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From 2020 to 2023, IREC participated as a partner in the [Better Buildings Workforce Accelerator](#) (BBWA). The BBWA is a Department of Energy initiative seeking to raise the level of building science and energy efficiency knowledge in the nation's building-related workforce. Through the BBWA, DOE engaged industry partners in activities that build interest and awareness, streamline pathways, and improve skills for people pursuing green building careers.

The Interstate Renewable Energy Council (IREC) partnered with the National Council for Workforce Education (NCWE) to launch the National Clean Energy Workforce Alliance to convene stakeholders and identify strategies to meet shared workforce challenges.

About the Partner

IREC is an independent nonprofit that facilitates the transition to clean energy by building the foundation for rapid adoption of clean energy and energy efficiency. They work through three complementary pathways:

- ▶ **Workforce development strategies**
- ▶ **Local clean energy solutions**
- ▶ **Regulatory engagement**

IREC enables clean energy technology adoption by working at multiple scales including communities, cities, counties, towns, and regional organizations. Through their work products and advocacy, IREC focuses on addressing climate change and creating new jobs.

About the Program

IREC and NCWE launched the [National Clean Energy Workforce Alliance](#) in 2021, which is a cross-sector effort to improve clean energy education, training, and job placement outcomes and ensure that expanding clean energy job opportunities are inclusive of diverse candidates and underserved communities. Since January 2022, the Alliance has been virtually convening more than 500 employers, training providers, community-based recruitment and support organizations, and energy justice organizations. Through structured and intentional meetings, the Alliance is collectively identifying and sharing resources and information, with a focus on concrete solutions to shared workforce challenges.

AT A GLANCE

- ▶ **Partner:** IREC (Interstate Renewable Energy Council)
- ▶ **Project:** National Clean Energy Workforce Alliance
- ▶ **Program Location:** Virtual, National
- ▶ **Audience Served:** Employers, Workforce Development Organizations
- ▶ **Better Buildings Workforce Accelerator Focus Area(s):** Streamlining Career Pathways



The National Clean Energy Workforce Alliance was funded through the Bank of America Charitable Foundation which aims to accelerate the development of a diverse and highly skilled workforce.

Challenges

A central challenge across the clean energy workforce is the need to build a sufficient pool of highly qualified workers. It is estimated that over 400,000 new workers will be needed annually over the next 12 years to meet ambitious energy goals and keep pace with federal investment. IREC published the *National Solar Jobs Census 2021* which found that 89% of solar employers reported that it was “somewhat” or “very difficult” to fill job openings, with nearly half citing small applicant pools as the most significant reason.

National, regional, and local stakeholders will need to take a conscious and strategic approach to clean energy workforce capacity building. Additionally, comprehensive policies and programs that holistically address clean energy technology, growing industry capacity, and workforce development are needed.

To accomplish such tall orders, national coordination must be paired with direct action. Many stakeholders including employers, trainers, community-based organizations supporting workers and learners, and workforce program designers need to coordinate to avoid duplicating efforts, identify and address gaps, and leverage lessons learned from comparable workforce growth in other sectors.

Solutions

Convening a broad array of stakeholders has enabled the Alliance to identify specific clean energy workforce development gaps and distribute recommended solutions that can be addressed through policy and program deployment through the compiled report.

The Alliance published a report titled, “[Key Recommendations: Cultivating a Diverse and Skilled Talent Pipeline for Equitable Transition](#)”

based on data collected from Alliance members through in-person and virtual meetings, live polls, online surveys, at the IREC 2022 Vision Summit, as well as through literature review. The recommendations will help funders, program designers, and those implementing workforce programs to focus resources where they will be most impactful—and most supportive of a just transition. They integrate provisions to support the development of a diverse workforce inclusive of those historically left behind.

Outcomes and Impacts

“Key Recommendations: Cultivating a Diverse and Skilled Talent Pipeline for Equitable Transition,” was published in 2023. The report includes an executive summary, summarized recommendations, and ten key recommendations to define actionable solutions. The report also highlights additional solutions compiled by Alliance members as well as other external resources, including those for curriculum development, credentialing, and employer collaboration.

The ten key recommendations include providing technical assistance to workforce ecosystems, conducting recruitment campaigns featuring clean energy workers as “energy heroes,” and driving recruitment and retention by prioritizing job quality. The report was spotlighted in a [February 2023 webinar](#) that was attended by 263 people and can be viewed on-demand.

In addition to the report, the Alliance hosts a webinar series called From Theory to Practice, that outlines topics such as recruitment, maximizing clean energy and infrastructure opportunities, the emerging green jobs sector, union partnerships, and more. This series has had over 800 attendees to date.

This case study was developed with content from IREC, the [National Clean Energy Workforce Alliance website](#) and the [“Key Recommendations: Cultivating a Diverse and Skilled Talent Pipeline for Equitable Transition”](#) report.