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**WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT NONPROFIT WINS  
NATIONAL GREEN JOBS TRAINING GRANT**

***AWEE only Arizona Nonprofit to Receive Funds to Build Pipeline of Green Collar Workers***

PHOENIX, Ariz. (November 23, 2009) – In a state where sunshine rules the day and headlines are celebrating a few local investments in solar energy, Arizona Women's Education & Employment (AWEE) is another bright spot when it comes to helping individuals get the training they'll need to be the future solar installers, weatherization technologists and energy auditors the state is looking for in a more diversified economy.

The U.S. Department of Labor has awarded AWEE an \$100,000 one-year grant to start building the capacity for those looking to move into a green industry career. The grant parameters are to focus on underserved communities and AWEE will be focusing most of its efforts towards its ex-offender populations. This is one population, among many, the organization has had great success with and continues to receive recognition nationally for its success rates. It will also help women build their skills in non-traditional employment where wages are typically higher.

"This Green Capacity Building Grant will allow AWEE to create a direct pipeline of interest and people with the aptitude to move into the green industry," says Marie Sullivan, AWEE president and CEO. "It will allow us to quickly create a stronger green footprint in Arizona and return many people to be contributing, tax-paying citizens."

Nearly \$55 million in green grants were just announced by the Department of Labor, \$48.8 million for state labor-market information improvement and \$5.8 million in green capacity building. The city of Phoenix and state of Arizona were the only other Arizona entities that received dollars for this effort. The efforts to ramp up the training in green industry career exploration, online green curriculum training, and support people to get through training and industry certification will begin in earnest in December and culminate in November of 2010. A key focus will be to match people's aptitude with their interests. "Being a solar installer is not for everyone," noted Sullivan. "This key concept is often overlooked and results in poor workforce development outcomes. We want to make sure this pipeline is filled with those who have the best chance at success."

Focus areas for the AWEE effort will include HVAC installers and technicians, solar installers and weatherization technicians/energy auditors. The grants are part of a larger national Recovery Act Initiative totaling more than \$500 million for green jobs training grants designed to promote economic growth.

"This is another great opportunity for collaboration and capacity building," notes Kerri Schultheis, AWEE project director who will oversee the implementation of the grant. "These dollars strengthen our ability to insert people with the necessary skill sets into a rising occupation. And we'll be delivering our workshops and training efforts at community and faith-based organizations as well as inside prisons."

AWEE will also use this as a springboard to pull together a green jobs advisory council so that other business nonprofits can join together in the new opportunities green collar jobs hold for a more diversified Arizona economy.

**About AWEE**

Arizona Women's Education & Employment has been successfully investing in women, families and this community through life and career success planning, training and support for more than 28 years. To date, AWEE has served and supported nearly 100,000 women, men and young adults in their quest to attain quality jobs that create positive changes and successful beginnings for themselves and their families. For more information, contact AWEE at (602) 223-4333 or visit [AWEE.org](http://AWEE.org).