

California Clean Energy Workforce Training Program SFP PY 2009-10
Clean Energy Summit–Diamond Bar
Questions and Answers
(Posted 8/18/09)

The questions and answers listed below were taken from the Clean Energy Summit on August 12 (Diamond Bar) and were a dialogue between the audience and the panel. Please note this is the actual transcript from the Summit and is very conversational in nature.

Allowable Activities

1. Can funds be used for capacity building services? In other words if you have an organization that is otherwise eligible, can these funds be used for leadership development, or organizational development, things of that nature.

Yes, we realize that this is quite a technical field, something very different than what our community is used to. Up to 5 percent of the program funds may be used for staff development, train the trainer type of function. [8/31/09]

Applicant Eligibility

1. It is an absolute that faith-based organizations would not be able to apply as a lead applicant for this solicitation?

Yes, this is an absolute. [8/31/09]

Community Forum

1. Could you talk a little bit about the community forum, and what would satisfy that requirement? Is anyone allowed to attend, should we look on your website for potential partners and invite them, will this satisfy the concept of the forum. How broad does the audience need to be?

It could be as simple as letting people know in your community through either radio advertisement or news release that you are going to be holding a community forum and that you intend on applying for this particular fund source. You don't have to have only required partners there as this is an open public community forum. [8/31/09]

2. For the community forum, can we do that in a webinar format?

Because of the time constraints we are going to allow that to happen. [8/31/09]

General

1. How do you define regions?

Regions will depend on the industry we're talking about and the different parts of the state. What does this clean energy industry mean to your economy and the critical drivers within your economy and then how do you define your region based on things like commute patterns, industry concentrations and availability of training. We want it to be logical for the partnerships you develop so there is a lot of flexibility in terms of what regional means to each applicant. Applicants are asked to describe their targeted region and why the region was selected in developing this industry/sector strategy.

2. What is the panel's opinion regarding proposals that include courses and certificates that are noncredit? Are noncredit certificates and courses in the green building and clean energy sector valued?

From a more general perspective, absolutely these courses are valued. We need a variety of educational opportunities for this sector. For this SFP, there is pretty clear guidance on the different curriculum we're looking for. We are looking for a continuum; we're looking for a way that individuals can progress on career pathways that have complementary educational pathways including connecting to apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship programs. We need to really refine the way we are delivering career advancement opportunities and partnering those with matching educational pathways. So it's not necessarily about credit and non credit, but certainly about meeting the demand of this industry so that as we are moving people through the training program and there is a job at the end.

3. How do you see K-12's participation in this? Are you looking for professional development around clean energy for K-12 educators?

The Energy Commission has formed a partnership with the California Department of Education to fund sixty-one career partnership academies across California where we're investing funds for school districts to put together partnerships academies. Basically, they're schools within a school. In grades 10-12, an individual takes all of their classes within an industry sponsored partnership academy as an equal partnership between the State, the school district and the industry that it's working in. The student takes science, math, and English classes all based around this industry. This solicitation went out in February and only forty-five school districts applied of the sixty-one slots available. So, there's still money on the table and opportunities for industries, community colleges, workforce investment boards and local governments to work with your local school districts and bring in some of that money and innovation for career technical education to some of your communities.

4. When you say the term "career pathways," are you looking for programs that lead to degree programs?

When the term "career pathways" is used, it is referring to programs that lead people to multiple outcomes across their working life. So what we're really talking about is identifying career pathways and building educational programs that support multiple on and off ramps for individuals as they experience career changes throughout their work life.

5. Is it possible for an organization to be funded through this SFP as well as the State Energy Sector and Training Grant SGA from the DOL?

We intend to use successful applicants from this solicitation as the foundation for those regional collaboratives that are required under the SGA that DOL has released. So yes, they would be a part of our application to the Department of Labor., We're beginning the process of writing that grant application and defining what that looks like in terms of potentially augmenting funding.

6. Can funds be used to facilitate the development of the Green Employer Associations?

Yes, if you are referring to the Green Employer Advisory Council, you can use funds to support that. That more than likely would come from your administrative funds, which are limited. We'll double check and post that clarification on the web site, once we get that clarification.

7. Can diagrams, charts or pictures be inserted into the application and won't be part of the 15 pages?

Diagrams, charts or pictures may be inserted into the application but will count toward the 15 page limitation.

8. Does a successful applicant invoice each agency separately, or is invoicing centralized through EDD?

From an invoicing perspective we are working with the Energy Commission on how that invoicing will occur, with the goal of keeping it as simple as we can for grantees. Further direction on this will be forthcoming, as we finalize how payments will be processed.

9. I am a very small construction company in the Bay Area. At this time, I'm in need of a way to educate myself and future employees on solar and green building technologies. Most important to me is a hands on training and education program that is not going to be a drain in my pocket book.

We are giving additional bonus point to applicants that come in and are partnering with employers. Potential employers, and builders and building departments are one of the key components that we're trying to have involved in this training program around the green building piece. The idea is for individuals with small business to be a part of this partnership or take advantage of this partnership by sending his workers through the re-skilling program. These are folks that already have some construction experience and they're perfectly suited to be able to go through the re-skilling partnership and being able to choose from the variety of whatever training is being offered by that applicants chosen curriculum.

10. Can organizations that are already in the training and development business use this as a means to expand the services they already provide their participants or does the training have to be open to the population at large?

Any training that's offered, whether its increasing training offered to participants who may already be involved in a training track or whether it's new entrants into a training program, would really be determined by the regional approach that you develop as you design your project. In all likelihood, it would be pretty safe in saying that the way we envisioned this it would be for new entrants into training programs, as opposed to augmenting training for individuals who are already engaged in a program. There is justification if it fits into your regional project design; you would need to demonstrate that within your justification.

11. Please define regional collaboration.

We could be very prescriptive about the regions in which we would like to see projects come in. What we're hoping to do is have you will work with your economic development organizations, workforce development, community based organizations, education and business to define a region that is logical for the project you're proposing. The region may be inside a geographic boundary or may cross geographic boundaries if you share common employer bases and common needs within the clean energy sector. We have opted not to define what a region looks like. We're asking you to explain how you configured your region and how that region supports and meets the needs of the delivery of the project that you're proposing.

12. Does the Community College or the WIB need to be the primary writer for the grant?

No, the Community College or the WIB does not need to be the primary “writer” of the grant. The writing of the proposal is coming from the industry sector strategy where the Green Employer Council has involvement in it. What we are saying is that the applicant, the person submitting the application, must be a WIB or a Community College.

13. Is there an online list of the Green Employer Councils?

No, this would have to be put together as part of a regional collaboration and a sector strategy approach.

14. Relative to Employment Training Panel (ETP) projects serving dislocated workers, in terms of the training programs that are being discussed, by definition if they're not working how do you address the employer match in terms of the wage?

It's not a requirement in an ETP project that's training dislocated workers. [8/31/09]

15. It was mentioned that ETP funds could pay for on the job training, is this through a salary subsidy or do you pay for the training portion that happens while on the job?

ETP does not fund on the job training with the core standard program but we are proposing to fund on the job training with the monies that we would be getting through our partnership with the Energy Commission. We're trying to retain our existing procedures to the greatest extent possible so in the context of on the job training that would mean we are still paying for hours of training incurred by the worker. [8/31/09]

16. Along those lines also it was said that companies that were currently successful with their ETP projects will be a benefit as a partner in one of these partnership to getting the grant if you already are on board with ETP and you have successfully used your funding.

We are going to be looking for new projects as well as looking at projects that have been successfully developing green skills in a range of occupations, so if you're an existing project, with the new money we would probably enter into a new contract, but you would certainly be a candidate for funding under our CEC partnership. [8/31/09]

17. Is there a way for an individual to go back in and edit their profile on the “Become a Green Jobs Partner” webpage?

Not yet, but that's a great suggestion and we're always looking for suggestions on how to make improvements. [8/31/09]

18. When will the next ETP board meeting be where funding could be approved for programs?

It will be September 25, 2009, so you should be contacted by the development analyst that worked with you in putting the proposal together. They'll let you know that we will be bringing projects back to the panel beginning the 25th of September. [8/31/09]

19. Where is there more information about the partnership academy?

The best thing you can do is Google "CDE partnership academies funding for 2009-10". You'll see the green partnership academies that were awarded funding. They're also putting together a new solicitation that will go out next year for the next two funding educational years. [8/31/09]

20. If funded we have to post our curriculum on the website. How detailed does this have to be because quite a few new and existing programs have proprietary curriculum that they have either developed or are developing and they may not want to really put it all up there. They may have already have put a lot of funding into developing the curriculum.

Let me clarify first of all, I know that any curriculum that is developed with federal funds is public domain, so I think in that sense we would want it shared. The only thing that we can require with this funding is any materials developed as a result of this funding would be shared including program material, curriculum, and best practices. [8/31/09]

21. So in order to submit an appeal to this, the appeal has to be made either by the workforce investment board or the community college?

The grant opportunity itself and the way it's structured are not appealable if that's what you're referring to. You're certainly not prohibited from being a partner to one of the eligible applicants, so you're not being excluded from this process if you choose to partner with and develop a relationship with one of the eligible applicants in providing a portion of the program that they are designing. This is certainly permissible and certainly what we're encouraging in terms of getting faith based/community based organizations, education, economic development, business and workforce around the same table. But the criteria outlined in this SFP are not appealable criteria in terms of eligible applicants. [8/31/09]

22. You stated earlier today that WIA funds could be used to purchase equipment. But even though that's a percent of each of the categories, under Category 3 we still can't purchase equipment, how does this work?

Under WIA you can purchase equipment, it's only the AB118 money that can't be used to purchase equipment. For example if you ask for \$100,000 under the WIA portion, you can spend part of that for equipment under Category 3. [8/31/09]

Match

1. Are there any limitations on the structure of matching funds? Is there a percentage cap for WIA match funds?

We are asking for a dollar-for-dollar match so 100 percent of your request must come in as match and leveraged funds. For example, if I'm requesting 1 million dollars, I must come in with a match of 1 million dollars. There is no cap on how much WIA dollars can be brought to the table as match.

2. On matching funds 100% is required, so if you are not currently the recipient of WIA funds you're barrier of entry is significantly greater than those that are recipients?

It is important to understand that when we talk about matching we aren't necessarily talking about hard cash matching. Applicants can include in-kind contribution of classroom space or employer match where the employer establishes a dollar value on access or utilization of equipment that may be essential for the program. So there are lots of ways to get to that 100% match. It's quantifying the in-kind match that helps you get to that 100%. [8/31/09]

Performance Goals

1. Should our projects mirror the performance goals? Are those minimums or recommended?

The performance goals are recommended and are State benchmarks. If you feel you are serving a particularly hard to serve population, you may lower those performance goals, but must provide a justification as to why you are going lower than the State recommended benchmarks.

2. Is there any other past performance records or measures that you would be looking at outside of the WIA system to give preference to applicants? For instance our apprenticeship programs have very high graduation rates and they don't all receive WIA funds.

No, we will not be looking at what's outside of the WIA system. We just don't want to fund someone in the WIA system that's struggling right now, that's the basis of that.

[8/31/09]

Proposal Criteria

1. Can you please elaborate on the level of skills required by incoming participants?

For the retraining program, we're focused on dislocated construction workers primarily. We're looking at those programs for both Green building and clean energy; that would be Category 1a and 1b. For the pre-apprenticeship programs, we talking about people with little or no construction experience and trying to set up programs where we're taking people out of other sectors, unemployed or underemployed, and bringing them into the construction industry or clean utility industry. So it could be that they may need a significant amount of work around soft skills, literacy training, and other job readiness skills to get ready for that program. It really depends on the program. In Category 1a or 1b we're looking for dislocated construction workers. In Category 2a and 2b we're looking for new workforce entrants. And for Category 3, it's really up to the developer of the program and the skill level they are choosing to train the applicant to.

2. Please provide specifics for Employer Commitment Letters. What is the employer required to commit to?

The requirements in the SFP state that each of the regional partnerships have a Green Employers Council to over see the program so that there's some real world accountability and the folks that are in this industry are providing input into the curriculum and the program delivery and the skills that are being delivered. They'll make a commitment to serve on this council and provide input and above and beyond that; it's whatever you can talk them into committing to. That could be things like committing to hiring participants out of the program, committing to cash/in-kind match, etc.

3. For the 1a application there were three bullet points listed on the slide. To get the bonus points, do we need to do all three or just one? For example, if we offered six certified trainings but did not offer them sequentially; would we get the bonus points?

No, what we're looking at under the green building retraining partnerships is for applicants to provide a range of skill trainings. It's up to the individual involved in the training programs how much of those programs they want to take. If that individual just wants to get training in solar photovoltaic that's up to them. If they want to take the full range of the programs that are being offered because they want to have more skill sets in a dynamic economy, that's up to them as well. We are offering bonus points if an applicant puts together a sequential, holistic program that leads an individual from basic green building all the way through the delivery of consistent skills which leads to a certificate at the end. This would ensure everybody comes out with specific skill sets. So everyone is going to be required to offer at least 6 components or more, but if it's in a sequential manner and participants go through the program and end up with the same skill sets, then they will be awarded bonus points.

4. Does the requirement of the need for a Green Employer Council mean that one could be formed as part of the SFP process or do we need to partner with or already be a part of a pre-existing Green Employer Council?

Yes, either of those would be an appropriate response. If you're applying for a project under this grant and have not begun to partner or have not established some kind of green workforce initiative in your region, then certainly this is an opportunity for you to do that. If you're part of an existing green workforce initiative or Green Workforce Council then certainly you would need to evaluate, based on the project you're proposing, whether or not the focus and direction of that existing entity meets the requirement to service as your advisory council for this opportunity. So it really is dependent upon the regional focus of the project you are submitting whether you establish new, use something existing, or modify an existing to meet the needs of the project that you are proposing.

5. The application is limited to 15 pages, is this single or double spaced?

Single spaced.

6. Do the 15 pages include all of the attachments that are required in the SFP forms (for example the work plans, the list of partners and roles, etc.).

The page limitation applies only to the proposal narrative; all the attachments and forms that come with that are not part of the 15 page limitation.

7. Does the application's 15 page limitation include the community forum form? This would seem to penalize those who had one.

No, that's a separate form. That's SFP Form 6 and is not part of the 15 page limitation.

8. Will a church based organization be able to participate for this proposal?

The way the SFP is structured and the way we are approaching sector strategies and regional sector initiatives really calls for a very grass roots kind of organizing, exactly what you are describing. You bring a wealth of knowledge to the table with the other partners, the workforce investment board and community college, in figuring out in your community and in your region how all this begins to tie together. These local organizations need to work closely together so that what you said was a loosely organized initiative becomes a well organized, well coordinated, and well operated initiative. We certainly would not exclude you from participating. It's how you connect to the regional effort that moves forward or how you connect to the primary applicant that will determine your involvement as this proposal moves forward. [8/31/09]

9. Are applicants prohibited from submitting applications for both categories 1a and 1b and the same goes for categories 2a and 2b?

That is correct. Applicant must choose between category 1a and category 1b, between green building and the clean energy. [8/31/09]

10. Could you please define what a service process flowchart is?

I have seen some great service process flowcharts that actually take you from recruitment of the individual, to training, to placement and show who's involved. It can be as simple as five or six little boxes showing us how an individual would flow through your system and what type of services they would receive. [8/31/09]

11. Are the awardees required to obtain a DUNs number or CCR number for reporting purposes under ARRA?

Yes, because these are Recovery Act funds you will be required to obtain a DUNs number and that is in all three category instructions. Details on how to obtain that number are also in the instructions. [8/31/09]