



National Plan to Create Jobs: Local job creation mirrors national movement

12/31/2009

The Economic Policy Institute (EPI) has issued a nationwide local jobs initiative called the American Jobs Plan. The five-point plan to create jobs for Americans has been embraced by the Obama administration following a recent jobs summit and is under consideration in Congress.

Last month, EPI issued a statement in collaboration with the NAACP, the AFL-CIO and other groups that called for a stronger focus on creating jobs as the only way to ensure a robust economic recovery. The plan calls for strengthening the safety net, fiscal relief for state and local governments, investment in transportation and schools, public service jobs, and a job creation tax credit.

Center on Policy Initiatives, a local research and advocacy group focused on needs of working people, has published stories of three innovative local programs that it hopes will serve as models of “the best kind of job creation by offering pathways to green careers.”

Those programs include the MAAC Project, a weatherization training program which puts residents to work in low income neighborhoods and provides free services to lower energy bills and greenhouse gas emissions. Funds are provided by the Recovery Act through the U.S. Department of Labor. Other programs include Recovery Act contracts for solar installations on local military bases and a program to train young veterans as plumbers and pipefitters.

The efforts of MAAC Project, Synergy Electric and Plumbers and Pipefitters Local 230 go beyond creating jobs, providing “opportunities for life-long, middle-class careers with health benefits and a secure retirement,” CPI concludes.

The U.S. Chamber of Commerce, by contrast, has proposed its own alternative jobs creation plan outlined in a letter to President Barack Obama. The Chamber’s plan calls for encouragement of public/private infrastructure investment, a pro-growth tax agenda, more exports, limits on litigation, and education reforms.