

Summary (Green-related)

The California Labor Federation is an umbrella organization comprised of 1,200 unions, representing 2.1 million union members in manufacturing, retail, construction, hospitality, the public sector, health care, entertainment, and other industries in California.

In this proposal, the California Labor Federation, AFL-CIO, in conjunction with the State Building & Construction Trades Council of California, which represents more than 350,000 unionized construction workers in California, seeks funding for a statewide *Building Green Skills* training program. The curriculum, based on predicted requirements, was jointly developed by local union and employer representatives in order to meet the specific needs of participating employers and assist construction union members in the acquisition of a greener skill set, designed to prepare them for active participation in the new green economy.

Recent legislation, emerging green technology developments, and the recession are significantly impacting workers and employers in the building trades. Examples of such “green” public policy initiatives in California include:

- California’s Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006 (AB 32), which will go into full force in 2012, and seeks to lower California’s greenhouse gas emissions to 25% below 1990 levels by 2020 and to 80% below 1990 levels by 2050.
- Renewable Portfolio Standard Legislation – Governor Schwarzenegger recently signed an Executive Order calling for 33% of state energy to come from renewable sources. Currently, the state legislature is negotiating a bill to implement this Order.
- Renewable Fuel Technology Financing of 2007 (AB 118) – this measure uses additional smog-check fees to create funds for renewable fuel technologies and includes funding for workforce development.
- Green Jobs Regional Initiative of 2007 (AB 3018) – this measure calls for regional collaboration and meeting of stakeholders engaged in efforts to create green jobs. The state Workforce Investment Board is in charge of implementing this effort.
- The Solar Hot Water and Efficiency Act of 2007 – this law directs the California Public Utilities Commission to establish a statewide incentive program to encourage the installation of solar water heating systems.
- The Million Solar Roofs Program – this initiative has a goal to install 3,000 megawatts of new, solar-electric systems by 2017. It requires publicly-owned utilities to adopt, implement, and finance a solar incentive program. It also encourages energy efficiency because building owners have to meet certain efficiency requirements in order to obtain the incentives.

California’s shift towards energy efficiency and greenhouse gas reduction, spurred on by recent legislation, primarily the implementation of AB32, will continue to severely impact the building industry. As the state continues to move towards more sustainable building practices, the development of green building measures for new construction, as well as existing buildings, is creating a need for additional training in order to comply with new regulations, upcoming legislation, and consumer demand.

To adequately address new standards and meet the increasing demand for greener buildings, workers in the building construction industry must have knowledge of current measures, which include: increasing building and appliance efficiency; implementing a major energy efficiency program for state buildings; encouraging combined heat and power systems; and implementing stringent efficiency standards for new construction. The California Labor Federation's *Building Green Skills* program will provide trainees with the commercial, computer, and business skills they need to compete in today's building industry.

Training will cover a vast amount of topics from commercial energy-efficient technologies and products, such as solar photovoltaic panels and wind turbine systems, to green building materials; retrofitting; and wastewater treatment systems. Additionally, trainees will learn a variety of computer skills which will enable them to modify blueprints; look up project requirements, budgets and timelines; and adjust computerized systems in order to increase energy efficiency. Training will include Computer-Aided Design (AutoCAD) and operation of software related to scheduling and planning jobs. Accompanied by a business skills component, the training will provide insight on new national building codes, green practices, and Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certification guidelines. Training will effectively provide workers with the tools they need to plan, organize, and manage their construction projects in an efficient and timely manner.

By proactively training workers now, the California Labor Federation hopes to lead the green movement by having training in place before green certification becomes a requirement. They realize that construction plays a key role in the shift to a green economy, yet as a result of green initiatives and developing technologies, future growth in the construction industry will only be realized if California is able to produce a new generation of construction workers, trained in the increasingly complex technologies of the future. Therefore, they have dedicated many resources to the education, and dissemination of information about the green movement to their stakeholders, and plan to publicize training through various means, targeting business owners, company presidents, human resource managers, and other senior executives in the industry. Training will also be promoted at labor-management and industry meetings, site visits to local schools, and trades shows.

In addition to marketing through the Joint Apprenticeship and Training Committees (JATCs), outreach will also be focused on the hundreds of small business, California-based, construction employers in order to highlight current and future green legislation and its impact on their industry; make them aware of green technology training that's available through the training center; and help them gain confidence in their employees' skills to perform these new green projects.

It's no question that new regulations are resulting in the creation of additional challenges and opportunities for the building trades, and in order to reduce their carbon footprint, jobs throughout the economy, not just in new industries, are requiring new skills. However, it's possible for most of these jobs to continue to provide high wages and good benefits if the workers' skill sets are enhanced. The *Building Green Skills* training program is designed to do just that; the curriculum will provide affordable, ongoing journey-level training in sustainable, green building and development, which has the potential to reduce periods of unemployment for construction trade workers who have been severely affected by the current economy. As we address climate change and other environmental challenges such training may also prevent further economic hardship by preparing workers for jobs on commercial and public works projects generated as a result of green initiatives, enabling them to keep pace with California's rapid shift to a new, more sustainable, green economy.