Request for Proposals: Small Grants for Solar Schools

The NC Solar Center, as part of the U.S. Department of Energy’s Solar Instructor Training Network, is launching a small grants program to promote the growth of Solar Educational Initiatives in the Southern Mid-Atlantic Region. Three to five grants of no more than $5,000 each will be awarded to community colleges to develop, implement, or enhance a solar curriculum.

While continuing to provide training opportunities to instructors in the Southern Mid-Atlantic Region, the NC Solar Center recognizes the need to provide additional services in the form of a small grant to partnering institutions that have the most potential to grow or implement solar programs in their schools. The Center plans to award three to five grants that range from $3,000 to $5,000 each.

Qualifications

The recipients of these grants must be community colleges that have participated in the NC Solar Center’s Solar Instructor Series and have a supportive administration that will aid in the creation and maintenance of the developed program. The grant recipient is expected to continue the project past the life of the grant through outside funding, cost-sharing programs, tuition, or other institutional support mechanisms. Finally, the management team in charge of overseeing the project must include a member who is active in the solar field and is knowledgeable of the needs of a successful program.

Proposal Evaluation Criteria:

1. Demonstrated support from school administration (30%)

(Is the head of the school writing a letter of support for the proposal? Has the school supported the implementation of other energy/sustainability related activities? Does the school support community programs related to sustainability/energy?)

2. Sustainability of the solar program past grant funding (40%)

(Will the community support the planned activities that come out of this grant? Will receipts from registration or outside grants be able to support the program? Is a local company involved in the project?)

3. Management team (30%)

(Is a license electrician and/or NABCEP Certified professional involved in the project? Is a Solar Instructor Series participant spearheading the proposal?)
Required Proposal Items

1. A description of the project outlining: a) project objectives; b) project activities; c) description of program needs; and d) future plans for the continuation of the project after the grant period. Each of these sections should be written to address the three aforementioned evaluation criteria. This narrative portion should not exceed five pages in length.

2. A budget identifying the assets and resources needed in order to complete the project. It must highlight what the grant would be funding and what other supplemental/complementary assets might be funded by other sources.

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<th>Budget Template</th>
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<tr>
<td>Description</td>
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<td>Salaries and Wages</td>
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<td>Fringe Benefits</td>
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**Total Personnel Costs**

| Description     |       |
| Contracted Services |   |
| Supplies and Materials |   |
| Travel            |       |
| Equipment         |       |
| Student Aid       |       |
| Subcontractors    |       |
| Other             |       |

**Total Non-Personnel Costs**

| Description     |       |
| Total Direct Costs |       |
| Total Indirect Costs |     |
| Total Costs      |       |

3. A timeline covering the duration of the grant.
Guidelines for Certain Types of Small Grant Proposals

These guidelines are written for the most common type of proposals we expect to receive and should help the writers address the priorities set by the awards committee. The Small Grants for Solar Schools program, however, is not limited to the types of proposals mentioned below.

**Equipment**

When using the small grant to supplement equipment purchases, the proposal should describe the following:

1. What are the equipment specifications? This includes the type of equipment (i.e. whole system, inverter, modules, etc.), size, make, and model if already identified.
2. What courses/classes might use the system, how often, and the department head assigned to be the primary guardian of said equipment (i.e. facilities office, electrical program head, sustainability office, etc.)?
3. Will there be any attempt to form a partnership with a company to provide cost share or reduce the cost of the equipment through a bidding process?
4. Who will be the primary instructor using the equipment and describe their credentials for teaching the class?

**Curriculum Development**

The NC Solar Center, through the Solar Instructor Training Network, will be able to provide Partnering Institutions a 40-hour entry-level PV design and installation curriculum at a highly discounted fee for the first year. If a solar curriculum other than the aforementioned needs to be developed, the proposal should describe the following:

1. Proposed topics to be covered under this curriculum.
2. Number of proposed hours and whether this will be an audit or credit class, and/or if it will be part of an existing class. If so, indicate what class and where in the syllabus the solar curriculum will fit.
3. Name of the primary instructor and a description of their credentials for teaching the class.

**Grant and/or Program Development**

The small grant may be used to pay for existing staff to help administer/develop the solar program, or may be used for a grant writer to leverage for a larger grant. Should the small grant be used for this purpose, the following should be included in the proposal:

1. Duties of the person pertaining to solar program integration on campus.
2. If a new person is to be hired, specify the time period that he/she will be working under this small grant.
3. A plan for continuity and program sustainability.
4. If grant writers are to be hired, specify what type of grant(s) they will be writing. Describe their credentials and experience in grant writing.

**Deadlines**
Proposals may be submitted through **February 1, 2014**. The awards will be announced on March 1, 2014. Winning proposals must complete their projects by December 30\textsuperscript{th}, 2014 and be able to submit a report of no later than March 1, 2015.

**Submission Instructions**
Email your applications to **Lyra_Rakusin@ncsu.edu**. Under “Subject” put in “Small Grants for Solar Schools _XXCC_ (Initials of your school). You may also upload your proposals under the Grants Section of the Moodle site **DOE Solar Instructor Series Collaborative**. Deadline for application is February 1, 2014.

For more information, contact Lyra Rakusin at **lyra_rakusin@ncsu.edu** or 919-513-7769.