



**For immediate release**

## **GRID Alternatives Mid-Atlantic's Solar Futures program prepares Washington, D.C.'s next generation of solar leaders**

*The four-week course offers classroom and hands-on learning of solar energy technology and explores career opportunities in the booming industry*

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**WASHINGTON, D.C.; May 20, 2019** — GRID Alternatives Mid-Atlantic's innovative Solar Futures program culminates Monday afternoon with capstone presentations from 16 students at H.D. Woodson Academy of Engineering. Students will present at 1 pm EST in front of guest judges representing different environmental nonprofits after four weeks of classroom-based instruction on practical solar technology and installation experience. The GRID Mid-Atlantic teamed up with representatives from National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL), whose researchers focus on creative answers to today's energy challenges, to provide students with an understanding of solar energy technology through hands-on activities that challenged students' quantitative reasoning, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills.

"Solar Futures aims to open career pathways in the fast-growing and well-paid solar industry and inspire the next generation to combat climate change," said Nicole Steele, executive director at GRID Alternatives Mid-Atlantic. "Students in the program participate in a dynamic 'Solar 101' course to learn how solar energy works and receive hands-on opportunities to learn the technology and process of installation."

"H.D. Woodson students were quick, enthusiastic learners," said NREL's Jonathan Morgenstein, who helped teach the 'Solar 101' class. "At NREL, we get excited about helping build a cleaner, better future—normally through technology, policy, or business innovation. So we were doubly excited to help GRID, through education, empower the next generation to build a broader and more diverse clean energy community."

"I am excited that our H.D. Woodson students were able to participate in a unique program that will prepare them for college, career, and life," said District of Columbia Public Schools Chancellor Lewis D. Ferebee. "The GRID Alternatives Mid-Atlantic Solar Futures program is supporting our efforts to provide students with rigorous and joyful learning that allows them to explore potential career interests while thinking of ways to address key challenges facing our communities."

The program, which began April 29, met once a week for 2 hours and 15 minutes. High school students from H.D. Woodson Academy of Engineering volunteered to join the program, which offered opportunities to learn about solar and explore career opportunities in the industry as they begin to make post-graduation plans. See photos [here](#). Interested students applied through an application process that included providing a statement of interest before beginning the curriculum.

"D.C. is a leader in green infrastructure," said Elizabeth Dunn, an educator at H.D. Woodson Engineering Academy, "It's only right that we get students, especially from low-income areas, involved in this lucrative career path. My goal for HD Woodson Engineering Academy students is to offer them as much exposure to high-income, sustainable career pathways—the partnership with GRID Mid-Atlantic is accomplishing just that."

High school programs in the District that are interested in more information should contact GRID Alternatives Mid-Atlantic at [infodc@gridalternatives.org](mailto:infodc@gridalternatives.org). For resources to give presentations to young students about solar and renewable energy, solar jobs, and energy conservation see our [Solar Futures K-8 Classroom Toolkit](#). These resources are designed to support anyone who wishes to visit a classroom and share their enthusiasm for renewable energy.

GRID Alternatives Mid-Atlantic is an affiliate of GRID Alternatives, a national leader in making clean, affordable solar power and solar jobs accessible to low-income communities and communities of color. GRID Alternatives' our energy access work is powering off-grid communities across the globe. GRID Alternatives began the Solar Futures program in California's Inland Empire and San Joaquin Valley, combining classroom-based sessions with real-world experience in installing solar for GRID Alternatives' income-qualified clients. The Solar Futures program in those areas is supported by SunPower.

**About GRID Alternatives Mid-Atlantic**

GRID Alternatives Mid-Atlantic is an affiliate of GRID Alternatives, a national leader in making clean, affordable solar power and solar jobs accessible to low-income communities and communities of color. Using a unique, people-first model, GRID Mid-Atlantic develops and implements solar projects that serve qualifying households and affordable housing providers, while providing hands-on job training. GRID Mid-Atlantic has installed 237 solar systems and helped households and housing providers save \$7 million in lifetime electricity costs while training over 836 people. For more information, visit [www.gridalternatives.org/midatlantic](http://www.gridalternatives.org/midatlantic).

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