

Dan River Region Collaborative

Green Skills for a 21st Century Economy

Request for Proposals

July 2009

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I. Introduction

Workforce skills matter in an increasingly global and competitive economic environment, yet over a third of the American workforce lacks the skills needed to succeed in this environment. America's prosperity will continue to depend on the strength of its workforce. Some sectors and communities already face skill shortages, unfilled jobs, low productivity, threats to regional competitiveness, and increasing disparities between those with and without education and skills.

Green skills provide a pathway to better jobs and promote growth industries in our region. Green skills are critical for developing the following sectors:

Energy Efficiency is the use of technology as well as operation and maintenance that requires less energy to perform the same function – getting more use out of the energy we already create. HVAC engineers, building control technicians, electricians, energy auditors, and insulation workers are only a few of the occupations defining this sector.

SmartGrid/Smart Energy can be defined as the improvement of power delivery systems to be more efficient, reliable and safe. Occupations typically associated with this sector include power engineers and computer technicians to design, manufacture, and provide maintenance for these new systems.

Renewable Energy is produced through resources such as sunlight, wind, rain, tides and geothermal heat which may be naturally replenished. Increases in the use of these technologies for energy production will require jobs in manufacturing (solar panels, wind turbines), as well as operators and maintenance technicians to keep these systems running properly and efficiently.

Biofuels/Biomass refers to the creation and use of fuel sources from chemical or biological materials other than fossil fuels for the generation of power. This industry requires the cultivation of resources such as corn crops to produce ethanol, and therefore employs a host of different occupations – from farmers to process technicians in biodiesel companies.

Green Building is the practice of increasing the efficiency with which buildings use resources — energy, water, and materials — while reducing building impacts on human health and the environment through better siting, design, construction, and removal. The green building sector employs architects versed in green design to plant operators creating green materials to laborers at green construction sites.

Alternative Transportation encourages the creation of modes of transportation (electric cars, mass transit, bicycles) that are powered by sources other than depleting fuel sources. Occupations range from technology designers to hybrid automotive maintenance workers.

Recycling & Waste Management is the collection, transport, processing, recycling or disposal of waste materials to reduce their effect on human health and the environment, and/or to recover resources from them. Waste treatment operators, technicians, and all types of handling positions are required to meet the functions of this sector.

Sustainable Agriculture & Horticulture encourages practices in plant and animal production that are efficient and sustainable. This sector employs a variety of occupations – from organic farmers to urban agriculture land use planners to green roof designers.

(Source: A Growing Green Economy: Opportunities of Tomorrow. Seattle Jobs Initiative and the National Network of Sector Partners, March 2009.)

The Dan River Region Collaborative (“DRR Collaborative”) seeks to improve employment, training, and labor market outcomes for low-income individuals. The DRR Collaborative seeks to improve both the quality of jobs and the capacity of workers by promoting change at three levels: individual, institution, and system. The result: better jobs, better workers, and a better workforce development system. The Dan River Region Collaborative serves approximately 150,000 people in Pittsylvania, Halifax, and Henry counties and the cities of Danville and Martinsville.

The DRR Collaborative is a new regional funding entity. Key funding partners include The Community Foundation for the Dan River Region, The Danville Regional Foundation, The Harvest Foundation, and the Virginia Tobacco Commission. These investors, along with the National Fund for Workforce Solutions, will capitalize this effort with \$1.5 million. A principle strategy of the DRR collaborative is to increase the number of local and regional workforce partnerships.

The key functions of workforce partnerships include:

- Pursuing a “dual customer approach,” serving businesses looking for qualified workers and job seekers and workers looking to advance their careers;
- Organizing multiple institutions and funding streams around common goals;
- Providing or brokering services—training and supports—that help workers gain access to the initial rungs on the ladder to economic opportunity and advancement;
- Serving a variety of workers but recognizing and addressing the special needs of lower-skilled, lower-wage workers and job seekers;
- Reducing turnover and increasing the economic mobility of workers;
- Testing and adapting innovative approaches to workforce problems; and
- Catalyzing improvements in public systems and business employment practices.

This Request for Proposals invites applications for workforce partnerships that seek to increase the level of green skills in the region. Funding decisions will be based on partnership readiness and response to the selection criteria listed below.

Proposals must be submitted to Debra L. Dodson at The Community Foundation of the Dan River Region by July 31, 2009.

II. Proposal Guidelines

In 2009 the DRR Collaborative intends to fund several new workforce partnerships, utilizing The Community Foundation of the Dan River Region as a fiscal agent. Grants will be awarded by The Community Foundation of the Dan River Region and the grant period will last one year. Additional funding in future years is possible depending upon program implementation and performance. The DRR Collaborative has designated \$100,000 for partnerships that increase green skills in our region.

Each new workforce partnership is expected to provide matching funds and/or in kind services equal to 25% the grant amount requested. Applicants must list the matching funds and resources in the budget and budget narrative and explain

how they contribute towards achieving the objectives of their workforce partnership.

The Community Foundation of the Dan River Region will manage the Request for Proposals and grant disbursement process. For more information about the Foundation, please see their web site: www.cfdr.org

The proposal should include the following:

1. Cover letter including a statement that the applicant agrees to collect and report the performance indicators and be willing to participate in overall program evaluation.
2. Name, address, and contacts of the lead partner and other members of the workforce partnership submitting the proposal (1 page);
3. Responses to the following selection criteria listed in part III (3 pages):
 - Vision
 - Regional collaboration
 - Existing partner services
 - Data management capacity
 - Funding resources and relationships
4. Implementation Plan with Outcome Goals (2 pages);
5. A completed budget form with budget narrative (1 page).

Proposals should be no longer than 8 pages in 12 point font. Appendices should be limited to information that directly relates to the proposal. Letters of support from key partners may also be attached.

Submit proposals electronically as a single PDF file by 5:00 pm EDT, Friday, July 31, 2009 to:

Debra L. Dodson

The Community Foundation for the Dan River Region

541 Loyal Street

P.O. Box 1039

Danville, Virginia 24543

Ph. (434) 793-0884

Fax (434) 793-6489

Email: communityfoundation@gamewood.com

Please include in the single PDF file a cover letter on institution letterhead.

III. Selection Criteria

Applicants should address the following criteria in their proposals:

- A. Vision for working with low-income individuals seeking to advance their skills and career opportunities in a green economy.
- Describe the barriers and needs of low-income individuals and their families in your region. Provide baseline data demonstrating the barriers.
 - What kind of region-wide changes are needed to increase green skills of low-income individuals?
- B. Regional collaboration that will invest time and energy to grow the project.
- How are partnership leaders engaged in supporting low-income jobseekers?
 - Define the geographic area your partnership encompasses and how the project could be used in other parts of the Dan River region.
 - How will employers participate and provide leadership to the partnership?
 - In addition to these leaders, which individuals within the partner organizations would be the champions for the program?
 - Where would the green skills program be housed?

C. Existing partner services that form the basis for a Workforce Partnership that can support a green skills program.

- What services do the partners currently provide related to green skills training, job placement, and career counseling?
- How can the partnership help individuals access public benefits and financial aid and scholarships?
- How will the partners integrate these core services? Will any be institutionalized at a larger scale?
- What additional capacity building does your partnership need? What barriers do you face in terms of capacity?

D. Data management capacity to track and analyze program information and results.

- What experience do the partners have with tracking and reporting data for low-income jobseekers and similar programs?
- How do the partners track economic outcomes? Specifically, what employment data can you track?

E. Funding resources and relationships that can advance the program.

- List any local or regional funding resources that the partners can leverage to support innovative programming;

IV. Implementation Plan and Outcome Goals

Describe how you would implement a Workforce Partnerships for a 21st Century Economy program by answering the following questions:

Who is your target population?

Who are your key partners?

What new services and supports will you develop?

What is your approach to coordinating services?

How will you collect data and track participants?

The Green Skills for a 21st Century Economy program requires certain basic outcome measures from each site. Please list goals in the chart below and provide rationale for the level of those goals:

Required Outcomes

<i>Outcome Measures</i>	<i>Goals</i>
Number of individuals that receive green skills training.	
Number of individuals that get jobs and/or advance in their careers.	
Number of businesses helped to recruit, retain, and advance employees.	
Describe improvements in the effectiveness of workforce systems including increased collaboration, new partners, innovative training models, industry input, and work supports for jobseekers.	

Tracking Performance Indicators

The Workforce Partnerships for a 21st Century Economy program also requires sites to track performance indicators that identify services that participants receive and the resulting impact. The DRR Collaborative will provide tools and peer learning opportunities that will assist selected sites with developing appropriate tracking systems.

V. Timeline for Proposals and Grant Awards

<i>Date</i>	<i>Event</i>	<i>Notes</i>
July 2, 2009	RFP announced.	

July 31, 2009	Completed proposals due by 5 PM EST to The Community Foundation of the Dan River Region	Incomplete or late proposals will not be accepted.
August 2009	Workforce partnerships selected for grant awards notified by email.	
September 2009	Grant awards mailed to sites.	
Early October, 2009	Kick-off convening.	Representatives from selected workforce partnerships will meet each other and learn about successful workforce partnership activities.
March 15, 2010	Interim reports due.	
September 15, 2010	Final narrative and financial reports due.	

VI. Budget Format

In the budget below, please categorize the request for DRR Collaborative Grant Funds and identify a match equal to 25% of the total amount requested. The match may consist of new or leveraged grants or funding commitments. You may also list any in-kind contributions that will benefit the program.

Workforce Partnerships for a 21st Century Economy – Program Budget

<i>Cost Category</i>	<i>DRR Collaborative Funds</i>	<i>Cash and/or In Kind Match</i>	<i>Total</i>
Personnel			
Fringe Benefits			
Travel			

Equipment			
Supplies/Office Expenses			
Contracted Services			
Other Direct Costs (specify)			
<i>Grand Total</i>			

Total DRR Collaborative Funds Requested: _____

Budget Narrative: