

Headline Partner

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US CLIMATE ACTION SUMMIT

Convened by
CLIMATE GROUP

Roundtable report

Foreword

Helen Clarkson, Chief Executive Officer, Climate Group

We've seen incredible progress on scaling the green energy transition amid historic climate legislation and funding in the United States. Key frameworks like the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and Inflation Reduction Act provide billions of dollars toward clean energy infrastructure projects. But who is responsible for making them happen on the ground, and how do we ensure that people don't get left behind?

Workforce and the Energy Transition, a roundtable co-hosted by Deloitte at the US Climate Action Summit in April 2024, addressed these critical questions with stakeholders from the business, government, and the labor sector to explore how we can put workers first in the energy transition.

During this transition, it's critical we prioritize workforce development - not only increasing the number of workers on green projects, but also giving them the skills to be part of a 21st century energy workforce, especially those impacted by a fossil fuel phasedown. We need cross-sector collaboration to address this issue, a changed mindset that encompasses the stewardship of critical relationships between employers, labor organizations, and community partners.

Moreover, how are we bringing disadvantaged communities to the forefront and providing assurances of job security and financial stability? Prevailing wages, subsidized childcare, and education are strong determinants in where the workforce will choose to seek employment and are a small subset of incentives currently drawing workers to seek green jobs.

Finally, those at the roundtable discussed how these initiatives are built to last. Even with the incredible momentum created from recent climate legislation, we need to prioritize sustainability in long-term labor planning and ensure that these new measures are not just reliant on new and time-bound government funding. We now have the capacity and the ability to achieve a lasting, successful green transition, but only if we work together to enable and empower communities with equitable opportunities across the workforce.

These are critical discussions to have, and I'd like to thank Deloitte for facilitating these conversations during the US Climate Action Summit.

Best and thank you all,
Helen Clarkson



Summary

We won't achieve our goals without including everybody involved in ways we've never done before in the United States.

We're in the midst of a complex transition. It's imperative for businesses, governments, and the workforce to understand how policy and funding mechanisms are working and where the gaps lie in creating new high-quality green jobs. Our US Climate Action Summit *Workforce and the Energy Transition* roundtable, co-hosted by Deloitte, called for clearly defined roles and responsibilities, and the creation of a "whole-ecosystem approach" to address how new jobs are being created and filled in the clean energy economy.

In conversations with senior government and private sector officials, we identified implementation gaps and multiple pathways and strategies to upskill and train workers across the clean energy sector. With ample funding available from sources like the BIL and IRA, we have plenty of carrots to incentivize a green transition, but incentives can only be effective if the workforce to build and staff these projects is properly trained and equipped to handle it.

With record levels of turnover across the labor force, we've seen the desire for employers to provide equitable wages and work standards – including prevailing wages, healthcare, and educational opportunities. Our discussion emphasized greater collaboration between labor unions and employers to nurture an environment that cultivates the needs of our workforce.

A core component of the roundtable focused on community engagement – namely prioritizing the needs of disadvantaged communities in the energy transition. Bringing communities into the earliest stage of green infrastructure planning will take pressure off governments and the private sector to identify community needs since they'll already be involved in the process. Participants across the private sector also emphasized the importance of providing opportunities like apprenticeships to break down barriers for community members at the entry level.



Discussion areas

- **The need for complete collaboration and clarity on where responsibility sits.** How can the private sector, governments, and communities best work together to provide employment opportunities in the green transition?
- **Building 'good' quality jobs and training programs.** What constitutes a 'good' job, and how can we upskill workers to ensure they're not left behind?
- **Creating policy and financial incentives.** What are workers looking for in their next job opportunity and how can companies incentivize opportunities to join the clean energy economy?
- **Prioritizing workforce needs and community engagement.** What can companies and governments do to put communities first in the green transition and ensure community members receive equitable access to workforce development opportunities?

Partner reflections

Anesa “Nes” Parker, Public Sector Sustainability Leader, Deloitte US

It was a privilege to be the Headline Partner for this year’s US Climate Action Summit and join an incredible group of leaders, speakers, and participants on ways that public and private sectors are mobilizing to create an impact that matters.

I’d like to thank Climate Group for convening an esteemed set of leaders who are committed to “Making it Real” and recognize the importance of sustainability, climate, and equity in our communities.

It was an honor to be able to showcase our inaugural Public Sector CxO Report on the mainstage, drive a fruitful roundtable discussion on workforce and the energy transition, and showcase our experience on Green Tax incentives and Green Jobs.

Below you’ll find some key takeaways from my time at the US Climate Action Summit as well as our “Workforce and the Energy Transition roundtable”:

The Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) and Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) are an incredible starting point for Climate Action

- We are living in an opportune time where the United States has made incredible investments to advance efforts like decarbonization, climate adaptation, and environmental justice
- New policies and funding like these driven in the public sector today will have social and health impacts for years to come
- These policies and legislations have outlined goals to bolster climate resilience and facilitate the transition to a low-carbon future. Addressing these systemic challenges necessitates a systemic solution which leads me to my next point



Climate Action requires a “Systems Approach”

- Advancing the needle on Climate Action can't be done alone or in a silo
- As we heard throughout the main stage discussions and in roundtables, a “whole-of-government” approach – meaning agencies with different missions and at various levels of government (federal, state, local, tribal and territorial) crossing boundaries and working together – is needed to meet common goals set out by their policymakers
- This systems approach also requires collaboration across not just the Public Sector but with the Private Sector, Unions, and Community-Based Organizations
- As our CxO Report showed: nearly half (46%) of sustainability officials at the state level said they want their leadership to increase public-private partnerships to achieve their goals
- Harnessing the collective power of organizations will enable us to do the most goods for the communities in which we live and serve

Embed Equity into Climate Action

- As we continue to advance our sustainability and climate efforts, it's also important to remember to embed equity into every part of the journey
- Fully delivering on climate commitments means delivering a just transition, including addressing the economic inequities that persist within our communities
- We know that climate change exacerbates existing issues related to economic equity, gender equity, health equity, and racial equity. And the list goes on
- As was reiterated in our Workforce and Energy Transition roundtable, driving equitable climate action to incorporate diverse perspectives can lead to more comprehensive and effective solutions that'll benefit everyone and help advance our climate ambitions

Thank you again to the Climate Group team and all of the leaders who spent time attending and contributing to the wonderful discussion throughout the day! I look forward to keeping the momentum going alongside each of you.



Outcomes

While the benefits are clear, barriers to large-scale adoption of green workforce development remain.



Challenges:



Durability

Governments and companies expressed concern at the ability to create and sustain long-term and long-lasting green workforce initiatives beyond the scope of short-term funding and incentives.



Union engagement

Companies and governments expressed difficulties in building engagement with organized labor and determining who should lead this process.



Community benefit responsibility

There is a lack of clarity surrounding responsibility for the implementation of community benefits. Governments and businesses found challenges in defining their role and mandate to provide training for a green workforce.



Wraparound Services

Companies expressed difficulty in determining the necessary scope and scale of wraparound benefits and implementing best practices behind them.



Solutions to bolster our clean energy workforce are available, but we need to approach with equity and sustainability.

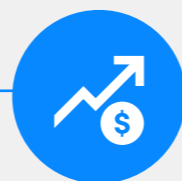


Solutions:



Bring disadvantaged communities to the forefront.

Stakeholders should design and implement policies and incentives aimed at lifting disadvantaged communities. Informed planning processes, job training programs, apprenticeships, and wraparound benefits are all viable strategies to boost community engagement and green workforce retention.



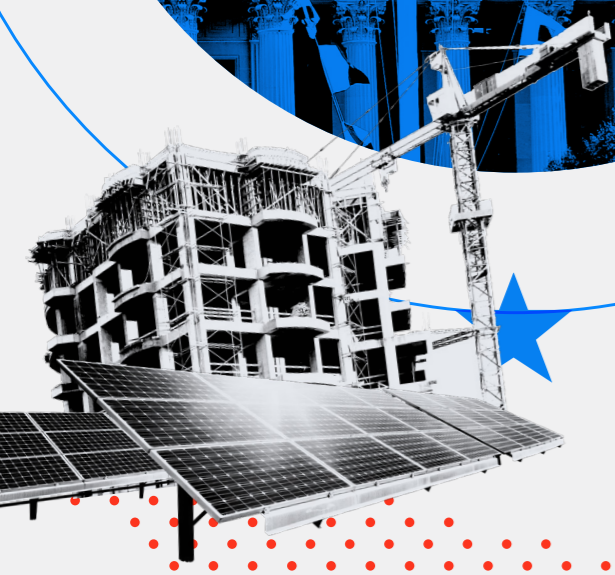
Build programs to last.

Create and scale green workforce development programs that will sustain and thrive beyond short-term funding opportunities.



Bridge and translate between stakeholders.

Governments, businesses, and communities need to be aware and informed of funding and policy opportunities for a green workforce in order to benefit from them.



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Thank you to Deloitte for co-hosting Workforce and the Energy Transition at the US Climate Action Summit Leaders' Forum 2024.

[Get in touch](#) to learn more about how you can partner and collaborate with us at Climate Week NYC and across 2024.

