



Md. lands \$5.8M green-job training grant

by **Danielle Ulman**

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Those looking to learn green-job skills in Maryland got a boost Wednesday, with the announcement that the state's labor department won a \$5.8 million training grant.

The money, part of \$190 million in grants announced by the U.S. Department of Labor through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, will provide training and job placement assistance to a variety of people, including veterans, low-wage workers and ex-convicts in Baltimore City.

About 1,585 people will train for jobs in green industries such as manufacturing sustainability, construction and building trades, environmental technology and solar energy.

Maryland's Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation will implement the "Smart, Green and Growing" project through partnerships with the Governor's Workforce Investment Board and other local job-creation boards, businesses, community colleges, labor apprenticeship programs and the One-Stop Workforce System.

The money will be passed out through local work force boards, community colleges and labor unions that will offer the training to those in need of work.

On the manufacturing sustainability front, companies can get training for employees to make their operations more efficient, said Eric Seleznow, executive director of the Governor's Workforce Investment Board.

"We want to customize training to meet the manufacturers' needs for making their businesses more sustainable and more knowledgeable about energy efficiency," he said.

The businesses involved in the program will advise the board on industry needs and the best way to train the work force.

Peter Van Buren, president of Baltimore energy audit and contracting firm TerraLogos Energy Group, said his team is excited about the program.

"I think that bringing this money into Maryland now is really important," he said. "You can see where we are with unemployment, I mean our numbers are better than elsewhere, but we're still struggling. Trying to change this around through job growth and business is really key."

Maryland's jobless rate in November was 7.4 percent, compared to the national average of 10 percent.

TerraLogos has inspected 800 homes and businesses since its launch three years ago, providing information about cost-effective ways to make buildings more efficient, resulting in \$2 million in utility savings for customers.

As more look to companies like TerraLogos for guidance on efficiency, the firm could have a well-trained work force at its disposal because of the jobs grant.

Pepco Energy Services, which last month won a \$9 million contract to increase the efficiency of Baltimore's Oriole Park at Camden Yards and M&T Bank Stadium, hopes to gain some good employees from the program.

"We were interested because we look at it as an opportunity to help and there's probably a joint interest there, because we're always looking for good people," said Patrick Sweeney, vice president of business development for Pepco Energy.

"There's always a need for skilled personnel, whether it be with us or at our subcontractors," he said.