

PRESS RELEASE

February 8, 2010

The Providence Plan's Building Futures initiative receives \$3.7 million in federal Recovery Act resources to prepare 1,600 Rhode Islanders for green jobs.

Kickoff event was held Monday, February 8th, 10:00 am at IBEW Local 99 headquarters with nearly 150 in attendance. Guest Speakers included Governor Carcieri, Senator Whitehouse, Congressman Langevin, Mayor Cicilline, Senator Paiva Weed, representatives from Deepwater Wind, project partners from Industry and Labor, as well as a Building Futures graduate.

Event:

Monday, February 8th

10:00 am – 11:30 am

International Brotherhood of Electrical
Workers (IBEW), Local 99

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Providence, Rhode Island – In January, The Providence Plan was one of 25 grantees across the nation to receive federal stimulus funds to support job training opportunities in the energy efficient-construction, green manufacturing, and renewable-power industries. The U.S. Department of Labor awarded \$3.72 million in Recovery Act funds to support the “Building Futures Energy Training Partnership for Rhode Island.” This represents a significant increase in training capacity for Building Futures, a Providence Plan initiative begun in 2007.

Energy Training Partnership resources will enable Building Futures and partners to prepare approximately 1,600 Rhode Islanders for work in the energy efficient-construction and renewable-power industries. In addition to putting 100 unemployed urban residents on a career path to green construction careers through the Building Futures’ pre-apprenticeship program, grant resources will be used to help building trade organizations train dislocated construction workers for jobs in the green economy.

“We are pleased to be able to bring these resources to Rhode Island,” said The Providence Plan’s Board Chair Richard Spies. “This is an exciting opportunity to help prepare local residents for work on renewable energy projects, attract new green businesses to the state, and to put Rhode Island on a path to economic recovery.”

Andrew Cortés, the Director of Building Futures, called the award a tremendous opportunity to jump start the development of a green economy. “Rhode Island’s Energy Training Partnership will help the state’s construction sector develop the skills needed to meet the anticipated demand associated with energy efficiency and renewable electric projects. Building Futures looks forward to helping position urban residents for these jobs, and we are excited about partnering with the building trades to ensure that the construction workforce is trained to build and maintain Rhode Island’s green energy infrastructure.”

Since 2007, Building Futures has served as a state-designated industry partnership with a mission to help the construction industry meet its present and future labor needs, while creating career opportunities for low-income residents through registered apprenticeships. With an engaged coalition of industry employers, labor organizations, professional associations, state agencies, and community groups, Building Futures has created the first pre-apprenticeship model in the state to be certified by the Rhode Island Apprenticeship Council, streamlined access to construction careers for urban residents, and implemented policy shifts that increase entry-level positions on local worksites.

A number of the organizations participating in Building Futures' Energy Training Partnership convened on Monday, February 8th at the headquarters for International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW), Local 99 in Cranston, RI to formally announce the award. Among those speaking at the event were Governor Donald Carcieri, Senator Sheldon Whitehouse, Congressman James Langevin, Mayor David Cicilline, Senate President Teresa Paiva Weed, Building Futures Director Andrew Cortés, Paul Rich of Deepwater Wind, Michael Sabitoni of the RI Building & Construction Trades Council, Gregory Mancini of Build RI, and Jason Mitchner, a Building Futures graduate.

Governor Donald Carcieri sent a letter to Labor Secretary Hilda Solis in support of the Providence Plan's Energy Training Partnership grant application, noting that three state agencies – the Department of Labor and Training, the Department of Education, and the State Economic Development Corporation – had signed on to the project. "This grant represents an important step in helping to ensure that Rhode Island can become competitive in the emerging green economy," the Governor said. "The Energy Training Partnership will give the state standing on a range of energy projects – from off-shore wind to the retrofit of Rhode Island's historic building stock."

Senator Jack Reed, while unable to attend, was quick to applaud The Providence's Plan's receipt of the award when it was first announced. "This is another example of Recovery Act funds helping our state overcome the last decade's legacy of job loss by investing in our local economy, strengthening our workforce, and further advancing our green-technology industries," said Reed. "Not only will this grant enable The Providence Plan to train 1,600 Rhode Islanders for a career in the construction industry, but it will also facilitate the adoption of more environmentally friendly practices throughout the state."

"Making the Rhode Island workforce competitive for the clean energy jobs of the future is key to our overall economic recovery, and I look forward to following the progress of these organizations as they work together to implement this funding," said Congressman James Langevin.

Leaders from the State's General Assembly also express great optimism for the upcoming project. "This type of investment is critical to helping Rhode Island maintain its position as a national leader in capturing of offshore wind resources," said House Majority Leader Gordon D. Fox. "This is great news for both our economy and our environment." Meanwhile, President of the Senate M. Teresa Paiva Weed stated, "Recovery resources like these are an important step forward in the process of growing green economy jobs in the state, while diversifying the ways in which we produce electricity. This is an example of federal stimulus funds being utilized to achieve real and long-lasting benefits for the state. This program will help prepare Rhode Island workers with the skills they need to succeed in a 21st century job market."

Another of Building Futures' key supporters has been the City of Providence, which has been working closely with the initiative to put low-skilled Providence residents to work on city construction sites. The City, with its nationally-recognized *Greenprint* plan, has incorporated Building Futures as a means to implement many elements of the plan created last year.

Mayor Cicilline hailed The Providence Plan's Department of Labor award. "Over the last several years, Building Futures has had considerable success in putting local residents on a promising career path to excellent paying jobs in the construction industry. With these new resources, Building Futures will give scores of urban Rhode Islanders a trade and a real chance to achieve economic self-sufficiency."