



Create a system that anticipates,  
addresses and exceeds the  
workforce needs of our community

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**The Green Career Pathways: Community for Equity Project  
in Partnership with Worksystems, Inc.  
Receives \$4 Million Pathways out of Poverty Grant**

Labor Secretary Hilda L. Solis announced today that the Portland area will receive a \$4 million “Pathways out of Poverty” grant. Only 38 applications were funded nationally and the grants are intended to fund workforce programs that help disadvantaged populations find ways out of poverty and into economic self-sufficiency through careers in energy efficiency and renewable energy industries.

The grant will provide skill training and culturally specific support to disadvantaged individuals to prepare them to enter careers in the energy-efficient building, construction and retrofit; renewable electric power; green manufacturing; and emerging green occupations. Participants will earn certificates and degrees through community colleges, organized labor, and industry-recognized training providers, and will receive employment placement and retention support in their chosen green career pathway.

The grant has been awarded to Worksystems, Inc. on behalf of the Community for Equity project - a diverse coalition representing Native Americans, African Americans, Latinos, the homeless, Immigrants, Veterans, ex-offenders, as well as the regional workforce investment system (CAWS, WorkSource, and the Local Workforce Investment Board), the business community, organized labor, the City of Portland, Oregon Department of Human Services, Housing Authority of Portland, PDC, local community colleges, and training providers.

“The guiding principle for this grant is equity,” says Worksystems’ Executive Director Andrew McGough. “All people should have access to training to prepare them for living wage jobs in the green economy.”

This announcement comes just 1 week after the Department of Labor notified the Portland metro area of a \$5 million “Green Jobs” grant to fund Renewable Northwest – a project that will preserve and create over 1,700 jobs in a nine-county region in the renewable energy industry (electric power and biofuels) by building a skilled workforce to support companies that generate power and by assisting local manufacturers with retraining their workforce to produce products in support of the industry.

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## Background

Like other areas around the United States, the Portland metropolitan area has been devastated by the recent recession, resulting in mass layoffs, business closures, and a high unemployment rate. Low-income people and people of color have been most affected. Historically they have higher unemployment rates and fewer resources to rely on during job loss. They live in neighborhoods of high and expanding poverty, where those in poverty live with ever-greater insecurity, and where new families and individuals are falling into poverty at an increasing rate.

At the same time, Oregon leads the nation in terms of green jobs (PEW: Clean Energy Economy, 2009) and Oregon's businesses project a 14% growth in green jobs between 2008 and 2010. The Green Career Pathways: Community for Equity Project formed to ensure an equitable response to our communities' needs for new jobs and to industry demands for a skilled green workforce.

The Green Career Pathways: Community for Equity formed out of two Portland area groups: the Coalition of Communities of Color (represented by El Programa Hispano, IRCO, NAYA, and the Urban League) and the Housing Organizations of Color Coalition (represented by Hacienda CDC and the Portland Community Reinvestment Initiative). Other community partners include Central City Concern, Change to Win, Construction Apprenticeship & Workforce Solutions, EC Company, Eco Tech, ETAP, Irvington Covenant, Laborers' International Union of North America, Metropolitan Contractor Improvement Partnership, Neil Kelly, Oregon Tradeswomen, Portland YouthBuilders, and Verde.

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