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DOEE AND DOES LAUNCH SOLAR WORKS DC

GRID Alternatives Mid-Atlantic Awarded Grant to Train 75 District Residents for Solar Careers and Install Solar Systems for up to 100 Low-Income Households in Year One

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, May 18, 2017 — The Department of Energy & Environment (DOEE) and the Department of Employment Services (DOES) have partnered to develop Solar Works DC, a new low-income solar installation and job training program. To implement the first year of the program, DOEE and DOES have awarded \$950,000 to GRID Alternatives Mid-Atlantic through a competitive grant process. With this funding, GRID will operate a year-round program to train District residents in solar installation. In addition to preparing residents to enter careers in solar and related industries, Solar Works DC will increase solar capacity in the District and reduce energy costs for qualified low-income District homeowners by installing solar systems on their homes.

Last year, DC Council passed the [Renewable Portfolio Standard \(RPS\) Expansion Amendment Act of 2016](#), which aims to increase access to clean energy, and create a long-term pipeline for green jobs. The goal is to increase the District's RPS to 50% and to provide the benefits of solar energy to 100,000 low-income residents by 2032. Solar Works DC intends to train more than 200 District residents and install solar systems on up to 300 low-income single family homes in the District over three years. The cost savings per household is roughly \$15,000, which translates to approximately \$600 in savings a year.

"Solar Works DC underscores Mayor Bowser's commitment to inclusive prosperity and her continued leadership in supporting our growing green economy, while working to meet our climate change commitments," said DOEE Director Tommy Wells. "Our partnership with DOES creates a clear pathway for District residents to receive the training and skills needed to gain employment in the rapidly growing solar industry."

According to The Solar Foundation's job census, there were 260,077 solar workers in United States in 2016, a 25% increase over the previous year. In 2016, there were 1,180 solar jobs in the District of Columbia, a growth rate of 18%, with projected growth of 26% in 2017. Sectors in need of trained solar professionals include installation, manufacturing, sales and distribution, project development, and operations. The median hourly wage for solar installers in the District is \$26. DOEE and DOES expect that Solar Works DC will provide training for up to 225 District residents, over a three year span, preparing them for entry-level green jobs.

"A local, qualified workforce is imperative to implement the District's RPS, and this program connects DC residents to sustainable careers in this growing clean energy economy," said GRID Alternatives Mid-Atlantic Executive Director, Nicole Steele. "The partnership between DOEE, DOES, and GRID not only creates high-growth career pathways in our most vulnerable communities, but also reduces the energy burden faced by so many low-income families."

"We are excited to launch Solar Works DC in partnership with DOEE," said DOES Director Odie Donald II. "This program is one of the first of its kind in the District, preparing residents for growing jobs in the solar industry, and playing a key role in facilitating the continued growth of the DC economy through investments in industries primed to provide opportunities for District residents."

Solar Works DC will operate three cohorts throughout the year (summer, fall, and spring). The summer cohort will be composed of DOEE [Green Zone Environmental Program \(GZEP\)](#) participants who are also participating in DOES's [Mayor Marion S. Barry Summer Youth Program \(MBSYEP\)](#), ages 18 to 24, for a six-week program duration; the spring and fall cohorts will be made up of residents ages 18 and older, for a 12-week program duration. Part of DOEE's comprehensive [Green Pathways](#) initiative, GZEP is one of the nation's largest summer green jobs training programs for youth and young adults.