

Subcommittee on Environment and Climate Change
Hearing on
“Building a 100 Percent Clean Economy: Opportunities for an Equitable, Low-Carbon Recovery”
September 16, 2020

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The Honorable Nanette Diaz Barragán (D-CA):

1. Dr. Fairchild, first I want to thank you your past work in Los Angeles on community development and job training for underserved communities, like those that I represent. My district is the fourth poorest district in California. It’s critical we center equity in any green stimulus investments we make so that the communities most in need of jobs can benefit.

1. Can you discuss model programs or policies at the local and state level that Congress can adopt alongside green investments to make sure communities of color aren’t left behind?

RESPONSE:

Legislative Initiatives:

Creating local hire policies and local procurement policies are essential for increasing employer demand to improve their hiring practices to include workers and businesses from diverse communities. Without these policies there are no incentives for breaking through closed hiring and contracting networks. L.A. County policies have helped ECC place over 100 YouthBuild (out of school/disadvantaged youth) into apprenticeship programs that lead to viable construction careers.

L. A County Executive Order 11246 outlines specific guidelines in which equal opportunity is provided in all aspects of employment when it comes to Government Contractors who do over \$10,000 in government contracts as well as establishing minority hiring and participation goals that are specific by trade.

In LA County the Local Worker Hiring Program (LWHP) was adopted in 2016 (and updated July 2019) to ensure local workers are hired for projects in their communities. The LWHP established local workers shall perform at least 30% of the total California craft worker hours. Disadvantaged Local Workers shall

perform at least 10% of total construction labor hours which are included in the overall 30% total. The size of the project determines whether or not these targets are mandatory, good faith effort or not applicable. Projects over \$2.5 million are mandatory.

The Federal Government has instituted similar regulatory tools for workforce and supplier diversity in Dept of Transportation and HUD – Section 3... but need to be similarly embedded and enforced as part of other federal agency programs (e.g., DOL, DOE, EPA, etc.).

These efforts towards local hire and to engage low-income residents help rural and urban poor who are often pushed out of the labor market by ensuring that large firms hire residents within the project area.

L.A. County Model Programs

Policies created need to go hand in hand with training programs in order to create a pipeline of workers from disadvantaged workers are connected to these growing living wage careers. If we don't provide the training needed for communities of color, we risk the reproducing income inequalities. We need to give disadvantaged communities the opportunity go into to the Green Building sector by providing training programs that build capacity and knowledge.

Current programs established by Emerald Cities Collaborative in the LA region are the Architecture Construction Engineering Students (ACES) Pathway Program and the Green Path Careers (GPC) Program that serve as models for broad replication.

Since 2015, over 10 high schools engaged with the ACES Pathway Program (ACES). ACES is a comprehensive in-school youth workforce development model that combines structured academic pathways to STEAM careers, access to pre-apprenticeship training, and paid internships. ACES engage disadvantaged students to explore careers in architecture, engineering and construction by capitalizing on local projects, concurrent college enrollment in STEAM courses, and strong industry participation. Thirty-seven percent of ACES students are female. The goals of the program are to facilitate college enrollment and transferable college credit during high school; increase diversity of students entering the design and building industries; expand experiential learning and industry mentorship through paid summer internships; and provide access to scholarships to assist students with the high cost of higher education.

Past and Current Participating Schools:

- Alhambra High School
- Mark Keppel High School

- San Gabriel High School
- Robert F. Kennedy Community Schools
- STEAM Legacy High School
- Helen Bernstein STEM Academy
- Mendez High School
- YouthBuild – Boyle Heights
- 5-Keys Charter
- Boyle Heights Youth Technology Center

The GPC Program provides Transition Age Youth (TAY) access to the emerging Energy Efficiency (EE) sector by offering education, training and work experience in the field. This initiative is made possible through collaboration between the SoCalREN, San Gabriel Valley Council of Governments (SGVCOG), Workforce Development, Aging and Community Services (WDACS), and Hathaway-Sycamores Child and Family Services.

The program is designed to address the barriers TAY face when aging out of the Foster Care system and moving into the growing workforce, while addressing the EE workforce expansion needs. GPC aims to assist TAY youth by eliminating the barriers of the EE workforce sector, by providing certification training, supportive services, and the coaching needed to emerge successful by providing the resources and support needed to begin their EE career.

The GPC program provides a multi-step approach that assists a participant in entering the Energy Efficiency workforce from the initial recruitment phase to becoming Job/Career Ready.

2. Dr. Fairchild, we also know that equity in the clean energy economy is not just about creating jobs, but supporting the growth of minority owned businesses. How can we ensure the clean energy economy we're building creates a new generation of CEOs that reflect our country's diversity?

RESPONSE:

In order to have an inclusive green economy we need to provide the resources and infrastructure small and minority businesses need to compete against the large companies. The industry is outpacing the knowledge and capacities of our small community contractor to keep pace. The building codes are changing, the technologies and equipment are getting smarter, greener and more expensive and out of reach of small contractors, are minority contractors cannot compete for the very larger multi-year, multi-billion dollar P3 projects. These trends taken together will put our minority contractor communities out of business in the next 5 years without investments in the capacity to compete.

This requires the on-going support to build capacity a small/minority business may need, which includes skills training for new and emerging technologies in the green sector. Small/minority businesses need to be equipped and prepared with available resources such as access to capital in order to grow in the clean energy sector. Our High Road Accelerated Minority Business Institute ([HRAMBI](#)) serves to position small, minority, women, disadvantaged and veteran-owned firms as leaders in the high road construction sector with state-of-the-art knowledge and skills in socially responsible green building and construction by:

1. Increasing the number of MWDVBES committed to environmentally and socially responsible contracting.
2. Strengthen the capacities and competitiveness of MWDBEs with knowledge and competencies in green building policies and practices.
3. MWDBE access to affordable state-of-art building technologies, equipment, materials and benefit programs.
4. Increased contracts awarded to MWDVBES

Investments from the Dept of Commerce, SBA, and other minority assistance programs needed to be targeted to build the capacity of minority entrepreneurs and contractors in green/smart building technologies.

For further information about ECC's L.A. programs please contact: Wendy Angel, LA Program Director @ wangel@emeraldcities.org