

SUMMARY OF JOBS/JOB AND SUSTAINABILITY COMMUNITY CONVERSATION

The purpose of the Sustainable DC initiative is to create a strategic framework and vision to make the District the greenest, healthiest, and most livable city in the United States. Throughout the planning process, several “crosscutting” topic areas emerged: health, environmental education, jobs and job preparation, and social equity.

The following summary of a conversation on jobs and job preparation held on June 12, 2012, represents the ideas of more than 40 individuals who participated in person or provided feedback online about how jobs and job preparation cuts across issues of sustainability. This information will be used in the development of jobs section of the Sustainable DC Implementation Plan.

1. In addition to the examples discussed, what are other current or pending “green jobs” in the District?

- Measuring, managing, and auditing buildings
- Policy analysts, program developers, etc (local, national, international)
- Businesses/consultants that help others become more sustainable, creating more green jobs as a result
- Food production, hydroponics, composting
- Clean Teams, maintenance
- Green construction, retrofitting, and deconstruction,
- Installation and maintenance of renewable energy infrastructure
- Information technology-related jobs (e.g. developers for energy saving programs/app)
- Transit, electric vehicle, and bike infrastructure and equipment
- Waste management

2. What types of skills are needed for green jobs that exist and are emerging in the District?

- Provide range of training from basic skills to advanced technical skills to accommodate people as they progress up career ladder (look into ‘Clean and Safe’ programs as model)
- Some basic literacy, math, science, computer required as well as training in basic workplace appropriateness (e.g. communication, etiquette)
- Entrepreneurship, business and project management skills
- Journeyman – HVAC, building trades skills
- Educators, trainers, teachers
- General understanding of sustainability
- Specific skill sets for jobs (e.g. waste management, transportation/ mobility, audits/weatherization, maintenance/monitoring)

3. How can we develop those skills or provide necessary training for unemployed job-seekers and those with barriers to employment?

- Train employers, assist in program development, and offer incentives to employers to hire hard-to-employ populations such as ex-offenders
- Need to address current barriers such as high transit and childcare costs, and health
- Map out current and future jobs (determine demand and build supply from there; tailor training to high-growth sectors but be savvy as growth trends can change quickly and can be left with trained workers for wrong sectors)
- Coordinate resources among government and increase partnerships with private sector
- Tailor training to audience (bring trainings to populations, tailor training to specific jobs, include step-up trainings for people as they progress up career ladder)
- Peer mentoring/on-the-job support
- Form partnerships with churches, community centers
- Web-based trainings may reach different demographic and be easier for some people
- Vocational education/apprenticeships

4. What are barriers to “green job” entry and how can they be removed?

- Use existing models that have proven to have worked well with hard-to-employ populations (e.g. ‘Clean and Safe’ programs) and better coordinate with current players
- Marketing—attract people to green jobs and explain what that means
- Incentives to private sector to boost market
- Create opportunities for people with little education or green sector experience
- Understand current full range of green jobs
- Current small business development rules and regulations need to be simplified and streamlined

5. How do we make existing “traditional” jobs in the District more sustainable?

- Make sure trainers and training programs are effective and standardize the credentials graduates receive so they become recognized as valuable
- More effective regulations and enforcement—make automatic
- Utilize programs like Better Buildings Challenge (educate and offer “challenge” to businesses to green their operations, including employee behavior change)
- Local government should have green procurement standard as catalyst and model
- How do you define sustainable jobs – broad or narrow? Develop terms so people see opportunities open to them.
- Transition/adapt non-green industries to green (e.g. waste to recycling/deconstruction)

6. How do we encourage private employers and market forces to spur green jobs in the District?

How do we use the District government to spur green jobs in the District?

- Streamline government regulations and programs, particularly First Source hiring law
- Provide strategic incentives to private businesses (e.g. tax credits)
- Make better use of existing programs and make them easier for employers to use
- Spur demand through policy (required energy audits, carbon tax)
- Provide data and information to help make case (assess markets, resources, demand, employees)
- Marketing—see sustainability as a competitive advantage & provide recognition
- Incubate new small businesses through cooperative business models and business development centers
- Promote mentoring, networking among green businesses – recognize business leaders and connect to others to share best practices

7. Is there anything else about jobs and sustainability that we should know about?

- Need to look beyond 'jobs' to good careers and beyond that to community development
- Find trusted messenger to deliver message, not just DC government
- Create a model job or company—show people HOW to do it
- Re-messaging at all age levels—focus on entrepreneurship not just getting a job
- Start training and awareness early in students' education, but continue message throughout
- Engage federal sector to create opportunities, tie federal employees more effectively to city
- Prepare for aging out