



## Education and Workforce Training Strategies\*

2/19/09

A dynamic green economy requires a highly trained workforce with life-long learning options. Education and workforce training strategies should build upon our existing workforce development system of WorkForce Centers, non-profit service providers, education institutions, and union apprenticeship training programs. Local Workforce Councils are well positioned to support the growth of green jobs by facilitating connections that bridge the needs of jobseekers and employers.

Additional funding for expanded green job training can be effectively leveraged and managed through the existing structure of Local Workforce Councils. These Councils function as neutral brokers in identifying and connecting workers and employers with available resources and educational institutions that can meet their specific training needs.

Job seekers interested in green careers should have access to intensive job search, vocational assessment and career guidance resources. ***By investing solidly in workforce development through existing systems***, a strong economy can once again be realized in our state. Supporting the growth of green jobs and green careers can be part of this infrastructure that needs stable funding to continue providing services to all Minnesotans.

A fair and equitable proportion of green jobs programs should include training for at-risk and disadvantaged people from low-income and minority populations, tribal communities, women in non-traditional career paths, and dislocated and unemployed workers.

- Invest in youth employment and training programs.
- Develop and disseminate accelerated green jobs retraining programs where they support workforce needs and do not duplicate existing available training and provide access to all.
- DEED/Local Workforce Councils/GEA (Green Enterprise Authority) should develop and maintain an inventory of training programs and workforce needs as part of its ongoing labor market information.
- Incorporate green techniques and jobs skills into existing curricula.
- Maintain and expand K-12 curricula and teacher professional development to include renewable energy and energy efficiency. When possible, leverage WIRED and other federal funding sources to achieve this goal.
- Maintain and expand access to STEM (science, technology, engineering and math), industrial arts and career technical education in both K-12 schools and through PSEO/MnSCU options in higher education.
- Include apprenticeship, mentorship, internship and work experience opportunities in publicly funded green jobs projects and assure access for all.

- Require private sector companies that are recipients of public funding creating green jobs to participate in career awareness activities.
- Fund career counselor programming for adult and youth career planning.
- Create a team that includes but is not limited to academia, unions, and industry to develop strategies for increasing private and federal funding for R & D in various green disciplines.
- Encourage industry, unions et al to participate in [www.GetSTEM-MN.com](http://www.GetSTEM-MN.com) and other similar resources for linking businesses to education.

\*These strategies were developed from the basis of the work of the workforce training and education sub-committee and its corresponding findings attached.

# Green Jobs Workforce and Training Sub-Committee Input Session Findings

12/22/08

## Guiding Principles:

- Inclusiveness - Paying attention to vulnerable, at risk and disadvantaged populations
- Alignment – Breaking barriers between agencies, institutions, companies and government entities
- Accessibility – Creating access to educational programs with multiple entry and exit points and access to employment for people across a wide range of skill and educational attainment levels.

**Finding:** Green jobs and education will require a cultural shift for both the public and employers. To facilitate a smooth transition to a green economy a significant amount of community education will be required.

- Better education of young people from preschool through post-secondary, or P-16:
  - Access to hands-on educational opportunities for all K-12 students.
  - Create more opportunities for students to connect with practical application of science and math theories concurrently covered in the classroom. (e.g. start young, field trips, classroom presentations)
  - Classrooms into the communities for specific energy efficiency, water quality or other projects that can provide opportunity to learn and improve existing infrastructure.
- Food Systems (another opportunity for classrooms in the communities)
  - Urban farming
  - Locally grown food
- Improve access throughout educational systems for all levels of training and education
  - Apprenticeship Programs, Technical College Programs, State Colleges and Universities
  - Dual track certification for vocational-technical through full-degree training and education
- Recommend promotion of concentrated/focused training for specific employment opportunities that exist and will not add to the existing unemployment in these specific employment areas.
- Development of 8-12 week intensive retraining programs that can be tailored to specific, existing and relevant employment opportunities in demand
  - Inventories of existing training programs should be ongoing to limit duplication of training programs. This will ensure the most cost effective allocation of resources.
- Academia needs to have a realistic awareness of the current, immediate and future outlooks for business innovation and technology
- Academia should make an attempt to attend seminars/technology fairs from the private sector as well as within academic realm in order to broaden awareness

**Finding:** Green industries, collectively, are seen as one of the most promising engines of economic growth both nationally and regionally. To maximize the return on state investment and to best leverage the economic potential of this sector, the jobs created under this program need to lead to sustainable employment, sustainable wages, and sustainable benefits.

**Finding:** If Federal and State funds begin to flow to programs, it is important to encourage the development of green jobs training and education. Any funding must start with training targeted to at-risk populations / low-income individuals and dislocated workers. For example, many dislocated workers will have rich skill sets that, if supplemented with appropriate retraining resources, could support the growth of the green economy. The workforce investment system, higher education system and unions should be engaged in helping to tap the skills

presented by these groups. For workers with existing skills, it is vital that all green jobs training and educational programs enhance workers' skill sets through continuing education or certification programs. No training or education program should contribute to higher unemployment in fields of training or education.

**Finding:** If a company can meet our job/wage/benefit principles of sustainability and is willing to train/pay/reimburse for training to assimilate people into a sustainable wage we believe a special committee to convene with DEED should have the latitude to focus its resources to incentivize the company to come to Minnesota.

**Finding:** Connectivity between employers, educators and workers

- Quantitative and qualitative information on current and future workforce gaps that may present job opportunities for workers.
- Just-in-time/on-demand business hiring and employment training program giving the forward looking employer the well-trained employee on a planned schedule.
- Qualified employers must meet current wage and labor laws.