

GREEN-COLLAR JOBS REALIZING THE PROMISE

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Sightline Institute

SUMMARY

The Promise

An Opportunity: Green-collar jobs can put us on the road to clean energy, economic recovery, and shared prosperity.

Defined and Counted: Green-collar workers devote their hours to boosting energy efficiency, increasing renewable energy, or reducing pollution.

Explained: Five reasons clean energy creates jobs:

- (1) Dollar for dollar, clean energy creates more jobs than fossil fuels.
- (2) Clean energy cushions the economy from volatile energy prices.
- (3) By reducing energy imports, clean energy locks in local job creation.
- (4) Clean energy improves trade balances and tempers financial shocks.
- (5) Clean energy reduces the financial risk of climate change.

Funded: The US federal stimulus efforts are already providing hundreds of millions of dollars to the Northwest states for clean energy and green jobs. Federal climate policy could bring similar amounts each year for decades.

The Plan: The biggest chance in the near term for green-collar job creation is in boosting energy efficiency in buildings.

Supply Workers: Two training strategies for green-collar jobs:

- (1) Focus on training programs that lead to credentials or certifications.
- (2) Create career ladders that link training, employment, and education.

Stoke Demand: Six lessons on successful programs for boosting energy efficiency in buildings:

- (1) Use smart marketing to educate property owners about energy efficiency.
- (2) Assemble partnerships; link organizations with shared interests.
- (3) Measure building energy use through audits and ratings systems.
- (4) Connect building owners with trusted contractors.

¹ A. Durning and J. Langston, with Lisa Stiffler and Roger Valdez and research by Avi Allison and Jesse Burns. Full report at: www.sightline.org/research/green-collar-jobs/green-collar-primer.

- (5) Create an “energy concierge” to guide property owners through the process.
- (6) Teach people to take advantage of their retrofits.

Secure Capital: Four solutions for financing energy-efficiency improvements in buildings:

- (1) Let building owners pay for retrofits on their utility or tax bills.
- (2) Use “green leases” and innovative strategies to unite the interests of landlords and tenants.
- (3) Offer family-friendly retrofit financing with conservation loans.
- (4) Use emerging tools to finance big projects that have long payback periods.

The Prize: To win the prize of shared prosperity through green-collar jobs that promote clean energy, the key is not one single thing; it’s putting all the pieces together.