

President's High Growth Job Training Initiative

Community Action Partnership of Sonoma County

Grantee: Community Action Partnership of Sonoma County

Industry Focus: Renewable energy

Key Partners: Sonoma County Human Services Department, One-Stop and Workforce Investment Board; John Muir Charter High School; Santa Rosa Junior College; Burbank Construction; and SolarWorks.

Grant Amount: \$500,000

Leveraged Amount: \$796,500

Location of Grant Activities: Sonoma County, California

Challenge: Renewable energy providers have identified the need for a large number of new workers. Solar energy production in America is in a period of rapid expansion, and the evolution of the technology is transforming the industry. The expansion of the industry is hampered by the need for skilled tradesmen. Providers have refined ideal employee characteristics and are seeking entry-level workers with construction experience and math, science and technology skills. To support the expansion of the solar industry a regional study mapped out the current situation: 1) Solar firms in the Bay Area employ between 6,900 and 8,000 workers. 2) Three out of four firms are increasing their hiring over the next year 3) Bay Area solar employment is expected to increase up to 17% in the next 12 months, resulting in 1,200 new jobs.

Addressing the Challenge: The Sonoma County strategy will bring to scale YouthBuild Santa Rosa, an existing comprehensive skill-building program that targets dropout youth. Solutions will include outreach, recruitment and awareness-building activities among unemployed youth. The program will allow participants to earn a high school diploma and will link them to community colleges, and on-the-job training leading to industry-recognized credentials. This experienced-based training program will be offered in partnership with John Muir Charter School to improve the literacy and numeracy skills of participants, with a focus on skills associated with construction, installation and maintenance of renewable energy systems.

Projected Outcomes:

- 60 students will enroll
- 50 students will be placed in employment or will move on to pursue further education or training programs
- 40 students will attain a recognized certificate, diploma or degree
- 20 students will attain a high school diploma or GED.

