



Climate Action Strategy 8: Workforce Development Programs for Occupations that Reduce Greenhouse Gas Emissions and Air Pollutants

Workforce Development 101

Community members can help decrease the harms of climate change, make their neighborhoods healthier, and earn good wages and benefits by working in jobs that reduce greenhouse gases (GHGs) and other air pollution. **Workforce development programs** can help community members gain skills and knowledge necessary to be competitive for these types of jobs. EPA states that these programs should include three features: (1) diverse partnerships that bring together workforce experts and enable employment pathways; (2) high-quality training models; and (3) strategies to recruit and retain workers from disadvantaged communities.

Workforce development programs must focus on jobs related to reductions in GHG emissions and other air pollutants. Examples include, but are not limited to, jobs in building electrification, solar energy installation, low- and zero-emission vehicles and their infrastructure, and community and environmental health. Many of these jobs are related to construction and the skilled trades. Here are some useful terms to know:



Registered apprenticeship programs (RAPs): An industry-driven, high-quality career pathway where employers prepare their future workforce. Apprentices gain paid work experience, progressive wage increases, classroom instruction, and a nationally recognized credential.



Pre-Apprenticeship programs: A set of strategies focused on work-based learning, designed to prepare people to enter and succeed in a RAP. Quality pre-apprenticeship programs can be valuable in providing work-based learning to help people prepare for an entry-level RAP.



Supportive services: Services to meet the needs of disadvantaged communities and lessen the barriers to training and employment. These may include childcare, transport, and mental health assistance. These services may also train people in life skills and basic skills such as financial literacy and job readiness.



Diverse
Partnerships



High-quality
Training Models



Strategies to Recruit and Retain Individuals
from Disadvantaged Communities

Key features of strong workforce development programs

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Workforce Development Solutions for Community Challenges



Essential Feature: Multi-Sectoral Partnerships

Importance and Examples	Elements of Effective Partnerships
<p>The right set of partners sets the groundwork for proven pathways to high-quality careers.</p> <p>Some potential partners are community colleges and vocational schools, labor unions, tradespeople associations, and workforce development boards.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Technical skills and experience to lead classroom and on-the-job training.• Knowledge of local, state, and regional labor markets, including understanding of hiring, staffing, in-demand skills, and emerging trends related to the clean energy transition.• Awareness of and strategies to overcome barriers that community members face related to training and employment.• Established relationships and trust within the community.



Essential Feature: High-Quality Training Programs

Importance and Examples	Elements of Effective Training Programs
<p>Formal and accredited training programs provide pathways into high-quality and long-term careers. These training programs can help people escape the cycle of short-term and low-wage work.</p> <p>Examples include Registered Apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship programs, Joint-Labor-Management Training Programs, paid internships, and partnerships with community colleges or vocational schools that award industry-recognized credentials. Training programs may also be eligible to be included as part of the American Climate Corps Program.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Fulfill an industry demand in the community and nearby area.• Informed and supported by employers.• Clear and defined pathways to long-term employment and family-sustaining wages.

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Essential Feature: Address Barriers to Accessing Job Training, Hiring, and Job Retention

Importance and Examples	Potential Ways to Address Barriers
<p>Disadvantaged community members who might benefit from a workforce development program may face barriers that keep them from taking part.</p> <p>Barriers include lack of awareness of training programs and new and emerging job sectors; lack of access to transport, childcare, and mental health services; inability to get time off from work; high costs for training; and lack of mentorship.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Locate training programs within the community.• Provide free or subsidized childcare and transport assistance.• Subsidize training costs.• Provide training program participants with a stipend.• Provide life and basic skills training such as financial literacy and job readiness training.• Provide career counseling to develop personalized employment plans.• Create a peer-to-peer mentorship program that connects experienced workers with new workers. Mentorship helps new workers learn on the job and make connections.

Disclaimer: This document was created to help Community Change Grant applicants think through various potential solutions to the problems their community may be facing. All the listed “Community Challenges” and “Possible Solutions” are only examples. We did not attempt to list all possible challenges or solutions.

For more information on workforce development, see the Department of Labor’s [Clean Energy Apprenticeship](#) and [High Road to the Middle Class](#) pages, the [American Climate Corps](#) website, and the [WorkforceGPS](#) technical assistance website.

For more information on the Workforce Development Climate Action Strategy, read Section I.G, Appendices C and F, of the Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO).



For further questions regarding technical assistance, please contact EJ_TechAssist@epa.gov or call 1(800) 540-8123.



For questions regarding the Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO), please contact CCGP@epa.gov.



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