



Edison  
Job Corps Center



A Leader in Social Impact

To Whom It May Concern,

Job Corps is a program administered by the United States Department of Labor that offers free education and vocational training to young men and women ages 16 to 24. It is the largest nationwide residential career training program in the country and has been operating for more than 58 years. Edison Job Corps is the only Job Corps location in New Jersey.

We have read the Board of Public Utilities straw proposal for the permanent community solar program, and we are very concerned with the lack of emphasis on workforce development. The dream of community solar should begin and end with environmental justice. What could be more just than introducing underserved populations to the emerging green energy economy in New Jersey?

We have been very fortunate to have begun a solar installation training program in collaboration with a community solar developer and GAF Roofing Academy. Our students receive commercial and residential solar training coupled with commercial and residential roofing training. This training helps them round out their careers. Our students have taken advantage of the program which has led to pathways to employment in the solar and roofing industries.

Our concern is that this vital component of the first two years of the community solar pilot program has been completely overlooked in the straw proposal. Workforce development is expensive, time-consuming and requires complete commitment. The straw proposal makes no allowances that ensure that a solar developer will engage in workforce development or any job training initiatives. It makes no assurances that solar developers are required to hire workers from underserved populations. As an example, in Illinois, there are requirements for solar providers to hire those who reside in environmental justice and income-eligible communities.

We are expanding our solar training and will be featuring it at our Community Event on May 24th. If The Board does not incentivize workforce development, you will not achieve equity with community solar, because our cohorts will not have access to the jobs this program is creating.

Jobs create meaningful and lasting change in communities. A community solar program that does not emphasize and reward workforce development that creates and deliver jobs to underserved communities is missing a once in a lifetime opportunity to introduce all New Jersey residents to the benefits of renewable energy and the promise it brings to us all.

We urge the Board of Public Utilities to create a scoring system that rewards workforce development, and the companies that are helping us train and employ our most vulnerable population.

Ashton Stripling  
Center Director

Operated by Management & Training Corporation for the United States Department of Labor