Research in Brief

# How Boomers Can Help the Nation Go Green

## Emerging Encore Career Opportunities In the Green Economy

### AUTHORS

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### SPONSORS

MetLife Foundation and Civic Ventures, a think tank on boomers, work and social purpose

### METHODOLOGY

This paper is based on a review of policy literature on the green economy, plus interviews with academics, policy experts, leaders of sustainability projects, employers in green industry sectors, encore workers in green jobs and training providers developing programs to help adults prepare for green encore careers. Such careers combine personal fulfillment, social impact and continued income, enabling people to put their passion to work for the greater good. Researchers examined information on both public and private investment and scanned job search and career web sites targeting encore workers or focused on green jobs.

*Boomers interested in continuing to work … represent a potentially massive green army of workers committed to improving the environment.*

### KEY FINDINGS

- Growing fast: The number of green jobs is growing quickly – up 9.1 percent from 1998 to 2007, compared with a 3.7 percent increase for all jobs in that same period, according to the Pew Charitable Trusts (2009). A report from the U.S. Conference of Mayors notes that green jobs will represent "the fastest growing segment of the United States economy" (2008).
- Encore opportunity: Boomers have a variety of skills that transfer to green jobs, making the green economy "perhaps the greatest source of encore career opportunities."

(*over*)

ENCORE CAREERS

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- Encore roles: This paper focuses on eight emerging encore career opportunities in the green economy. They are: weatherization installers and crew leaders; energy auditors; solar contractors; solar installation trainers; outreach workers; and conservation and sustainability consultants and advocates.

- Details: The paper examines the context, purpose, tasks, qualifications and compensation for each of the eight new jobs. For example, those with construction experience could be well suited for work in weatherization efforts at all levels. For those interested in training for such careers, green energy and construction training programs have proliferated in community colleges across the country.

- Profiles: The paper includes three examples of people in green encore careers. They are: Mark Davis, who started his own solar installation company and works with a Washington, D.C., nonprofit to teach high school dropouts installation skills; Bruce Rhodes, who works as a vocational trainer with YouthBuild in Santa Rosa, Calif., to prepare minority youth for green jobs; and Sharon Ridings, who is in charge of training and leadership development programs for the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency in Washington.

To download the full study, and get more information on three companion studies, go to www.encore.org/research.

## QUOTABLE

- "The challenges to reverse or lessen the impact of decades of abuse to our planet require talent backed by years of experience."

- "There is a vital opportunity for our planet at the intersection of major social and economic trends: the increased activity and investment in green technologies that preserve the environment; looming labor shortages across sectors; and interest among boomers in personally meaningful encore careers that benefit society."

- "By refocusing their knowledge, skills and experience, boomers can help meet the growing demand for talent in the green economy; play a major role in advancing energy independence and environmental sustainability; and assist in the creation of new jobs for all ages."

- "Boomers interested in continuing to work ... represent a potentially massive green army of workers committed to improving the environment."

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