

PRESS RELEASE



Action Research and Coalition Building
to Advance Social, Economic and
Environmental Justice

For immediate release
September 18, 2008

Contact: Joanne Derwin, 917 7490682
joanne@urbanagenda.org

NYC GREEN JOBS ROUNDTABLE INITIATIVE GATHERS STEAM Over 100 Organizations Meet to Craft Comprehensive City-wide Roadmap To Connect Jobseekers with Green Jobs

New York City, 18 September 2008 – As New York transitions to a greener economy, hundreds of organizations are mobilizing to ensure that New Yorkers are prepared for green collar jobs. Representatives from over 100 groups met today to outline a roadmap to meet the City's growing demand for a well-trained green collar workforce. The roadmap is part of the Green Collar Jobs Roundtable Campaign, spearheaded by Urban Agenda. The Campaign connects businesses, unions, community members and government agencies in a coordinated effort to close the gap between jobseekers and green jobs.

The Campaign's roadmap analyses specific green collar sectors, such as energy efficiency, transportation and urban forestry, and will make practical recommendations around key aspects of a workforce development plan. These include training curricula, job standards and regulations, job certification, wraparound and pre-employment services, and connecting with employers, among others. The Campaign will use the roadmap in 2009 to convince mayoral and City Council candidates to prioritize a green collar workforce development plan.

Recent large-scale environmental sustainability initiatives, like the Mayor's PlaNYC 2030 and the Governor's 15x15, are expected to create hundreds of thousands of green job opportunities. Yet, the City's workforce development and training system is not adequately keeping pace. "In recent interviews we held with several City-based energy-efficiency contractors, they said that in the last year they were forced to turn down dozens of new projects, because they simply can't find the trained workforce to meet their demand," said Joanne Derwin, Urban Agenda's executive director.

"Businesses are a key component for growing a green economy and building a reliable workforce to make us more sustainable as a city," said Ramon Cruz from the Partnership for New York City. "As we move forward developing this nascent sector of our economy, we need to know what the employers' needs are. The Campaign's roadmap will help to assess the opportunities and obstacles that employers are facing in the emerging green economy."

Beyond meeting sustainability demands, green jobs also offer other benefits. Because they have the potential to be quality jobs – ones that provide family-sustaining wages, benefits and chances for career advancement – they could offer pathways out of poverty for many of the under- and unemployed in low-income communities. Kellie Terry-Sepulveda, from The Point, agrees. "Hundreds of green jobs already exist and with the far-sighted sustainability policy currently

being considered, there's the potential to create thousands of new jobs. At the same time, unemployment rates are extremely high – we have 24% unemployment in Hunts Point. The key is to tap into the existing social service infrastructure and develop the skills needed to fill the green jobs that are out there.”

Michael McGuire, political director of the Mason Tenders District Council of Greater New York said that since most green jobs cannot be outsourced, they can spur local economic development. “Organized labor has the infrastructure not only to ensure the fair wages and benefits workers deserve, but also to provide top-notch training. We are ready to train a new cadre of workers so we don't miss out on the benefits of the new green economy,” he added.

“As we tackle environmental problems, tremendous opportunities exist to also advance economic justice and prosperity across the City, for all New Yorkers,” said Ms. Derwin. “We believe that green collar jobs represent a new paradigm for equitable economic development. But we need to work together to exploit the potential that's there – that's what the Green Collar Jobs Roundtable Campaign hopes to do.”

END

About Urban Agenda

Urban Agenda is an action-oriented public policy, research and advocacy organization dedicated to building a socially, economically, and environmentally just New York City.

With its experience leading city-wide campaigns and staffing effective coalitions, Urban Agenda is well-placed to spearhead the Roundtable campaign. As convener of the NYC Apollo Alliance, the organization is connected with business, labor, advocacy, workforce development, and environmental justice organizations. In addition, a close working relationship with the NYC Central Labor Council (CLC) enables Urban Agenda to tap the knowledge and reach of the CLC's 400 affiliated unions representing 1.3 million workers.

For more information, please visit www.urbanagenda.org