

Apollo Alliance Applauds Portland Community Workforce Agreement

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By [admin](#)

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Agreement Sets Local Hiring, Training, Wage Goals for City's Groundbreaking Clean Energy Works Program



SAN FRANCISCO – The Apollo Alliance praised Portland City Council members today for approving a community workforce agreement to guide the implementation of [Clean Energy Works Portland](#) (CEWP), a pilot program that will test new ways to deliver affordable home energy upgrades to Portland area homeowners. The goal of the project is to reduce carbon emissions, raise home values, and create new family-supporting jobs and long-term employment opportunities for Portland area residents.

The initial phase of CEWP will help up to 500 qualified Portland homes finance and install energy efficiency upgrades. Homeowners will have access to low-cost financing for residential weatherization, including new insulation and installation of energy-efficient heating and cooling systems. Efforts are underway to secure public and private funding so the project can be scaled up to reach 100,000 homes.

“This agreement is groundbreaking in Portland because it unifies the contractors, labor unions, and community-based organizations around a shared vision of energy efficiency and equitable employment opportunities,” said Barbary Byrd, chair of the Oregon Apollo Alliance and secretary treasurer of the Oregon AFL-CIO (*see pix above*).

The community workforce agreement reflects a strong partnership between union apprenticeships, community-based pre-apprenticeship programs, contractors and organizations representing people of color and low-income communities. The agreement establishes several goals and targets for the CEWP program, which include hiring at least 80 percent of the project's employees from the local workforce; ensuring that workers earn no less than 180 percent of the state minimum wage; offering workers access to adequate and affordable health insurance; mandating that people of color, women, and low-income residents perform at least 30 percent of total trades and technical project hours in the pilot program; ensuring diverse business participation; and offering resources for continuing education and certification for those new to the industry as well as for workers seeking career advancement opportunities.

“Oregon is at the vanguard of America's clean and efficient energy movement,” said Ron Ruggiero, Portland-based field director for the Apollo Alliance. “The Clean Energy Works program can be a model for urban communities across the country that are striving to reduce pollution, cut energy costs, and provide a pathway out of poverty for low-income residents.”

The state of Oregon recently passed the Energy Efficiency and Sustainable Technology Act of 2009 (EEAST), a bill that will help create good local jobs and boost the state's economy. Similar to CEWP, EEAST is a low-cost, voluntary loan program that can be applied to weatherizing existing residences and small businesses. With EEAST yet to be officially implemented, the Clean Energy Works program will likely be integrated into the larger statewide framework eventually. Together, EEAST and CEWP have the potential to significantly reduce energy expenses for home- and small business-owners and to create thousands of good green-collar jobs throughout the state.

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