

Key Findings, 2009

# Energy Efficiency Occupations

in the  
Inland Empire Region



Centers of Excellence  
Economic and Workforce Development  
California Community Colleges

The Centers of Excellence, in partnership with business and industry, deliver regional workforce research customized for community college program decision making and resource development.



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## Inside:

Research Objectives  
Energy Efficiency Employers  
Occupational Employment  
Workforce Challenges  
Education and Training



## Research Objectives

Increasing energy and commodity costs, legislative requirements and consumer demand for a more sustainable environment have all led to a substantial push for a greener economy. To better understand the implications for community colleges, the Centers of Excellence (COE) conducted a study of the energy efficiency sector and related occupations. The research objectives of this study were to:

- Estimate the current number and size of firms, as well as geographic concentration.
- Project future job growth over three years in energy efficiency occupations relevant to community colleges.
- Identify employer needs and challenges for hiring and training employees.
- Define skill sets and education requirements needed for key occupations.
- Identify industry interest in accessing community college education and training programs.

## Energy Efficiency Employers

### Type of Firm

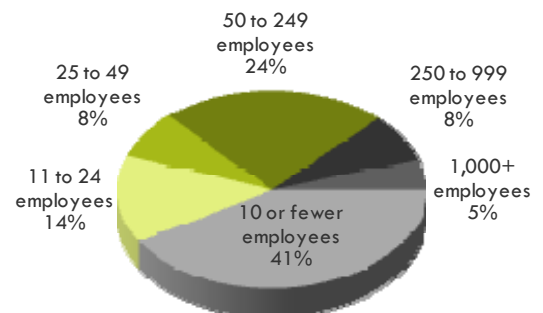
Firms that hire energy efficiency workers are found in different industries. This study focused on employers in the following three industry groups.



- In the Inland Empire, approximately 1,330 firms were identified as employing energy efficiency workers in one or more of the eight occupations studied.<sup>1</sup>
- Fifty-one percent of employers identify themselves as indirectly involved with energy efficiency work; the remaining indicated they are directly involved with energy efficiency work.
- The primary services offered by energy efficiency employers include consulting, construction, project management, engineering, HVAC installation and repair, electrical, and marketing and sales.

### Size of Firm

The data compiled on the size of firms reveals that most of the firms are relatively small – 56% employ fewer than 25 employees – with a significant portion (42%) employing 10 or fewer employees. This data is reflected in the pie chart on the right.



## Occupational Employment

Eight energy efficiency occupations were identified as high-growth and align with community college education programs. The combined employment in the Inland Empire Region for the eight occupations totals at least 1,190 jobs (known employment from survey respondents) and could be as high as 8,790 jobs. The latter figure is an extrapolated estimate of employment, based on survey responses and an estimate of the number of energy efficiency-related firms in the region. All eight occupations show significant growth over the next 12 months and three years.

- In the next 12 months, the largest growth is projected for building performance or retrofitting specialists with 250 new jobs (26% growth) and energy auditors or home energy raters with 160 new jobs regionally (22% growth).
- Over the next three years, these two occupations are also the fastest growing. Building performance or retrofitting specialists (830 new jobs; 86% growth) and energy auditors or home energy raters (480 new jobs; 67% growth).

The table on the opposite page details these occupations and their growth potential.

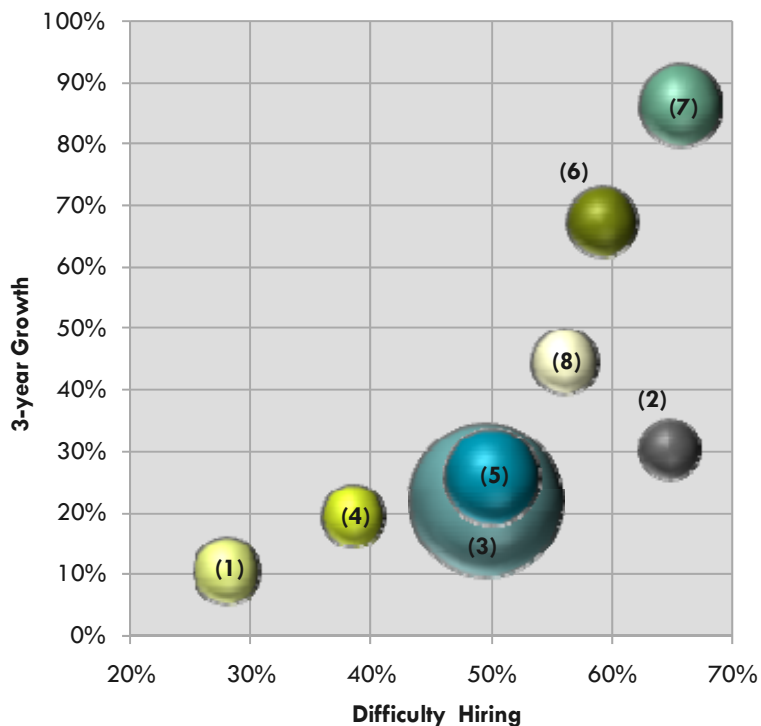
<sup>1</sup>Margin of error for the 142 survey respondents (out of the universe of 1,330) is  $\pm 7.78$  percent.

## Occupational Employment

Energy Efficiency Occupations	Estimated 2009 Employment	3-year Projected Growth	Growth Rate
<b>Project managers for construction or design work</b> are responsible for communicating with project partners and ensuring the project is completed in a timely manner and on budget.	3,360	740	22%
<b>HVAC mechanics, technicians or installers</b> install, repair and maintain heating, ventilation, air-conditioning and refrigeration systems.	1,360	350	26%
<b>Building performance or retrofitting specialists</b> are contractors who improve the energy efficiency of homes or buildings by installing insulation, windows, lighting and other energy efficient products.	970	830	86%
<b>Energy auditors or home energy raters</b> are responsible for collecting, analyzing and validating energy usage in the field and preparing reports on a building or home's total energy profile.	720	480	67%
<b>Building operators or building engineers</b> troubleshoot, install, replace, and repair building energy systems and controls to optimize energy efficiency.	640	70	11%
<b>Building controls systems technician</b> combine traditional skill sets of building technicians with advanced skills in controls programming, networking and systems integration.	630	280	45%
<b>Compliance analyst or energy regulation specialists</b> evaluate if projects are meeting regulatory requirements and/or incentives and provide recommendations as needed to meet compliance.	570	110	19%
<b>Resource conservation or energy efficiency managers</b> assess current energy and resource consumption and develop strategies to reduce usage.	540	160	30%
<b>Total, All Occupations</b> (totals may not add due to rounding)	<b>8,790</b>	<b>3,030</b>	

## Workforce Challenges

Employers indicate difficulty in hiring for all eight occupations. The chart below shows the 12-month projected growth rate of the eight occupations in relationship to the level of difficulty hiring. The area of each bubble represents the size of current employment for each occupation.



- The majority of surveyed employers reported they experience difficulty finding qualified applicants for five of the eight occupations.
- More than one-quarter experience great difficulty finding resource conservation or energy efficiency managers (32%), compliance analysts or energy regulation specialists (31%), and building performance or retrofitting specialists (26%).
- Over half of employers reported difficulty finding qualified energy auditors or home energy raters (59%), building controls system technicians (56%), HVAC technicians (50%) and project managers for construction or design work (49%).

- (1) Building operators or building engineers
- (2) Resource conservation or energy efficiency managers
- (3) Project managers for construction or design work
- (4) Compliance analysts or energy regulation specialists
- (5) HVAC mechanics, technicians or installers
- (6) Energy auditors or home energy raters
- (7) Building performance or retrofitting specialists
- (8) Building controls systems technicians

## Education, Training, and Skill Requirements

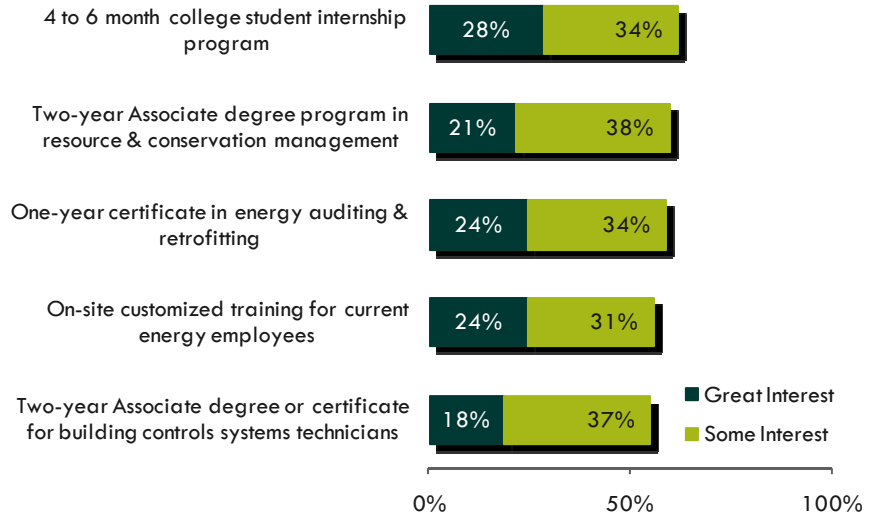
Employers expressed great interest in education and training programs that can be developed by community colleges:

- The majority of employers expressed interest in each of the five potential community college program options (as shown in the graph below).
- Sixty-one percent of surveyed employers prefer HVAC mechanics, technicians or installers to have an associate degree or program certificate specific to the position.
- Six out of ten employers expressed great or some interest in an internship program for community college students (62%) and a two-year Associate program in resource and conservation management (59%).

### Employers' Top 3 Most Important Knowledge and Skill Areas

1. Ability to communicate with customers, in writing and in person.
2. Understanding of local and state energy efficiency requirements and incentives for new and existing buildings.
3. General understanding of the mechanics and engineering of energy systems, including HVAC, lighting, and renewable energy systems.

### Employer Interest in Community College Programs



## For More Information

For more information on this study, contact:

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Coming soon! The Inland Empire Region Energy Efficiency Occupations environmental scan will be available to download at [www.coecc.net/energy](http://www.coecc.net/energy) in September, 2009.

## Research Partners



## Industry Partners

