



Green Justice Coalition
Boston, MA and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts
February 2010

In December 2008, the Green Justice Coalition launched a campaign to bring home energy efficiency upgrades and jobs to Boston's low-income communities and communities of color. Convened by Community Labor United, an Apollo Alliance affiliate, the Coalition is a growing partnership of more than forty community organizations, labor unions, environmental groups, and faith-based alliances from across the Commonwealth that have come together to build support for Massachusetts' move towards an environmentally and economically sustainable green economy.

The Coalition has been leading a campaign to (1) dramatically expand energy efficiency and weatherization programs in both the public and private sector to reduce Massachusetts' carbon footprint, focusing on utility-based energy efficiency programs as well as state and local investment; (2) maximize energy efficiency opportunities for the state's working class communities, especially those that are struggling the most with rising energy bills; (3) create living wage and "high-road" jobs for new and incumbent workers via job standards and local hiring requirements, and entrepreneurial and collective ownership opportunities for green businesses in those communities; and (4) establish career ladder training programs to connect new workers from lower-income communities and communities of color to green jobs, which will require strong training, education, and job placement programs and, in some cases, wrap-around services connecting low-skilled people with new employment.

The Green Justice Coalition's model for large-scale, community-driven energy efficiency work prioritizes the hiring of community organizations to create demand in working class neighborhoods for the energy efficiency work, bundles the work in communities creating steadier work in the field, and ensures local hiring by the contractors. The model calls for deep retrofits and upfront financing, and "green leases" to help ensure tenants' access to the efficiencies and to create protections against gentrification as rental properties are upgraded.

In October 2009, Massachusetts adopted a \$1.4 billion, three-year plan for energy efficiency retrofits that will cut greenhouse gas emissions, create high-quality jobs in communities with the highest unemployment rates, and provide upfront financing so low- to moderate-income residents can save money through retrofits on their homes. The plan includes significant elements of Green Justice Coalition's recommendations. Under the plan, the state's utility companies will work with the Green Justice Coalition and (1) establish "community mobilization initiatives," i.e., intensive, door-to-door outreach campaigns to sign up hundreds of low- to moderate-income residents for high-quality home retrofits, (2) provide upfront financing so residents can afford deep retrofits and save more money and energy, and (3) ensure that retrofit contractors hire community residents for high-quality green jobs that include livable wages, benefits, and training for lifelong careers. The state Energy Efficiency Advisory Council will set up an Equity Committee to ensure that new jobs and services reach working class and of-color communities. The state estimates that the plan will result in \$4.1 billion in energy savings and reach 140,000 households.

The state's plan includes four pilot projects that will be launched in the spring of 2010 across the state to demonstrate this community-based model and approach to the work, followed by incorporation of best practices from these pilots statewide in 2011 and 2012.

*This overview on the Green Justice Coalition is current as of February 2010.
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