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## Center for Energy Workforce Development receives \$1.3 Million Grant To Train Low-Income, Young Adults for Energy Jobs

**(WASHINGTON)** – The Center for Energy Workforce Development (CEWD) has received a \$1.37-million grant from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation to prepare low-income, young adults in eight states for careers in the energy industry.

The State Energy Workforce Consortia in Ohio, North Carolina, Washington, Georgia, Florida, California, Indiana and Minnesota will work with 5,000 low-income, young adults (ages 16-26) to assess their interest and skill levels for potential employment in skilled technician positions. Students will have an opportunity to earn “stackable credentials” through the project that focus on the foundational skills necessary to be successful in a variety of positions in energy. The program will use the “Get Into Energy Career Pathway Model,” which might include boot camps, apprenticeships, certificate programs or an associate degree. Roughly 500 participants will be placed into electric and natural gas utility jobs. Others will be referred to jobs in construction and manufacturing.

This grant follows a \$300,000 planning grant awarded to CEWD by the Gates Foundation in 2009, during which energy consortia in eight states were assessed for their readiness to implement the Pathways Model. The Model provides a roadmap for entry into skilled utility technician positions in the energy industry with pathways to higher-level jobs in a variety of work settings, working with three key stakeholders: students and potential applicants; educators; and employers.

“We are very proud to be working with the Gates Foundation as part of their effort to improve the lives of low-income, young adults,” said CEWD Chairman Bob Powers. “This initiative will provide jobs to those who need them, while also supplying our industry with the skilled workers we need to continue ensuring reliable service to our customers. At the same time, it helps to strengthen our nation’s economy by putting people to work. Really, it’s a situation in which everybody wins. This grant will help us better understand what needs to be done to get these potential candidates properly trained and ready to move into entry level positions as quickly as possible.”

The 2009 CEWD Gaps in the Energy Workforce Pipeline Survey predicts that by 2015, 46 percent of the existing skilled technician workforce may need to be replaced due to potential retirement or attrition as well as 51 percent of the engineering workforce. The electric and natural gas utility industry has been working together through CEWD to identify the skills this next generation of workers will need and the best ways to train for the positions. The Get Into Energy Career Pathways Model provides a framework for creating a flexible workforce with skills that can be transferred to multiple positions.

“We believe postsecondary education institutions and employers can work together in innovative ways to meet the needs of today’s students and the growing demands for skilled labor,” said Hilary Pennington, Director of Education, Postsecondary Success, and Special Initiatives at the Gates Foundation. “This project will give students a clear and well-marked path through college and into a growing field of good-paying jobs.”

The State Energy Workforce Consortia are critical to the implementation. The consortia are partnerships between utilities, industrial construction, unions, educational institutions and government and focus on creating a pool of workers that can meet the needs of their state today and in the future.

“These eight pilot programs will provide the next step toward creating industry-recognized credentials that will allow energy consortia in other states to develop the necessary structure for building a stronger and better-prepared energy workforce,” said CEWD President Mary Miller.

CEWD will work with other organizations on the initiative - American Association of Community Colleges (AACC), Association for Career and Technical Education (ACTE), the Council for Adult and Experiential Learning (CAEL), the American National Standards Institute (ANSI), the League for Innovation, the American Council on Education (ACE), Economic Modeling Specialists, Inc. (EMSI), Kuder, Inc., SkillsUSA, and the center for Occupational Research and Development (CORD).

The Center for Energy Workforce Development is a non-profit consortium of electric, natural gas and nuclear utilities and their associations. It was formed in 2006 to help utilities work together to develop solutions to the coming workforce shortage in the utility industry. It is the first partnership between utilities, their associations, contractors and unions to focus on the need to build a skilled workforce pipeline that will meet future industry needs.

For more information on the Get Into Energy Career Pathways Model, please visit [www.cewd.org](http://www.cewd.org).

#### Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation

Guided by the belief that every life has equal value, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation works to help all people lead healthy, productive lives. In developing countries, it focuses on improving people’s health and giving them the chance to lift themselves out of hunger and extreme poverty. In the United States, it seeks to ensure that all people—especially those with the fewest resources—have access to the opportunities they need to succeed in school and life. Based in Seattle, Washington, the foundation is led by CEO Jeff Raikes and Co-Chair William H. Gates Sr., under the direction of Bill and Melinda Gates and Warren Buffett.

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