



Governors' Climate-Ready Workforce Initiative

New initiative aims to grow career pathways in climate and clean energy fields, support new and existing workers, ensure job quality, strengthen workforce diversity, and train 1 million new registered apprentices by 2035

The U.S. Climate Alliance, a bipartisan coalition of governors representing approximately 60 percent of the U.S. economy and 55 percent of the U.S. population, has repeatedly shown that climate action goes hand-in-hand with economic growth and job creation. Thanks to the leadership of Alliance states and territories in partnership with the Biden-Harris administration, career pathways in climate-ready fields are rapidly growing. This includes good-paying jobs not only in clean energy and clean technology sectors – such as wind, solar, electric vehicles, energy efficiency, and batteries – but also in fields associated with climate resilience and natural climate solutions.

Historic federal investments under the Inflation Reduction Act, Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, and CHIPS and Science Act are building on this momentum. Implementation of these laws by the Biden-Harris administration is unleashing a significant expansion of good-paying and union jobs in climate-ready fields across the country,¹ with analysis showing that combined investments will create nearly 3 million jobs per year over the duration of the laws. Importantly, almost 70 percent of these jobs will be available to workers without a college degree.²

Expanding workforce training pathways into climate-ready professions offers an unprecedented opportunity to strengthen workers' economic mobility, boost job quality, ensure a sufficient supply of skilled workers, improve representation of women and people of color in these fields, and help the United States achieve a clean, equitable, and resilient net-zero future. Governors have long led the way in building the climate-ready workforce. Across the Alliance, member states and territories have taken steps to align workforce development plans with their climate targets, establish new climate-ready pre-apprenticeship and Registered Apprenticeship programs, stand up dedicated funding streams, and launch innovative partnerships, among other strategies.

In September 2024, the Alliance will build on governors' longstanding leadership and catalyze further progress by launching the Governors' Climate-Ready Workforce Initiative ("the Initiative"), aimed at accelerating the development of a diverse, equitable, and inclusive climate-ready workforce and expanding career pathways for new and existing workers into the good-paying jobs that will be created as the United States advances its climate goals and works toward a just economic and energy transition.

Through the Initiative, Alliance members will partner to strengthen and expand pathways into a wide variety of climate-ready professions that are critical to building a clean, equitable, and resilient net-zero future. Goals include:

- Advancing strategies to ensure climate-ready employment pathways lead to good-paying, high-quality jobs that protect worker safety, ensure worker voice, and support workers throughout their careers with family-sustaining wages and benefits.
- Prioritizing equity in climate-ready workforce policies and programs to expand opportunities for all workers, particularly those from underrepresented and underserved communities and those disproportionately impacted by climate change and the energy transition.
- Fostering meaningful and inclusive collaboration across government, Tribal nations and communities, workforce systems, labor unions, industry, community-based organizations, educational institutions, and other key partners in developing solutions.
- Supporting innovative and evidence-based approaches to help workers enter, transition into, and advance in climate-ready careers through a range of supportive services, including educational and transition services, language access services, and wraparound supports such as childcare and transportation.
- Promoting the development and use of stackable, portable, and industry-aligned credentials in climate-ready fields to build transferable skills, support reskilling and upskilling, and strengthen workers' economic mobility.

- Maximizing opportunities to build a climate-ready workforce with federal investments under the Inflation Reduction Act, Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, and CHIPS and Science Act, including by supporting employers' compliance with applicable prevailing wage and Registered Apprenticeship provisions.
- Strengthening regional and sector-based collaboration to promote greater alignment and maximize impact in addressing shared challenges and opportunities.
- Encouraging climate-focused workforce planning that is rooted in evidence and aligns with states' existing workforce development and education systems, increasing capacity of states' workforce systems and improving data collection and reporting as needed.

Alliance members recognize that Registered Apprenticeship programs that are registered with the U.S. Department of Labor or federally approved State Apprenticeship Agencies are an especially valuable career pathway in many climate-ready fields. Together with quality pre-apprenticeships,³ these programs are a proven workforce training model that empower workers to earn while they learn in key climate-ready occupations and industries.

To advance progress toward the goals of the Initiative, Alliance members will work to collectively support 1 million new workers in completing Registered Apprenticeship programs across the coalition by 2035. At the same time, Alliance members will collaborate to build a substantially more diverse workforce by bringing more underrepresented populations into these programs. Alliance members will also collaborate on supporting the development of new Registered Apprenticeship programs in climate-ready fields where there are gaps, while promoting upskilling and reskilling of the existing workforce; improving completion rates across these programs; and developing new or expanding existing quality pre-apprenticeship programs.

As part of the Initiative, Alliance members will launch cohorts focused on sector-specific strategies to expand pathways into in-demand, climate-ready careers and support new and existing workers across each sector. These cohorts will enable members to collaborate with one another, share evidence-based practices and resources, engage experts and stakeholders, and develop solutions that can be scaled across states and territories to support continued job creation and boost access to high-quality workforce training, including Registered Apprenticeships. Cohorts to be launched in the Initiative's first year include the following focus areas:

- Clean Energy, Fuels, and Technologies, led by Michigan and New Jersey, focused on careers in the design, construction, and maintenance of a clean, affordable, and resilient power system; the manufacturing and deployment of zero-emission vehicles and technologies; and the development and distribution of alternative, low-carbon fuels.
- Clean Buildings and Industry, led by Maine and Massachusetts, focused on careers in the engineering, design, construction, retrofitting, maintenance, and operation of buildings and industrial processes that are clean, energy-efficient, healthy, and resilient.
- Resilient Communities and Lands, led by Arizona and Vermont, focused on careers in the development and maintenance of safe, livable, and resilient communities; preparedness for and response to climate impacts such as extreme heat, wildfires, severe storms, flooding, and drought; and the deployment of natural climate solutions and climate-smart stewardship of our lands and waters.

The Initiative will be led by Alliance states and territories with support from the Alliance's Secretariat. In implementing the Initiative, Alliance members will customize efforts to address their own individual opportunities and challenges while working together to achieve its collective goals. Members will also collaborate directly with their workforce development system partners, labor unions, higher education institutions, industry, and other key partners that bring substantial expertise and experience in supporting high-quality workforce development pathways and strategies.

¹ White House Fact Sheet on Biden-Harris Actions to Create Good-Paying, High-Quality Clean Energy Jobs, June 2024, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2024/06/18/fact-sheet-biden-harris-administration-announces-historic-rules-to-create-good-paying-high-quality-clean-energy-jobs/>.

² Employment Impacts of New U.S. Clean Energy, Manufacturing, and Infrastructure Laws, PERI Report, September 2023, https://peri.umass.edu/images/publication/BIL_IRA_CHIPS_9-18-23-1.pdf.

³ U.S. Department of Labor Training and Employment Notice (TEN) No. 23-23, Quality Pre-Apprenticeship Programs, March 2024, <https://www.dol.gov/sites/dolgov/files/ETA/advisories/TEN/2023/TEN%2023-23/TEN%2023-23.pdf>.