

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Preparing Colorado's workforce for the new green collar jobs and adding entrepreneurial & managerial capacity to lead new clean tech companies in the State.

Issue: Colorado ranks fourth out of the 50 states in renewable energy and energy research employment concentration in 2007. With direct employment of approximately 15,400 workers, Colorado is the 10th-largest renewable energy and energy research state in absolute employment. Employment is also increasing in other clean tech related sectors. It will be difficult for the State to remain competitive unless it is able to develop the new skills in its workforce that these companies require.

Importance to the Colorado Cleantech Industry Epicenter: Investors, company founders and commercial scale companies are already experiencing a shortage of knowledgeable entrepreneurs and managers to lead new cleantech companies. Programs need to be developed to take highly skilled and successful business professionals from other sectors and bridge their knowledge base to the new industry. Colorado is home to many new cleantech manufacturers and clean energy producers and they need workers with new skill sets. Manufacturing and technical jobs in this sector are highly desirable and Colorado's training institutions need assistance in order to be effective industry partners.

Federal Opportunities and Programs: The stimulus legislation provides for grants to community colleges. The US Department of Labor should be encouraged to give priority to those institutions that partner with the clean tech sector to the jobs of the future. Guidelines are due by June 1, 2009. CCIA will help the Colorado delegation monitor grant submittals. Resources for cutting edge programs that transition experienced entrepreneurs and managers to the sector should be provided in these guidelines or through other federal programs.

- CU-Boulder's Clean Energy Business Management Education Program requires \$1 million to launch its program of short courses, one year certificate program and two-year masters degree to accelerate the transition of entrepreneurs and managers into the cleantech field.
- Northern Colorado's highly successfully "blue collar-to-green collar" education program requires funding and is expected to be expanded to the entire Colorado Front Range.
- A broad coalition – including the Colorado Community College System, the Colorado Renewable Energy Collaboratory, private industry, economic development agencies and State government are proposing to create wind and solar technology training centers. (A smart grid center will follow shortly.) These centers will provide current technologies for hands-on training of students or workers in transition.

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