

Veteran Based Energy Advisor Program to support Residential Demand Management Goals

Components and Key Success Factors
for a Veteran's Based Program



Program Goal (Mission)

Provide a training and development program for well qualified veterans seeking employment and career opportunities in the growing Energy Efficiency industry.

Why Veterans?

- Team focus
- Mission Focus
- Self Discipline
- Understand Organizational Structure
- Work Ethic
- Adapt to change
- Respect leaders
- Understand feedback
- Like to Win (Losing not an option)



Lessons Learned

Successes

- Selection process
- Curriculum
- Instruction involved SMEs in each topic
- Excellent Energy Efficiency Call Center (Populus) for internships
- Intern team dynamic extended to create a support system inside and outside of the classroom and the internships.
- Excellent support from CDLE and NREL
- Interns met Utility Goal for upgrades(30%) in reduced time frame

Challenges

- Initial project scope definition
- Changes to the project goals during internship.
- Loss of NREL liaison with Utility for project extension.
- Call center relationship to Utility created confusion with the Consumer.
- Call Center internships began without all consumer data available.
- Consumer awareness of the rebate and energy saving program.

Keys to Project Success

- **Project Stakeholder Commitment to a Successful Project** from the Utility Company, Sponsoring Government Agencies, Internship Company, Education Institution.
- **Memorandum of Understanding** to define team Business Plan goals, timelines, responsibilities, accountabilities.
- Implement an effective **Communication Strategy** to keep stakeholders engaged and informed of project performance.

Project Stakeholders

Utility Provider

- Point of contact person
- Project goals
- Schedule
- Performance targets
- Resources
- Funding assistance
- Program marketing and promotion
- Candidate Qualifications

Energy Efficiency Consulting Company

- Established firm
- Candidate Qualifications
- Internship provider
- Project implementation as directed by Utility
- Experienced in Residential Demand Management

Project Stakeholders cont.

Education Institution

- Candidate recruiting and selection based on defined qualifications
- Training curriculum
- Expert instructors
- Training facility
- Candidate assessment and mentoring

Colorado Department of Labor and Employment

- Grant funding assistance
- Grant administration

National Renewable Energy Laboratory

- Project conceptual development
- Training Curriculum – Energy as a National Security Issue
- Expert Instructors

Participant Recruiting and Selection

- Specifically identify required skills sets for position.
- Develop effective screening tools to evaluate technical and behavioral skill sets.
- Identify pool of candidates – stakeholders help identify pool.
- Ensure candidates meet the skill sets required – be conservative in participant selection.

Training and Education

- Identify training facility and staff to conduct training.
- Establish training curriculum.
- Prepare students for the internship experience.
- Establish strict attendance and performance criteria.



Student leading a project implementation plan for the team

Training and Education con't

- Intense training schedule (8hr x 5day)
- Provide ongoing performance communication.
- Provide student mentoring and assessment.
- Provide students with self-selection options.
- Pay the students during the training period.



Training and Education

- Curriculum includes:
 - Effective Customer service and relationship building
 - Basic Residential Building Construction and the Construction Process
 - Building Energy Efficiency Systems
 - Overview of rebate systems and incentive program (Utility Specific)
 - Introduction to the Need for Energy Conservation

Customer Service Training

Student will learn the relationship of self to customers, problem solve and understand the importance of communicating with customers. Specific emphasis is given to managing customer expectations by building customer rapport and creating positive outcomes.

Demonstrated Competencies include:

- Explain the importance of customer service.
- Demonstrate effective communication skill face-to-face, via telephone, email, etc.
- Evaluate the impact of effective customer relationships and customer loyalty.
- Develop interpersonal communication skills.
- Analyze Customer Service and how it relates to consumer behavior.
- Discuss social and cultural traditions/perceptions of customer service.
- Assess the causes of service breakdown and the recovery process.
- Analyze customer service from the consumer perspective.
- Demonstrate the ability to meet challenges and changes in customer service.

Introduction to the Construction Process

Provides an overview of the construction process and is designed as an introduction to the construction process for the student.

Demonstrated Competencies Include:

- Understand plans, specifications, codes, contracts.
- Explain building materials and methods overview.
- Discuss soil types, and excavation.
- Discuss the function and limitation of utility services: water, sewage, gas, electrical, phone, etc.
- Discuss contracts, building permits and contractor qualification and licensing.

Building Energy Efficiency Systems

Student is presented the principles of building energy audit techniques to include diagnostic software. During the course the students perform an energy audit. As a result of the audit, he/she will be able to recommend application of the most appropriate energy-saving treatments such as insulation, windows, appliances and HVAC equipment.

Demonstrated Competencies include:

- Understand the physics of energy movement.
- Learn about energy audit tools.
- Understand energy saving techniques.
- Apply energy audit techniques to structures.

Internship

- Establish interface with Energy Efficiency Company during training period to establish expectations
 - Address basic people management issues regarding parking, commuting, start and end times, salary, etc.
- Training representative meets weekly with the internship company and interns to facilitate communication and evaluate progress.
 - Continue to provide mentoring to interns.
 - Make corrections to the process as needed.
- Update interns on progress toward project goals.

Post Internship

- Utilizing all stakeholders and the interns in evaluating all aspects of the project (After Action Review).
- Evaluate the entire systems performance.
- Identify and implement systems corrections before the next project implementation.