



Thomas Nelson Community College Hampton, Virginia Green Jobs

SCHOOL

Thomas Nelson Community College, public, 2-year, Hampton, Virginia.

ABSTRACT

In September 2010, the Department of Energy Weatherization Training Center grant was awarded to the Hampton Roads-based Green Jobs Alliance to establish a Weatherization Training Center with Thomas Nelson Community College (TNCC) Workforce Training and Continuing Education as a key partner. The training and employment pipeline includes information sessions conducted at the college and at recruiting partner sites and work keys assessments for the Governor's Career Readiness Certificate (and time in the key train tutorial lab as needed). As of spring 2012, it includes five non-credit courses.

The Weatherization Training Center supports the need of local governments to assess and evaluate low-income weatherization projects and for contractors to evaluate effectiveness of renovation or retrofitting for homeowners to qualify for energy incentive funding.

GOALS AND OUTCOMES

Accomplishments and Outcomes

In the project's first year, partners met extensively to align separate organizational cultures and business practices into a coordinated approach. For TNCC WD, initial tasks included hiring a Project Coordinator, designing outreach materials and a format for Information Sessions, developing scholarship guidelines, participant application and agreement, photo release and certification reporting forms, course packets and customized certificates of completion.

Adapting a very successful model developed by TNCC WD for advanced manufacturing "pipelines" that include outreach, screening, customized training, industry certifications and job referral, TNCC named this new initiative the "Weatherization Training Pipeline." Its components include Key Train tutorial labs, WorkKeys Assessments to earn The Virginia Governor's Career Readiness Certificate, a series of courses that included Occupational Health and Safety Administration (OSHA) 30-hour training for Construction, CPR for Construction, Weatherization Basics, and Building Performance Institute (BPI) – certified Weatherization Installer and certified Building Analyst.

TNCC WD hired an instructor who worked with LIUNA staff using the Weatherization Assistance Program Technical Assistance Center (WAPTAC) website and Virginia Weatherization Assistance Program (WAP) training materials to develop Weatherization Basics classes. Weatherization Basics is a week-long prep course especially designed for career changers and unemployed individuals that might not have any previous experience in home renovation. It also includes an introduction to worker safety that mirrors

the OSHA 10 topics. Participants, especially the members of LIUNA, can qualify for additional classes that include handling hazardous materials, and lead and asbestos abatement. For the Union members these additional certifications offer extra value to contractors that may need a wide range of skills.

The Weatherization Training Pipeline serves all of the original partners as well as new community agencies that have joined the effort. Because the funding was part of the Americans for Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA), the Pipeline focuses on referring participants to jobs. The primary employment is with the state-funded Weatherization Assistance Program, conducted in the localities of south Hampton Roads by The STOP Organization in Norfolk and on the Virginia Peninsula by the James City County Community Action Agency. Another potential source of employment is in through Redevelopment and Housing Authorities in the cities and counties of Hampton Roads. For their reconstruction and retrofit projects, Section 8 and Section 3 contractors will have a pool of qualified or industry-certified workers that can assist in Weatherization upgrades within their own neighborhoods. As well, some renovation and Heating, Cooling and Ventilation (HVAC) contractors are looking to the Pipeline to provide skilled workers that enable the top add new services for their customers.

Challenges and Responses

One of the early challenges was curriculum development. Staff from TNCC WD and its training partner, SENCON, began training with the Building Performance Institute's (BPI) Building Analyst (energy auditor) certification. Then, BPI released its standards for certified Weatherization Installer that included 8 hours of hands-on lab practice and 4-7 hours of testing. TNCC had state-of-the art classrooms but no space to offer the hands-on labs.

So GJA and TNCC worked with the City of Hampton Economic Development Office to identify ARC of the Peninsula, a non-profit organization with a warehouse space that had been subdivided for varied uses. When a large corner space (more than 2500sq.ft) became available, the weatherization props that SENCON had built found the perfect home. Once Weatherization Installer classes were field tested and successfully implemented, the pipeline was nearly complete.

For those already working in construction, home renovation, or WAP retrofit projects, there are two challenge exams -- Construction Basics and Weatherization Basics -- that allow qualified individuals to fast-track directly into the industry certification classes.

At the beginning of the pipeline, individuals that might not have a high school diploma or general education diploma (GED), or perhaps have not been in any kind of classroom for some years, can practice their math and reading skills in the Key Train tutorial lab. Then they can take Work Keys assessments to show employers their skill levels in reading, applied mathematics and locating information.

Campus Climate Action: Your School's Carbon Footprint

Having a weatherization training program has

- allowed workforce development to play a key role in TNCC's new college-wide Sustainability Committee.
- fostered a close working relationship with college financial, purchasing, and facilities staffs as we work together to find appropriate construction materials for the weatherization tasks.

When the college renovated our office and classroom building to LEED Silver standards, we understood the depth and breadth of that achievement.

Commentary and Reflection

To support one of the Department of Energy's major goals, the Weatherization Training Pipeline results in new awareness of energy saving measures for collaborating organizations, area contractors, training participants, and homeowners or residents served by the program. As one training participant noted, "This class has made me think about energy in a whole new way!"

ENGAGEMENT AND SUPPORT

Leaders and Supporters

The Green Jobs Alliance is a collaborative of partner organizations serving 16 localities in the Hampton Roads area of Southeast Virginia. Original partners in the Hampton Roads area included: Peninsula Council for Workforce Development (PCFWD), Peninsula Worklink, Office of Human Affairs (OHA) & Urban League for outreach and recruitment; Thomas Nelson Community College Workforce Development (TNCC WD), the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW), and Laborers International Union of North America (LIUNA) for curriculum development and training courses; and Environmental Career Center (ECC) & PCFWD for job referral.

Funding and Resources

Received grant DE EE-00003786 from the Department of Energy in summer 2010 as part of ARRA.

Education and Community Outreach

We have recently met with staff at the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development to better understand how our location in Southeastern Virginia can assist them in meeting their statewide mission.

A representative of Dominion Power has recently been added to the Green Jobs Alliance Board of Directors, and conversations have begun regarding initiatives that could be supported by utility rates.

Unique aspects of our Weatherization Training Center include the following:

- the participation of industry, unions, and community organizations on the GJA Board
- collaboration among the GJA partners for recruitment, outreach, training, and job placement
- the production of mini-videos for posting on partner websites to give interested persons a view of weatherization jobs, the Green Jobs Alliance partners, the future of weatherization and impact on neighborhoods, employer perspectives, and samples of training classes and fieldwork

CONTACT INFORMATION

Contacts

Carmen Burrows at 757-825-2939

Burrowsc@tncc.edu

Thomas Nelson Community College

99 Thomas Nelson Drive

Hampton, Virginia, 23666

www.tncc.edu/workforce

MORE ABOUT YOUR SCHOOL

Campus Sustainability History

Please view the TNCC Sustainability Task Force webpage: <http://tncc.edu/about-2/general-information-2/sustainability-task-force/>