



# JOB TRAINING

## SUMMARY

Green job training offers high-quality job opportunities for both unemployed and incumbent workers who, in turn, improve the environment and economy in their immediate communities. Jobs in the renewable energy sector are stable and well-paying with average wages nearly \$5,000 more than the national median. They are also accessible to people with varied educational backgrounds; half of those employed in the industry do not have a bachelor's degree.

The widespread need for energy efficiency upgrades and environmental cleanup in New Jersey's residential and commercial buildings, along with accelerated deployment and servicing of renewable energy systems, create an opportunity for workforce development at all income levels across the state. Energy efficiency training offers major employment opportunities in the lighting and electrical sectors, weatherization, home and business energy audits, and new technology development. Renewable energy-related job training offers opportunities in solar array installation and wind turbine manufacturing, installation, and servicing.

More energy efficient homes are also healthier, more affordable homes, particularly in our state's most vulnerable communities. Utility bills are a major cause of homelessness in low-income households because these homes often lack the necessary upgrades for energy efficiency and environmental safety; nearly 750,000 low-income families in NJ qualify for state fuel assistance. Lead-based paint is still common in many of New Jersey's older schools, public housing, and abandoned industrial facilities; while progress has been made in remediating lead-contaminated buildings, much work remains.

A comprehensive environmental agenda should advance energy efficiency standards in the state and also address the serious environmental issues impacting occupants of housing. Many energy updates cannot be made in homes with substandard conditions like leaky roofs, broken windows, lead contamination or pests.

Using the standards of the Building Performance Institute (BPI) to certify training centers along with improving funding and opportunities for job training in energy efficiency and environmental health will offer major savings for low-income families, better community health, and family-sustaining jobs.

# **POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS**

## 1. PROVIDE FUNDING FOR TRAINING

Support union apprenticeship programs, entrepreneurship training, and community-based training centers with \$10 million for programs across the state to equip under- and unemployed workers with skills for jobs in a clean energy economy. Programs should align literacy, job readiness, occupational training, support services, career coaching, and other resources needed to prepare lower-skilled adults to meet the expectations of employers. Improved access for women and people of color to career pathways within the green economy should be a major policy goal.

## 2. REVIVE STATE INCENTIVE PROGRAM FOR HIRING

In 2013, New Jersey ended its state incentive program that offered funding for companies to hire graduates of green job training programs. New Jersey should reinstate the incentive program to pay up to 50% of new hires' wages for 6 months for companies who create new, full-time jobs that last at least 1 year, hire trainees from state approved training programs, and deliver an energy efficiency or green energy product or service.

## 3. SUPPORT ENERGY EFFICIENCY AND HEALTHY HOMES

New Jersey should improve field practices to combine lead safety, energy efficiency, and health upgrades for low and moderate income families who rent or own a property. Maximizing current funding for energy efficiency through the Weatherization Assistance Program and NJ Clean Energy and fully restoring the Lead Hazard Control Assistance Fund would result in significant reductions in residential energy use, lower energy costs for low and moderate income households, and expand lead safety and healthy housing for all families.

## 4. CROSS-TRAIN PROFESSIONAL HOME VISITORS

Current policy prohibits many energy upgrades from being made in homes with substandard conditions like leaky roofs, broken windows, lead contaminants, or pests. Cross-training on energy efficiency and environmental safety in a breadth of fields creates more job opportunities and improves safety of residents. Policies should encourage cross-training for building inspectors, social workers, case managers, and other home visitors in lead, energy and healthy homes fields. Rather than walking away from substandard housing, cross-trained workers can identify hazards and educate residents on how to manage them.

**WE WANT**  
GREEN JOBS  
SAFE HOMES  
HEALTHY COMMUNITIES