Grant for green-energy training

United Way begins new program with help from BofA

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United Way of Long Island has launched a green-energy training program that combines classroom learning with on-the-job training to nurture a new generation of workers in the solar, wind and renewable energy fields.

The program, which is being funded through a $250,000 grant from Bank of America, will encompass a 50-hour training curriculum that includes technical, functional and "soft skills that will lead to employment in the renewables and green-construction sectors," United Way announced.

United Way said the grant will allow it to train an initial 100 students over the next year, including those currently unemployed and looking for work, as well as veterans, and those just entering the job market. It will work with United Way's YouthBuild program to provide an on-the-job training site for young adults seeking work in the field.

Called Power Up Wind, Solar & Renewables, the training will take place at United Way's Deer Park E3 SmartBuild Training Center and the Jones Beach Energy and Nature Center. The program is designed to "advance economic mobility as well as shape the future of employment in our region's energy sector," United Way said.

At the Jones Beach energy center Tuesday, Theresa Regnanate, president and chief executive of United Way Long Island, said the program will "help us break down barriers for diverse communities to gain employment." She said the renewables training will "blend with" other training done by the United Way to prepare those who use its services for higher-skilled jobs. She said she expects the program to last beyond its initial one-year funding outlay through fundraising and grant applications that United Way does normally.

Training will include field trips to power plants, the Block Island Wind Farm, the Brookhaven Lab solar farm and other related locations, Regnanate said. United Way will assist students who earn a training certificate to move on to higher levels of education or training beyond United Way or local jobs, she said.

United Way will also work with green-energy employers in the region, including wind-energy companies such as Orsted and Eversource, which are constructing the South Fork Wind Farm and Sunrise Wind, to "help prepare a workforce for the clean energy future," Dennis Galvan, an Ever-source manager for outreach planning, said in a statement.

Bank of America Long Island president Robert Isaksen said the program is "going to provide a career for young people on Long Island in an industry that's really the future." It's part of Bank of America's commitment to "accelerating the transition to a low-carbon, sustainable economy," he said, noting the bank's decadelong record of contributing to and working with United Way.