



Empower Clarkston: Green Jobs Training & Weatherization Retro-fits for Clarkston, Georgia
Training underemployed Dekalb County Residents & Providing Relief for Energy Burdened
Households

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I. Abstract

Empower Clarkston creates green jobs and develops the skilled workforce of our City's unique population, while also providing energy and water retrofits for low-income housing stock. The program delivers measurable outcomes that simultaneously minimize environmental impacts and provide sustained financial benefits to low-income members of the community. In total, over the 24-month period, we estimate vetting and approving 60 units to receive services and delivering trade skills training to 60 individuals.

In addition to being the highest population density City ZIP in the entire state of Georgia (30021 = >6,880 people/square mile), the City of Clarkston is known as "the most ethnically diverse square mile in America". While this rich mix of cultures makes Clarkston an exciting place to live and work, the assimilation of diverse populations and creating pathways to economic prosperity is not without challenges. Clarkston residents are working, but they are in jobs that do not provide enough income to escape poverty. Obstacles to economic opportunity for Clarkston residents include lack of access to living wage jobs and training opportunities. While various vocational programs exist around metro Atlanta, transportation is a critical challenge with 53% of households only having one vehicle. Physically accessible and affordable training for underserved youth and young adults is a critical pathway to living wage jobs in growing industries.

Empower Clarkston is halfway through its two year pilot funded by the Southeast Sustainability Directors' Network (SSDN). During this pilot, curriculum has been developed and infrastructure for recruiting trainees and residents has been established and refined. We anticipate these refinements will result in nearly a 40% decrease in cost-per-participant in future project years. We now look to expand our impact by extending the project into subsequent years and increasing training capacity.

Tekton Career Training ("Tekton") will serve as the project's lead, overseeing this project by coordinating community partners, outreach, and engagement. The Southface Institute ("Southface") which promotes sustainable homes, workplaces, and communities through education, research, advocacy, and technical assistance, will deliver classroom training using their existing weatherization training curriculum. Southface and Tekton will select weatherization vendors to conduct field training for participants while performing energy efficiency retrofits to homes at no cost to residents. Greenlink Analytics will supply data analysis to determine the project's energy impact for over-burdened residents. The Friends of Refugees Career Hub will assist in recruiting and will supply job placements with a target placement of 80% of those who complete training into good jobs within 90 days of project completion.

II. Goals & Objectives

This 2-year project will provide three 10-person cohorts with 2-week, paid, green jobs training to include one week of classroom training and one week of field training. Each cohort will perform energy efficiency upgrades to 10 energy-burdened residents in Clarkston. Priority for these free upgrades will be given to those applicants with the highest energy burden relative to household income. Recruiting for residents will be conducted by Tekton and Friends of Refugees along with community leaders. Dekalb County can also support recruiting by making direct referrals to households who have applied for rent, mortgage, and utility assistance.

In addition, this project will facilitate 2 project management residents (interns) employed by Tekton. This role provides hands-on development of management skills to help community members overcome barriers to professional mobility while simultaneously pushing the project forward.

At the conclusion of the training, the Friends of Refugees Career Hub will manage job placement for participants into good jobs in the green jobs and construction sectors.

III. Project Plan

Tekton will lead participant recruiting by engaging in grassroots, word of mouth campaigns with Clarkston's community leaders. Tekton will also depend on partnerships with other organizations including local faith-based organizations, ethnic-community based organizations, and energy equity groups. Dekalb County may elect to refer residents who have recently requested rent, mortgage, or utility assistance for participation in the program. Training candidates will complete math and English screeners in order to ensure safe and thorough acquisition of skills to succeed on the job. Residents applying for energy efficiency upgrades will self report household income and utility data in order to determine each household's energy burden to prioritize admission. Selected households will release utility data to project partners in order to complete analysis on the project's impact on energy usage and utility expenses.

Upon selection, each trainee will be provided with vocabulary decks to support success across language & educational backgrounds. Training cohorts will complete 4-5 days of classroom training led by Southface. The topics of the course include building science and construction safety, air-sealing, insulation, ductwork, and plumbing. Trainees will then be assigned to various job sites with selected contractors to complete weatherization retrofits. These retrofits may include: LED lighting, ULF faucet aerators/showerheads, spray foam air sealing, door seals, washable air filters, smart thermostats, smoke/CO 10 yr units, other insulation as needed, pipe insulation as needed. Some units may need toilet modification for lower flow or possible replacement as well as some appliance replacement/upgrade. Students completing training will receive a certificate from Southface. In addition, Southface will perform inspections of all homes after retrofits are completed.

Project Management Interns will be selected from the community by Tekton through applications and interviews. These interns will gain experience and coaching in management tasks through their involvement in this program. As community members themselves, these interns will increase participant engagement to increase retention rates. With support, interns will be responsible for managing applicants, coordinating schedules, and supporting project completing within the outlined budget and timeline.

Upon program completion, the Friends of Refugees Career Hub will take the lead on placing training participants into jobs within 90 days. This involves supporting trainees through resume creation and interview preparation along with appropriately pairing participants with jobs that meet their transportation and schedule needs.

With the completed utility release authorizations, Greenlink will provide data analysis on indicators and outcomes to be determined by Dekalb County and the Empower Clarkston team.

IV. Project Budget

Expense Type	Vendor	Detailed Description	Annual Budget		% of Sum	Project Budget		% of Sum
Personnel								
	Tekton Career Training	Project Management	\$65,000			\$130,000		
	Tekton/Contractor	Trainee support	\$6,000			\$12,000		
	Greenlink Group	Data management	\$15,000			\$30,000		
	Friends of Refugees	Placement assistance	\$45,000			\$90,000		
				\$131,000	29.03%		\$262,000	29.03%
Training								
	Southface Institute	Training, retrofit oversight & inspections	\$90,000			\$180,000		
	Tekton Career Training	Internship	\$56,000			\$112,000		
	Materials	Training, Materials	\$5,000			\$10,000		
	Tekton Career Training	Classroom training stipends to participants	\$7,200			\$14,400		
	Tekton Career Training	Field training stipends to participants	\$18,000			\$36,000		
	Tekton Career Training	Worker tool kits	\$6,000			\$12,000		
				\$182,200	40.38%		\$364,400	40.38%
Construction	Tekton Career Training	Contractor selected by team	\$90,000		19.95%	\$180,000		19.95%
Materials	Tekton Career Training	Outreach materials, signage	\$3,000		0.66%	\$6,000		0.66%
Insurance	Tekton Career Training	Liability & Workers Comp insurance for participants	\$45,000		9.97%	\$90,000		9.97%
		Grand Total	\$451,200			\$902,400		

Budget provides for 3, 10-person training cohorts and 10 homes upgraded per cohort. With additional funds and recruiting support, and pending job demand, the program could expand to include up to 4, 10-person cohorts and 15 homes upgraded per cohort.