

Goodwill Industries® Uses Competency Models and Pathways to Train Older Workers

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Introduction

Goodwill Industries International is a global social service enterprise made up of 165 local, independent Goodwill® agencies (also known as members) across the United States and Canada, as well as 14 international affiliates in 13 other countries. Goodwill funds job training programs, employment placement services and other community-based programs by selling donated clothes and other household items in more than 2,500 Goodwill retail stores and online at *shopgoodwill.com*®. Programs are also funded through commercial services, private and public grants and individual giving. Collectively, Goodwill agencies provided career services to nearly 2 million people in 2009.

In 2009, Goodwill Industries International received an American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA) High-Growth Green Jobs Capacity-Building grant from the U.S. Department of Labor's Employment and Training Administration (ETA) to build the capacity of its agencies to provide training and placement services related to green building and sustainable agriculture. With these funds, Goodwill leveraged existing partnerships within six Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) member sub-grantees to develop competency models and career pathways to help people find green jobs with sustainable wages. SCSEP, which is part of the national Older Americans Act, helps seniors find work, giving preference to those who have physical or mental disabilities, those who are veterans or spouses of veterans, and those who need job training.

The Workforce Challenge

As a recipient of SCSEP funds, Goodwill serves workers aged 55 or older who lack jobs or face financial challenges and connects them with the on-the-job training they need to move into employment. These older workers are able to broaden their skills and gain work experience at local nonprofit and government facilities like day care centers, senior centers, schools, hospitals, libraries and landscaping centers. By adding green training to the program, Goodwill aims to better serve this group and help them find jobs in the high-demand green industry.

The Solution and Results

Janet Marinaccio, Goodwill's national workforce development program manager, recognized the value of using competency models as a resource for staff capacity building, career guidance, and the development of training programs. Through the ARRA grant, Goodwill teamed up with a team of consultants to develop 18 competency models and career pathways targeting industries identified by the six SCSEP sub-grantees. The consultant team included O'Brien & Company, a Seattle-based

sustainability and green building consulting firm; Reach, Inc., a Regional Operator for Indiana Workforce Board; and Seattle Tilth, a non-profit organization that provides education and programming to promote organic gardening and local food systems.

The models and pathways produced by Goodwill Industries International's consultant team will be distributed to the sub-grantees, where they will serve multiple purposes. First, staff at the six locations will use the models and pathways to gain an increased awareness of green jobs and industries, specifically the knowledge, skills and abilities needed to advance within the field. With this knowledge, these staff members will be able to work with SCSEP participants to develop individual employment plans that focus on green employment. The models can also be used by SCSEP training providers to offer participants training that targets the competencies needed in occupations identified by the community. Goodwill intends to roll out additional competency models and pathways to build the capacity of its other members.

How They Did It: Gathering Local Input and Building Models

Faced with the challenge of developing effective and relevant competency models, Goodwill staff members, together with their consultant team, sought input from the communities that would benefit from the resulting training programs. To this end, Community Days were held at each of Goodwill's six SCSEP sub-grantee sites: Ft. Washington, PA; Roanoke, VA; Indianapolis, IN; Albuquerque, NM; Phoenix, AZ; and Tacoma, WA.

The Community Days were designed to gather current and potential community training partners; exchange information on the local job climate, green jobs, competency models, and career pathways; identify three locally important occupations related to green building and sustainable agriculture; and create enthusiasm for SCSEP. Held in September and October, these events were attended by local community colleges, Workforce Investment Board members, business and industry representatives, as well as Goodwill staff and SCSEP partners. The Community Days proved to be a success, and provided the team with a look into the local workforce needs of the six communities.

The competency model team then began researching material for models and pathways using the U.S. Department of Labor's Occupational Information Network (O*NET), as well as job search websites, actual job openings and descriptions, state employment sites, and green jobs websites and publications. Among the industry sectors identified by the Community Days were weatherization, construction waste management, electronics reclamation, green health care administrative support, and value-added landscaping. Specific green occupation openings available included sustainable agriculture enterprise specialist, recycling warehouse distribution manager, farm-to-institution coordinator, agricultural resource liaison, and solar design estimator. Taking advantage of the Competency Model Clearinghouse's Build a Model and Career Ladder/Lattice tools, the team produced 18 competency models and career pathways.

Conclusion

The Goodwill project successfully produced competency models and pathways that will accomplish the goals of both the SCSEP and Capacity-Building grants. The end products reflect the input of the six local communities that will use the models to provide effective training in expanding green industries.

Related Links

The career ladders and competency models for each of the six local communities are available on the Department of Labor's Workforce3One online community:

- [Albuquerque, New Mexico](#)
- [Fort Washington, Pennsylvania](#)
- [Indianapolis, Indiana](#)
- [Phoenix, Arizona](#)
- [Roanoke, Virginia](#)
- [Tacoma, Washington](#)

Goodwill Industries International, Inc.

www.goodwill.org

O'Brien & Company

www.obrienandco.com

Seattle Tilth

www.seattletilth.org

Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP)

www.doleta.gov/seniors

Competency Model Clearinghouse

www.careeronestop.org/competencymodel/default.aspx