

2011

Marketing & Press Relations Contract Request for Proposal

SolarTech Workforce Innovations Collaborative



An initiative of SolarTech, NOVA WB, & Foothill-DeAnza CCD



SolarTech

Making Solar Happen

Date Dec. 12, 2011

Marketing & Press Relations Contract Request for Proposal

SolarTech Workforce Innovations Collaborative

SolarTech

3081 Zanker Road

San Jose, CA 95134

(408) 943-6976

www.solartech.org

This is a sponsored, commissioned work under a grant from the State of California conducted by the SolarTech Workforce Innovations Collaborative.



Questions?

Contact:

Doug Payne

Executive Director
and Co-Founder

dpayne@solartech.org

David McFeely

Director, Grants and
Industry Solutions

dmcfeely@solartech.org

First Release, Dec, 16, 2011

Prepared By:

SolarTech Workforce Innovations Collaborative (SWIC)

SWIC Program Director:

David McFeely
SolarTech Offices
3081 Zanker Road
San Jose, CA 95134
dmcfeely@solartech.org
(408) 529-0508



Subject To:

**California Employment Development Department
Green Innovation Challenge Grant Program
California State Grant Registration No. K079971**

Sandy Iwatsuru
Project Manager, Workforce Collaborative Section
California Employment Development Department

DISCLAIMER

This report was prepared as the result of work sponsored by the California Labor & Workforce Development Agency (LWDA). It does not necessarily represent the views of the LWDA, its employees or the State of California. The LWDA, the State of California, its employees, contractors and subcontractors make no warrant, express or implied, and assume no legal liability for the information in this report; nor does any party represent that the uses of this information will not infringe upon privately owned rights. This report has not been approved or disapproved by the California Labor & Workforce Development Agency nor has the Agency passed upon the accuracy or adequacy of the information in this report.

Preface

The California Labor & Workforce Development Agency (LWDA) is the only agency in state government coordinating labor and employment programs for workers and businesses. Within the LWDA, the California Employment Development Department (EDD) offers a wide variety of services to Californians under the Employment Service, Unemployment Insurance, State Disability Insurance, Workforce Investment, and Labor Market Information programs.

The EDD provides labor market information to employers, job seekers, and others, including policy makers, economic developers, economists, and planners. Its programs provide job search workshops, referral to education, training, and supportive services to help keep employers, employees, and job seekers competitive.

Within the LWDA and the EDD, the Green Innovation Challenge grants are designed to encourage industry leaders to collaborate with workforce development organizations and find innovative methods to determine the workforce needs of businesses (characterize the labor market), identify actions to address priority industry needs in commercialization and application process and integrate/align actions into an overall collaborative strategy. The objectives are to fill immediate employment needs as well as develop a partnership and infrastructure flexible enough to support employment growth for up to 10 years.

The grants will encourage business-led partnerships in a number of counties to develop the most creative methods of accelerating talent development to serve increasing employment specialties within the green economy. The programs offered will support the development of a highly-trained workforce with the critical skills required for jobs in the following clean tech sectors:

- Renewable energy generation
- Energy efficient buildings
- Alternative and renewable fuels
- Efficient vehicles
- Energy storage

Key Acronyms

GIC: Green Innovations Challenge, a California state 2010 grant initiative.

LWDA: California Labor and Workforce Development Agency.

FHDA: Foothill-De Anza Community College District, Los Altos Hills, CA.

NOVA: North Valley Job Training Consortium, Sunnyvale, CA.

SWIC: SolarTech Workforce Innovations Collaborative, which includes SolarTech, NOVA and FHDA.

Table of Contents

Preface...	5
Table of Contents.....	6
1.0 Executive Summary	7
2.0 Introduction.....	8
2.1 Overview: SolarTech Workforce Innovations Collaborative (SWIC).....	8
3.0 RFI Requirements.....	9
3.1 Summary.....	9
3.2 Services Requested	9
4.0 Funding.....	10
5.0 Selection Criteria	11
6.0 Basic Submission Requirements	11
7.0 Summary	11

1.0 Executive Summary

In the remaining six months of the GIC grant, SolarTech wishes to engage a PR, marketing communications and public affairs firm to help define the SWIC message and promote it. The SolarTech Workforce Innovations Collaborative (SWIC) is SolarTech's answer to the Green Innovation Challenge grant of 2010 from the State of Californian Secretary of Labor. The following Introduction section will describe SWIC in more detail. Over the course of the program SWIC has developed several innovative approaches to training and placement in the Green/Clean Energy job sectors. In the final months of the program (terminates June 30th), the SWIC team would like to promote these accomplishments for three reasons:

1. Better outreach to potential employers
2. Better visibility to state and national industry stakeholders
3. Media documentation of successes to use as leverage for future grant applications

The successful marketing and public relations firm would assist in the above three goals by:

1. Leading the SWIC team to clarify the organization's value proposition and defining the PR strategy to reach target audiences and objectives
2. Guiding and assisting in the creation of collateral targeted at employers, students and media. Reaching out to media to make connections and pitch article ideas
3. Following through on articles with media to make corrections or offer additional follow up ideas
4. Promoting the program as a state and national leader for cleantech job training/career development, with the priority audience being potential funders of future grants.

This is a five month engagement beginning mid-January 2012 and ending mid-June 2012.

This is a fast paced decision that much be concluded by mid-January 2012 to allow a realistic period of time to execute.

All submissions in response to this RFI must be submitted in writing by January 6, 2012 for consideration, as per the requirement listed below.

SolarTech looks forward to your submissions.

2.0 Introduction

2.1 Overview: SolarTech Workforce Innovations Collaborative (SWIC)

SolarTech Workforce Innovations Collaborative (SWIC), a partnership of SolarTech, the North Valley Job Training Consortium (NOVA), and the Foothill-De Anza Community College District (FHDA), was awarded a \$4 million grant in July 2010 as part of the Green Innovations Challenge. This workforce development group was created through the leadership of SolarTech's Workforce Committee to prepare the Bay Area to meet the labor needs of the burgeoning and fast-changing clean-tech industry over the next two years.

The Green Innovations Challenge is part of a highly competitive effort to focus on green jobs, started in May 2010 by the California Labor and Workforce Development Agency (LWDA). SWIC's grant was among five statewide awards totaling \$19 million issued by the LWDA.

SWIC's mission is to identify the immediate and mid-term unmet workforce needs of the solar industry. Through its unique model, SWIC is connecting job seekers, educators, and employers to better align labor supply and demand.

SWIC provides the common ground between industry (led by SolarTech), displaced workers (NOVA), and training organizations (FHDA). Frequent and systematic information exchange between these three entities is key to the success of this two-year program.

The ultimate goal is to leverage real-time market intelligence and create educational programs providing the *right* type of training at the *right* time so that 245 regional workers are trained and placed in renewable energy jobs.

Throughout the program, SolarTech will work with industry to define labor needs so that FHDA can develop targeted training modules to which NOVA can steer job seekers. Once trained, SWIC graduates continue to benefit from SolarTech's deep industry connections, which help them identify employment opportunities as they emerge. This cycling process, repeated throughout the year, provides ongoing validation and continuous improvement.



Figure 1: SWIC Model & Partners

3.0 RFI Requirements

3.1 Summary

1. SWIC's short-term PR goal is generating attention for The SolarTech Workforce Innovations Collaborative's (SWIC) upcoming courses and innovative job placement system, with the priority audience being potential employers and students/displaced professionals.
2. SWIC's long-term PR goal is promoting the program (and potentially five of the other GIC grant recipients in CA) as a state and national leader for cleantech job training/career development, with the priority audience being potential funders of future grants.

3.2 Services Requested

Immediate Action

- Review existing marketing collateral ("tool box") and provide feedback on messaging
- Develop presentation of materials and brochures
- Help develop background pitch memo for targeted media in the Bay Area
- Make initial approach to Dana Hull/SJ Mercury News energy/employment reporters in the Bay Area about SWIC's innovative job training program and request desk sides and/or phone briefings with Doug Payne
- Hold 30-minute practice session to prepare Doug for reporter briefings
- Handle any follow-up with reporters

Basic Services through Duration of Grant, the request below includes up to two grantees, if applicable, or support for just SolarTech/SWIC.

- At the start of the engagement, the PR firm would hone and clarify SWIC's value proposition through a 1 - 2 hour message development and communications planning session (at which we will tightly define SWIC target audience, start the process of creating a core message ("elevator pitch") and supporting points and develop a timeline for executing PR tactics/deliverables)
- Further refinement of SWIC "tool box" based on messaging agreed upon by client
- Develop full media universe (including longer lead time publications that reach potential funders), pitch program and its value proposition to up to 50 publications
- Draft, pitch and submit up to three op-eds/bylined articles/blog posts on the program and other like-minded programs in the state (5 other grantees)
- Media train one third-party validator (e.g., student)
- Arrange media tour for SolarTech Executive Director and third-party validator, and provide a backgrounder on the reporters with which they would meet
- Media monitoring and compiling of any resulting coverage, and provide recommendations on how best to present coverage to potential donors

Additional Service options and/or should three or more GIC grantees sign-on to the program.

These options target 4-6 GIC grantees, if applicable, in addition to all deliverables mentioned above:

- Define triggers for when these optional services would activate prompting an grant budget expenditure increase.
- Pitch program and its value proposition to up to 50 additional publications
- Draft, pitch and submit up to 3 additional op-eds/bylined articles/blog posts on the program and other like-minded programs in the state
- Media train 1 additional third-party validators (e.g., student, professor)
- Research and nominate SWIC (and/or other like-minded programs) for up to 3 regional or national awards for outstanding job training programs
- Develop and execute a discrete list of steps that makes effective use of select social media platforms for amplifying SWIC's message
- Arrange and staff a second media tour for SolarTech Executive Director and third-party validators, and provide a backgrounder on the reporters with which they would meet

In the case of additional GIC grantee involvement beyond SolarTech's SWIC during the message development process, the selected Marketing & PR firm will find the innovation that applies to all of the participating grantees and use supporting points to flesh out the details/data points of each specific program. These supporting points will become modular pieces depending on the media outlet/reporter that the selected Marketing & PR firm is pitching. For op-ed/bylined articles, the goal will be to double-up (co-signers) to highlight several successful job-training case studies across the state.

If the deliverables conducted under **Basic Services** are for SolarTech/SWIC only, the Marketing and PR firm should rescope the deliverables by adding, for example, another media training for a second validator or tacking on the social media piece that is currently described in **Additional Services**.

During the planning session, the selected Marketing & PR firm will work with SolarTech/SWIC and any other participating GIC grantees to tease out the communications activities/news timeline over the next five months and make informed recommendations. The Marketing & PR firm will also work with SolarTech and participating GIC grantees to reevaluate the timeline and steps every month or so since this is a somewhat fluid process. The Marketing & PR firm will provide written, weekly summaries of progress on deliverables and offer quick, phone check-ins a few times a week.

4.0 Funding

SolarTech has reserved a maximum of \$30,000 for these marketing activities in the overall budget.

However, since this is a grant related to three non-profits, it is assumed that a certain amount of pro bono might be offered and/or reduced rates from that which is customary and/or both.

Additional funds may be available pending the engagement of one or more of the other GIC grant recipients in a larger funding pool to drive a state-level set of PR goals. The exact level of this funding is not defined at the time of this RFI draft.

5.0 Selection Criteria

Proposals will be rated and ranked accordingly:

- Responsiveness/Completeness to the request, 20 points
- Innovation in Approach, 20 points
- Cost & Pro Bono Contribution, 20 points
- Experience and Track Record in the Cleantech industry , 20 points
- Contacts/Rolodex, 20 points

For a possible total of 100 points towards selection.

6.0 Basic Submission Requirements, due Jan 6, 2012

- Narrative of deliverables, 2 pages max
- Pricing and Pro Bono of services, 0.5 pages max
- General outline of schedule for first 60 days, 0.5 pages max
- Resume/Bio of key personnel, 2 pages max
- Listing of experience and accomplishments, 2 pages max
- Contact info and other optional information as preferred by the vendor, 2 pages max
- Send full complete Submission as a single PDF or Word document to dmcfely@solartech.org with the Subject, "SWIC Mkt & PR RFP Submission"

7.0 Summary

By identifying the right job growth opportunities at the right time, SWIC can better advise training providers and talent coaches on how best to respond to industry needs. SolarTech looks forward to your proposal to help promote this valuable grant project. For additional information, contact David McFeely, SWIC Program Director, at dmcfely@solartech.org or at (408) 529-0508.

