



For immediate release

Obama Administration Announces National Investment in GRID Alternatives' SolarCorps Program

Funding through AmeriCorps will help deploy solar and create jobs in low-income communities

BALTIMORE, MD, July 7, 2015 - White House and other government officials gathered today at a live solar installation in East Baltimore's C.A.R.E. Community to announce a series of commitments around solar in low-income communities, including a major new investment in GRID Alternatives' [SolarCorps Program](#) through the Corporation for National and Community Service.

Under the program, 40 AmeriCorps members will gain hands-on training and skills to access jobs in the booming solar industry each year through service at GRID Alternatives' affiliates and offices throughout the country.

At the end of the first program year, the AmeriCorps members will be responsible for helping retrofit 1,500 low-income homes with solar power and help 200 economically disadvantaged individuals gain jobs in the solar industry, while successfully securing green jobs for themselves at the end of their years of service. In addition, the AmeriCorps members will leverage an additional 4,000 volunteers who will be engaged in installing solar for low-income families.

"Over the past decade, AmeriCorps members serving with GRID Alternatives have successfully harnessed the power of national service and volunteering to bring solar energy to thousands of low-income families," said Wendy Spencer, CEO of the Corporation for National and Community Service. "Today we are excited to launch a major expansion of our partnership through AmeriCorps. This is a win all around: low-income families save on utility bills, young people gain skills for solar jobs, and our nation becomes more energy independent."

SunEdison has already committed to provide matching funds for the program through the [RISE Initiative](#), a \$5 million workforce diversity partnership SunEdison and GRID Alternatives announced earlier this year.

"SunEdison is proud to sponsor the work that GRID Alternatives is doing to train people for a career in solar," stated Ahmad Chatila, SunEdison chief executive officer. "Solar is one of the fastest growing industries in the U.S., and expects to add more than 36,000 jobs by November 2015 according to the national Solar Jobs Census. All Americans should have the opportunity to work in a high-quality job that pays living wages, and SunEdison is partnering with GRID Alternatives to do something about it."

CNCS has supported GRID Alternatives through AmeriCorps and AmeriCorps VISTA since 2006, and nearly 140 people have received training through the SolarCorps program. This new investment marks a major national expansion of the program across GRID Alternatives' service territory. The AmeriCorps grant, totaling \$521,084 for the first year, is expected to be renewed for two additional years, contingent on funding, making a three-year total of more than \$1.56 million to support 120 AmeriCorps members. In addition to grant funding, CNCS is making \$687,600 in education scholarships available for SolarCorps AmeriCorps members who complete their service to help pay for college or pay back student loans.

"Many of our SolarCorps members come from the very communities we are serving with our Solar Affordable Housing Program," said Tim Sears, CFO/COO and co-founder of GRID Alternatives.

“SolarCorps provides them an opportunity to not only launch careers in a growing industry, but also make a real difference on the ground for families that need the energy cost savings and job training opportunities the most.”

Antwain Nelson, a GRID Alternatives SolarCorps fellow who came to GRID through DC-based job training organization Sasha Bruce Youthwork, is one of the staff members leading today’s installation. In addition to providing solar power for Margaret Griffin, a retired grandmother living on a fixed income, the project will provide hands-on training opportunities for local job trainees from Civic Works, an AmeriCorps-funded job training group based in Baltimore.

About GRID Alternatives

GRID Alternatives is a non-profit organization that makes renewable energy technology and job training accessible to underserved communities, bringing together community partners, volunteers and job trainees to implement solar power and energy efficiency for low-income families. More than 5,400 families have benefited from GRID’s work to date, saving \$135 million in lifetime electricity costs, and over 21,000 people have received solar training. GRID Alternatives has ten regional offices and affiliates serving California, Colorado, the New York tri-state region, the mid-Atlantic region, and Tribal communities nationwide. For more information, visit www.gridalternatives.org.

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