

The WorkPlace, Inc.
Data-Driven Green Training Programs

The WorkPlace, Inc., southwestern Connecticut's regional WIB, has been at the forefront in using data to make practical and professional decisions regarding the new green industry. The BlueGreen Research Institute, a project of The WorkPlace produced the *Bridgeport Region Green Jobs Study*, which identified occupations with the most cross-over among green industry sectors, as well as the sectors with the greatest potential for including green occupations. The study made recommendations on how the region could respond to its green industry needs – using existing resources as well as suggested new initiatives – and is helping drive training and education decisions in the region.

The WorkPlace focuses on the training needs associated with occupations in green industry sectors, with an emphasis on developing entryways into these professions and defining career ladders that lead to sustainable, family-supporting employment. In many cases, these occupations are traditional blue collar jobs that, through modified materials or techniques, re-emerge as green collar jobs. The region also focuses on direct responses to ARRA-funded programs for job training in energy efficiency and renewable energy occupations, particularly the weatherization assistance program.

The WorkPlace has put this approach into practice in the following areas:

- Summer Youth/Conservation Corps Initiative employed nearly 50 youth to provide door-to-door service to homeowners, supplying them with information on global climate change, water waste management, and recycling bins.
- State Incumbent Worker Training program expanded to include a customized green jobs training program, preparing workers for new and challenging employment opportunities in a more competitive, global economy.
- Weatherization Assistance Program Job Training will provide training, supportive services, placement, and follow-up to prepare participants to fill the anticipated hiring needs of contractors conducting ARRA-funded weatherization. This Bridgeport jobs funnel program model was built upon findings in the *Green Jobs Study* that construction-related workers would be in demand.
- Veterans' Workforce Investment Program will provide employment and training to honorably-discharged veterans, with 80 percent to be trained in green jobs.
- Green-Up Bridgeport, if funded, will be a \$4 million, three-year Pathways out of Poverty Green Jobs Training program matching residents from Bridgeport's neediest neighborhoods with the training they need to enter or advance in in-demand green collar jobs.

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