

# **WAP Workforce Potentials: Expanding Hiring Pools and Possibilities**

*National Community Action Partnership*

*NASCSP Conference  
September 24, 2025*



*Helping People. Changing Lives.*

**community  
Action®**

**PARTNERSHIP**

**AMERICA'S POVERTY FIGHTING NETWORK**

*This presentation was created by the National Community Action Partnership in the performance of the U.S. Department of Energy's Office of State and Community Energy Programs Grant Number EE00010310. Any opinion, findings, conclusions, or recommendations expressed in this material are those of the presenters and do not necessarily reflect the views of the U.S. Department of Energy's Office of State and Community Energy Programs.*

# Today's Presenters



**Mia Harnos**

Director, Energy Partnerships  
National Community Action Partnership



**Lillie Seels**

Director, Practice Transformation  
National Community Action Partnership

# AGENDA:

---

Introductions

---

The ideal candidate

---

Workforce challenges and solutions

---

Right fit, fresh starts, & first shots

---

Wages & growth culture

---

Efficiency, sustainability, and adapting

---



A photograph of a formal garden featuring complex topiary hedges. The hedges are meticulously shaped into various forms, including spheres, spirals, and geometric patterns. A light-colored gravel path winds through the garden, separating the different sections of the topiary. The overall scene is one of precision and artistry in landscaping.

**Many people found weatherization  
through a serendipitous journey.**



A low-angle, upward-looking perspective of several modern skyscrapers with glass facades, reaching towards a blue sky with scattered white clouds. The buildings are arranged in a circular pattern around the center of the frame, creating a sense of height and scale. The text "Helping the right applicant find you." is overlaid in the center in a white, sans-serif font.

Helping the right applicant find you.



Why does the  
right candidate  
swipe left?





## CHALLENGES

- Job seekers don't know about career pathways available
- Workforce development resources are fragmented
- Subgrantees need help reaching new audiences
- Contractors don't know how to connect to program opportunities



## SOLUTIONS

- **Green Workforce Connect**  
provides job seekers with access to career details and employers
- Workforce development resources, assistance, and support are easily accessible
- Contractors discover program information and opportunities to expand their businesses





# GREEN WORKFORCE CONNECT

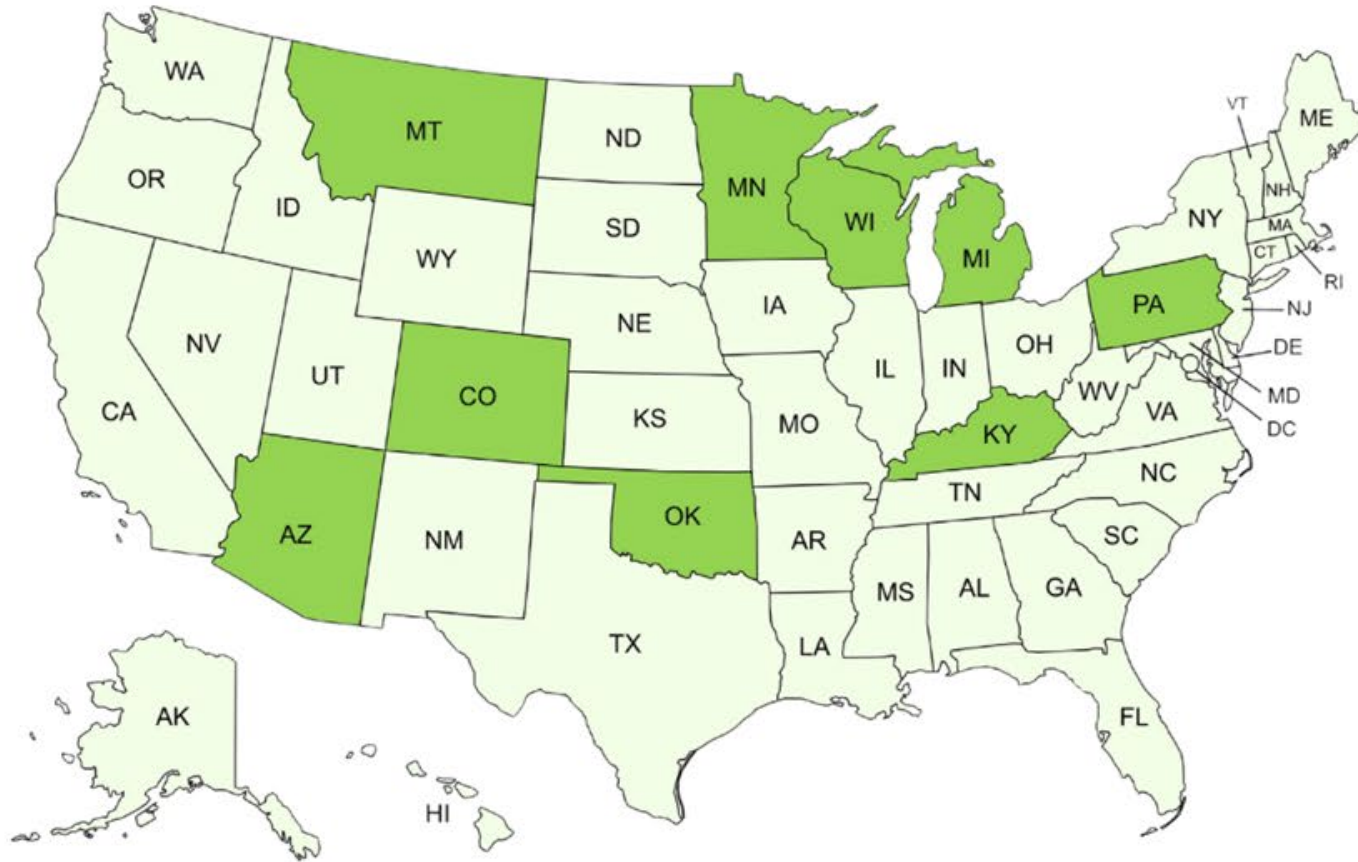
Developing a new generation of  
energy and Weatherization  
Assistance Program Professionals  
and Contractors





# Green Workforce Connect Impact

## for the Weatherization Assistance Program



**127**

**Agencies in 9 States**





## WEATHERIZATION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM BENEFITS

- Coordinated national awareness campaign
- Outreach and Engagement Toolkit templates for recruitment
- Access to workforce development resources and technical assistance
- Increase contractor readiness and program understanding with the Contractor's Guide to Success and supplemental resources
- Connect job seekers to employment and contractors to bids/RFPs
- Reduce time/cost to hire
- Help build local talent pipelines

The **Green Workforce Connect** initiative for the Weatherization Assistance Program provides the network with workforce development tools, templates, and supports to raise awareness of opportunities for students, job seekers, and contractors, and help build local talent pipelines.

**FREE** resources include:

- An Outreach and Engagement Toolkit
- A Contractor's Guide to Success
- Editable Job Descriptions
- Tips for Enticing Job Postings
- Best Practices for Your Career Page
- Weatherization Career Story Features
- Job Boards to Consider
- Career Pathway Planning Resources
- Weatherization Coloring Book
- Workforce Development Technical Assistance
- ...and more!

Explore Now!



  
**GREEN WORKFORCE**  
**CONNECT.org**



A 3D yellow puzzle piece is centered on a dark grey background. The piece has a standard interlocking shape with four tabs and four blanks. The background is decorated with thin, wavy black lines that resemble the outlines of other puzzle pieces. The text "Finding the right fit" is written in white, bold, sans-serif font across the middle of the yellow piece.

**Finding the right fit**



# Making a fresh start







**Second Chance - A Fresh Shot**

# Returning Citizens



## Background

**Over 70 million Americans  
have a criminal record.**



## Reality

**Nearly 1 in 3 adults in the U.S.  
has been arrested at least  
once.**

# Reliability

- 82% of managers report performance of justice-impacted employees meets or exceeds expectations.
- Employees with criminal records tend to stay on the job and remain loyal to employers who hire them.





# Untapped Potential

- Many returning citizens possess skills in trades, technology, and more.
- Certifications and training earned during incarceration or even before incarceration.



Slide taken from a presentation by Fellicia Smith

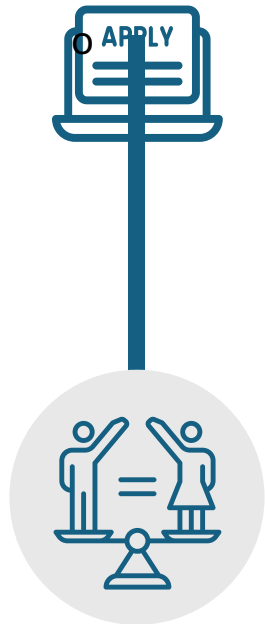
# Unintentional Barriers

## Applications

- Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) recommends that employers avoid asking about criminal records on application forms.
- **Ban the Box** is a law that prevents employers from asking about criminal records before an interview or conditional job offer.

## Cognitive Bias

- Cognitive bias is a wide variety of inadvertent mental tendencies that can impact perception, memory, reasoning, and behavior. These tendencies are universal, meaning everyone has them.
- It is estimated that discrimination against formerly incarcerated people results in earnings losses from 10-40%.



# Community Action Vision And Mission



## Eliminate Barriers

Incarcerated people face barriers in multitude of ways including employment and housing.



## Reduce Poverty

When people returning from incarceration cannot find employment offering a living wage, the rate of poverty will not decrease.



# At the Starting Line





# Opening the Door of Opportunity



Sustaining great culture  
by  
retaining great people





# Investing in Your Community





**Empowering Upward Employment**





**Expanding Employment Opportunities**

The background of the slide is a deep blue underwater scene. Sunlight rays, known as crepuscular rays, penetrate the water from the top left, creating a dramatic play of light and shadow. The water surface is visible at the top, with gentle ripples. The overall atmosphere is serene and mysterious.

# **Underwater Wages**

# What are Apprenticeships?



Include a blend of paid on-the-job training and classroom instruction aimed at preparing workers for skilled careers.



Provide workers with a practical, skills-based education that helps them secure good-paying jobs.



Allow workers to learn job skills while earning an income, experience wage progression throughout the skill-building process, and gain the opportunity to earn a widely recognized and portable certificate of completion and proficiency.






# Apprenticeship as a Pathway to Economic Mobility



- **Increase Earning Potential:** Skilled workers command higher wages, improving financial stability.
- **Enhance Job Security:** In-demand skills provide resilience in an ever-changing job market.
- **Contribute to Community Prosperity:** A skilled workforce attracts businesses, driving growth and strengthening local economies.
- **Break Cycles of Poverty:** Access to quality training creates opportunities for upward mobility.

A person wearing a white protective suit and gloves is working with a precision tool on a small component. The background is a light green gradient.

***“Apprenticeship represents a valuable investment in skills that can put workers on a proven path to the middle class while getting the job done for employers and businesses looking to grow and expand”***

**Source:** [The Federal Resources Playbook for Registered Apprenticeships | U.S. Department of Labor](#)



# Types of Apprenticeships

Feature	Registered Apprenticeship	Apprenticeship	Pre-Apprenticeship
Registration	Registered with DOL or State Apprenticeship Agency and abides by 23 established standards	Any apprenticeship that is not formally registered with DOL	Not necessarily registered
Wage	Paid employment	May be paid a stipend, starting hourly wage, or unpaid	May be paid a stipend, starting hourly wage, or unpaid
Credential	Nationally recognized credential upon completion	May or may not lead to credential, but not always nationally recognized	May or may not lead to credential, but not always nationally recognized
Duration	Typically 1-5 years depending on chosen industry	Typically 1-5 years depending on chosen industry	Shorter term, often a few weeks to months
Purpose	Provides industry-vetted, paid job training that leads to full occupational proficiency while earning a portable, nationally recognized credentials	Offers structured, paid or unpaid job training to prepare individuals for skilled careers, potentially leading to industry-recognized credentials	Foundational program designed to prepare individuals to enter and succeed in Registered Apprenticeships





# Benefits of a Pre-Apprenticeship

- **Bridge to Registered Apprenticeships:** Designed to prepare individuals to enter and succeed in Registered Apprenticeship Programs (RAPs).
- **Industry-Relevant Training:** Curriculum based on industry standards, taught by qualified instructors.
- **Hands-on Experience:** Provides practical, simulated real-world training environments.
- **Career Exploration:** Offers a "pre-vetting" opportunity for individuals exploring career paths.
- **Foundational Skill Development:** Focuses on building essential skills for success in advanced training.
- **Comprehensive Support Services:** Stipends, Career Guidance & Mentorship, Transportation Assistance, Childcare Assistance, Housing Support, Academic Tutoring (e.g., Math), Industry-Recognized Credentials (e.g., CPR), Soft Skills & Professionalism Training



## Key Components of a Registered Apprenticeship



### ON-THE-JOB TRAINING (OJT)

- Structured, hands-on training provided by a qualified mentor/instructor.
- Apprenticeship programs must define clear learning objectives and competencies.
- Skills are developed according to industry standards and employer needs.
- Regular evaluation and feedback are provided to the apprentice.



### RELATED INSTRUCTION (RI)

- Provides the technical knowledge and theoretical foundation for the occupation.
- Curriculum is aligned with OJT industry standards to ensure a cohesive learning experience.
- Instruction can be delivered through various methods, including classroom instruction, online courses, and self-study. Federal rules recommend at least 144 hours of related instruction per year.
- Often provided by educational institutions, community colleges, or training providers.



### WAGES AND PROGRESSION

- Apprentices are paid employees and receive a progressive wage scale.
- Wages gradually increase as Apprentices acquire new skills and advance through the program.
- The wage progression schedule is established at the beginning of the program and is known to the Apprentice.
- Ensures that Apprentices are compensated fairly for their increasing value.



### MENTORSHIP

- Experienced journey workers serve as mentors/instructors to guide and support apprentices.
- Mentors provide on-the-job training, answer questions, and offer guidance throughout the Apprenticeship.
- Mentor training is essential to ensure mentors have the skills to effectively support Apprentices.
- Although not a requirement for successful program completion, a strong Mentor-Apprentice relationship is recognized as a valuable factor that can enhance learning outcomes.



### CREDENTIALS

- Upon completion of apprenticeship program, apprentices earn a nationally recognized credential to certify that the apprentice has achieved the required skills and competencies.
- Credentials enhance career prospects and demonstrate a commitment to professionalism and industry standards.
- Credential portability is a nationally recognized credential that is accepted by employers nationwide.
- Credentials may include certificates of completion, industry recognized certifications, accreditations, modules, or "stackable credentials" that build up qualifications over time.

# Benefits of a Registered Apprenticeship Program

## For Employers

- Creates a reliable pipeline of qualified, job-ready workers.
- Apprentices who are actively engaged in hands-on learning, tend to be more committed and are more likely to stay with the organization long-term.
- Employers experience Return on Investment (ROI) through increased productivity, reduced turnover, and the development of a highly skilled workforce.

## For Career Seekers

- Allows individuals to receive a paycheck while building valuable skills and on-the-job experience.
- Provides the opportunity to earn a nationally recognized, portable credential that validates their expertise and enhances their career flexibility across industries and locations.
- Supports long-term career pathways, often leading to opportunities for career advancement.



# Home Performance Laborer (Residential)

Perform a variety of activities to weatherize homes and make them more energy efficient. Duties include repairing windows, insulating ducts, and performing heating, ventilating, and air-conditioning (HVAC) work. May perform energy audits and advise clients on energy conservation measures.

## ★ Registered Occupation

**ONET Title:** Weatherization Installers and Technicians

**ONET Code:** 47-4099.03

## Alternative Occupations Titles:

Energy Administrator; Field Technician; Weatherization and Housing Inspector; Weatherization Installer; Weatherization Technician; Weatherization Worker; Home Performance Laborer (Residential); Home Performance Laborer Residential, Revised; Home Performance Laborer Residential, Revised

- + Test products for functionality or quality
- + Inspect equipment to ensure proper functioning
- + Test characteristics of materials or structures
- + Apply material to fill gaps in surfaces
- + Inspect industrial or commercial equipment to ensure proper operation
- + Install green structural components, equipment or systems
- + Inspect work sites to determine condition or necessary repairs
- + Communicate with clients about products, procedures, and policies
- + Install insulation in equipment or structures
- + Install building fixtures
- + Estimate construction project costs
- + Clean equipment or facilities
- + Maintain construction tools or equipment
- + Record operational or environmental data
- + Prepare operational reports
- + Inspect completed work to ensure proper installation
- + Install doors or windows



<http://www.apprenticeship.gov>

# Success

- First graduation  
July 2022
- Current  
registration:
- 9 Weatherization  
Techs
- 3 Energy Auditors





Weatherization Crew Specialist Myles Neff was the first participant. He brought basic construction skills to the job but has found the apprenticeship program has helped.

*"Upon getting hired at NECAC, I wanted to help out in any way that I could and the apprenticeship program sounded like a really good program and I can see the many benefits of it," Neff said. "It will jump start the necessary skills to perform my job that I didn't necessarily have before starting in the weatherization program."*



# Building on the Strengths of Community Action Agencies

## Recruitment and Outreach

CAAs have strong ties with the local community and can help recruit potential participants for apprenticeship programs. They can conduct outreach activities, host information sessions, and connect individuals to apprenticeship programs for better career opportunities.

## Pre-Apprenticeship Programs

CAAs can provide direct services or collaborate with partners to offer Pre-Apprenticeship programs that expose individuals to career pathways and build the work-readiness skills needed to successfully enter a Registered Apprenticeship.

## Supportive Services

CAAs can provide supportive services to apprentices to help them succeed in their programs, such as:

- Transportation assistance
- Childcare assistance
- Financial literacy training
- Case management and counseling

## Employer Partnerships

CAAs can work with local employers to promote the benefits of Registered Apprenticeships and encourage them to sponsor programs. They can also help employers navigate the process of developing and registering an apprenticeship program.

## Community Collaboration

CAAs can serve as a bridge between employers, training providers, workforce development boards, and other community organizations to create a coordinated system of support for Registered Apprenticeships.

## Registered Apprenticeships

CAAs can design and implement Registered Apprenticeship programs by building on the services they already provide. Many of the supports CAAs currently offer can be formalized to align with apprenticeship models and meet the evolving needs of their communities.



# Action Steps for Implementation

Identify Industry  
Needs

Engage  
Employers

Collaborate with  
Educational  
Institutions

Seek Out New  
Partners

Secure Funding

Develop  
Program  
Structure

Engage the  
Community

Recruit and  
Screen  
Participants

Evaluate and  
Improve

A photograph of two men in winter work attire. The man on the left is smiling and looking towards the camera, wearing a dark beanie, a dark jacket, and a light-colored safety vest. The man on the right is in profile, looking towards the left, wearing a light-colored jacket. They are standing in front of a large, light-colored building with a corrugated metal roof. The text "Tools and Resources" is overlaid in the center of the image.

# Tools and Resources



# PREPARING AMERICANS FOR HIGH-PAYING SKILLED TRADE JOBS OF THE FUTURE

Executive Orders

April 23, 2025

**Sec. 4. Expanding Registered Apprenticeships.** Within 120 days of the date of this order (April 23, 2025), the Secretary of Labor, the Secretary of Commerce, and the Secretary of Education shall submit...a plan to reach and surpass 1 million new active apprentices. That plan shall identify the following:

- Avenues to expand Registered Apprenticeships to new industries and occupations, including high-growth and emerging sectors.
- Measures to scale this proven model across the country, improve its efficiency, and provide consistent support to program participants.
- Opportunities, including through the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education (Perkins V) Act and Federal student aid, to enhance connections between the education system and Registered Apprenticeships.

# Apprenticeship Resources

- [Workforce Development Board Finder](#)
- [Apprenticeships for America](#)
- [Apprenticeship Standards](#)
- [The Federal Resources Playbook for Registered Apprenticeship](#)





# PRE-APPRENTICESHIPS WEBINAR COMPANION GUIDE



INNOVATIVE APPROACHES TO WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT PART 2

## APPRENTICESHIP WEBINAR COMPANION GUIDE

This guide is designed to accompany the webinar Workforce Development focusing on Pre-Apprenticeships as pathways to economic mobility shaping a brighter future not only for individuals but

In today's rapidly evolving job market, workforce is strong, resilient families and fostering long-term economic growth. It's about creating new drive long-term economic growth. By investing in and empower individuals to:

- **Increase Earning Potential:** Skilled workers can improve financial stability.
- **Enhance Job Security:** In-demand skills prove job market.
- **Contribute to Community Prosperity:** A skill driving growth and strengthening local economy.
- **Break Cycles of Poverty:** Access to quality training upward mobility.



This guide is designed to accompany the webinar Innovative Approaches to Workforce Development focusing on Registered Apprenticeships as pathways to economic mobility. This resource is designed to deepen your understanding of Registered Apprenticeships and provide you with additional resources to support your next steps, whether you're launching a program, expanding an existing program, or exploring how Registered Apprenticeships can strengthen your Workforce Development program goals.

### What is a Registered Apprenticeship?

A Registered Apprenticeship is an industry-vetted, structured, work-based learning model that combines on-the-job training (OJT) with related instruction (RI). These programs are registered with the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) or a State Apprenticeship Agency, ensuring they meet specific quality standards.

Feature	Registered Apprenticeship	Apprenticeship	Pre-Apprenticeship
Registration	Registered with DOL or State Apprenticeship Agency and abides by 23 established standards	Any apprenticeship that is not formally registered with DOL	Not necessarily registered
Wage	Paid employment	May be paid a stipend, starting hourly wage, or unpaid	May be paid a stipend, starting hourly wage, or unpaid
Credential	Nationally recognized credential upon completion	May or may not lead to credential, but not always nationally recognized	May or may not lead to credential, but not always nationally recognized
Duration	Typically 1-5 years depending on chosen industry	Typically 1-5 years depending on chosen industry	Shorter term, often a few weeks to months
Purpose	Provides industry-vetted, paid job training that leads to full occupational proficiency while earning a portable, nationally recognized credential	Offers structured, paid or unpaid job training to prepare individuals for skilled careers, potentially leading to industry-recognized credentials	Foundational program designed to prepare individuals to enter and succeed in Registered Apprenticeships

01

# WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT WEBINAR SERIES

Dive deeper into apprenticeship pathways with the Workforce Development webinar series!

Explore action steps, strategies, and resources to strengthen your understanding and implementation of Pre-Apprenticeships and Registered Apprenticeships through this two-part webinar series and accompanying companion guides from the Collaborative on Economic Mobility.

**EXPLORE  
MORE HERE!**




<https://tinyurl.com/WORKFORCE-DEVELOPMENT1>

# Subscribe to Weatherization Plus



SUPPORTING RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN  
WEATHERIZATION AND OTHER ENERGY INITIATIVES



 Follow  
**@NcapEnergy**





The background features a repeating pattern of light gray speech bubbles, each containing a dark teal question mark. The bubbles are arranged in a staggered grid on a dark teal background.

**Questions?**

We want to hear from you!

We would love to hear about  
your experience in today's  
conference training. Please  
take a moment to complete  
the survey.



# THANK YOU!



**Mia Harnos**

Director, Energy Partnerships  
National Community Action Partnership  
[mharnos@communityactionpartnership.com](mailto:mharnos@communityactionpartnership.com)



**Lillie Seels**

Director, Practice Transformation  
National Community Action Partnership  
[lseels@communityactionpartnership.com](mailto:lseels@communityactionpartnership.com)

# Session Survey

---

- <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/8QX7GF5>





# 2026 Winter Training Conference Call for Presentations

---

- [https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/2026WTC\\_Call4Presentations](https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/2026WTC_Call4Presentations)

