more information: Michele McGeoy, Director, 510-847-3172, info@SolarRichmond.org, <http://www.solarrichmond.org/>

In Washington, D.C., Mayor Adrian M. Fenty last September announced the start of a “Green Collar Job Advisory Council,” and has tapped the directors of four city agencies to play integral roles in the development of green jobs training policies. The central goals of Mayor Fenty's effort are to develop the capacity of local businesses and workers to capitalize on opportunities opened by an array of new green policies and programs. Among them are 1) a new Green Building Law, 2) storm water management and green urban infrastructure policies, 3) a comprehensive energy policy that promotes energy efficiency and renewable energy installations, and 4) a city-wide commitment to reducing carbon emissions to fight climate change. For more information: <http://planning.dc.gov/planning/cwp/view,a,1282,q,642589.asp>

Reasoned Four-Step Strategy: Assess, Enact, Train, Communicate

The process for establishing these and other green-collar development programs starts, said the guide, with research to understand local economic conditions, business strengths, and opportunities to develop green businesses and jobs. Los Angeles, for instance, developed a convening organization and published a comprehensive report in 2006, “*Jobs in L.A.'s Green Technology Sector*,” that identified green industries poised for growth and the ability of the community to fill jobs in those sectors. The report has served as guiding document in the city's work to build a green jobs economy. See:

http://www.economicrt.org/summaries/Green_Tech_synopsis.html

“*Green-Collar Jobs*” also calls on cities to enact new policies and programs to stimulate demand for green businesses and jobs. Chicago and New York are among the growing number of cities that require municipal buildings to be retrofitted to improve energy efficiency, a step that encourages new opportunities for the construction trades, energy auditors, and other specialists.

The third step in the report's strategy urges cities to develop training programs that take a special interest in providing job opportunities for low income residents. Especially significant in developing such training programs are building the skill set for jobs that actually exist or are on the way so that trainees have rewarding work when they finish.

And last is the report's recommendation for leaders and participants to document their achievements and make sure the community knows of their successes. Americans love winners and good stories. Strong narratives of achievement galvanize communities, attract supporters, and strengthen the will of policy makers to improve, invest, and expand programs that work.

More Green-Collar Job Programs

Other successful green-collar job development projects noted in the study include:

-- The Bronx Environmental Stewardship Training program and the Center for Sustainable Energy in the Bronx, both of which are moving people from welfare into green collar jobs.

For more information: James Chase, Director of Communications, Sustainable South Bronx, 212-431-5113, Givechase@gmail.com, Annette Williams, Director, B.E.S.T.. Program, 718-617-4668, awilliams@ssbx.org, <http://www.ssbx.org/>.

-- B'more Green, an initiative of Civic Works, is an innovative job training program for unemployed and underemployed residents of Baltimore to gain entry level positions in environmental technology.

For more information: John Ciekot, Project Director, 410-366-8533, jciekot@civicworks.com, <http://www.civicworks.com/bmg/home.html>.

-- Wilbur Wright College in Chicago has a six-course, 21-credit hour occupation building certificate in building energy technologies. The first 14 students graduated in December.

For more information: Victoria Cooper, Director, Environmental Technology Program, Wilbur Wright College, 773-481-8610, vcooper@ccc.edu, <http://wright.ccc.edu/departments/etp/build.asp>.

FACT SHEET BACKGROUNDER

“Greener Pathways”

Jobs and Workforce Development in the Clean Energy Economy

Across the country—in the media; in boardrooms, think tanks and community organizations; in local and state government; in Congress and the presidential campaign—people are talking about the economic promise of clean energy. Greener Pathways puts jobs at the heart of this animated national conversation.

The report describes the kind and quality of jobs in the clean energy economy, the skills needed to fill those jobs, and how existing plants and their workers—especially those in the beleaguered industrial heartland—can move to the center of the clean energy economy. These nuts and bolts issues bring labor, business, community, and education together as partners in the new industrial revolution.

Greener Pathways profiles some of the best examples in the nation where work is underway to develop green jobs, including green construction career development in California, Iowa’s biofuels job-training bonds, wind technician training in Oregon; and Pennsylvania’s green re-industrialization.

Building a competitive and equitable green economy, says the report, means investing in the backbone of America’s labor force: workers with more than high school, but less than a four-year degree. Beyond a cadre of highly skilled engineers and innovators who catalyze change, and a limited number of green-collar workers in just-invented jobs, the new energy economy will be built and sustained by middle-skill workers in traditional occupations.

Indeed, according to the report, many skills of the greener future are closely related to the skills of today. And most of the jobs in them industries examined in this report—electricians retrofitting buildings for energy efficiency, lab technicians ensuring quality control in ethanol plants, machinists crafting wind turbine components and technicians maintaining them—do not require advanced degrees. Thus the greener pathways of this report lead to middle-skill jobs in the clean energy future.

Greener Pathways examines jobs in three key green industries:

- **Energy efficiency** may be the fastest, cheapest way for states to address global warming, reduce energy costs for citizens, and create and sustain good jobs. The report looks primarily at residential retrofits, one sector in a broader field that includes commercial and industrial retrofits, green building, and green manufacturing.
- **Wind power** is growing rapidly in the U.S. and abroad and has the potential to be an economic driver in urban and rural areas. Wind power has the capacity for job creation in manufacturing as well as installation and operations. Component part manufacturing for wind turbines holds particular promise.
- **Biofuels** have taken root and are generating more policy interest and business investment, particularly in the Midwest. The report, while noting that biofuels may have significant environmental consequences, examines jobs in ethanol and biodiesel production.

Greener Pathways outlines a plan of action for state policy makers, highlighting policy, program and system reform opportunities to embrace the greener and more equitable promise of the new energy economy. The report provides information to help states craft clean energy agendas that simultaneously meet emerging industry demand, train and support workers, and create good, family-supporting jobs.

Clear principles help focus and animate green jobs policy:

A. Get Smarter About Green Jobs

Careful thinking is the foundation of successful policies and projects. Of particular importance here is focusing the approach, and then building on a solid foundation of labor market data and analysis.

Target specific sectors within the “green jobs” universe.

Use good data on labor market opportunities and skill gaps to drive green jobs initiatives.

Measure and evaluate green jobs programs and make them better.

B. Sustain Good Jobs Through Green Partnerships

Green jobs occur when smart economic development links with thoughtful workforce training. That happens when green jobs partnerships are founded, supported, and sustained to ensure the linkage.

Employ energy standards as green job creation tools.

Promote green industry clusters.

Design green jobs initiatives to both save existing jobs and create new ones.

Link green economic and workforce development.

Construct green industry partnerships.

Integrate green jobs initiatives into existing workforce systems.

C. Make Sure Green Jobs Pay Off For Workers and Communities

Focus attention on job quality, strong access for all, and upward mobility in the green economy.

Maximize community benefits by requiring them

Build greener career pathways

Extend green ladders to build real pathways out of poverty

Greener Pathways examines federal resources that can support state green jobs initiatives, including programs in the Departments of Energy and Labor, and the Green Jobs Act included in the 2007 Energy Independence and Security Act. The report finds that green investment and policy innovation need to be joined with an opportunity agenda that extends the greener pathways to all. The new energy economy will not simply emerge and generate good jobs; strategic state policy initiatives must hasten and direct the growth. States that build green-collar job training partnerships will be at the forefront of the new energy economy, and in a prime position to reap the benefits of the new federal Green Jobs Act. And as states construct greener pathways, workers will build a cleaner and more prosperous future for their families and communities.