

SEED Grant Summary

American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 Energy Training Partnership Grant SGA/DFA PY 08-18

Applicant Name: Northwest Energy Efficiency Council (NEEC)

Project Title: Partnership for Sound Energy Efficiency Development (SEED)

Area Served: 5 counties of the Puget Sound region: King, Snohomish, Pierce, Kitsap, and Clallam which cover the state's largest urban areas as well as many suburban and rural areas. These counties do not appear on the list of counties impacted by automotive-related restructuring.

Funding Requested: \$3,876,171

Applicant Category: Local non-profit

The Northwest Energy Efficiency Council (NEEC) is applying for funding from the Department of Labor for job training and placement in the sectors of energy-efficient building, construction, and retrofit and energy efficiency assessment. NEEC will utilize this funding for the Sound Energy Efficiency Development (SEED) project to be implemented by a strong regional partnership of employers, labor organizations, Workforce Development Councils, One Stop Career Centers, and community and technical colleges across a five-county area. This grant will target training for youth, unemployed adults, veterans, incumbent workers and people with employment barriers for entry to middle-skill energy efficiency and assessment occupations, placing them in existing jobs openings and in jobs created through the investment of stimulus funds.

NEEC, a non-profit trade association, is the pre-eminent regional leader in the development and promotion of energy-efficient policies, programs, and training throughout the Pacific Northwest. NEEC has an engaged membership of nearly 90 regional and national energy-efficiency companies that can ensure the SEED program addresses real-time labor and training needs within the energy efficiency marketplace. For an industry that currently employs approximately 8,000 in our region and contributes well over \$1B of economic activity annually, NEEC is the voice of the industry. Widely-recognized participating companies include McKinstry, McDonald-Miller, Johnson Controls, Puget Sound Energy, Tacoma Power, and Snohomish County PUD.

The Central Puget Sound Region of Washington state is composed of King, Pierce, Snohomish, Kitsap, and Clallam counties. The Region covers an area the size of the states of Connecticut and Rhode Island combined and has a population of 3.4 million. It is fortunate to have one of the most advanced port complexes in the world and is home to a wide range of industry leaders. With 60% of the jobs in the state located in this five-county area, the prosperity of the region is critical to the economic health and globally competitive position of Washington and the nation.

The built environment today accounts for close to 50% of greenhouse gas emissions, offering one of the richest opportunities in our region to realize energy efficiencies that will protect our environment while, at the same time, generating job openings in the skilled trades and a wide range of professional/technical occupations. Policy drivers, such as the 2020 greenhouse gas reduction limit established in House Bill 2815, and financial incentives from federal, state, and local funding sources are rapidly creating demand for residential weatherization and commercial building retrofits which will enable home and building owners to reduce energy consumption and achieve energy savings. The impact will be felt throughout our region both economically and environmentally.

Developing a trained energy efficiency workforce for our region will solve the challenges facing employers today: (1) a supply of workers that is not keeping pace with expected industry demand;

(2) a diminishing level of experience among incumbent workers as the economy continues to recover and workers begin to retire in larger numbers; (3) skill and knowledge gaps created by the emergence of new green materials and technologies; and (4) capacity constraints in local pre-apprenticeship and occupational training programs.

SEED will meet these challenges through a robust network of training programs working together to open green career paths for job seekers and meet industry's demand for trained energy efficiency workers. Having this skilled workforce available now, along with a pipeline of workers in the future, will be a key factor in our region's competitiveness in local and global markets. The energy efficiency sector is an important pillar of Washington's 21st century economy and source of family-wage jobs.

SEED's training network will be comprised of three core components:

- **Home Weatherization:** Home weatherization offers an entry point into the energy efficiency field and a skill upgrade opportunity for building trade apprentices and journey workers. A SEED partner will launch an innovative, community-based home weatherization program which will bring journey workers "off of the bench" and upgrade their skills through advanced training in home energy systems and energy audits. Over a two year period this program will undertake two home weatherization projects each in King, Pierce, and Snohomish counties for up to 2800 homes. Community and technical colleges in five counties will provide training classes for entry-level weatherization workers and middle-skill residential energy auditors.
- **Apprenticeship Preparation for the Building Trades:** SEED partners recognize the importance of expanding the pipeline for the building trades to meet future demand. SEED will increase the capacity of regional pre-apprenticeship programs which uniquely utilize a multi-craft approach, enabling participants to be eligible for a variety of trade apprenticeships.
- **Energy Assessment and Efficiency in the Built Environment:** SEED's third critical component is training for occupations that construct, retrofit, maintain and manage buildings for the greatest energy efficiency. "Shovel-ready" and sector-based curricula will be offered in occupations that employers tell us are most needed, including commercial energy auditors, building inspectors, building engineers/ operators, construction and energy managers. These training programs result in recognized college or industry certificates. Curriculum gaps in counties will be filled by sharing curriculum across the network, building a foundation of standardized and articulated programs in the region. Enrollment capacities will be expanded, support services will be integrated along with links to remedial education, and programs will be accessible to working adults - all key factors to the success of individual participants and the regional network.

NEEC will provide overall grant administration, performance monitoring, program linkages with other industry sector initiatives, data collection and reporting, and coordination of the SEED partnership.