



FINAL APPLICATION FORM

## Minnesota Renewable Energy Marketplace – Alliance for Talent Development (MNREM-WIRED)

### Proposal

#### Applicant Information

Business/Organization Name: Workforce Development, Inc.

Authorized Applicant Representative: Randy Johnson

Title: Executive Director

Project Contact: Becky Thofson Title: Sector Projects Manager

Street/Mailing Address: 1649 West Main Street

City/State: Albert Lea, MN Zip Code: 56007 County: Freeborn

Telephone: 507-259-5209 Extension: \_\_\_\_\_ Fax: 507-379-3413

Email Address: bthofson@wfdi.ws

Organization Website Address: workforcedevelopment.ws

Type of Business/Organization:

Private-for-Profit  Private-non-Profit  Education

Other (specify): \_\_\_\_\_

Employer's Federal ID#: 41-1484-613 Unemployment Comp ID#: 0416719000

Type/description of your business/organization, product(s), and/or service(s): Workforce Investment Board and Employment and Training Program operator for 10 counties in southeast Minnesota including Freeborn County.

**Key Partners** (minimum partnership requirements include industry, education, and workforce investment boards) Workforce Development, Inc., Riverland Community College, Alliant Energy, Freeborn-Mower Cooperative Services, Albert Lea High School, Southern Minnesota Initiative Fund

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**Organization Status and Other Information**

How long has your business/organization been in operation in the State of Minnesota? 25 years

Is your business/organization current on all State of Minnesota tax obligations?  Yes  No

Is your business/organization current on all applicable federal, state, county, city, and local taxes?  Yes  No

Is your business/organization on a government disbarment list?  Yes  No

Is your business/organization subject to a collective bargaining agreement?  Yes  No  
*If yes, attach a letter of endorsement from the authorized union official.*

*Please check the county(ies) in which the project will take place.*

**MNREM-WIRED County(ies):**

- |  |  |                                     |  |
|--|--|-------------------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Big Stone           | <input type="checkbox"/> Grant         | <input type="checkbox"/> Murray     | <input type="checkbox"/> Rock            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Blue Earth          | <input type="checkbox"/> Jackson       | <input type="checkbox"/> Nicollet   | <input type="checkbox"/> Sibley          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Brown               | <input type="checkbox"/> Kandiyohi     | <input type="checkbox"/> Nobles     | <input type="checkbox"/> Stevens         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Chippewa            | <input type="checkbox"/> Lac qui Parle | <input type="checkbox"/> Norman     | <input type="checkbox"/> Swift           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Clay                | <input type="checkbox"/> Lincoln       | <input type="checkbox"/> Otter Tail | <input type="checkbox"/> Traverse        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cottonwood          | <input type="checkbox"/> Lyon          | <input type="checkbox"/> Pipestone  | <input type="checkbox"/> Waseca          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Douglas             | <input type="checkbox"/> Martin        | <input type="checkbox"/> Pope       | <input type="checkbox"/> Watonwan        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Faribault           | <input type="checkbox"/> McLeod        | <input type="checkbox"/> Redwood    | <input type="checkbox"/> Wilkin          |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Freeborn | <input type="checkbox"/> Meeker        | <input type="checkbox"/> Renville   | <input type="checkbox"/> Yellow Medicine |

Note: Grantees must be located in the MNREM region. If the project will extend beyond the region, or is in a partnership with others outside the MNREM counties, please explain and list other counties that will be included:

**Mower, Steele, Dodge counties within our area who have extensive renewable energy companies and projects**

*Please check the Industry Sector(s) that is/are the target of the initiative.*

- Renewable Energy
- Value-Added Agriculture
- Agri-Bioscience
- Supporting Industry *(please specify):* \_\_\_\_\_

Please give a 2-3 sentence summary of your request: We are requesting funding for projects that will target the entire workforce pipeline for renewable energy workers in our region. The Renewable Energy Skilled Worker Pipeline project will expose out-of-school youth and adults to the opportunities in the industry, support graduated seniors with work experience within the industry, and assist with credit-based tuition for individuals wanting to pursue leadership positions within this emerging industry.

## 1. Executive Summary

The Renewable Energy Skilled Worker Pipeline project targets the critical need for a diverse, skilled workforce within the emerging renewable energy industries in our area. This project will create and deliver industry-driven education and training to develop the skilled workforce required to sustain the growth of renewable energy in our region.

The Renewable Energy Skilled Worker Pipeline project targets three distinct, but equally important groups: high-school students, out-of-school youth and adults, and incumbent workers who are pursuing more rigorous study at the community college level.

To meet this goal, specific objectives and measurable outcomes are outlined in the table below:

OBJECTIVE	OUTCOMES
Increase availability of renewable energy curriculum and materials to high school teachers	High school Renewable Energy curriculum Units are developed using industry-driven content and posted on the RCC website
Provide hands-on learning opportunities for high-school seniors (18 years old+) about the careers and skills required for jobs within the area Renewable Energy companies.	Renewable Energy Paid Internships for ten students
Develop and deploy Pre-Employment Energy Academies to introduce potential students and workers to the requirements and opportunities within the area employers	Pre-Employment Energy Academies are developed and delivered to 60 potential workers.
Provide scholarships to eligible students begin the education pathway into the Renewable Energy Technician program at RCC.	Scholarships to credit-based classes are awarded to 18 students

**TOTAL REQUEST: \$242,535.00**

**TOTAL MATCH & LEVERAGE: \$217,414.00**

**TOTAL PROJECT: \$432,900.00**

## **2. Opportunity and need**

The *Renewable Energy Skilled Worker Pipeline* project targets the critical need for a diverse, skilled workforce within the emerging renewable energy industries in our area. The renewable energy industry must recruit a new workforce from a population that is unfamiliar with the industry, and the career opportunities that are available and developing in the immediate future. At the federal level, President Elect Obama has prioritized investments targeted toward reducing America's dependence on foreign oil. Specifically, the Obama-Biden comprehensive New Energy for America plan focuses on creating millions of new "green" jobs. Representative Lila Solis has recently been announced as President-Elect Obama's choice for Secretary of Labor in the new administration. Van Kleunen, Executive Director of The Workforce Alliance announced:

"President-Elect Obama is wisely looking to invest in job creation strategies in such sectors as green industries and public infrastructure, as a means of rebuilding a crippled American economy. We know Congresswoman Solis will make sure that we are not only investing in the concrete that will rebuild our nation's roads and bridges, but in the skills of the young people, the unemployed and the underemployed who must be part of this economic solution."

We must support our emerging industry to position ourselves to compete for the training dollars that will be made available at the federal level. Existing curriculum for electrical and industrial maintenance programs needs to be enhanced to include information required by the Renewable Energy (RE) employers. In Minnesota, and specifically, within Southern Minnesota, we are uniquely positioned to meet this challenge. Our region is home to a number of

businesses in renewable/alternative energy, value-added agriculture, agri-bioscience, and supporting industries. Several of these businesses are experiencing growth, and report a need for workers with specialized skills. The current and future workforce needs additional information about these growth industries and the employment opportunities within them. Educators (both high school and higher education) know that these employment opportunities exist. However, they lack the curriculum and training materials to incorporate renewable energy information into their existing classes and inform learners of these career paths. The 2007 Minnesota legislature appropriated funding to Riverland Community College for both wind and solar equipment for the purposes of developing training and education for the industries. This equipment is will be incorporated into the Wind Technician program beginning Fall Semester. However, the Solar program needs funding to develop a relevant, industry-driven curriculum.

### **Target population(s)**

The *Renewable Energy Skilled Worker Pipeline* project targets three distinct, but equally important groups, who need more information and support to enter the Renewable Energy Career Pipeline. The first group includes high-school students who are in the process of determining their career goals. This group of young people needs to be educated about the career opportunities within the renewable energy industry, and motivated to pursue the education required of professionals in these emerging businesses. The second group includes out-of-school youth and adults. For many in this group, the decision to pursue employment in the renewable energy field will best be accomplished through a hands-on experience within the workplace. The third group includes incumbent workers, underemployed individuals, and

others who have the motivation and determination to pursue more rigorous study at the community college level to become professional technicians and mechanics in the industry. This population of workers will be encouraged to pursue higher education to become the leaders of tomorrow's Renewable Energy industry in our area.

**3. Program summary, goals and objectives, and tasks involved**

**PROJECT GOAL:** Create and deliver industry-driven education and training to develop the skilled workforce required to sustain the growth of renewable energy in the region. To meet this goal, the *Renewable Energy Skilled Worker Pipeline* project will, whenever possible, use existing tools and career exploration venues (i.e. *Get Energized: Your Career in the Energy Industry* DVD by the Minnesota Energy Consortium, Energy Academy final exams based on the pre-employment testing done by eneXco and Vestas, and Career Laddering Information developed by the Renewable Works! project). Specific objectives and tasks involved are outlined in the table below:

OBJECTIVE:	TASKS INVOLVED:
Develop and provide industry-led training for needed occupations in the targeted industries	Collaboration with local employers will result in industry-driven curriculum content, defined entry-level requirements for their workforce, and information about the training methods currently used for their workforce. <b>Special emphasis will be made to partner with solar-related businesses.</b>
Increase availability of renewable energy curriculum and materials to high school teachers	Information generated by business is incorporated into Unit lessons and available on the RCC website for high school instructors to access (free of charge) and present to their classes.
Provide hands-on learning opportunities for high-school seniors (18 years old+) about the careers and skills required for jobs within the area Renewable Energy companies.	Area high school seniors and adults age 18+ are recruited and placed in paid internships within area renewable energy companies for 3 week on-the-job experiences.

<p>Develop and deploy Pre-Employment Energy Academies to introduce potential students and workers to the requirements and opportunities within the area employers</p>	<p>Local business information from above and research into Renewable Energy training programs will be used to customize the successful WDI Academy model to offer Pre-Employment Energy Academies. The Academy training model ensures entry-level workers and students understand the nature, requirements and opportunities of working in the Renewable Energy industry in our area.</p>
<p>Provide scholarships to eligible students begin the education pathway into the Renewable Energy Technician program at RCC.</p>	<p>Eligible students will be offered the opportunity to compete for scholarships for tuition-based classes. These scholarships will allow students to develop the skills needed to move along the career pathway within the Renewable Energy industry in our region. Low-income and disadvantaged populations will be targeted for scholarships through the WorkForce Center system.</p>

**How the program is industry-driven:** Collaboration with local employers will result in industry-driven curriculum content, defined entry-level requirements for their workforce, and information about the training methods currently used for their workforce. This industry-driven content will be incorporated into the materials produced for teacher instruction for both high school and college instructors. Through the research process, we will identify the business leaders who would be willing to serve on Industry Advisory Boards. These local champions will ensure that the training and education content remains current and consistent with industry developments and changes.

**Innovative approaches, techniques, or processes:** The *Renewable Energy Skilled Worker Pipeline* project utilizes several innovative approaches, techniques and/or processes. By connecting business leaders to curriculum development at the high-school level, youth receive cutting-edge information. Business has indicated a willingness to work with area high schools

to target their future workforce, but the partnerships need to be facilitated in order to be successful.

WDI has been very successful in developing Pre-Employment Academies – first for the Healthcare industry and then customized to meet the needs of the local Manufacturing industry. The current Return on Investment for the Academy process is more than 700% and benefits underserved populations: forty-two percent of Healthcare Academy students have been minorities; twenty-seven percent have been welfare recipients. WDI is currently in the process of replicating this successful Academy model across the state. The Energy Academy curriculum would be developed using much of the material from the current Manufacturing Academy, with additional materials and input from the Energy industry. Using a successful, existing network with school districts, a previously-developed training model and the lessons learned from replication will allow us to get the Energy Academy off the ground within the short, one-year timeframe. As a result, we will be able to provide tangible outcomes (including specific student and/or worker data as required by the Department of Labor). We anticipate the Energy Academy curriculum could be developed and a minimum of two Academy sessions could be held before the new Wind Turbine Technician program at RCC begins fall semester, 2009. A total of four sessions will be held before the end of the grant period. Academy graduates would be assisted by their career counselor to find work within the industry but may also be supported with scholarships or employer tuition assistance for further education. WDI has developed a scholarship program targeted to the regional “hot jobs”. This scholarship model will be expanded to support qualified students to pursue credit-based education in the Renewable Energy field. These students will be supported to any Minnesota public education

institution offering curriculum relevant to the Renewable Energy industry. The scholarship program will target low-income and disadvantaged populations, and will be administered through the WorkForce Center system.

**Outcomes are as follows:**

<b>Outcome</b>	<b>Measurement</b>
High school Renewable Energy curriculum Units are developed using industry-driven content and posted on the RCC website	Curriculum is available and marketed to all area high schools
Renewable Energy Paid Internships for ten students	10 students receive \$10.00 per hour for 120 hours
Pre-Employment Energy Academies are developed and delivered to 60 potential workers.	6 classes (ten students per class) delivered before 12/31/09.
Scholarships to credit-based classes are awarded to 18 students	16 credits @ \$156.71 + materials for 18 students who commit to continue within the Wind Tech program.

**Impact on the region**

The Renewable Energy industry is emerging and changing so fast that businesses are finding it difficult to recruit and train their workers. Current Renewable Energy employment is found in the construction of wind turbines and the retrofit installation of solar panels on existing buildings. As wind farm construction finishes and the equipment begins to generate power, the workforce needs will also change. Additionally, the current workforce within the energy industry is reaching retirement age and the need to encourage youth to enter this dynamic industry is crucial. The materials created under this project will provide a skilled workforce ready for the emerging challenges as the industry addresses the need to maintain and upgrade its equipment.

**3. The proposed program will address the following:**

### **Business/Industry workforce needs**

Local businesses and industry specialists will determine the most up-to-date content for all curriculum development. Advisory boards will facilitate the development of relationships with the business/industry representatives to insure continued updates to the curriculum.

### **Delivery challenges specific to target population(s)**

In and out-of-school youth, as well as unemployed and underemployed adults, will be served “where they are”. The high school units will be delivered to students through their science, technology, or other courses through their regular school day. Low-income and disadvantaged populations will be recruited through the WorkForce Centers. The Academy and related materials will be designed to encourage workers to continue their education and skill development to move through the Renewable Energy Career Pipeline. In addition, outreach materials will raise the awareness of the program within our communities.

### **Replicability**

WDI has already demonstrated the ability to successfully replicate Academy curricula. Posting the high-school materials on the RCC website will expand the availability to anyone who can access the website. Coursework and materials will be available through the regular college course offerings.

### **Sustainability**

Start-up or development funding is the biggest issue for the Renewable Energy Career Pipeline activities. RCC has been innovative in obtaining the equipment to support new training and education programs. The need now is to obtain resources to support the development of the curriculum using the wind and solar equipment that directly incorporates the needs of local

industry. In order to ensure the best possible programming, considerable time is needed to facilitate partnerships and curriculum and activity development. Once the programming is finished, classes and content will be updated continuously through our partnerships. After the components are available, regular student financial aid, WFC employment and training programs (i.e. WIA, Dislocated Worker, or Youth programming) and employer tuition reimbursement programs will ensure the program is sustainable.

**4. Partnership Structure:**

All partners have contributed resources and committed to participate in this project to ensure its success. Each partner’s role is defined below:

<b>Partner</b>	<b>Role and Responsibility</b>
Workforce Development, Inc.	Fiscal agent for the project; participate in content development; development and delivery of Energy Academy; assist with recruitment, screening and placement of internship students within business, potential academy students, and scholarship winners for Wind Technical courses; participate on Project Leadership Team.
Riverland Community College	Participate with content development; coordinate with area high school teachers to develop RE unit, and link unit and materials to RCC website; assist with recruitment, screening and placement of internship students and potential academy students; participate on Project Leadership Team.
Area Renewable Energy business leaders: Alliant Energy (Albert Lea office) and Freeborn-Mower Cooperative Services	Make staff available for input into content for curriculum development and update of high school unit and Energy Academy; make staff available for job shadowing and teaching student internships about the business and industry; speakers at classes and activities as available; participate on Project Advisory Team.
Albert Lea High School and other K-12 Systems	Collaborate on curriculum input and design for high school Renewable Energy Units; incorporate Renewable Energy curriculum into existing classes as appropriate
Southern Minnesota Initiative Foundation	Assist with convening business and partners for development of content for curriculum; support for marketing and recruitment of students.

**5. Organizational qualifications/experience:**

The project leader for this project will be Becky Thofson, Industrial Sectors Project Manger for Workforce Development, Inc. Ms. Thofson's expertise includes project management experience, computer and data management skills, and exemplary communication skills. Ms. Thofson has a master's degree in Adult Counseling.

Ms. Thofson will work closely with Steve Vietor, Electrical Instructor at RCC. Mr. Vietor's experience includes 16 years at Riverland, and most recently as the lead for the Renewable Energy Projects at Riverland. Mr. Vietor brings expertise to this project, including curriculum development for and specific knowledge of the solar industry. Both Ms. Thofson and Mr. Vietor have support from their management to participate in these projects as indicated in the attached letters of commitment.

**Fiscal management and reporting experience**

All fiscal management and reporting will be completed for the partnership by Workforce Development, Inc. WDI and RCC have worked closely on other Department of Labor grant funded projects and have successful experience with the DOL e-reporting systems. These previous projects will allow the Renewable Energy Career Pipeline project a fast start, ensuring successful completion within the allotted timeline and proper identification of individuals, which can be included on WIRED and DOL reporting, including required Common Measures.

**Renewable Energy Marketplace – Alliance for Talent Development  
MNREM-WIRED  
“RENEWABLE ENERGY SKILLED WORKER PIPELINE”  
Budget**

<b>BUDGET CATEGORIES</b>	<b>MNREM-WIRED Funds</b>	<b>Cash Match</b>	<b>In-Kind Match</b>	<b>Other Leveraged Resources</b>	<b>Total Project Funds</b>
Program Staff Wages	\$87,860	\$0	\$0	\$13,920	\$101,780
Staff Fringe Benefits	\$28,994	\$0	\$0	\$4,594	\$ 33,587
Staff Training & Development	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Participant Training Services (if applicable)	\$97,632	\$0	\$0	\$19,500	\$117,132
Employer Services (if applicable)	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Travel	\$0	\$0	\$3,000	\$0	\$3,000
Communications, Publications/Printing	\$3,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$3,500
Materials & Supplies	\$3,000	\$0	\$1,500	\$0	\$4,500
Equipment	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$169,900	\$169,900
Facilities	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$5,000	\$5,000
Other	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Administration (10% maximum)	\$22,049	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$22,049
<b>Total budget</b>	<b>\$242,535</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$4,500</b>	<b>\$212,914</b>	<b>\$459,949</b>

**DEFINITIONS:**

**Cash match** - additional funds or services (allowable costs) provided and paid for by the sub-recipient from non-Federal funds that are in support of the WIRED-funded project (e.g. actual costs incurred)

**In-kind contributions** - the products, space, or services that are not directly paid by the sub- recipient but are incurred in support of the WIRED-funded project (e.g. staff time)

**Leveraged resources** - all resources used by the sub-recipient in support of the WIRED-funded project (e.g. costs of services provided to WIRED participants that are funded by another Federal Program or by a non-federal program)

**Project Budget Narrative:  
Description of Requested MNREM-WIRED Funds**

<b>BUDGET CATEGORIES</b>	<b>DESCRIPTION</b>
Program Staff Wages Riverland CC:  WDI	Define curriculum content and activity design with business input, create high school "Unit", link "Unit" to RCC website, create and implement "Kids College" activities, participate on Advisory Board. (2080 hours @ \$32.00 per hour=\$66,560)  Develop Renewable Energy Career Academy curriculum, deliver minimum 4 sessions, develop & coordinate Student Internships and scholarships, participate on Advisory Board. (1260 hours=\$21,300)
Staff Fringe Benefits	Calculated at 33% of hour wage request=\$28,994
Staff Training & Development	
Participant Training Services (if applicable)	-Student Paid internships (120 hours @ \$10.00 per hour for 10 students=\$12,000). -Scholarships @ \$3,007 per student (includes tuition and materials) for 18 students=\$54,132. -Renewable Energy Academies 6 academies @ \$700.00 per student (60 students)=\$31,500.
Employer Services (if applicable)	
Travel	
Communications, Publications/Printing	Pathways to Careers high school student planning booklet for Energy careers=\$3,000.
Materials & Supplies	Develop, print and disseminate marketing materials for outreach to high schools=\$3,000
Equipment	
Facilities	
Other (Specify)	
Administration	10% of total request=\$22,049.
<b>WIRED Funds budget</b>	<b>\$242,535</b>

**Project Budget Narrative:  
Description of Match and Leveraged Resources**

BUDGET CATEGORIES	Calculated Amount/ Value Of Match/ Leverage	Amount of Federal Match	Amount of Non-Federal Match	Match		Leveraged	Source (organization name)
				Cash Match	In-Kind Match	Other Leveraged Funds	
Program Staff Wages	WFC Career Counseling & Assessment (464 hours)					\$13,920	WDI
Staff Fringe Benefits						\$4,594	WDI
Staff Training & Development							
Participant Training Services (if applicable)	25% of academy students eligible for other E&T funding + Alliant Energy Scholarships + FMCS class participation					\$19,500	WDI & Alliant Energy & Freeborn-Mower Cooperative Services
Employer Services (if applicable)							
Travel	Travel to Project Meetings				\$3,000		WDI
Communications, Publications/Printing							
Materials & Supplies	Misc. supplies				\$1,500		WDI
Equipment	RCC Wind & Solar Training Equipment					\$169,900	Riverland
Facilities	WFC facilities					\$5,000	WFC system
Other (Specify)							
Administration							
<b>Match and Leveraged Resources Budget</b>					\$4,500	\$212,914	

## Renewable Energy Skilled Worker Pipeline Timeline

	High School Materials	High School Senior Internships	Pre-Employment Academies	Tuition-based Scholarships	Ongoing participation in reporting/ MNREM activities
February	Curriculum Development	Recruit students & businesses	Curriculum development	Recruitment & screening	
March	↓	↓	Recruitment & screening	↓	
April	Material Development	↓	Academies held	↓	
May	↓	Assessment & training for students	↓	↓	
June		Internships			
July	↓	↓		Scholarship selection	
August	Material deployment to high schools	↓		Classes begin	
September	↓				↓
October			↓		
November			↓		
December			↓		
January	↓				