



High Road Outcomes in Portland's Energy Efficiency Upgrade Pilot

March 2011



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Introduction

In Portland, Oregon Green For All has been helping implement Recovery Act-funded programs that create high-quality jobs for people who really need them. With a clear-eyed commitment to high-road outcomes Portland has leveraged the collective expertise of its community to produce results.

The City has just completed a 500-home energy efficiency pilot and is leading the launch of a state-wide effort to upgrade 6,000 homes over the next three years. The pilot program used \$1.1 million of Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant (EECBG) formula funds to seed a revolving loan fund for home energy remodels. The loan fund leveraged additional public and private investment to spur nearly \$7 million in private homeowner investment. This brief report highlights the impact of that investment in terms of high-quality job creation, equitable hiring, inclusive business opportunities, standardized training, and energy conservation.

“Clean Energy Works Portland is the first program of its kind in the nation to enable on-bill financing for home energy upgrades. We’ve jumpstarted the energy efficiency industry in Portland — which creates good jobs, increases demand for energy-efficiency products and services, and helps the city meet our goals of reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 80% by 2050. Portlanders should be proud of the national recognition that validates Portland as America’s living laboratory for the sustainability economy.”

Mayor Sam Adams

Project Background

Clean Energy Works Portland (CEWP) is a project of the City of Portland that is creating jobs, boosting business, and saving consumers energy by making local homes more energy efficient. This program works because households are willing to invest in energy efficiency and the green economy, and to procure these services from local businesses. EECBG funds have catalyzed Portland’s ability to innovate and build systems that drive high-road growth in the clean energy market. These systems are recycling funds and attracting private investment to create an ongoing, financially self-sustaining program.

At the heart of the program is a revolving loan fund that offers low-interest financing for energy efficiency upgrades. The City capitalized the loan fund with \$1.1 million from Portland’s formula allocation of Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant under the Recovery Act. The City contributed additional resources, and with its CDFI fund manager, Enterprise Cascadia, attracted another \$2 million from private investors. In June 2010, the City received a \$20 million BetterBuildings grant from USDOE to expand Clean Energy Works statewide in the coming years.

Clean Energy Works Portland is a whole home energy performance financing program that not only reduces energy consumption and promises to be financially self-sustaining, but has been designed in partnership with stakeholders to support long-term community economic development. Early on, the City invited those stakeholders to craft an Agreement on high-road goals and strategies.¹ This Agreement lays out how the program will create jobs while providing high-quality employment and access for those in the community who have been historically left out of new economic opportunities. The Mayor subsequently appointed a Stakeholder Committee to provide ongoing community input on implementation, monitoring, and evaluation.

In order to achieve the work quality and community workforce objectives laid out in the Agreement, Clean Energy Works program partners — including the City of Portland, Energy Trust of Oregon, Conservation Services Group, and the Stakeholder Committee — developed a combination of requirements, incentives, and supports for contractors. Thus, while some high-road practices are non-negotiable (e.g., paying living wages, hiring from designated training programs) the program incentivizes other community workforce objectives (e.g., providing health care insurance, employing a diverse workforce, being or contracting with a historically underutilized business, forming mentor-sub relationships). The program also offers a suite of business support services designed to increase capacity among local contractors.

A central tool to achieve high road community workforce objectives in the Pilot is the contractor application, which the program uses to select and rank eligible contractors to conduct assessments and retrofits, based on an analysis and weighting of multiple performance and workforce factors.

¹ The Agreement was originally called a “Community Workforce Agreement” but is being called a “High Road Agreement” going forward, in keeping with emerging practice. High Road means a scalable development strategy to build a society characterized by environmental sustainability, shared prosperity, and effective democratic governance. High road standards ensure that programs create high-quality jobs, produce high-quality work, ensure broad access to economic opportunities for a diversity of businesses and workers, support quality training programs that connect workers to sustainable career paths, and result in substantial, measurable, and long-term environmental, economic, and social benefits.

Summary of High-Road Outcomes to Date

As of March 1, 2011 complete data is only available for 434 of the 500+ completed home energy upgrade projects.

Data collection lags behind project completion by up to 20 days.

Economic activity

New home energy upgrades	434
Average annual energy savings per home	450 therms of gas; or 7,675 kWh of electricity
Private investment (= payments to contractors)	\$6,431,398
Participating contractors	15 primes 51 subs
Contractors that are Oregon-based businesses	100%

New, High Quality Jobs

Construction workers employed on pilot projects	381
Hours of new construction work generated	48,047
New construction hires	29
New hires coming from Qualified Training Programs	22
Wages	180% of state minimum wages or federal prevailing wages, whichever is higher
Median wage	\$18.00 / hour
Average wage	\$24.66 / hour
Participating contractors offering health insurance to their workers	64%
Workers who reside in the Portland metropolitan area	84.4%

Diverse Workforce – Access To Jobs

Trade/technical hours worked by people of color	49.5%
Trade/technical hours worked by women	8.1%

(Agreement Goal: 30% of all trade/technical hours are worked by historically disadvantaged or underrepresented people, including people of color, women, low-income residents.)

Diverse Business Participation – Access to Opportunity

Pilot dollars going to minority-owned or women-owned small businesses	22.9%
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(Agreement Goal: 20% of contract dollars from 500-home pilot go to historically disadvantaged or underrepresented businesses.)



“Clean Energy Works was a direct action item in the city’s climate plan to reduce carbon emissions. The Recovery Act funding brought with it a focus on job creation. We had the opportunity to have the program be a high-road approach to economic development.”

Andria Jacob, Portland Bureau of Planning and Sustainability



“It’s a testament to the city and Energy Trust of Oregon how much they opened up their process. Energy Trust was willing to change its competitive application process for contractors in order to create a Clean Energy Works qualified contractor pool and achieve the goals of the High Road Agreement.”

Alan Hipolito, Verde Energy

“Getting support from the community for high-road jobs and serving historically underserved people, and having these adopted by the city and council was a great accomplishment. It certainly has set a good standard for this community.”

Rey España, Native American Youth & Family Center



High Road Outcomes to Date

New, High Quality Jobs

Portland’s High Road Agreement ensures high-quality jobs with good wages, benefits, and training. As of March 1, 2011, there have been 434 completed projects, 29 new construction hires, and 48,047 construction hours worked, which equates to 23 full-time job years. Participating contractors and program partners have also made non-construction hires (e.g., administrative, program staff) to support CEWP-financed contracts. For example, Chick of All Trades, LLC (C.O.A.T.), a prime contractor in the program, has hired 6 new employees as a result of participation in CEWP, including a field crew of 4 and 2.5 full-time employee positions in project management and administration. They are about to hire 2 more field crew workers.

“The best outcome is that we’ve all been working together. For once it’s been pretty nice to see some results and for a number of us to get to be a part of it. The best practice is the overall program. When we go to other agencies, we refer to Clean Energy Works. We now have a best practice.”

Tony Jones, Metropolitan Contractor Improvement Partnership



The Agreement sets the pay scale for trade and technical workers at the higher of 180% of state minimum wage (\$15.12) or federal prevailing wage for energy efficiency retrofit work. These wage standards are designed to ensure that workers in Clean Energy Works are able to support their families and contribute to the local economy. The average wage for construction workers in the program so far is \$24.66 per hour, which is \$15.93 above the living wage for an adult in Portland (Multnomah County) (\$8.73).² Paying family-supporting wages has not appeared to be a burden on contractors. There were six participating contractors in the program when the wage standards were adopted; now there are 15 primes and 51 subs — all paying these wages.

“Chick of All Trades is a minority- and woman-owned business. We have a history of implementing green building practices in our work. We also try to encourage participation by minorities and women in the trades. Clean Energy Works has helped us to be more successful at achieving these goals. Also, it’s important to us that people working in construction are earning a living wage along with benefits because it’s seriously lacking in our industry. If Clean Energy Works didn’t have wage and benefit standards and instead gave work to the lowest bidders, we would be competing against that segment of the construction industry that uses the cheapest labor, cheapest products, and shoddy work techniques, which results in substandard performance. Clean Energy Works levels the playing field by having these standards in place. It’s been important, and in my opinion it’s been phenomenally successful. Because the other contractors in this program are paying living wages and providing benefits, we’re able to recruit more skilled workers who tend to be more invested in companies and staying longer. The end product is therefore more consistent and one we can stand behind.”

Thomas Staten, Chick of All Trades, LLC

² The living wage for Portland (Multnomah County) is calculated by the Living Wage Calculator, an online tool developed as part of the Living Wage Project. <http://www.livingwage.geog.psu.edu/pages/about>

“I’ve worked in retail and been paid \$8 an hour to fold clothes. Now I’m being paid \$16 an hour to make people’s homes more efficient and to save them money in the long-run on their bills. They can spend that money elsewhere. I think this is something that all of America should do. We could help homeowners really utilize every ounce of resources that they have. Also, it’s really empowering to be a woman in the trades. I don’t have to depend on anyone else to fix things for me. I’m actually in a position now to use what I’ve learned to fix my grandmother’s house.”

Alexxis Lee, Sustainable Solutions Unlimited, LLC



The Agreement sets the goal that employees on CEWP jobs have access to adequate and affordable health insurance. One of the weighted selection factors in the contractor application is provision of health insurance to employees. Applicants may receive between 2 and 7 points based on partial or full coverage of employee and dependent premiums. Sixty-four percent of contractors are voluntarily offering health insurance to their workers.

Clean Energy Works has incentivized some employers who haven’t offered insurance to their employees to start offering it. The contractor application gives points to employers for offering health insurance to their workers. After 12 years of being a contractor, **Berenice Lopez-Dorsey** made a business decision to invest in a health plan for workers and dependents. That investment has paid off for her. Her company, Home Energy Life Performance Group, Inc. (H.E.L.P. Group, Inc.) has been among the highest scoring contractors in several phases of the program. She has grown her business and has been able to rehire 4 employees who were laid off during the rough time in the economy. She also hired 6 new workers and increased gross revenues by over 200% in less than a year. The 10 total new jobs include both construction and office positions. “It’s been a great experience as a Latina and being a woman to participate in Clean Energy Works. It’s presented an opportunity for business growth and has opened a new door for women interested in this field. Everyone has good intentions, and that’s really important to me. We’re creating good-paying jobs for our employees, and not just temporary jobs but jobs that will create a boost in the economy.”



The Agreement requires that participating contractors hire 100% of new, entry-level weatherization workers from designated training programs until 50% of the contractor's total non-supervisory worker/installer weatherization employee monthly work hours on covered projects are performed by graduates of a designated training program. Participating contractors also agree to ensure that their subcontractors do the same. The City, Energy Trust of Oregon, and Stakeholder Committee established a pool of qualified training programs for the pilot, based on their capacity and ability to train experienced new hires to federal and state standards within a reasonable time and at reasonable cost. Labor unions and training providers, including the Laborers and Carpenters unions, are contributing their multi-million dollar training infrastructure to the program and preparing most of the new hires in weatherization and basic construction skills. Designated training programs partner with community-based pre-apprenticeship programs and ensure that a majority of its trainees are women, people of color, residents of low-income communities, or other historically disadvantaged people. The training utilization requirement is a strategy to ensure a highly-skilled workforce and access to jobs for historically disadvantaged or underrepresented people from the local community. To date, 22 new, entry-level hires (out of 29 total new hires) have come from designated training programs.

Marshall Runkel of EcoTech LLC is one of the local contractors working on these retrofits. At a recent Green For All event, he talked about how Clean Energy Works Portland has affected his business and his experience as a small business owner. “[The program] requires me to hire 100% of my new employees from qualified training programs. I hired a young guy a couple of weeks ago, a young African American guy, 20 years old, two kids, his mom is incarcerated, never had a job. And this guy is kicking [butt] every day, I’ve got to tell you. It’s going to make me cry. It’s an enormous opportunity, and it really felt great to do. One of the joys of this business is really providing those kinds of jobs and those kinds of opportunities for people.”

“Part of the motivation for having training is to have a quality standard for work performed. It also creates a pathway for workers, which makes it easy for contractors to achieve local hire and workforce diversity. It’s a helpful pipeline. LIUNA in Portland has embraced what it means to be part of a high road agreement. We’re proud to be part of it. Because it’s



a new industry, there's a new bench, and we have the opportunity to integrate diversity for residential weatherization. We've been working alongside Oregon Tradeswomen, Inc., the Native American Youth & Family Center, and Verde, which helps keep the union accountable to the community. We have more allies; they hold us accountable in honoring pathways and creating a diverse workforce."

Kirsten Isaacson, LIUNA

The Agreement also sets the goal that 80% of the workforce are local hires. Local hiring is critical to ensuring that communities retain maximum benefits from the program and can also be helpful in generating consumer demand. The program has surpassed its local hiring goals. 84.4% of the 381 construction workers involved in the project thus far reside in the Portland metropolitan area. Also, 100% of the participating contractors are Oregon-based businesses.

Diverse Workforce – Access to Jobs

The Agreement sets the goal for 30% of all trade and technical hours to be worked by historically disadvantaged or underrepresented people, including people of color, women, and low-income residents. Portland is a city of 22% people of color, including 7% Hispanic, 7% Black, and 6% Asian. In contrast, 49.5% of trade and technical hours on Clean Energy Works have been worked by people of color – including 35% by Hispanics, 7% by African-Americans, and 5% by Asians. Women have performed 8.1% of all trade and technical hours in the pilot. This is more than double the national and state averages for women participation in the construction. The program does not currently collect data on chronically unemployed or underemployed, or low-income workers.

The Agreement also sets the goal that formerly incarcerated individuals seeking new opportunities for responsible citizenship and economic self-sufficiency are presented with employment opportunities leading to a career in weatherization or construction. Twelve formerly incarcerated individuals have been employed on Clean Energy Works projects.

One of the weighted selection factors in the contractor application is the applicant's successful track record in hiring and retaining historically disadvantaged or underrepresented people, including people of color and women. Applicants may receive between 1 and 7 points for the proportion of their direct-hire field staff that consists of women, African American, Hispanic, Asian Pacific, Pacific Islander, American Indian, or Alaskan Native individuals. Applicants who have less than 20% as a proportion can receive credit of between 1 and 3 points for this factor for a detailed and readily imple-

mentable plan for how the applicants will hire, maintain, and welcome diversity in their workforce in the immediate future.

“We want to see those left behind get living wage jobs, including the formerly incarcerated; this is for the individuals’ and the community’s benefit if they lead productive lives.”

Bev Logan, Metropolitan Alliance for the Common Good (MACG)

“The construction field has carried forward many discriminatory practices for many years. I believe strongly in diversity in multiple areas; it makes us better people to be around diversity. Sustainable Solutions is a certified B corp.³ We’re a triple-bottom-line business. We want to provide access to a broader range of people who want to be doing this work.”

Steven McGrath, Sustainable Solutions Unlimited, LLC



Albert Horsley, Jr., is a 25 year old African American who moved back to Portland, where he was born, after his father passed away four years ago. For the past few years, Albert has gone through some training programs, taken community college classes, and had on-and-off work, including at a salvage yard where he made \$8.50 an hour and as a gas station attendant, but he could never get ahead. He was in and out of homelessness, living under a bridge. Then in 2010 he found out through the Native American Youth & Family Center (NAYA) that he was eligible for the Laborers weatherization training program, which he completed to become a certified weatherization technician. Verde Energy, a nonprofit joint social enterprise between Verde and NAYA that provides weatherization labor and services, hired Albert for one of two open positions. He is now working full-time and earning \$15.23 an hour plus health benefits. “It looks like I’m going to be out of homelessness permanently,” he says. “This opportunity has been phenomenal because I’ve been able to get ahead rather than racing to catch up. I’ve put a lot of time and effort into learning. I’m focused on doing everything right because you build a reputation based on what you do.”

³ B Corporations are a new type of corporation that uses the power of business to create public benefit. www.bcorporation.net

Diverse Business Participation – Access to Opportunity

The Agreement goal is to see at least 20% of total contract dollars in the pilot program go to businesses owned by historically disadvantaged or underrepresented people, including people of color- and women-owned businesses. When Clean Energy Works initially launched, before the Agreement was established, there were no minority- or women-owned participating contractors. Indeed, there was only one minority- and woman-owned home performance contractor in the state that had the necessary certifications to participate. Today, the program is surpassing its goal — 23% of pilot program dollars have gone to minority- or women-owned small businesses, including 4 minority-owned prime contractors and 7 minority-owned subcontractors. A number of these contractors have also joined the state Energy Trust of Oregon’s network of trade allies, which in turn helps increase contractor-driven market demand for energy efficiency. All prime contractors in CEWP must be part of Energy Trust’s trade ally network ensuring that they are experienced and knowledgeable in home energy efficiency best practices; subs are not required to be.

“One of the biggest goals that we had was to have weatherization contractors be more of a diversified group and reflective of the city. In this stakeholder process, constant involvement made the outcomes a lot greater than those that the city, county, or state have tried to implement in the past. The process has been successful because there has been an oversight component to it that has allowed compliance to occur.”



Maurice Rahming, President, Oregon Chapter, National Association of Minority Contractors

Rather than issue a single Request for Proposals, CEWP split the 500-home pilot into five consecutive phases of 100 homes each and issued an RFP for each phase. These multiple, staggered phases provided contractors who may not have been eligible or prepared to apply for work in an earlier phase with time to prepare themselves to apply in later phases. Each phase of work accommodated new contractors.

One of the weighted selection factors in the contractor application is whether the applicant is a certified disadvantaged, minority, or women business enterprise (4 points) or has subcontracted with one in the last six months (5 points). Applicants may receive between 1 and 3 points for a plan to develop subcontracting relationships for Pilot work with DBE, MBE, or WBE who have been in business for a minimum of six months.

“The High Road Agreement is structured to give minority contractors the opportunity to compete and succeed in doing the work. If it weren’t for Maurice [Rahming] and having good diversity and community leadership at the stakeholder table, we wouldn’t have the outcomes that we do. The RFP scoring was set up to benefit businesses that already had a diverse workforce or that would make the effort to have one. The RFP was written in a manner that gave me and contractors hope that they had a shot at this because of how it was structured.”

Tony Jones, Metropolitan Contractor Improvement Partnership

One of the weighted selection factors in the contractor application is the applicant’s plan for establishing a “mentor-sub” relationship with businesses owned by historically disadvantaged or underrepresented people, including people of color- and women-owned businesses, that have been in business for a minimum of six months. A “mentor-sub” relationship is defined as a commitment to working with a subcontractor for a significant amount of Pilot-related work while such subcontractor seeks necessary training and experience toward BPI certification to be eligible to be considered for selection in subsequent Pilot participating contractor pools. Applicants may receive between 1 and 7 points for their narrative, with more points available for plans that include multiple subcontractors.

In addition to these weighted selection factors, program administrators and stakeholders developed and deployed Business Support Services as a core feature of the pilot. The suite of business support services are intended to develop increased capacity in the local contractor base to contribute to the home performance energy efficiency market; increase the representation of minority-owned, women-owned, and other historically underutilized businesses in the market; and support the success of contractors who are committed to high road standards and practices. CEWP contracted with the Metropolitan Contractor Improvement Partnership (MCIP) — a business support and training program for historically underutilized viable construction businesses with a heavy emphasis on minority businesses — to develop and deploy business support services. The program also partnered with the following organizations on this model: National Association of Minority Contractors Oregon, Portland Development Commission, Energy Trust of Oregon Trade Ally Network, Oregon Home Performance Guild, and others.

“**E**very step of the way, there’s a need for support when dealing with new businesses and a new system, including one established by government agencies that don’t have experience working on a grassroots level with very low-income people. You have to think about what you do differently, identify values and perceptions, use different teaching methods, know how to talk to minority groups who’ve seen green as being about white people, communicate what green is about, and get them to buy in. We knew that the chief vehicle to get minority contractors coached and supported to become engaged and successful was MCIP. Tony [Jones] provides a sense of having a partner, cheerleader, resource for answering questions, support; there’s a one-to-one connection. It’s all about the relationship.”

Lynn Knox, Economic Opportunity Initiative, Portland Development Commission

Business Support Services in the pilot program included:

1. *Outreach and Information.* MCIP reaches out to minority contractors and subcontractors through trusted networks to inform them about and explain business opportunities in CEWP.
2. *Certification Support.* The City provides scholarships to HUBs for BPI training and certification (a requirement for participating contractors and a necessary signal of quality and competitiveness in the larger market), and MCIP helps secure those scholarships for minority contractors.
3. *Application Preparation.* MCIP provides direct technical assistance to minority businesses in the preparation of applications to become a member of CEWP’s contractor pool. (Energy Trust has attributed to this assistance the increase in quality of applications with each subsequent round of applications.)
4. *Relationships for Success.* MCIP and the City of Portland host networking events to make direct connections between contractors and subcontractors and to facilitate the development of “mentor-sub” relationships in an effort to increase the participation of HUBs.
5. *Technical Assistance and Business Development.* With support from the City’s Economic Opportunity Initiative and the Northwest Area Foundation, MCIP provides direct coaching and business development support to participating contractors, including: establishing infrastructure for bidding and accounting, developing marketing materials, complying

with Clean Energy Works reporting requirements, determining capital requirements for expansion in CEWP as well as other home performance sector opportunities.

6. *Contractor Advance Credit Facility.* Enterprise Cascadia, a community development finance institution and program partner, offers a line of credit to participating contractors and subcontractors, with support from the Northwest Area Foundation. This access to capital is designed to address working capital shortfalls created in part by the fact that program guidelines imposed by use of public funds provide full payment to contractors upon completion of all work. Short-term loans offered through the facility provide participating contractors with a 50% pre-construction disbursement for each qualified contract (home retrofit) and enable historically underutilized businesses to acquire capital and expand their capacity to the extent necessary to be able to participate in the program.

“**A** phenomenal achievement was Enterprise Cascadia’s creation of a line of credit for contractors so contractors can borrow. There are a lot of barriers for contractors, including the Energy Trust of Oregon’s trade ally requirement, BPI certification, and working capital to run these jobs. The line of credit has enabled certified minority contractors to be able to participate in the program. They now have a credit history and score, which has increased their capacity for the future.”

Debbie Goldberg Menashe, Energy Trust of Oregon

Neighborhood Phase

The final phase of the Pilot was a Neighborhood Phase in which contractors have been employing innovative, collaborative, social enterprise outreach and mobilization models in a targeted low-income neighborhood. They also partnered with nonprofit community-based organizations that provide support and training services for low-income individuals embarking on a career pathway to economic self-sufficiency in the building and construction trades.

Led by the nonprofit organization Metropolitan Alliance for Common Good (MACG) in partnership with Cully Association of Neighbors, Sierra Club, Native American Family & Youth Center, Verde Inc., St. Charles Catholic Church, Friends of Trees, and Laborers International Union of North Amer-

ica (LIUNA), the *Changing the Climate in Cully* project focused on getting 100 homes in the Northeast Portland Cully neighborhood to make energy efficiency improvements.

Six contractors and a number of subcontractors, all of whom were signatories of a Project Labor Agreement with LIUNA, collaborated with MACG on the technical aspects of the RFP for this phase. In working cooperatively with each other, the contractors agree to use the same subcontractors; get reduced pricing in return for the exclusive use of a supplier, with 20–30% lower prices than previous costs; and have developed cooperative marketing strategies.

“People in Cully wouldn’t be able to afford energy improvements without the Clean Energy Works program. We’ve identified barriers to participation and have been able to fix some issues that were unintentionally discriminating against lower-income households.”

Bev Logan, Metropolitan Alliance for Common Good (MACG)



“You’re not going to solve a problem with the same solutions from the past; you have to have a radical change in mindset. Clean Energy Works has set the groundwork for that to happen. A primary example is moving from a competitive to a cooperative work model. That is, we’re moving from a model of maximizing profits to having reasonable profits and maximizing community service — by encouraging businesses to work with nonprofits in order to meet certain goals such as reducing energy consumption, organizing low-income and minority communities, and as a result developing leaders in participating organizations. This model has enabled us to explore relationships that have done some amazing things and opened up a lot of doors for us. Following this model makes work a much more personal project for employees; there’s a real sincerity in work because they’re helping a community, and often one they’re very much a part of. Also by doing this we can help ensure that there’s enough work for everyone out there. We’re growing at a modest rate, but it’s a rate in which we can really develop our goals and ideals and maintain this cooperative work spirit. It’s key that any business recognize their place in the community. If their business grows and there’s no return to the community, it’s lopsided. When a business is invested

in a community, it cares what it's doing and becomes a strong and better suited business to participate in the community. This experience has created long-term relationships and long-term change in our business model. To me, the cooperative work model is the wave of the future for the construction industry; this is what needs to happen in order to make a substantial recovery and get out of the mess we're currently in."

Thomas Staten, Chick of All Trades, LLC

"This is an exciting experiment. It has brought out the best in all involved, including contractors. The contractors are there not just for the business but because they truly believe in the benefits. It's been paradigm-shifting to be working side-by-side."

Kirsten Isaacson, LIUNA

"We're happy to be a partner in the neighborhood phase. We're very excited about the potential for this type of organizing. The long-term community building benefits are huge. We're advocating for more opportunities to leverage this model in scale-up."

Ben Nelson, Laborers International Union of North America



Stakeholder Evaluation and Implementation Committee

In inviting community stakeholders to help design Clean Energy Works Portland to produce long-term community development benefits, the City initiated a conversation that called for broad, ongoing collaboration among diverse leaders from the public and private sectors. Representatives from business, community, labor, and government worked together to define the high road community and workforce goals of the program and establish standards and strategies regarding work quality, job quality, quality training, and broad access to economic opportunities for diverse workers and business enterprises.

Many of the stakeholders said that they shared the same or similar values in terms of equity and community benefits — for example, that all workers, including low-income workers, make good wages

and get health insurance; that there be contractual diversity; and that economic development sustain job creation, help local businesses to grow, and result in long-term community development benefits. Green For All and the City's Office of Neighborhood Involvement helped guide the conversation. In the end, the combination of community participation, coalition building, and institutional leadership resulted in a strong High Road Agreement that lays out workforce goals and strategies to achieve multiple, lasting program outcomes not on an individual contractor basis but in the aggregate.

“Green For All said, ‘This is the way we need to be thinking in our communities; let’s actively participate in our communities.’”

Tony Jones, Metropolitan Contractor Improvement Partnership

“The SEIC has had fabulous facilitators; they’ve helped the committee move along different segments. We got to know each other and are feeling like colleagues.”

Connie Ashbrook, Oregon Tradeswomen, Inc.

“It was encouraging to be around the table with people who had the same values; there are different values but a lot of common ground. In the beginning we were wondering, are we going to have to fight for these values? But other people would speak up with our values. We’re working with values-driven people. Most of the partners are really on the same page.”

Bev Logan, Metropolitan Alliance for Common Good (MACG)

“It’s been exciting to be part of so many organizations that have an equity goal. We have equity voices at the table — it’s working well in that regard. I can’t think of any other effort that is working for a diverse workforce, developing training pipelines that are supporting people and removing barriers, and incubating historically underutilized businesses. The city led an inclusive process where all felt that their voices were heard.”

Ben Nelson, Laborers International Union of North America

“For some of us who’ve been around the block a few times, [the program manager’s] leadership at the city was really refreshing. Typically, we’re met with a bureaucratic ‘we can’t’ approach. We’re so used to resistance and fight. In this case, he said, ‘we can’ and ‘we’re into it.’ He was truly collaborative and tried to make things happen in a way that brought us all along.”

Tony Jones, Metropolitan Contractor Improvement Partnership

The stakeholder process resulted in a Stakeholder Evaluation and Implementation Committee — appointed by the mayor based on nominations from the community — that met monthly and was tasked with monitoring, evaluating, and adjusting strategies in Clean Energy Works. Staff from the Energy Trust and from City bureaus dedicated time to supporting and working with the stakeholder committee.

The ongoing collaborative process strengthened existing relationships and forged some new partnerships among stakeholders.

“The Laborers already had strong relationships with community organizations, but through the stakeholder process we built much stronger relationships and completely new relationships. For example, Verde, which is a nonprofit social enterprise, is now a union signatory. This is completely a product of Clean Energy Works. Verde now has a shared value of a union workplace. They’re hiring Latino residents right from the community.”

Ben Nelson, Laborers International Union of North America

“Verde Energy decided to become a union signatory, after the High Road Agreement but before the neighborhood phase. LIUNA and we have wanted to develop a relationship over time. Both groups did things to develop trust. LIUNA supported our work on Cully Green Street on local hire. Also, LIUNA have been strong advocates for minority business standards in the High Road Agreement, even though this is not in their wheelhouse. The only thing that could sustain this work was community partnerships. It was important for us to be a good partner as well.”

Alan Hipolito, Verde Energy

Conclusion

The Recovery Act's Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant dollars — in combination with its investment in workforce preparation through the Green Jobs Act — have opened up multiple opportunities through Clean Energy Works Portland, by creating jobs and reducing CO₂, while being leveraged with other public and private funds and recycled through a revolving loan fund. This clean energy investment has given Portland an opportunity to innovate and pioneer a high road clean energy economy that provides high quality jobs with good wages, benefits, training, and upward mobility; and increases access to employment opportunities for local workers and businesses, including those who have been historically disadvantaged and underrepresented — all while driving the growth of the clean energy market. Green stimulus works when combined with good civic capacity at the local level and commitment to achieving high road outcomes.

As illustrated by the example of Clean Energy Works Portland, Recovery Act dollars have not only helped to move innovative, high road pilots from concept to practice at the local level. They have also blazed the path for scale-up and financial sustainability through the BetterBuildings program, thus maximizing positive results for the green economy, environmental protection, and social equity.

Acknowledgements

Thanks to the staff at the City of Portland Bureau of Planning and Sustainability and at the Bureau of Internal Business Services for helping compile and analyze the data for this report. Thanks also go to the participating contractors and to the staff and members of the Mayor's Stakeholder Evaluation and Implementation Committee who made a commitment to gathering data and worked together to create a smooth process for tracking our outcomes. Stacy Ho and Jeremy Hays of Green For All wrote this report. © Green For All 2011