

## WAP Enhancement & Innovation Grant

**Organization:** Faith in Place

**Project Title:** Engage and Empower Communities of Faith to Advance an Equitable Clean Energy Workforce

**Major Participants:** OAI, Inc., Slipstream Group, Inc.

### **Objectives:**

- Educate, engage, and collaborate with diverse communities of faith to increase the representation of marginalized communities (e.g., communities of color, women, and returning citizens) in the home energy performance and energy efficiency workforce.
- Offer opportunities for relevant trainings, connections to employers for hiring, and continued support for long-term career retention for marginalized communities who are underrepresented in the home energy performance and energy efficiency workforce.
- Reduce systemic barriers and inequities that prevent marginalized communities from entering the home energy performance and energy efficiency workforce.

**Description:** Faith in Place (FIP) will collaborate with OAI, Inc., and Slipstream Group, Inc., to engage communities of faith located in Chicago, IL, the South Suburbs of Chicago, IL, and Waukegan, IL, to advance a more equitable and diverse clean energy workforce where workforce training hubs are currently lacking. Our project will increase training, hiring, and long-term retention of residents of marginalized communities in the clean energy workforce.

**Potential Impact:** Our project bridges gaps caused by systemic inequities impacting marginalized communities' ability to enter and thrive in the clean energy sector. By the end of the grant period, 30-45 residents of marginalized communities in Northeastern Illinois will be trained and supported for long-term success in clean energy careers. This will build a foundation for replicability to continue advancing and diversifying an equitable clean energy industry workforce in collaboration with marginalized communities and communities of faith.

**Community Benefits Plan Goals:** Utilizing FIP's faith-based Trusted Messenger model, we will recruit workforce candidates from marginalized communities who are often unaware or skeptical of employment opportunities in clean energy. Our authentic relationships built on trust with communities of faith position us to reach audiences often overlooked or underrepresented in the clean energy workforce. All recruited participants will be vetted via a "Try-Out" selection process, which will encourage high retention rates and refer unqualified participants to alternative programs. Upon selection, participants will receive trainings to enter clean energy careers and will be provided barrier reduction stipends, e.g., for transportation and childcare. Career placements will be facilitated with OAI's existing network of 40+ solar, construction, and environmental employers in the region. All participants will continue to receive ongoing mentoring and peer support to ensure career success.