

U.S. Education Leaders Release National Plan to Prepare Millions of Community College Students for New, Clean Economy Workforce

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RESTON, VA--(Marketwired - January 19, 2016) - Jobs for the Future, National Wildlife Federation, Bank of America and education leaders all across North America have released [Greenprint: A Plan to Prepare Community College Students for Careers in the Clean Economy](#).

This plan comes at a critical time as President Obama's State of the Union Address last week called for a clean economy, good jobs for all, and free workforce education and training at the nation's 1,200 community colleges. Recently, 190 heads of state met in Paris for the COP-21 to address the need to curtail climate change and eliminate greenhouse gas pollution. [This new report](#) begins to address the challenge of linking workforce development and environmental quality in the U.S. and beyond. Highlights include:

- **Competitive employers require a workforce with 21st-century skills and sustainability basics.** Workers need to be equipped with the new skills required for millions of new jobs that are eclipsing their older, fossil-fuel-based counterparts and providing comparatively better wages for adults across all demographics, including lower-skilled adults.(i)
- **America's workforce needs to have the skill sets to curtail carbon pollution.** This will require rapidly scaling up innovations in dozens of industries -- and training workers to carry out these changes -- such as clean energy generation, distribution and storage; smarter grids; smarter transportation systems; more sustainable food and agriculture; improved forest management; restored coastal ecosystems; and closed loop manufacturing.
- **Community colleges are uniquely positioned to help develop these skills in America's workforce.** In the U.S., the majority of jobs requiring science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) will require education beyond high school, including that provided by community colleges. And for millions of adults, community colleges will provide the pathways into STEM jobs.(ii) The imperative for community colleges to prepare graduates with sustainability skills will only increase as these STEM fields become greener.

"Community colleges are on the frontlines of sustainability skills education, with nearly 40 percent pioneering educational initiatives that promote sustainability skills," explains Maria Flynn, senior vice president of Jobs for the Future. "These initiatives contribute to students' career potential, respond to local employer needs, support the health of the regional environment, and benefit the local economy."

"Imagine the possibilities if community colleges had all the support they need to equip the next-generation workforce with skills in areas such as clean energy generation, distribution and storage; lean and green manufacturing; and protection of water quality and wildlife," says Kevin Coyle, vice president of education of the National Wildlife Federation. "The *Greenprint* report illustrates the important roles that community college leaders will play in accelerating these positive trends and is something we hope that the world leaders at the COP-21 will pay attention to, embrace and support."

Highlights of the *Greenprint* plan include:

- A call to key stakeholder groups such as government and the private sector to work with education institutions to increase programs and employment opportunities for a workforce with sustainability skills.
- A review of federal and state policy vehicles that can provide clearer and more direct support of sustainability skills and knowledge.
- The marrying of sustainability education programs with STEM education.
- How student organizations can play a role in supporting the nation's transition to a greener workforce.

"When we launched initiatives such as Greenforce in 2010 with Jobs for the Future and Campus Ecology in 1989 with education leaders across hundreds of 2- and 4-year colleges and universities, we envisioned a whole new generation of graduates, equipped to lead the way for healthy, clean, wildlife-friendly communities," says Julian Keniry, senior director at the National Wildlife Federation, "and that is now happening thanks to bold innovation and leadership by college and university presidents, faculty and students. This plan is part of our collective determination across organizations and programs, nationwide, to

create a clean, green economy in the U.S. and beyond, by ensuring education is central to the solutions."

"Connecting individuals, including young adults, to education and job training that will put them on a path to success is critical to economic growth in local communities across the country," says Kerry Sullivan, president of the Bank of America Charitable Foundation. "We recognize that the expansion of a low carbon, green economy offers great opportunities for the workforce, and we're honored to partner with Jobs for the Future and the National Wildlife Federation to help advance this effort."

The *Greenprint* plan was created by thought leaders representing industry associations, student groups, nonprofit organizations, government agencies and higher education entities in the U.S. and Canada who participated in a national and statewide convenings as part of the [Greenforce Initiative](#), organized by the National Wildlife Federation and Jobs for the Future with support from Bank of America Charitable Foundation, NASA, Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, The Kendeda Fund and other donors.

We encourage community colleges and employers to discuss this new plan with hashtags [#highered](#) and [#sustainability](#). The report is available at <http://www.nwf.org/Greenforce-Initiative/Resources/Greenprint-Report.aspx>.

About National Wildlife Federation

The National Wildlife Federation protects wildlife for our children's future and has placed special emphasis on working with college and university leaders, through NWF's Campus Ecology Program (started in 1989), to advance leadership for sustainability learning and practice. Offerings for students and other young professionals have grown to include: NWF's EcoLeaders career and leadership development program with more than 1,000 students and young professionals creating an EcoMission, advancing EcoProjects, supporting others, and earning certification in all US states and other countries.

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About Jobs for the Future

Jobs for the Future is a national nonprofit that works to ensure educational and economic opportunity for all. We develop innovative career pathways, educational resources, and public policies that increase college readiness and career success, and build a more highly skilled workforce. With over 30 years of experience, JFF is the national leader in bridging education and work to increase mobility and strengthen our economy.

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About Bank of America Charitable Foundation

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(i) Muro, Mark, et al. Sizing Clean Economy, Brookings Institution. 2011. p.23

(ii) Rothwell, Jonathan. The Hidden STEM Economy, Brookings Institution. 2013. p. 7

Image Available:

http://www.marketwire.com/library/MwGo/2016/1/19/11G079260/Images/nwfLogo_greenCMYK-3a0a875478a2be96826544fb68fbc817.jpg

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