

2009 Innovations Awards Program APPLICATION

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ID # (assigned by CSG): 09- E-02DC

Please provide the following information, adding space as necessary:

State: District of Columbia

Assign Program Category (applicant): Workforce Development (Use list at end of application)

1. **Program Name:** The Mayor's Green Summer Job Corps
2. **Administering Agency:** The District of Columbia Department of the Environment
3. **Contact Person (Name and Title):** Jill Wohrle, Assistant to the Director
4. **Address:** 51 N Street NE, 6th Floor, Washington DC 20002
5. **Telephone Number:** (202) 535-1983
6. **FAX Number:** (202) 535-2881
7. **E-mail Address:** jill.wohrle@dc.gov
8. **Web site Address:** <http://green.dc.gov/summer>

9. Please provide a two-sentence description of the program.

The Mayor's Green Summer Job Corps engages District youth, ages 14-21, by providing them with substantive green-collar work that yields measurable community sustainability benefits. Participants receive hands-on experience and educational programming that introduces them to environmental issues and careers.

10. How long has this program been operational (month and year)? Note: the program must be between 9 months and 5 years old on March 2, 2009 to be considered.

The program was created in March 2008.

11. Why was the program created? What problem[s] or issue[s] was it designed to address?

The District hires 15,000-20,000 youth per summer through its central Summer Youth Employment Program. Traditionally, those youth are assigned to District agencies and private-sector/non-profit partners. In past years, the District Department of the Environment (DDOE), given the small size of its staff, had hosted a small number of youth, but was asked to increase its number in 2008. In addition, as a primarily regulatory agency, there were a number of sustainability efforts that DDOE wished to undertake, but for which the agency didn't have adequate staff. Therefore, the agency needed to design a solution by which it could increase its youth opportunities while also achieving its sustainability objectives.

12. Describe the specific activities and operations of the program in chronological order.

September-October 2008: Evaluation of Green Summer 2008. Initial planning meetings for Green Summer 2009 begin with potential government and non-profit partners.

November-December 2009: Planning meetings conclude. Identify preliminary budget, supply list, topic areas and educational needs. Devise initial project list to accommodate 800 youth.

January 2009: Identify educational facilities. Release Request for Applications announcing grant funding for potential project and training partners. Develop job announcement for summer supervisors. Finalize program budget.

February 2009: Begin supervisor recruitment and interviews for 100+ positions. Identify physical worksites to host youth teams. Finalize project list.

March 2009: Complete supervisor hiring. Execute all partner grant agreements. Complete District-required Host Agency Agreement for summer youth employees. Finalize summer supply list and begin procurement process. Begin youth recruitment through District Summer Youth Employment Program.

April-May 2009: Design and finalize daily youth project schedules. Develop supervisor training curriculum and schedule. Modify supervisor handbook. Finalize educational programming for youth seminars. Make necessary transportation and facility reservations for specialized training offerings. Assign youth to topic-specific teams. Submit supervisor and youth information to payroll systems.

June 8, 2009: Supervisor training begins.

June 18-August 21, 2009: Green Summer 2009 takes place.

13. Why is the program a new and creative approach or method?

The critical feature of Green Summer is the means by which youth employment is structured. Past youth programs paired a participant with an existing government worker. Program quality was largely dependent on the engagement of the assigned supervisor, and an agency's ability to host youth was limited by the number of workers that could serve as supervisors. Green Summer was the first youth program in the District to hire college students and recent graduates as Team Leaders and Managers. This temporary workforce accomplished a number of goals. First, DDOE could leverage these summer supervisors to greatly expand its youth hiring. Second, temporary supervisor hiring offered an intrinsic "second rung" for a youth's career ladder; if a youth succeeded in the program, he could apply in future years to work as a Team Leader at a higher wage. Finally, the team structure enabled youth to be immediately placed on green-collar projects that had languished for lack of resources. For example, a parcel of land adjacent to the Anacostia River that has not received attention in years will have 96 youth solely devoted to its restoration during the summer of 2009. This alignment between city priorities and youth opportunities is greatly strengthened because the program is District-organized. Amidst all of the discussion about how best to create and train a green-collar workforce, the District has successfully done so.

14. What were the program's start-up costs? (Provide details about specific purchases for this program, staffing needs and other financial expenditures, as well as existing materials, technology and staff already in place.)

The bulk of the program's costs are operational. Supply outlays changes from year to year and any remaining inventory is re-used in the following year. In the first year, the start-up costs included the staff time of two existing staff members. Existing technology and office materials were used as well. For 2009, the Department is hiring a full time Program Coordinator. The estimated salary for this position is \$72,000/year.

15. What are the program's annual operational costs?

The operational costs depend on the number of participants. For 2009, when Green Summer will employ 800 youth and 100 supervisors, the estimated operational cost is \$993,456.00. The general estimated cost per student ranges from \$1,000-1,200.

16. How is the program funded?

The program is funded entirely within the budget of the Government of the District of Columbia. Youth participants are paid through the Department of Employment Services' Summer Youth

Employment Program. Supervisor salaries and supply/training costs are borne by the District Government and the District Department of the Environment specifically.

17. Did this program require the passage of legislation, executive order or regulations? If YES, please indicate the citation number.: No

18. What equipment, technology and software are used to operate and administer this program?

The administrative operations of the program employ:

- A web-based job application
- A PeopleFirst database developed by the District Office of the Chief Technology Officer
- Quickbase databases for project tracking and hiring processes
- AirClic and eTime technologies provided by ADP

The field-based youth teams use a variety of equipment that meets the specific needs of each project. Equipment includes loppers, pruners, diameter breast height tape measures, ooze tubes and other tree watering mechanisms, compact fluorescent light bulbs, weatherization kits (including caulk, door sweeps, and coil brushes), storm drain Labels and adhesive, grass whips, and assorted other supplies as needed.

19. To the best of your knowledge, did this program originate in your state? If YES, please indicate the innovator's name, present address, telephone number and e-mail address.

Yes. Innovator: DDOE Director George Hawkins, 51 N Street NE, 6th Floor, Washington DC 20002. (202) 535-2615, g.hawkins@dc.gov

20. Are you aware of similar programs in other states? If YES, which ones and how does this program differ?

Yes. The city of Pittsburgh has contracted with the Student Conservation Association to employ youth in outdoor projects. Green Summer differs in that our program is entirely city-directed. Therefore, the projects undertaken by students have been designed and executed such that they directly address sustainability needs identified by the city. Green Summer leverages existing District programs, expertise and project ideas to simultaneously provide a strong youth work experience and also achieve District goals.

21. Has the program been fully implemented? If NO, what actions remain to be taken? No. Although Green Summer's first year was a success, we are seeking to add more advanced programs and training each successive year, so that returning students can build upon their earlier experiences and develop a more sophisticated skill set. In that respect, the program will evolve over time and will consistently include new elements.

22. Briefly evaluate (pro and con) the program's effectiveness in addressing the defined problem[s] or issue[s]. Provide tangible examples.

The program's greatest strength was the extent to which it effectively exposed youth in environmental issues. Green Summer found that the most effective approach to do so was by relating these issues directly to their communities. For example, rather than discussing watersheds generally, students were taught about the Anacostia River, which borders many of their neighborhoods. During clean-ups, trainers drew out youth experiences ("How many of you litter?"; "How does the neighborhood we work in differ from your neighborhood?") and then related the work and issues to the youths' answers. The environmental assessment sheets completed by students frequently revealed insightful comments about the state of their neighborhoods and problems they observed. By

the end of the summer, participants could discuss, in detail, the concepts of stormwater, runoff, watersheds, energy audits and the benefits of an urban tree canopy. In the words of one student, “Hey man, now you’ve got me looking at trees!”

The greatest challenge to the program’s effectiveness is translating the skills and knowledge acquired over the summer into action that lasts beyond the end of the program. DDOE hopes to expand Green Summer to a smaller, year-round team at some point in the future. However, the majority of Green Summer participants return to high school during the year, so a year-round work program would not meet their needs. Therefore, the best opportunity to build on the youths’ summer gains would be via environmental education in the schools, student activities and service opportunities. These programs are not currently in place in the District and represent the next step in supporting the green-collar skill development of youth.

23. How has the program grown and/or changed since its inception? There have been two significant changes since Green Summer’s inception. The first is the number of students served. In its first year, Green Summer was assigned 300 participants. In 2009, Green Summer will expand to 800 participants so that a greater number of youth are offered green-collar opportunities.

The second, and perhaps more significant change, is an increase in the sophistication of the projects that youth undertake. In the program’s first year, all teams received a basic introduction to environmental issues. Projects consisted of neighborhood clean-ups, basic environmental assessments, park clean-ups and invasive species removal. In 2009, youth will select one of four topics areas: Watersheds, Parks, Trees and Energy. Within each topic area, they will attend specialized trainings and educational programming and will complete projects related to their chosen topic. This will result in development of specialized skill sets and more advanced environmental knowledge. Additionally, the projects have been selected in accordance with the District’s broader sustainability priorities, which means that Green Summer ultimately yields benefits to District communities as well.

24. What limitations or obstacles might other states expect to encounter if they attempt to adopt this program?

The chief obstacle is ensuring that flexibility exists within state and local systems to fully implement this model. Critical questions include: Does a mechanism exist for temporary hires done en masse? Do the financial resources exist to employ a large corps of youth? Can existing youth employment programs be re-shaped in order to incorporate these elements?

Additionally, the content and objectives of the state are fundamental in ensuring both a meaningful experience for youth, as well as successful outcomes for state priorities. Do substantive work opportunities for youth exist? Do those opportunities connect to a greater career path?

2009 Innovations Awards Program Program Categories and Subcategories

Use these as guidelines to determine the appropriate Program Category for your state's submission and list that program category on page one of this application. Choose only one.

Infrastructure and Economic Development

- Business/Commerce
- Economic Development
- Transportation

Government Operations

- Administration
- Elections
- Public Information
- Revenue

Health & Human Services

- Aging
- Children & Families
- Health Services
- Housing
- Human Services

Human Resources/Education

- Education
- Labor
- Management
- Personnel
- Training and Development
- Workforce Development

Natural Resources

- Agriculture
- Energy
- Environment
- Environmental Protection
- Natural Resources
- Parks & Recreation
- Water Resources

Public Safety/Corrections

- Corrections
- Courts
- Criminal Justice
- Drugs
- Emergency Management
- Public Safety

Save in .doc or rtf. Return completed application electronically to innovations@csg.org or mail to:

CSG Innovations Awards 2009
The Council of State Governments
2760 Research Park Drive, P.O. Box 11910
Lexington, KY 40578-1910

Contact:

Nancy J. Vickers, National Program Administrator
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This application is also available at www.csg.org, in the Programs section.

Deadline: March 2, 2009