APPLICANT NAME: Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, Department of Labor & Industry (L&I)
AREA TO BE SERVED: Statewide (All 67 counties)
FUNDING LEVEL REQUESTED: $1,250,000

PROJECT SUMMARY

Pennsylvania needs more detailed, timely labor market projections and analyses to respond to the economic realities of a recession and the unique opportunities associated with Pennsylvania's rapidly greening economy. This project takes advantage of three unique Pennsylvania assets—aggressive state energy policies and ARRA investments that drive green job creation, a well-developed industry linked workforce system which already includes nine industry partnerships tied to groups of green employers, and extensive foundation-funded efforts to help low-income workers access pathways out of poverty at industry partnership employers.

In addition, Pennsylvania's Center for Workforce Information and Analysis undertook an initial project to map Pennsylvania's green economy. The first stage of developing green labor market information defined five green-related sectors and 81 green-related occupations, and established that:

- Many of the state's green occupations are mid-range technical or 'gold collar' jobs requiring some education beyond high school and/or a technical credential but not a four-year degree
- Many green occupations pay well; and
- Driven by $10 billion in state and federal energy investments, five green sectors are projected to create 125,000 jobs from 2010-2012 (counting indirect and induced jobs), with nearly half of these jobs in energy efficiency and another 30% in renewable energy.

While Pennsylvania has industry-level information that documents potential for green job creation, it does not have the detailed information on occupational demand and skill requirements needed to target workforce investments to the needs of green industries. Despite these advanced energy and workforce development policies, Pennsylvania cannot assist unemployed and impoverished citizens in landing these jobs without filling the labor market information gap that exists because projections, statistics and analyses have not kept pace with the rapidly developing renewable energy and energy conservation industries.

To fill this gap, L&I will engage agencies, local workforce boards, employers and industry partnerships to guide the collection, analysis, and dissemination of the real-time labor market data essential for Pennsylvania. Our research plan, to be refined with input from partners, includes (1) a statewide baseline survey of the green economy to estimate current and anticipated green jobs, critical occupations, unique skill needs, and potential skill shortages; (2) employer focus groups and training needs surveys to augment traditional labor-market tools and more precisely define employers' training needs; (3) an inventory of green education and training capacity drawing on the knowledge of industry partnerships and local workforce boards; (4) job task analyses of emerging and "evolving" green occupations that enable customization of green curricula and assessment tools; and (5) development of an automated career tool (with information on wages, career paths, education and certification requirements) to market green jobs to job seekers. This proposed project captures and translates information on the emerging green economy to capitalize on job creation in green industries and to help a diverse set of Pennsylvania workers move out of and stay out of poverty.