



Council Meeting: August 19, 2008

SUBJECT: Authorization to Accept Contract in the Amount of \$50,040 from Foothill-De Anza Community College District to Assist with Solar Installer Training Program

REPORT IN BRIEF

The Foothill-De Anza Community College District wishes to contract with NOVA to administer the internship component of its Industry-Driven Regional Collaborative grant to develop and implement training for solar installers. Staff recommends that the Sunnyvale City Council, on behalf of the seven-city NOVA Consortium, authorize the acceptance of a contract in the amount of \$50,040.

BACKGROUND

In 2006, a coalition of solar energy employers in Silicon Valley came together with the goal of eliminating barriers to the use of solar power. From the start, this group, known as SolarTech, recognized that addressing workforce challenges would be key to supporting their rapidly growing industry, and they invited NOVA to be part of the group. In its 2007 white paper, SolarTech stated, "As the PV [photovoltaic] market grows, installers [installation companies] are finding it increasingly difficult to hire qualified people. In addition, there are few training programs with adequate curricula, especially in the Bay Area."

SolarTech identified the follow major challenges for the industry in terms of workforce:

- The need for each company to train its own solar workers is not highly scalable and results in higher costs for the industry and its customers.
- The lack of trained workers who execute a consistent set of standards across the industry presents a risk that more onerous licensing requirements will be imposed.
- The number of workers who possess certification in industry standards is limited, resulting in widespread variations in quality and efficiency.

The SolarTech members realized that community colleges are an important resource for timely and responsive help with these workforce challenges. Solar industry representatives, NOVA staff, and workforce development leaders from local community colleges met to discuss funding available for developing curriculum to train PV installers, identified as one of the most critical needs.

The timing was right, as the California Community College Chancellor's Office had just issued a request for applications for its Industry-Driven Regional Collaborative (IDRC) grants. Together, the group strategized as to what would make up a successful PV installer training program. It was decided that the proposed training would entail a classroom and lab component, delivered in both accelerated and semester format, followed by a paid 8–10 week internship at a SolarTech company. Students would be prepared to take the North American Board of Certified Energy Practitioners (NABCEP) PV Entry Level certification exam.

The grant was funded, and approximately 125 students in both Santa Clara and Santa Cruz counties will receive training over the course of the grant.

EXISTING POLICY

The proposed activities are consistent with the City of Sunnyvale's Socio-Economic Goal 5.1F: Provide job training and employment services within constraints of operative, federal regulations and available federal funding, to address the locally-determined employment and training needs of economically disadvantaged residents and others with special needs.

DISCUSSION

As a partner in Foothill-De Anza's IDRC grant, NOVA was instrumental in the development of the grant and a proponent of an internship component to provide the trainees with practical work experience following their classroom training. NOVA agreed to coordinate the internship portion and will be working closely with SolarTech to reach the solar integrators, the employers that install the PV systems, both to market the training and to have employers participate with the work experience portion of this effort. Foothill-De Anza desires to contract with NOVA in the amount of \$50,040 for the internship coordination.

FISCAL IMPACT

The source of funds for this project is IDRC funding targeted for development of solar installer training and coordination of internships. As such there is sufficient funding to accomplish the required work, and the funding cannot be used for any purposes not in the original proposal. There is no negative fiscal impact on the City of Sunnyvale.

PUBLIC CONTACT

Public contact was made through posting of the Council agenda on the City's official notice bulletin board and at the Senior Center and Community Center, posting of the agenda and report on the City's Web site, publication of the Council agenda in the *San Jose Mercury News*, and the availability of the report in the Library and the Office of the City Clerk.

ALTERNATIVES

1. Council authorizes the acceptance of a contract from the Foothill-De Anza Community College District in the amount of \$50,040 for the coordination of internships for solar installer trainees.
2. Council does not authorize acceptance of the contract.
3. Other action as determined by Council.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended by staff that the Sunnyvale City Council, on behalf of the NOVA seven-city consortium, adopt Alternative 1: Council authorizes the acceptance of a contract from the Foothill-De Anza Community College District in the amount of \$50,040 for the coordination of internships for solar installer trainees.

Reviewed by:

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