



# Stronger Together: Diversity and the Energy Efficiency Workforce



ENERGY EFFICIENCY  
PROGRAMS



# THE FACES OF DIVERSITY: WHO ARE THE UNDERREPRESENTED?

**Gender:** Women

**Race-Ethnicity:** African American, Latino/a

**Ability:** People with Disabilities

**Income:** Low-Income

**Age:** Early Adulthood/Adulthood

**Incarceration Status:** Formerly Incarcerated



# THE PLACES OF UNDERREPRESENTATION

Rural Communities:  
“Forgotten Places”



Urban Communities  
“Disinvested Places”



# WHAT ARE THE CHALLENGES TO WORKFORCE ENGAGEMENT?

## Childcare

- Accessibility
- Affordability
- Flexibility

“I don’t trust just anyone watching my daughter, I don’t have family around here and don’t live in a good part of town where I can ask a neighbor.”



# WHAT ARE THE CHALLENGES TO WORKFORCE ENGAGEMENT?

## Childhood Experiences

- Generational Poverty
- Trauma

“Poverty is kind of intractable. In many communities people are kind of locked in, kind of like a hamster wheel, they just cannot escape it.”



# WHAT ARE THE CHALLENGES TO WORKFORCE ENGAGEMENT?

## Health

- Asthma
- Diabetes
- Obesity
- Substance Usage

“We have chronic health issues in our poor communities. Poor nutrition, diabetes....impact one's ability to get and keep a job.”



# WHAT ARE THE CHALLENGES TO WORKFORCE ENGAGEMENT?

## Perceptions of Energy Efficiency Jobs

- Manual Labor
- Dirty Work

“That’s always been the stereotype, that people look down on somebody that works with their hands. They don’t wear a suit.”



# WHAT ARE THE CHALLENGES TO WORKFORCE ENGAGEMENT?

## Perceptions of Wages

- Low Pay
- Lack of a Living Wage



“Local agencies that provide weatherization don't often pay a wage that's competitive with the trades.”

# WHAT ARE THE CHALLENGES TO WORKFORCE ENGAGEMENT?

## The Role of Education

- Loss of Shop Classes
- Lack of Exposure
- Stress on College

“I blame a lot of the high school counselors. Everybody gets beat into their head, they need to go to college”



# WHAT ARE THE CHALLENGES TO WORKFORCE ENGAGEMENT?

## Group Stereotypes

- Dependability
- Work Ethic
- Work and Gender

“There is a lot of physicality.”

“The stereotype of minority and poor populations: Is this young [person] going to be able to show up every day?”



# WHAT ARE THE CHALLENGES TO WORKFORCE ENGAGEMENT?

## Training Expenses

- Affordability: Time and Money



"If the hours that you are doing your training is taking you away from a paying job, even if the training is free, it's costly."



Free job training OR  
pay from my  
regular job??

# WHAT ARE THE CHALLENGES TO WORKFORCE ENGAGEMENT?

## Transportation

- Accessibility
- Affordability

“Transportation: That’s huge!”

“No driver’s license: That’s a deal breaker!”



# SOLUTIONS: THE POWER OF SOCIAL SUPPORT

## Key Elements of Social Support:

- Long-term, ongoing
- Includes multiple, wrap around services
- Group specific
- Provided by caring, supportive mentors

“I was like a mother with two little boys and with kid gloves.....”

