

State Labor Market Information Improvement Grants

Total: \$48.8 million nationwide

Total Wyoming: \$494,000

- *The Wyoming Department of Workforce Services, in conjunction with the Wyoming Department of Employment, joined six other states in applying for funding*
- *The grant process was competitive; Wyoming's consortium had to compete against other consortia.*
- *Approval was announced November 18, 2009, by the U.S. Department of Labor's Employment and Training Administration.*

Purpose and Principles: The Recovery Act provided \$750 million in competitive grants for worker training and placement in high-growth and emerging industries. Of that amount, \$500 million was designated for projects that prepare workers for careers in the energy efficiency and renewable energy sectors. The Workforce Investment Act defines these sectors to include: the energy-efficient building, construction, and retrofit industries; the renewable electric power industry; the energy efficient and advanced drive train vehicle industry; the biofuels industry; the deconstruction and materials use industries; the energy efficiency assessment industry serving residential, commercial, or industrial sectors; and manufacturers that produce sustainable products using environmentally sustainable processes and materials.

On June 24, 2009, the Department of Labor's Employment and Training Administration announced that the \$500 million would be disbursed through five grant opportunities, including this \$48.8 million grant, which encouraged states, acting singularly or in groups, to collect, analyze and disseminate labor market information, and to enhance the ability of individuals to learn about and pursue careers within the energy efficiency and renewable energy industries. More specifically, the U.S. Department of Labor sought proposals for research and analysis of labor market data to assess economic activity in energy efficiency and renewable energy industries and identify occupations within those industries.

One goal is to obtain employment estimates of the number and skill characteristics of current and projected jobs in the green economy. The U.S. Department of Labor also is interested in assessing the extent to which new green jobs are being created as a result of Recovery Act investments as well as investments in green technologies by state and local governments, the private sector, and community organizations. Any data collection activities proposed by grant applicants must either conform to technical standards and methodologies established by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics or provide a sound rationale for use of an alternative methodology. Another key goal is to ensure that the training efforts being funded through the public workforce investment system provide workers with the training that will be in demand for green jobs, and to ensure that a supply of trained workers will be available to fill the openings posted by businesses that will be hiring as a result of Recovery Act investments.

Wyoming's Application: Wyoming joined six other states (Iowa, Montana, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota and Utah) in submitting an application requesting \$3,877,949 for a

variety of labor market data gathering activities. Of this amount, Wyoming specifically requested \$494,000, which will be spent on the following: Personnel, \$125,000; Fringe benefits, \$45,000; Travel, \$20,000; Hardware/software, \$50,000; Office supplies, \$20,000; Contracts for printing of reports, \$124,000; In-house printing, \$110,000.

The seven-state partnership, known as the Northern Plains and Rocky Mountain Consortium, proposed a variety of projects that seek to gather more robust information on the green economy through better collaboration on employer surveys, to acquire more knowledge about growing green industries in the region (such as wind, biofuels, clean coal, carbon sequestration and solar), and to widely disseminate the information.

The proposal consists of three phases: 1) identifying existing research in the seven-state region, 2) devising methods to close information gaps; and 3) making the research available to a broad audience, including jobseekers, employers, worker training entities, educational institutions, labor market information agencies, labor-exchange entities, and the general public. One of the key components is a request for institutions of higher learning to collaborate on research that measures the effect that new technologies are having on the green economy. The resulting findings will be shared during a regionwide conference. Additionally, the consortium proposed to host a nationwide conference to share information gathered by this consortium and any others successfully funded by the U.S. DOL through this grant opportunity.

Wyoming's Specific Responsibilities: The Research and Planning Section of the Wyoming Department of Employment will use the grant funding to conduct the following activities:

1. Analyze job orders and surveys of businesses to determine green job trends.
2. Contract with the state Department of Environmental Quality to determine the effect of environmental regulation on job skills and requirements (such as in the fields of construction reclamation; watershed protection; and mitigation of environmental and industrial impacts from new construction of power plants and utility lines).
3. Analyze skills requirements of green jobs.
4. Analyze salaries of various green jobs.
5. Develop informational brochures on green jobs to distribute to dislocated workers and unemployment insurance claimants.
6. Develop informational Web links that will be referenced in quarterly unemployment insurance newsletters that are sent to employers.
7. Develop expertise and knowledge in carbon dioxide sequestration job skills.
8. Conduct a statewide green jobs conference.

Grant Expenditure Period: The period of grant performance will 18 months beginning Dec. 1, 2009.

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