The clean energy labor market in each New England state is stable, stretching across many clean technologies and has room for growth. Demand for clean energy workers is expected to increase dramatically over the coming decade, but tight labor market conditions will continue.

There are disparities along the lines of race, ethnicity and gender as to who holds these jobs in the region, with White male workers holding most of the current positions. It remains difficult for people of color to enter a career in the clean energy economy, and while MBWEs have some opportunities, they report that it is difficult to gain traction to secure large projects.

While there are individual variations in state policy and funding when compared across states, these policies and programs will continue to boost demand for clean energy (and therefore workforce), especially when coupled with new federal policy. Advocacy and education efforts have paid off in terms of creating an environment with an increasing drive to prepare a diverse workforce in energy efficiency and energy generation. This was seen throughout interviews, in focus groups, and other engagement with stakeholders.

However, representatives of environmental justice communities seem absent from state advocacy efforts for climate and clean energy jobs. These coalitions need to be broadened to include environmental justice organizations in light of federal efforts to ensure disadvantaged groups receive the benefits of federal funding through the Justice40 Initiative.

To support state-level advocacy efforts, there should be a concerted effort to ensure that coalitions include, and preferably, are led by organizations currently engaged with environmental justice communities. Organized labor will be an important partner in these efforts. These coalitions should focus on ensuring that federal funding is benefiting environmental justice communities.

State officials, advocacy groups, foundations, community groups and a host of other stakeholders are still trying to absorb the implications of historic federal investments through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Legislation (BIL) and the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA). With the exception of Massachusetts, state efforts to promote workforce equity through federal funding seem unclear.

While some local workforce development and training organizations are aware of the burgeoning demand for a clean energy workforce, most are either unclear about or unaware of what this means for their efforts to prepare a diverse workforce.
State and metropolitan building trades councils appear to be working with more pre-apprenticeship programs to increase the diversity of tradespeople who will participate in the clean energy workforce. This is likely to impact the complexion of the workforce for government buildings and large-scale commercial projects.

The training infrastructure for residential energy efficiency workers is opaque to community-based organizations working to diversify the workforce. Also, there is still a perception that individuals with criminal records are unable to enter this market. Utilities operating these programs are working to address these barriers through policies, but this hasn’t yet affected employers who are hiring workers.

While workforce training organizations are loosely connected in their efforts to address labor market demand and almost all have articulated a commitment to workforce equity, the levels of connection vary within different metropolitan areas. A more intentional approach to partnerships and equity is required to meet the growing demand for a diverse workforce.

Investments to build the capacity or workforce organizations within metropolitan areas must also be complemented by co–equal support of state–level initiatives to advocate for community benefits. Both are critical and support each other. State–level coalitions will influence the flow of federal investments towards community benefits that ensure access to quality jobs. Workforce development organizations within metropolitan regions will be responsible for ensuring diverse workers from justice–impacted communities have the support, training, skills, and abilities to obtain and remain in these jobs.

The hallmark of successful workforce development initiatives within metropolitan areas must be collaboration. This must occur across organizations at different points along a career pathway. Collaboration includes linkages between early support organizations such as vocational and technical education schools and community–based organizations; community colleges and technical colleges; pre–apprenticeship programs; apprenticeship programs; and employers. The goal is to create seamless career pathways for diverse workers where they have access to quality jobs.

Philanthropy has an important role to play in creating, supporting, and expanding an inclusive and equitable clean energy workforce. While historically there has been a lack of focus on funding equitable workforce goals within climate and clean energy (and of those in this space, only a select few funders provide most of the funding), there is increasing funder interest in these areas, driven by greater focus on equity and in response to federal and state policy developments described in this report. Funding high–quality clean energy jobs and increasing access to those jobs for people of color is a priority for many funders surveyed for this report, and there is an abundance of opportunities for philanthropy to engage in climate and clean energy workforce development.

**LEARN MORE:** Access the full New England Clean Energy Workforce Assessment Report and supporting materials at: barrfoundation.org/ceworkforcedev