



David L. Mathis  
Director, Workforce Development



Anthony J. Picente, Jr.  
Oneida County Executive

## **NEWS RELEASE**

**For Immediate Release  
Monday, March 5, 2018**

**For Information Contact:  
David Mathis (315)798-5543**

# **New Americans Green Jobs Training Program Launched**

The Midtown Utica Community Center, supported by local and state partners, kicked off its New Americans Green Jobs Training Project Monday.

The project is funded by a Green Careers / Environmental Justice Grant from the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation. It provides solar installer training for income-eligible youth through Mohawk Valley Community College.

“The partnership that we have developed through this project helps our refugee population prepare for a successful career and solidify the future,” said Oneida County Executive Anthony J. Picente, Jr. “The New Americans Green Jobs Training Project taps into the tremendous potential these young adults possess and injects them into the high-growth sector of our construction economy.”

“This grant is an investment in transformation,” said Assemblyman Anthony Brindisi, D-119. “As we deepen the skills of these young people who have come from all over the world, we give them the tools not only to find a good job, but also play a lead role in the redevelopment of Utica’s housing stock as the next generation of homeowners. We are transforming lives and transforming the community.”

The project targets youth 18-24. Participants are enrolled in a solar installer training program that leads to a possible certification. The project also addresses the needs of many refugees for expanded technical English instruction. Anyone interested in the program should contact the Midtown Utica Community Center (MUCC) at 43 Scott Street in Utica. Midtown staff can then begin the application process.

“MUCC was created to make a difference in our neighborhood and our community,” said Executive Director Chris Sunderlin. “We see this project as an extension of that commitment. If youth who want to work, and have many of the skills needed to be successful, can acquire the training needed to become solar installers, then they have a brighter future, and so do their families. We are very excited about the possibilities of this project.”

MVCC will provide training for the project.

“We have customized this training to align it with the needs of our community and our young refugees,” said Franca Armstrong, Associate Vice President for Workforce Development and Dean of the Rome Campus. “This project meets the needs of the youth and the needs of our local

economy. MVCC has a history of giving the next generation of workers the skills they need to succeed, and we are delighted to continue that service to the community with this project.”

The New Americans Project aligns with the Career Pathways for Youth Project of the Workforce Development Board, which is referring its participants to the project for training.

“The young refugees who come to Utica have tremendous life skills,” said Alice Savino, executive director of the WDB. “Our goal is to harness those skills and connect them with the regional job market. This project will help fill a need for solar installers and give our young refugees the training they need for employment.”

In announcing the awarding of the Environmental Justice Grants, Gov. Andrew Cuomo said, “These grants empower residents to address the environmental concerns that directly affect where they live, and during the last 10 years, remarkable progress has been made one neighborhood at a time.”

Lieutenant Governor Kathy Hochul said, "By focusing on environmental and public health projects, these grants will directly impact vulnerable New Yorkers and improve their quality of life."

New York State Department of Environmental Conservation Commissioner Basil Seggos said, "Supporting community based efforts to improve environmental quality and protect public health is essential, and I'm proud of the accomplishments we've achieved over the past decade of this program. The increased (Environmental Protection Fund) funding provided this year will further enhance, and jumpstart new, projects in many EJ communities across the state, and I look forward to continuing to grow this important program in the years ahead."

DEC's mission is to conserve, improve and protect New York's natural resources and environment and to prevent, abate and control water, land and air pollution, in order to enhance the health, safety and welfare of the people of the State and their overall economic and social well-being.

**Project Summary: New Americans Workforce Green Jobs Training Project.**

**Step One:** Outreach to the community will develop a pool of participants who meet the age and other characteristics for the project. MUCC will screen youth to determine their potential for employment in areas of high demand. Youth who meet appropriate characteristics are enrolled in the project.

**Step Two:** Any academic remediation required to achieve minimal competency for employment will be provided through existing classes in a partnership with MVCC.

**Step Three:** The participant will undergo training at MVCC in solar installation. Midtown will provide case management. Students will learn specific vocational ESL skills pertaining to the career area.

**Step Four:** Project staff will work with the participants to explain the job search and interview process. Staff from Oneida County Workforce Development and the Workforce Development Board will support the youth by providing job leads and also ensuring that youth planning to enter employment receive any support services for which they are eligible. During this phase of the project, students will learn basic job search skills and will work closely with both project staff and with OCWD staff to enter employment.

**Step Five:** Employment, with the assistance of the WDB, MUCC and Oneida County Workforce Development.

**Step Six:** MUCC will follow up with placed youth to assist in program retention.