



## **West Ocala Green Jobs Program**

### **Pathways Out of Poverty**

#### **What will the grant do for West Ocala?**

Provide training and placement services to 665 eligible people over two years within green industries such as:

- Energy-efficient building construction and retrofitting industries
- Renewable electric power industries
- The bio-fuels industries
- The energy-efficient assessment industry
- Manufacturers of sustainable products using environmentally sustainable processes and materials
- Recycling
- Sustainable agriculture

**Grant Size:** \$2.9 million

**Projected Number of Participants:** 665 over two years

#### **Who will be eligible?**

Priority will be given to residents of West Ocala who are:

- Disadvantaged individuals living in areas of high poverty
- Unemployed individuals
- Recent high school dropouts
- Individuals with a criminal record

#### **Types of Services:**

- Basic skills and work readiness training
- Occupational skills training in green jobs
- Supportive services to overcome barriers to education and employment
- Training services at times and locations accessible to individuals
- Job placement coaching and assistance

#### **When will the program start?**

Recruitment efforts for the first training class will begin in March. Classes should begin in April and May 2010.

#### **Who do I contact for more information?**

Call 352-840-5700, extension 5550 or [WestOcalaGreenJobs@clmworkforce.com](mailto:WestOcalaGreenJobs@clmworkforce.com)

**Watch videos** on Green Jobs at [www.youtube.com/WorkforceCLM](http://www.youtube.com/WorkforceCLM)

This publication was funded 100% from the \$2.9 million Department of Labor Pathways Out of Poverty Grant.

## West Ocala Green Jobs Program

Workforce Connection proposes to reduce unemployment and promote economic expansion in West Ocala, a low-income region of Marion County. Although the area is challenged by wide spread unemployment, low incomes, below average education levels, lack of adequate housing and transportation, and health and safety issues; new economic incentives are being put in place to create the perfect storm for community and economic development.

Due to the economy and recent trends in new business attraction, Workforce seeks to create a broad-based group of business and community partners to provide unemployed and low income residents, including area youth, a variety of training tracks in the green jobs area over the next two years. Over 50 business partners are being recruited in areas such as energy-efficient building construction and retrofit industries, renewable electric power industry, bio-fuels, deconstruction and materials use, energy-efficient assessment industry, green manufacturing and sustainable agriculture. The diverse industries were selected because of the trends towards small business relocations, start-ups and expansions, rather than the large business relocations of the past. By focusing on a variety of training tracks, some custom to one industry and others involving multiple business partners, the West Ocala Green Jobs Coalition can better insure employment at the end of the training process. Workforce has a successful track record in managing such multi-faceted projects.

Important work experience or on-the-job training opportunities will be integrated into each training track. Partnerships with groups such as Ocala Housing Authority, Community Action Agency and Habitat for Humanity of Marion County allow participants the opportunity to do energy audits, retrofitting, green construction and alternative energy projects that build their skills while improving the housing and quality of life in the community. The SR40 Corridor, one of the three gateways to downtown Ocala, is the primary artery in West Ocala, This project provides a triple win - skills and jobs for those in need, increased economic opportunities in West Ocala, and a safer, healthier and more vibrant West Ocala.

During the first year, the project will focus on "employment-ready" opportunities. Concurrent with those training programs, community and economic development partners will work together to build local entrepreneurial capacity and new business start-ups from West Ocala to further expand employment opportunities during the second year. Partners such as the Small Business Development Center, the Ocala/Marion County Chamber of Commerce Minority Business Council and local banks are core to this part of the project. An Enterprise Zone is being finalized, a SR40 Overlay Zone with expedited permitting is in place, an Airport Industrial Park is being promoted by the City and the area is privy to New Market Tax Credits, federal tax incentives for very low income areas. These incentives all line up to create the ideal environment for business start-ups and expansions. The City of Ocala, Marion County and the Ocala/Marion County Economic Development Corporation are already working to attract new businesses to the area.

At the core of West Ocala lies the Central Florida Community College Hampton Center and a soon to be remodeled community building that is slated to be an all encompassing community resource center. These two facilities will serve as the hub of the project, complete with training facilities, a community health and dental facility, and support services such as counseling and employability assistance. The facilities are on the route of the Sun Tran bus system managed by Marion County. Through grant funds and pooling existing community resources, the group will provide the support services needed to remove employment barriers such as transportation, health and mental health issues, background challenges due to incarceration, employability skills deficits and strategies to compete in a highly competitive jobs market.

*Workforce Connection is a member of the Employ Florida network of workforce services and resources. Workforce Connection is an equal opportunity employer/program. Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities. All voice telephone numbers listed above may be reached by persons using TTY/TDD equipment via the Florida Relay Service at 711. If you need accommodations, please call 352-840-5700, ext. 7878 or e-mail [accommodations@clmworkforce.com](mailto:accommodations@clmworkforce.com). Please make request at least three business days in advance.*