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# Workforce Development and Employer Engagement

By: Kyle Barber and Austin Frank

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# 1. Intro

**My name is Kyle Barber**

**I grew up in the Coal Mines of Southern Illinois and worked my first real job rehabilitating the grounds. I later graduated from Illinois College (in Jacksonville Illinois) with a B.A. in Mathematics. Worked as a financial/insurance advisor for Country Financial. Started a solar company in 2011 called EFS energy and was bought out by my business partner in 2016. I began teaching solar and that brings me here to share my knowledge and life lessons in the solar industry to those who would like to listen and understand more...**



## **Austin Frank**

- **Illinois Workforce Graduate**
- **IBEW Contractor**
- **EEC Contractor**
- **NABCEP Associate**
- **Illinois Shines Approved  
Vendor/Aggregator**
- **Illinois Solar For All Approved  
Vendor/Aggregator**


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# Where do you get the students?

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**Everywhere you can! It's  
vital to have great intake  
partners.**

(We will be using SSP who won't the Navigator portion)



## 2. What happens pre-Solar training (soft skills)?

- **Tutoring and Tabe testing! (9th Grade equivalency)**
- **Individual Interviews**
- **Individual Financial literacy**
- **Individual Barrier Reduction (DL)**
- **Drug Screenings**



# Soft Skills and Job Readiness Training

## 4-Week Bridge Programs & Job Readiness Training

Component conducted and in conjunction with the Navigator

- Assessments: basic life and academic skills, motivation, career interests, barriers to employment
- Essential Skills:
  - Interpersonal skills
  - Professionalism
  - Dependability
  - Time management
  - Working with integrity
  - Conflict resolution





# Soft Skills and Job Readiness Training

Certifications and sections coming out the BRIDGE program:

1. OSHA10
2. CPR
3. Team Building
4. BPI- Building Sciences
5. Prepared for Drone License (FAA part 107)

Plan on additional certifications as more needs appear







# Technical Solar Training

## 5-Week Comprehensive Solar Technical Training

- Combination of classroom and hands-on training activities
- 5-days per week for 37.5 hours/week (like a job)
- Participants receive weekly stipend
- Experienced instructors with solar industry professionals (real world knowledge)
- Periodic assessments and quizzes (daily)
- NABCEP knowledge content domains and learning objectives
- NABCEP PV Associate Certificate Exam





# Technical Solar Training

## What They Learned

- Applications with and without storage
- Creating financial proposals
- System install & design (6 Kw Roof Mount and 8Kw Commercial)
- ID & learn all component parts of a Photovoltaic (PV) array
- Online system configuration
- Troubleshooting within a PV system
- Solar & battery maintenance
- Public educational gaps in solar (economic analysis)
- Utility interconnected PV design



# Technical Solar Training

## What They Learned

- Online job resources & professional social media training (LinkedIn, Solar-specific job sites)
- Marketability of students ( Solar resume, cover letter, interviewing skills)
- Stand-alone PV design
- Key sales points
- Educational tools
- Online PV educational resources
- Exposure to newest technologies (Drones and Design software)
- Career/Networking Fair (Exposure to local companies)



# Retention and Follow-up

- Post-training outreach and follow-up with graduates
- Facebook Alumni Solar Installer Group (job successes, events, opportunities, information, relevant solar stories)
- Continuation of case management by all partner agencies
- Follow-up assistance as needed
- Alumni Events





# Workforce Job Placement

- Working with and Listening to Solar Agencies (ISEA, MREA, SEIA)
- Creating Career Fair with appropriate companies (screen)
- Continuation of case management by all partner agencies
- Follow-up assistance as needed
- Alumni Events





**Thank you for your time:**

**Any Questions?**

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# Good luck!

I hope to see all of you running a successful classroom soon or hiring out of our program.

“Your purpose in life is to find your purpose and give your whole heart and soul to it” - Buddha

