



Workers Employed in Green Jobs



As part of its weatherization program, Northeast South Dakota Community Action Program (NESDCAP) in Sisseton, South Dakota employs crew members that make energy efficiency improvements to residential homes in its 17-county service area. They provide homeowners with energy kits that contain energy-conserving light bulbs, low-flow shower heads and other items to help save on energy bills. During tax season, the education packets NESDCAP distributes contain information on the EIC and CTC, along with tips on how to reduce utility bills and how to make homes more energy-efficient. The weatherization crew refers anyone who needs assistance with tax filing to local VITA sites. During 2009, NESDCAP distributed 500 education packets and 250 energy kits. Since 2005, NESDCAP has served as a VITA site and partners with financial institutions and non-profit organizations to promote the tax credits and free tax preparation. In addition to filing taxes at its office, in 2009, NESDCAP established nine tax preparation clinics in six counties. NESDCAP sites assisted a total of 216 taxpayers, providing approximately \$157,000 in refunds to the community.

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Green jobs are jobs that contribute to greater environmental quality. While some green jobs require advanced skills, careers in the green jobs sector can begin at an entry level and can provide a pathway out of poverty for some workers. Employment opportunities include weatherizing homes, retrofitting commercial buildings and private homes, conducting energy audits on businesses and residences, installing wind and solar panels, and manufacturing energy saving products. Many workers entering this field for the first time and those transferring to this sector are likely to earn incomes that qualify them for the EIC and CTC. Since the tax credits provide such valuable support for employees, it is important to inform workers entering new green job employment about the availability of the EIC, CTC and free tax filing assistance.

Strategies

- Work with employers in green industries to inform workers, as well as customers of green products and services, about the tax credits. Encourage them to include envelope stuffers with employee paychecks or distribute flyers to inform employees about the EIC and CTC. Train supervisors to deliver information and answer questions about the tax credits and VITA for employees, especially new hires. Offer to speak about the tax credits during an information session for employees.
- Enlist green jobs training programs to share tax credit information when participants enroll. Training sites that have financial aid offices — such as programs at community colleges — can display posters and provide flyers in waiting areas. Financial aid counselors can also communicate information about the tax credits to participants requesting help in paying for their training. If online registration is available, send an email to new registrants about the tax credits and where to find free tax filing assistance.
- Encourage agencies referring participants to green jobs training programs to promote the tax credits. For example, job seekers often visit One-Stop Career Centers to find information about employment and training opportunities. By promoting the tax credits and free tax services, these centers can show job seekers how to make their participation more feasible.

- Partner with organizations involved in green services such as home retrofitting or energy audits that cater to low-income individuals and inform them about the benefits of the EIC and CTC for their workers and clients. Invite them to join your outreach efforts and provide them with outreach materials.
- Coordinate a free tax filing assistance day at a job training program or business.
- If your organization hosts a VITA site, invite green businesses and job programs to set up a booth to promote green jobs and training opportunities.

FACT:

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 is providing funding for the investment in green jobs. With approximately \$40 billion directed towards energy efficiency and renewable energy projects, including \$500 million for job training programs, more than two million new and current green collar workers will be able to find pathways to careers and higher paying jobs within the next few years.



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