

Empowering people with disabilities in the green industries

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People with disabilities represent a talented and creative section of the workforce in most areas of employment. A study to be published in the International Journal of Green Economics, suggests that as the so-called "green economy" grows, so education and training opportunities should be tailored to people with disabilities as well as those without.

Susanne Bruyère and David Filiberto of the Employment and Disability Institute, at Cornell University in Ithaca, New York, explain how the environmental and ecological focus of many areas of [employment](#) has increased during the last few years. Green products and services represent emerging fields and growth markets and a largely untapped realm within which people with disabilities are yet to be fully engaged, they suggest. The potential for inclusion of a huge number of people often excluded from growth areas represents a great opportunity for participation that will be beneficial to those people, employers, the economic and, ultimately, the environment.

As the USA and other nations slowly emerge from the recession that started in 2009 and has battered economies in waves ever since, the pressing environmental issue of climate change continues to represent a significant threat to the future wellbeing and quality of life for millions, if not billions, of people, in coming decades. As such, re-growth and addressing climate concerns have become major driving forces for development in many nations. The new jobs that emerge from the [green economy](#) represent important opportunities for many people in science, engineering, design, architecture, construction, power production, public

awareness of the relevant issues and in many other areas.

The pair has surveyed the employment landscape with a particular emphasis on green jobs and have found that mutual benefits accrue to both employers and [people with disabilities](#) if disability considerations are introduced into mainstream public policy. "People with disabilities can be powerful allies in the revitalisation and economic development of their communities as the green jobs employment sector grows," Bruyère and Filiberto assert.

Their work advocates four important considerations for workforce development professionals as they seek to support green job training programmes. First, they must apply rigorous standards for funding green industry training providers. Secondly, they must establish and make available a thorough inventory and clearinghouse of existing training programmes in the [green jobs](#) area to address gaps. Thirdly, they should develop and support high-quality partnerships with green industry employers that include hiring agreements and access to career advancement. Finally, they should construct tools and training manuals that provide programme funders, counsellors, and jobseekers with disabilities better information on labour market demand in the emerging green industry as it evolves.

More information: "The green economy and job creation: inclusion of people with disabilities in the USA." Susanne Bruyère, David Filiberto *Int. J. of Green Economics*. 2013 Vol.7, No.3, pp.257 - 275. [DOI: 10.1504/IJGE.2013.058151](#)

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