

Summary Proceedings of the

**Women, Jobs and
Wisconsin's Green Economy**

Public Policy Roundtable

October 29, 2009
MGE Innovation Center
University Research Park
Madison, WI



Women's Bureau
U.S. Department of Labor

BACKGROUND

The National Women and Green Jobs Roundtable

On Earth Day, 2009, US Secretary of Labor Hilda Solis hosted with Nancy Sutley, Chair of the White House Council on Environmental Quality, a national roundtable discussion on Women and Green Jobs, held in Washington, DC. For the first time, leading women from labor, business, academia, government and the non-profit sectors from around the country shared how they are shaping our green economic strategy and how we can work together to ensure that women have access to the green economy. Building on this initiative, US Department of Labor's Women's Bureau offices, across the country, are working with partner organizations to host state and local Women and Green Jobs roundtables.

At the request of Nancy Chen, Midwest Regional Administrator, Women's Bureau, US Department of Labor, the Wisconsin Women's Council, in partnership with Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development, hosted *Women, Jobs and Wisconsin's Green Economy*, a public policy roundtable, in Madison, WI. More than 60 people attended the program, representing industry, government, educational partners, workforce development organizations and other stakeholders.

In Wisconsin, as nationally, the social and political momentum of green jobs has garnered interest, legislation and dollars to encourage the development of green work and industries. Many green jobs, however, are in occupational fields that are non-traditional for women (that is, women comprise 25 percent or less of total employment). The purpose of the Roundtable was to bring together leading Wisconsin experts to assess where women – as workers, business owners, and leaders – fit in to this momentum. And, if they don't, to determine how we will engage them. An important outcome of the program was to gather valuable information to provide input to state policymakers and other stakeholders, as well as to US Secretary of Labor Hilda Solis, who has made including women in American Recovery and Reinvestment Act created jobs a national concern.

On behalf of the Wisconsin Women's Council and the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development, we extend our thanks to US Secretary of Labor Hilda Solis and Women's Bureau Regional Administrator Nancy Chen for the opportunity to host this timely and important Wisconsin roundtable on women and the green economy. In her remarks, Secretary Roberta Gassman, Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development, commended the leadership of Secretary Solis as a passionate advocate for the power of the green economy and the work of the Women's Bureau in building on President Obama's priorities around building a green economy and the jobs and economic benefits for states that will follow.

By providing the training that will turn 20th century blue-collar jobs into secure 21st century green-collar jobs, we are paving a pathway out of poverty; strengthening urban and rural communities; rebuilding a strong middle class; and protecting the health of our citizens and planet.

Building a Clean Energy Economy
US Secretary of Labor Hilda Solis
US Secretary of Energy Steven Chu

PROGRAM

Featured Speakers

Representative Kristen Dexter
Wisconsin State Assembly

Secretary Roberta Gassman
Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development

What Are Green Jobs?

Sarah White, Senior Associate
Center on Wisconsin Strategy

PANEL DISCUSSION

Women and Non-Traditional Occupations in the Green Economy: Barriers, Opportunities and Promising Practices

Carrie Hersh, Operations Manager
Wisconsin Regional Training Partnership (WRTP/Big Step)

Mike Bernhard, Master Electrician
Full Spectrum Solar
Seventh Generation Energy Systems

Nancy Nakkoul, Program Coordinator
Tools for Tomorrow: Women in Trades & Technology Program, Madison Area Technical College

Moderator

Abby Vogen Horn, Senior Project Manager
Energy Center of Wisconsin

PANEL DISCUSSION

Emerging Business & Policy Trends in the Green Economy: A Forward Look at Women and Green Jobs in Wisconsin

Kathy Kuntz, Director of Energy Programs
Focus on Energy
Wisconsin Energy Conservation Corporation

Kathy Lipp, Chief Environmental Officer
Alliant Energy

Amy Heart, Director, Milwaukee Office
Midwest Renewable Energy Association

Moderator

JoAnna Richard, Deputy Secretary
Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development

ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION

Introduction

Nancy Chen, Regional Administrator
Women's Bureau, U.S. Department of Labor

Roundtable Discussion Questions

- What are the major challenges and opportunities in green jobs for women? Please recommend solutions.
- How can we facilitate connections between workforce development, green jobs training programs, and employers to better train women for green jobs and employment?
- What are the next steps the state, local government, and private sector can do to encourage and train women for green jobs?

INTRODUCTION

Wisconsin is laying the groundwork for the new, clean, green economy, with state actions and Recovery Act dollars directed at making Wisconsin a clean energy job leader — a priority of Governor Jim Doyle. Wisconsin's Department of Workforce Development, along with educational, trade union and other community partners, is preparing workers for the green economy, including investments in worker training, youth employment and apprenticeship programs focused on increasing green job skills. The State Legislature is advancing initiatives offering financial supports and tax credits for business start-ups, investment and research to help grow the green economy. State policymakers also are working on specific efforts related to wind energy, biofuels and global warming.

Many of the organizations actively collaborating with Governor Doyle, his Cabinet, and Legislative leaders to position Wisconsin as a clean energy jobs leader, were also key players guiding the development of the *Women, Jobs and Wisconsin's Green Economy* roundtable. In establishing this crucial link between industry, academic, workforce development and other key partners already moving forward on these issues, Wisconsin is well-positioned to ensure not only that green jobs will be a reality for the many workers who want them, but that women will be full partners and beneficiaries of all this new economy brings. The *Women, Jobs and Wisconsin's Green Economy* public policy roundtable is a timely and important step in moving that agenda forward.

Following is a brief summary of the discussion and findings from the Wisconsin roundtable. The summary which follows, like our conversation at the roundtable, is organized around four discussion points: challenges, opportunities, lessons learned, and next steps.

More information about the *Women, Jobs and Wisconsin's Green Economy* roundtable, including handouts and other materials from the program, is available on the Wisconsin Women's Council's web site at www.womenscouncil.wi.gov.

I. CHALLENGES

Public policy in Wisconsin is moving rapidly toward a green economy; however, it will take time for emerging green industries and sectors to develop and deliver job growth. Moreover, involving women in green jobs, many of which are in historically non-traditional occupations, will require transforming social perceptions, and improving recruitment and support systems. Roundtable participants and speakers identified a variety of challenges to fully developing opportunities for women in the green economy.

The public needs to better understand the nature of "green jobs."

- **Sarah White (COWS) defined green jobs, explaining that they consist of a mix of new jobs and traditional occupations across a vast array of industries.** Part of developing a "green workforce" includes training individuals to apply their existing skills to "green" jobs. Further growth in this sector will require additional skilled workers who must be recruited and trained.
- **White noted that not all green jobs are necessarily "good jobs".** She provided a framework for thinking about green jobs, including: 1) job quality, e.g., wages, benefits, work conditions, job security, organizing rights, pathways to advancement, and safety; 2) content, e.g., expanding or greening of existing occupations versus new occupations; 3) training requirements; and 4) targets, e.g., clean energy, energy efficiency, environmentally friendly production, conservation and pollution mitigation, or training and support.
- Within and beyond the alternative energy and energy efficiency sectors, **an expanding green economy will drive greater demand for skilled workers in traditional occupations.** "*Some green jobs are brand-new jobs but a lot are very familiar, like truck drivers, steel workers, bookkeepers, receptionists and customer service representatives,*" said White. "*Training for these jobs is something we already know how to do.*"

A green labor market is not necessarily gender-neutral.

- White cited an Economic Policy Institute study of labor market outcomes for federal investments in green infrastructure, noting "**if we have 'business as usual,' only 25 percent of the resulting jobs will go to women.**" A report by Wider Opportunities for Women further notes that "policy makers, funders and contractors can use the opportunity presented in this emerging field to eradicate past inequities and ensure that women will be full partners in this green revolution."

Recruiting and retaining women in non-traditional occupations (NTOs) remains a major challenge to progress.

- **More investment is needed for programs to recruit and support women in apprenticeship and related training programs**, as well as to support women once they are working in NTO fields. Few women apply or are involved with technical jobs or apprenticeship opportunities currently available, in part because they are not specifically recruited or encouraged to do so.
- Panelists suggested that key reasons women do not go into the skilled trades include lack of knowledge about jobs, training and benefits, and lack of role models via other women who have succeed in those occupations. Other barriers to overcome may include need for adult basic education such as GED or bridge-to-apprenticeship programs; need for social/logistical supports such as access to transportation or affordable, quality child care; and isolation in predominantly male industries.
- **Societal awareness and acceptance of technical careers and of women in non-traditional occupations must increase to expand the green workforce.** The supply of trained “green workers” is at risk because technical training is often viewed less favorably than completing a four year college degree. Yet, the core occupations for the green economy, including construction and building trades and related support positions, require less than a four year degree, such as associates or journey-level training, and can offer family-supporting wages and strong career advancement. Marketing and outreach to audiences from middle school students through seasoned workers are needed to change perceptions and increase participation, particularly for women.
- Mike Bernhard, Master Electrician, Full Spectrum Solar noted: *“One of the major problems is institutional. We have to start changing attitudes by middle school to change the whole idea that women don’t get dirty and don’t take tech jobs. It’s a societal norm – the mindset is still there and really needs to be addressed. Long-term, we need to change attitudes that keep young women out.”*

Ensuring women are full partners in the emerging economy is not just an equity issue, it is an economic issue.

- **A robust green economy will need women to meet labor market demand.** White reported that two-thirds of the workforce of 2020 is already working today. As a result, we need to focus on boosting more low-income working adults (the majority of whom are women) into the skilled

green labor force. Workforce issues such as an aging workforce, worker shortages and skills gaps, affect the ability to seize opportunities in the green economy.

- Kathy Lipp, Alliant Energy, reported that the U.S. energy industry will need to replace 50 percent of its skilled technicians and power plant operators, plus 40 percent of engineers and line workers, in the near future due to its aging workforce. Anticipating major increases in energy efficiency projects over the next 10 years, Kathy Kuntz, Wisconsin Energy Conservation Corporation, highlighted concerns that there will be too few trained workers to meet the demand for retrofitting existing homes and commercial buildings.
- While great interest exists in emerging sectors like solar and wind energy, the majority of jobs in those sectors will be found in the construction and technical trades. These are occupations that are often overlooked by adult women, high school students and displaced workers considering career options.

Targeted and coordinated training efforts are necessary to advance current workers with the skill sets needed for future job demand, including green career ladders to create pathways out of poverty.

- **Traditional educational programs are often inaccessible for single parents and people supporting a family** while seeking to train for a new career. *“We need to extend green career ladders to create real pathways out of poverty – and make them friendly and accessible to women,”* said White. *“Do I want little girls to dream of being green architects and biochemists? Yes! But there are 400,000 low income working women in Wisconsin who do not have a two- or four-year college credential, and/or have limited English proficiency, and I want them to have a green future too.”*

Do I want little girls to dream of being green architects and biochemists? Yes! But there are 400,000 low income working women in Wisconsin who do not have a two- or four-year college credential, and/or have limited English proficiency, and I want them to have a green future too.

**Sarah White
Center on Wisconsin Strategy**

II. OPPORTUNITIES

State Representative Kristen Dexter told roundtable participants that green jobs and the new economy hold many opportunities for women, including helping to make economic security a reality for generations of women workers from a wide variety of backgrounds. Presenters and roundtable participants agreed, and articulated a wide variety of opportunities, lessons and next steps to help women (and girls) explore, pursue and excel in the green economy and labor market.

Green jobs are hiding in plain sight and can be found in all sectors, presenting opportunities for expanding women's participation in the green economy.

- **Green jobs are, for the most part, found in traditional occupations and industries – they are existing jobs with greener skill sets.** White emphasized that while there is a lot that is new and exciting, many green jobs grow out of traditional occupations and reflect work and training that we have been doing. We know what these jobs look like. We can reach this economy by building on to the knowledge, training, and apprenticeship programs already in place.
- **Most green jobs are middle skill jobs** that require more education or training than a high school diploma, but less than a four year college degree. This is good news for Wisconsin given its premier technical college and apprenticeship systems. It is also good news for workers interested in pursuing green jobs who may have previously been excluded from more skilled occupations that offer career pathways and family supporting wages.
- **Information is already available identifying significant job growth opportunities in specific sectors and occupational areas**, such as jobs tied to retrofitting current buildings as people increasingly invest in energy efficiency. Kathy Kuntz noted, for example, that the state is considering dramatically expanding its energy efficiency investment, but training is needed to teach workers different methods. *“Wisconsin now is investing \$100 million in energy efficiency and renewable energy but a study found we could invest \$300-400 million with \$900 million in benefits,”* said Kuntz.

Green jobs and the new economy can help make economic security a reality for generations of women workers—women from a wide variety of backgrounds, including single mothers, older women, women of color and women veterans.

**Representative Kristen Dexter
Wisconsin State Assembly**

- **Expand on cross-sector collaborations to provide the targeted and coordinated training efforts necessary to advance current workers with the skill sets needed for future job demand.** Speakers highlighted opportunities for state government to continue to work with local partners to develop green career pathways, and bridges onto them, including Wisconsin's WIRED, RISE and Sector Strategy initiatives.

Green public policy is essential if women are to become full partners in the green economy.

- **Pursue state government support to help in moving forward the development of green jobs.** Secretary Gassman noted that Governor Doyle wants Wisconsin to be the greenest manufacturing state and recognizes that workers must be well-trained in this area. She provided examples of how the Governor has directed dollars to build the green workforce of tomorrow, including investing in emerging industries and sectors, and allocating significant funding for training.
- **Use legislation and other public policy vehicles to ensure funding opportunities include goals for women's participation and appropriate measures of progress and success.** Public policy can be a leading factor in institutionalizing a commitment across sectors to deliberately recruit and engage women in non-traditional occupations and the green economy. Roundtable participants highlighted the need for language in legislation specifying full and equal career choice and pay, along with measurement and analysis of employment outcomes and job training services provided to women.
- **Include women's entrepreneurship in strategies to build the green economy.** Support women business owners and start-ups in non-traditional industries related to the green economy. Roundtable participants again highlighted the need for language in legislation and procurement opportunities specifying targets/goals for contracting with women-owned businesses, along with measurement and analysis of outcomes in meeting goals. In addition, the state was urged to promote the Wisconsin Department of Commerce's Women's Business Enterprise (WBE) certification program and ensure it is meaningful by including WBEs in state procurement guidance and linking WBE goals to state procurement opportunities.

The emergence of the green economy offers a unique opportunity to expand efforts and overcome challenges to linking women (and girls) to non-traditional occupations.

- **Expand outreach and education to change perceptions of women in non-traditional jobs in the green economy and promote STEM skills with women and girls.** Stakeholders were urged to take advantage of the interest in green technology and advances in industries and occupations to expand outreach and education, including marketing the range of available post-secondary training and career options; and promoting women role models to break down stereotypes;
- **Begin outreach and education about STEM and other non-traditional fields by middle school (if not earlier), and bring parents, educators, and counselors into the discussions.** Roundtable participants highlighted that having both strategies in place increases the possibilities for keeping girls engaged in math and science, and combating stereotypes about girls and women in these fields. Participants also suggested that there is opportunity in working with at-risk youth to promote interest in skilled trade occupations and make links to bridge and mentoring programs that may help at-risk students access and succeed in apprenticeship and certification programs.
- **Seek to identify, engage and serve different populations of women,** including, for example, rural women, women veterans, women of color, low-income women, single parents, and women with limited English proficiency, to increase awareness of the possibilities and benefits of high quality green jobs. Tailor programs to provide population-specific wrap-around support and education systems to promote success.

The emerging green economy will help fuel our nation's recovery, and it must include opportunities for women. We need to ensure that women have access to green jobs in manufacturing, construction trades, renewable energy, biotechnology and other areas. We must also alert girls at an early age to career opportunities in this new, vital sector of clean energy, conservation and innovation.

**Secretary Roberta Gassman
Wisconsin Department of
Workforce Development**

- **Build awareness of new applications for current skills to better assist dislocated workers and help identify transferable skills.** Increase involvement between green industries and workforce development systems to help workers move into new opportunities when displaced. Include specific recruitment strategies for women to increase the odds that dislocated women workers will consider and pursue green jobs when retraining for new careers.
- A Time Magazine poll found that **72% of women rate job satisfaction as critical to job choice and retention.** With this in mind, it was suggested that in recruiting women, it is important to spend time to addressing the question, "What in this is interesting to me?" It was suggested that women will, in general, find green economy jobs more attractive when it is clear how they can make a difference and find job satisfaction in daily work.

Training a green workforce can keep Wisconsin economically competitive and environmentally sustainable. But beyond skills training, green jobs initiatives must address access and upward mobility. To help [women] advance from unemployment, disconnection, or dead-end, poverty-wage work into family-sustaining green jobs, the state should work with local partners to develop green career pathways — and bridges onto them. Critical first steps include Wisconsin's WIRED, RISE, and Sector Strategy initiatives, including the Governor's Skills Jump Start and Opportunity Grants programs.

Sarah L. White, *Greening Wisconsin's Workforce: Training, Recovery, and the Clean Energy Economy* (Center on Wisconsin Strategy, 2009)

III. LESSONS LEARNED

1. **Collaboration and communication among stakeholders, including government officials, industry, education and other workforce development partners, is critical** to meeting the potential of a green economy. Ensuring that all the players come together will facilitate the right mix of investment, trained workers, and job opportunities, and lead to high quality jobs.
2. **Create innovative partnerships to provide practical experience to newly trained workers.** The Midwest Renewable Energy Association cited an example of supplementing its training in renewable energy skills through a partnership with Habitat for Humanity to install energy-efficient features in Habitat homes. This gives newly trained individuals the experience in installation that they need to become certified and move into the workforce.
3. **A variety of program delivery options and support systems are needed to meet the schedules of students, particularly adult learners and displaced workers.** Women and single parents, for example, often face barriers to training, retraining and other skill development opportunities due to child care concerns (e.g., access and affordability) and other individual, educational and family support needs.
4. **Mentors and role models for young girls and women make a difference** in combating stereotypes and promoting STEM and other non-traditional occupations to girls, as does giving access to non-traditional opportunities through avenues outside the traditional classroom, such as girl-serving organizations (e.g., Girl Scouts, Girls Inc, etc.) and other community partners.

IV. NEXT STEPS

1. **Include specific language in government and organizational policies to require goals, preferences, measurements, and/or other concrete means to expanded involvement of women and women business owners** in the green economy.
2. **Secure funding for new training and technology, particularly targeted toward women,** and create tax, grant and other incentive systems to reward organizations that demonstrate success in providing women with education and training leading to green jobs.
3. **Educate girls, parents, teachers and counselors to encourage young women to pursue opportunities** in the green economy, particularly related to technical, skilled trade and other STEM-related fields.

4. **Build on the wealth of information already available about bringing women into non-traditional occupations (NTOs) to the industries and jobs of the green economy.** Participants, including those from the Midwest Renewable Energy Association, Madison Area Technical College, and Full Spectrum Solar, highlighted successes in recruiting and retaining women in NTO training programs and breaking down stereotypes, through, variously, targeted recruitment strategies, mentoring, job shadowing, women instructors and classes led by women for women.
5. **Pursue public-private partnerships and industry-driven efforts to help identify green job skills and training needs** and ways to convert or upgrade existing workers' skills to those needed for the green economy.
6. **Create a significant public relations campaign around women and opportunities in the green economy.**
7. **Promote entrepreneurship for women around green industries.** Specifically, it was suggested that state government align its Forward Innovation Fund with the mission of the U.S. Department of Commerce, Office of Innovation and Entrepreneurship, in promoting high-growth entrepreneurship in America. In an effort to foster the development of high-growth and innovation-based women-owned businesses, create state requirements that target women-owned entities for funding available through Wisconsin Forward Innovation Fund. The state should work closely with the Office of Innovation and Entrepreneurship to identify and seek solutions to the critical need for better access to capital for women business ownership.

Questions for Future Research and Discussion

- What are the attitudes that keep women out of the skilled trades and at what points in social and educational development can we address those attitudes with women and men?
- How do we effectively communicate to women the *what, why, where* and *how* of green jobs?
- How do we support women and keep them in green jobs once there?
- How do we reach, engage and serve different populations of women (rural, urban, veterans, women of color, low-income women, etc.)?
- What entrepreneurship and certification programs are available to support women with the start-up and growth of companies that provide green jobs?

Wisconsin as a Green Jobs Leader Selected Highlights

Representative Kristen Dexter reported that the green economy is the focus of discussion and action in the Wisconsin State Legislature, including:

- expanding criteria for certification of a Qualified New Business Venture to include businesses engaged in staple WI industries such as manufacturing and agriculture as well as developing industries such as biotech and clean energy creation;
- increasing credits the Department of Commerce may allocate annually under the Early State Investment program from \$11.5 to \$37 million;
- creating a capital gains break of up to \$10 million for investors who invest their capital gains in WI start-up businesses;
- creating a Super R&D Tax credit that establishes a dollar-for-dollar credit to offset future tax liabilities for qualified research expenses;
- passing wind-siting legislation that will streamline regulations for wind energy, which is good for investors and producers;
- in process of passing into law a comprehensive Domestic Biofuels bill; (SB 279 and AB 408) which will lay the groundwork for economic development, especially rural economic development; and
- in process of passing into law recommendations of the Governor's Taskforce on Global Warming.

Secretary Roberta Gassman, Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development (DWD), highlighted Governor Doyle's commitment to making Wisconsin a leader in green jobs training and development. DWD has invested \$6 million to "green up" its apprenticeship program to keep existing apprenticeship programs on pace with new skill demands and skill sets in the green economy and bring new people into the program; and unprecedented youth employment through Wisconsin's 2009 Summer Jobs Program and focus on youth jobs around energy efficiency.

DWD also recently submitted a funding proposal to the U.S. Department of Labor for the Wisconsin Sector Alliance for the Green Economy (SAGE) Project. This project will employ short- and long-term strategies that are critical to the greening of Wisconsin's workforce. Today, occupations in the green economy will need flexible energy skills training to fill known training gaps and quickly upgrade the green skills of traditional workers. As these occupations change and grow, the energy sector's demand for skilled workers will increase.

The SAGE project responds to industry's needs by better preparing the existing workforce for selected industries. SAGE's agile training system will move workers into this pipeline, including many who lost their jobs due to declines in manufacturing jobs, such as

auto industry losses in Rock and Kenosha counties. SAGE establishes future-focused energy sector partnerships through which industry, workforce professionals, labor, and education partners will work together to continually improve Wisconsin's response to the rapid changes of the sector's training needs.

Initiatives such as SAGE are driven by the state's energy plan, *Clean Energy Wisconsin*, developed by Governor Doyle in partnership with industrial, environmental and scientific leaders. The plan promotes an affordable, renewable, and diverse energy supply; targets investments in job creation and new business opportunities; and improves our environment.

Wisconsin's Office of Energy Independence (OEI), has made over \$111 million in investments to advance *Clean Energy Wisconsin*; \$55 million to manufacturing to create clean energy products and processes; and, \$34 million in Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grants towards retrofitting public buildings and installing energy efficient lighting. Through Workforce Investment Act (WIA) funding, \$850,000 of Emerging Industry Skills Partnership grants have been awarded allowing manufacturers to green the skills of their workforce. Plus, \$175,000 of Wisconsin's WIA discretionary funding has been committed to energy sector strategies, allowing each GROW region to establish an energy sector plan.

The Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development projects that there will be an estimated 246,400 new jobs created between 2006 and 2016, and over 680,200 jobs available from replacement openings. The jobs will be across approximately 90 industries, including renewable and energy efficiency sectors.

Clean Energy Wisconsin's goal to capture 10 percent of the production market for renewable energy and bio-products could create over 20,000 new jobs. Construction and extraction occupations will have 150,100 jobs in 2016, an increase of 11,900 jobs and 24,800 jobs open as a result of replacement needs. There will be nearly 26,200 job openings in installation, maintenance, and repair occupations, with 7,500 of them due to new job creation. The rest, 18,700 jobs, will be due to replacement needs, concentrated mainly in manufacturing. Production jobs will result in 77,300 openings, both from new jobs and replacement needs. New energy efficiency program investments are projected to support 7,000 to 13,000 Wisconsin jobs by 2012.

Traditional electricity and gas systems will remain critical. In 2006, surveys by the Utility Workers Coalition pointed to a need to replace 1,100 retiring utility generation and transmission workers by 2015, not including workers needed by energy construction contractors. Manufacturing is a key source of employment for Wisconsin. Secretary Gassman noted that Wisconsin has more workers in the manufacturing sector than any other state (16%), despite the significant loss of manufacturing jobs due to the current recession.

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PROMISING PRACTICES

A Women's Guide to Green Jobs

The U.S. Department of Labor's Women's Bureau has partnered with Wider Opportunities for Women (WOW), a nonprofit organization based in Washington, D.C., to develop a publication designed to increase women's access to high-growth and emerging industry occupations in the green jobs sector nationwide. *A Woman's Guide to Green Jobs* will provide women and employment professionals in general with information on hiring needs, training and entrepreneurship opportunities in green industries. National, state and local resources, including women's organizations and workforce practitioners, will be included. As part of this effort, the US DOL Women's Bureau has collected information about promising practices and support services that facilitate women's success in the green-economy workplace of the 21st century. The Wisconsin Women's Council put out a call for promising practices related to women and green jobs in conjunction with the *Women, Jobs and Wisconsin's Green Economy* roundtable. Five promising practices gathered from leading Wisconsin organizations have been submitted to the US DOL's Women's Bureau for this project. Summaries are provided below. US DOL expects to release *A Women's Guide to Green Jobs*, and an accompanying curriculum, in Spring 2010.

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Organization's mission, focus, impact

Community Action is a not for profit organization offering over 40 programs to fight poverty in Rock and Walworth Counties, Wisconsin. Community Action provides access and opportunity for those we serve and those who support our efforts. Through innovative programs and strong community partnerships we eliminate barriers, establishing clear pathways to economic self-reliance. Broad anti-poverty programming including job training and education, housing development, emergency housing and housing counseling, weatherization, health care. Core programming is focused on assisting household in achieving self-sufficiency.

Purpose

To assist young women in completing their secondary education while gaining job skills in the construction industry.

Process/how it works

Participants are enrolled in Youthbuild/Fresh Start program and spend a portion of their time in a classroom and a portion on a construction work site learning construction skills. The goal of educational work is to assist participants in earning their high school diploma and preparing for post-secondary educational experiences. Construction programming and training qualifies the program as a pre-apprenticeship program. Participants are paid a training wage for their construction work. Collaboration with Community Action's weatherization program and the WI Focus on Energy program enables us to begin green construction and energy efficiency training.

Community partners

Beloit School District; City of Beloit, Neighborhood Housing Services, Rock County Human Services, Juvenile and Adult Probation, the Child Support Department and Civil and Criminal Court System as well as local employers.

Potential outcome/impact

6 – 8 young women are recruited, trained and employed annually.

Among the apprenticeship preparation services provided, Tools for Tomorrow holds two exploration workshops each year (one is 8 weeks, the other is 2 weeks, each 12 hours/week) -- one focused on commercial construction, the other on residential construction -- both of which feed into potential apprenticeship career pathways. Approximately 15-18 women attend each workshop, each year.

Madison Area Electrical Joint Apprenticeship

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Organization's mission, focus, impact

The delivery of an efficient training program so individuals can, through a systematic program of schooling and on-the-job training, become a well-qualified electrical worker.

Purpose

Working with community partners and the other building trades to increase and improve access, recruitment, training and retention of women and minorities in construction trade careers through State-approved apprenticeship programs.

Process/how it works

Electrical Training Committee actively recruits women and minority participants for careers in the electrical industry.

Community partners

Construction Workforce Diversity Alliance
Skilled Trades Apprenticeship Readiness Training (START)
Madison Area Technical College Tools for Tomorrow Program
Training Partnership for the Skilled Trades (TPST)

Potential outcome/impact

The Committee has steadily increased female participation in the electrical industry through apprenticeship training employment opportunities.

Midwest Renewable Energy Association

Name

Midwest Renewable Energy Association

Key contact

Zara Scharf, Site Assessor Coordinator

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Organization's mission, focus, impact

The Midwest Renewable Energy Association promotes renewable energy, energy efficiency, and sustainable living through education and demonstration. The US Department of Energy (DOE) recently announced that MREA was selected to provide solar energy training and resources to technical and community college instructors across the Midwest, including Wisconsin, Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, Iowa, and Minnesota. With \$3.3 million in funding over five years, MREA will work with training partners to offer instructor training institutes and organize a network of Midwest solar training programs.

Purpose

Certified Renewable Energy Site Assessors help customers determine if their home or small business site is appropriate for the installation of a renewable energy system (solar electric, wind, or solar domestic hot water).

Process/how it works

Once a customer has taken energy efficiency and conservation measures and is ready to incorporate renewable energy systems, Focus on Energy recommends having a certified site assessor visit to determine if their site is a good location for a solar electric, solar water heating or wind electric system. The certified site assessor can provide in-depth information about their specific location, to include an analysis of the customer's energy usage and opportunities for energy efficiency and savings. A site assessor is able to help calculate the size of a potential renewable energy system based on that individual customer's needs and goals. Focus on Energy currently provides eligible customers with a discount on the cost of a solar energy or residential wind energy site assessment.

Community partners

Focus on Energy (Wisconsin)

Potential outcome/impact

Currently 10 of the 82 renewable energy site assessors in Wisconsin are women (12%). This is a great area of opportunity for women to enter the green job market, resulting in work can be done on a flexible schedule or on the side in supplement to another career. Renewable energy site assessments are a first step to solar and wind project installations in Wisconsin.

Tools for Tomorrow: Women in Trades & Technology Program Madison Area Technical College

Name

Tools for Tomorrow: Women in Trades & Technology Program
Madison Area Technical College

Key contacts

Mary Knight and Nancy Nakkoul

Address

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Organization's mission, focus, impact

The Tools for Tomorrow Program is designed to increase the enrollment, academic performance and graduation of women students in non-traditional degree, diploma and apprenticeship programs at the college through a network of services. Targeted occupational clusters include construction, industrial, mechanical and technical fields.

Purpose

Tools for the Trades is a free 90-hour career workshop offered for women to explore construction-related occupations, primarily apprenticeships. The overview of skilled trade occupations includes hands-on labs, job duties, labor market information, terminology, tools and equipment usage, applied math and safety issues. Many of the green jobs will be connected with existing apprenticeship trades within the electrical, carpentry, plumbing and ironworking fields.

Process/how it works

Applicants attend a Career Information Session and a Basic Skills and Career Assessment Session, followed by an interview with program staff. During the workshop, women receive information on apprenticeship qualifications, application procedures, testing requirements and job-seeking assistance. Opportunities to link with tradeswomen through networking activities and a mentoring program are made available.

Community partners

Job Center Agencies and Programs
Community-based Organizations such as Operation Fresh Start, Employment & Training Assn., Centro Hispano, Project Home, YWCA
Employers
Construction Workforce Diversity Alliance
Joint Apprenticeship Committees
WI Bureau of Apprenticeship Standards

Potential outcome/impact

Tools for Tomorrow provides a wide range of programs and supports for women career exploration and training in non-traditional occupations fields for women, in addition to apprenticeship preparation. Overall, Tools for Tomorrow works with 175 women annually providing an umbrella of services. Of those that enter post-secondary training, over 90 percent of the students are retained with approximately 80 percent obtaining training-related employment.

Among the apprenticeship preparation services provided, Tools for Tomorrow holds two exploration workshops each year (one is 8 weeks, the other is 2 weeks, each 12 hours/week), with one focused on commercial construction, the other on residential construction -- both of which feed into potential apprenticeship career pathways. Approximately 15-18 women attend each workshop, each year.

Focus on Energy Wisconsin Energy Conservation Corporation (WECC)

Name

Focus on Energy/WECC

Key contact

Lisa Fox

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Organization's mission, focus, impact

Focus on Energy is Wisconsin's statewide resource for energy efficiency and renewable energy.

Wisconsin Energy Conservation Corporation (WECC) is a national leader in the design and implementation of award-winning energy savings programs for utilities, municipalities and regulators across the U.S. and Canada. WECC administers the Focus on Energy program.

Purpose

Energy Advocates are individuals who help homeowners understand and participate in the Focus on Energy home efficiency programs/services.

Process/how it works

Homeowners interested in making their homes more energy efficient, yet unable to find the time or money to make that happen, contact Focus on Energy. Through pilot programs in targeted areas in the state, those homeowners are teamed with an Energy Advocate that has been trained by WECC. The Advocate meets with the homeowner, explains the programs/services available to them and conducts a walk through energy audit (which includes):

- Inventory of HVAC equipment and appliances
- Energy efficient education on and settings of electronics and thermostats
- Direct install of CFLs, low flow showerheads and faucet aerators
- Utility bill understanding
- Education on energy efficient practices affecting plug loads
- Education on energy efficient behavior changes

Upon completing the walk through audit, the Advocate then serves as a "hand holder" for the homeowner as the process moves forward with determining and implementing energy efficiency within the home, including, for example, assisting with paperwork scheduling appointments; gathering information; and "go to" person for questions

Community partners

In the targeted neighborhoods in which the Energy Advocates are working, we have partnered with existing community action groups (soliciting Energy Advocate candidates from within their ranks), block watch organizations and neighborhood safety groups (organized through the local police department).

Potential outcome/impact

To date, with two community pilots up and running, eight Energy Advocates have been hired and trained, with "first hires" being used to help mentor those hired later. Six of the eight Advocates are women, two of whom are bilingual (large Hispanic population in one neighborhood for which the Advocates serve as interpreters). The skill set involves people skills such as communication; organization, multi-tasking and follow through. Technical background or experience is not a requirement. All six of the female Advocates were either stay at home moms or had been out of the work force for some time. The Advocate role and skill set, along with the flexible hours (the Advocates work part time, no fixed hours/day or days/week), make this an ideal job opportunity for women looking to have a professional role yet maintain balance in their personal life.

Disclaimer: This report is published under the authority of the Wisconsin Women's Council, a state agency. The report summarizes the proceedings of the *Women, Jobs and Wisconsin's Green Economy* public policy roundtable program, held October 29, 2009 in Madison, WI. The information and findings presented in this report do not necessarily represent the views, official positions or policy of the Wisconsin Women's Council, State of Wisconsin or other participating organizations or individuals.

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