

The Northern Plains and Rocky Mountain Consortium: Researching the Green Economy

Abstract

The Montana Department of Labor and Industry is the lead applicant for a USDOL Labor Market Information (LMI) Improvement Grant in the amount of \$3,877,949 in federal funds. This proposal, titled *The Northern Plains and Rocky Mountain Consortium: Researching the Green Economy*, would create a consortium consisting of workforce agencies in seven contiguous states: Iowa, Montana, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota, Utah and Wyoming, to improve labor market information collection and research in the seven states to enhance the labor exchange system for careers within the green economy.

If the grant is awarded, the states and their strategic partners will be able to collaborate more effectively on surveys, on building expertise into green industries and occupations, and disseminating findings. Research will focus on green sectors that are expected to be significant drivers of the seven-state area's economy, including clean coal research, wind energy, carbon sequestration and biofuels.

The proposal consists of: 1) identifying existing research in the region; 2) devising new methods to close information gaps; and 3) disseminating the research. Key components will be a request for proposal to universities to research the impact of green technologies on the workforce, a region-wide symposium to share those academic findings, and a nationwide conference to share data collected by all consortia and projects funded under this USDOL grant opportunity.

The proposal's main objectives are to: (1) build a sustainable dialogue relating to green labor demand, supply and training requirements; (2) build an LMI system sustaining those relationships; and (3) establish a design for evaluation as an integral part of a sustained effort.