

# City of Alexandria, Virginia

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## MEMORANDUM

DATE: MARCH 3, 2009

TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL

FROM: JAMES K. HARTMANN, CITY MANAGER

SUBJECT: BUDGET MEMO #20: JOB TRAINING THROUGH JOBLINK

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This memorandum is in response to City Council's request for information regarding the City's job training efforts, given the rising job losses in our community. It also responds to inquiries regarding the Department of Human Services JobLink Division's collaborations with the Northern Virginia Community College and highlights projects with area businesses.

JobLink prepares individuals through education, training and counseling and refers qualified candidates to prospective employers. Joblink utilizes a comprehensive workforce development system that brings together skilled workers and businesses to sustain economic growth and development.

In addition to routine one-stop activities, JobLink is currently pursuing several initiatives that will address the surge in job losses in the region. Several of these initiatives were created in anticipation of emerging employment opportunities in the "Green Industry."

The following outlines some of JobLink's collaborations and employment related activities:

- JobLink organized the Green Workforce Consortium, whose members include local employers, training organizations, Northern Virginia Community College and the Alexandria Redevelopment Housing Authority (ARHA). The chief objective of the consortium is to prepare Alexandria residents to meet the growing need for workers in the "Green" industry and to sustain existing employment and training partnerships in the community. JobLink will include the Office of Environmental Quality in all initiatives being considered.
- Already earmarked is \$335,000 for the City's Automobile Training Academy, which is committed to placing 40 clients in full time employment positions. These funds were recently released and so far, there are two clients in mechanic training and one in a mechanic apprenticeship. Staff is investigating categories within the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) that might lead to additional funding for this program.
- The Ashlawn Group renewable energy project is a cost-effective and readily available renewable product that stabilizes power output and increases the capacity by storing a portion of the electricity produced in fuel cell storage units. Staff is collaborating with Northern Virginia Community College, Washington Gas and Dominion Electric to apply

to the Department of Energy for a grant to train local residents in the construction and maintenance of a battery system. Once the proposal is complete, City Council will be asked to approve City participation in the grant application.

- Virginia Sustainable Building Network is a statewide organization that represents diverse sectors interested in building healthy, energy-efficient and eco-friendly sustainable communities. JobLink staff will participate in a Job Fair to recruit clients for “Green Training Projects” currently underway.
- Calvert Jones Sustainable Building Services is a local Heating Ventilation and Air Conditioning company interested in working with City staff to access “Green” training dollars and prepare local residents for available positions within their company.
- In operation 20 years, Housing Evaluations Plus, LLC is a home remodeling company located in Washington, DC that provides residential and commercial construction and renovation services. JobLink is partnering with the company to apply for training funds from the Department of Labor and/or Department of Energy for “Green” construction training and weatherization. This project may be initiated using existing Workforce Investment Act formula funds. JobLink is exploring a partnership with ARHA to hire residents to weatherize public housing units.
- Continuum Energy Solutions is an Alexandria-based company that provides energy conservation solutions to homeowners that include Solar Voltaic and Solar Heating systems. Continuum will begin a Green Clean Energy Auditor Training class at JobLink in March 2009, which will include installation of Solar Voltaic and Solar Heating home operations. Some of the successful participants will be hired to work for the company as installers/salesman. JobLink will find jobs in the energy industry for those not hired by Continuum.
- The Director of Human Resources of Washington Gas, who is an active member of the Workforce Investment Board and the Alexandria Commission on Employment, will work with JobLink in recruitment efforts to fill the company’s vacant positions.
- Staff is also working with the City’s Environmental Policy Committee to identify employment/training opportunities related to the committee’s recommendations.
- JobLink hopes to use ARRA funds, which have been allocated to the State, to fund additional training activities. Staff is pursuing the possibility to change the eligibility requirements for the one-time stimulus fund for the Summer Youth Employment program. The current criteria restrict the number of youth eligible for enrollment and will result in a small allocation that will not greatly expand the program.

The Alexandria Works program continues to move clients from welfare to work. As a direct correlation to the economic downturn, the number of applicants seeking employment services at JobLink has increased 67%. The average number of clients using the Resource Center has increased from 50 to 70 clients daily. The total number of customer visits from October to December 2008 increased 45% over the same period October to December in 2007.