

Defining “Green Jobs” in Manufacturing¹

According to NACFAM the overarching definition is that “Green Jobs” in manufacturing are jobs that contribute substantially to preserving or restoring environmental quality.² However, in its application to manufacturing there are several general “shades of green” or categories that we are concentrating on.

1. Greening existing manufacturing jobs. These jobs can help make manufacturing facilities more efficient. Jobs in this category cover many efficiency-related topics including, but not limited to, the following:

- a. Energy efficiency and renewable energy
- b. Resource efficiency
- c. Waste efficiency
- d. Water efficiency

2. Jobs manufacturing “green” or “sustainable” products. Some examples of these types of products include:

- a. Photovoltaic panels
- b. Wind turbines
- c. Energy efficient products
- d. Products containing recycled or remanufactured components
- e. Products to facilitate more efficient means of transportation
- f. Many more products and product categories

3. Jobs in the economy that are enabled through sustainable manufacturing can include:

- a. Collection centers & materials recovery
- b. Reuse
- c. Recycling
- d. Remanufacturing
- e. Efficient transportation between points
- f. Entrepreneurial opportunities

It is imperative that we build flexibility and progression into our definitions of jobs that are considered “Green Jobs”. For example, as energy efficiency capabilities improve and become more affordable the “Green Jobs” related to the manufacturing of the applicable products will change accordingly. NACFAM believes we must build in the ability for our definitions and categorizations of “Green Jobs” to change morph over time in order to stay up to date and push progress. If we do not build in that flexibility, it could be a detriment to sustainable manufacturing and effectively quash or hold back innovation.

1 “Green Jobs in Manufacturing”: A Roadmap for Progressively Greener Solutions through a Sustainable and Green Workforce National Council for Advanced Manufacturing (NACFAM) December 23, 2008

2 Green Jobs: Towards decent work in a sustainable, low-carbon world. Produced by Worldwatch Institute with technical assistance by Cornell University Global Labor Institute. Commissioned and funded by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) as part of the joint UNEP, ILO, IOE, ITUC Green Jobs Initiative.