

Native non-profit to focus on green collar careers

A new Austin-based Native-operated non-profit organization is turning its focus on Green Collar careers for American Indians and Veterans.

Native Workplace (NWP) is officially announcing their new effort to help the community connect with the thousands of careers created by growth in renewable energy industries.

Their mission is to promote Green Collar careers, and to develop an American Indian & Veteran workforce for green industries. However, they also intend for their website, NativeWorkplace.com to become a hub for information regarding green growth in Indian country as well as an educational site.

“We realized that there wasn’t a place where people could learn about the different types of careers in green energy and the skills sets involved,” said Cristala Mussato-Allen, founder and Executive Director of Native Workplace. “People have no idea what these jobs require or how they are defined.”

The non-profit is focusing on two main goals: educating the community and recruiting Tribal members and Veterans into training and employment nationwide.

The organization will be hosting “Green Collar Career Day” events where the community can learn about these new jobs. Events will be a combined effort with on site recruitment into local training, OJT (on-the-job training) employment, and certification opportunities.

Affordable entry-level training is already available at some schools near tribal communities, and expansion into tribal colleges is under way. Many of the employment opportunities are OJT, so tribal members can be working, learning and receiving a paycheck from day one.

“Indian country is poised to fill the workforce void the renewable industry is currently experiencing. Tribal communities, both rural and urban, are located near growing opportunities,” says Lee Ann TallBear, who Chairs the Board of Directors. “These careers are a perfect fit for who we are as Native people.”

The organization hopes schools use the site as a place for creating green education and career projects.

Additional resources provided include: nationwide listings of Native Chambers of Commerce, Urban Indian Centers, and Tribal Colleges as well as green Native businesses, green grants for tribes, green tribal news and links to other Native environmental organizations.

“We are excited at the possibilities of our community being in the forefront of these new jobs. Besides the obvious contribution we will be making to save our sacred sources, it gives us a chance to learn trades that provide secure income and an opportunity for business development,” said Mussato-Allen. ✧

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