

BUILDING A DREAM: YouthBuild students land green jobs grant

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Fall River — YouthBuild Fall River has received a \$100,000 grant from a federal green jobs program to start a manufacturing operation to employ YouthBuild graduates and prepare youths for careers in green technologies.

The operation could employ up to 35 workers once it gets going, YouthBuild Director Terry Moran said. YouthBuild graduates, most of whom have earned a GED, will be hired for the manufacturing work, while another component funded by the grant will train those currently in the program.

Graduates of the YouthBuild program will be trained on manufacturing environmentally friendly products like the LED lights, which use far less electricity than traditional bulbs. They will assemble the lights in the basement of the Bank Street Armory, where an assembly room will be created, Moran said. The operation will later include insulating panels and other green products.

The first order facing YouthBuild graduates will be to produce LED lights for an FBI office in Chicago, Moran said.

YouthBuild students will be prepared for work in green construction, including weatherization and retrofitting older buildings. The programs should start around the beginning of next year, Moran said. The \$100,000 will be used to start the operation, and YouthBuild plans to use revenue from selling the bulbs and other products to hire more workers.

Some YouthBuild students manufactured LED lights this summer, using some parts that are pre-produced. Assembling the components takes about six minutes per bulb, Moran said.

The \$500 million green-jobs portion of the stimulus, which gave \$278,000 to three Massachusetts projects, is meant to support job training to help workers, in many cases in poorer communities, find jobs in green industries and help jump-start the economy.

YouthBuild, a national program in 270 communities, is also involved in the two other Massachusetts projects funded by the stimulus. Green job employment and training programs will also be established in Boston and Lowell.

The Fall River YouthBuild program is operated by the Old Colony YMCA, a Brockton-based regional network that works with the YMCA Southcoast in Fall River. The Old Colony Y started the Fall River YouthBuild three years ago as a year-round program for low-income youths and young adults age 16 to 24 to earn their GEDs, learn career skills and leadership and perform community service.

YouthBuild has 11 Massachusetts locations, including in New Bedford, Brockton and Quincy.

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