



SMART ENERGY SOLUTIONS, INC.

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Executive Summary

Urban League of Southern Connecticut (ULSC), a non-profit 501(c) 3, in collaboration with, a local community partner, developed and implemented Smart Energy Solutions (SES), a minority business enterprise (MBE) and social venture that promotes economic, environmental and social sustainability through education, training and energy efficient services to low-income residents of Southern Connecticut.

SES began as a workforce development initiative to train ex-offenders and veterans in the field of weatherization through the grant from the Workforce Investment Board. The goal of this initiative is to “retool” hard-to-serve individuals to be hired as skilled laborers for the Weatherization Assistance Program (WAP).

The purpose of the Weatherization Assistance Program (WAP), created by the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) in 1976, was to support low-income families who lacked resources to invest in energy efficiency. Since then, WAP is operating in all 50 states, as well as in the District of Columbia, Native American federally recognized tribes, and all U.S. Territories. Funds are used to improve the energy efficiency of homes using the most advanced technologies and testing protocols available in the housing industry. As the result, and due the efforts of state and local agencies, the energy conservation helps our country reduce its dependence on foreign oil and decrease the cost of energy for families in need while improving the health and safety of their homes.

Weatherization and other energy assistance programs have become a focus in most major cities across the country. The Connecticut Energy Assistance Program has an annual budget of \$5.3MM that is used to fund repairs to improve the energy efficiency in homes of low income residents. Most states also have ‘Set-Aside’ programs, specifically for small and minority owned businesses. Connecticut’s Supplier Diversity program targets at least 25% of the state’s business and transacted with small businesses, including those owned by minorities, women and the disabled.

By becoming a minority supplier, SES is able to compete for Weatherization contracts; create jobs; employ a segment of the population that were considered unemployable and provide energy assistance to low income families. SES is also the leading training provider and testing site for Building Performance Institute (BPI)¹, whose graduates become certified energy auditors and shell technicians, and can go on to work with most energy related companies or start their own business.

¹ Building Performance Institute – the only nationally recognized certification by the Department of Energy Weatherization Consortium. www.bpi.org

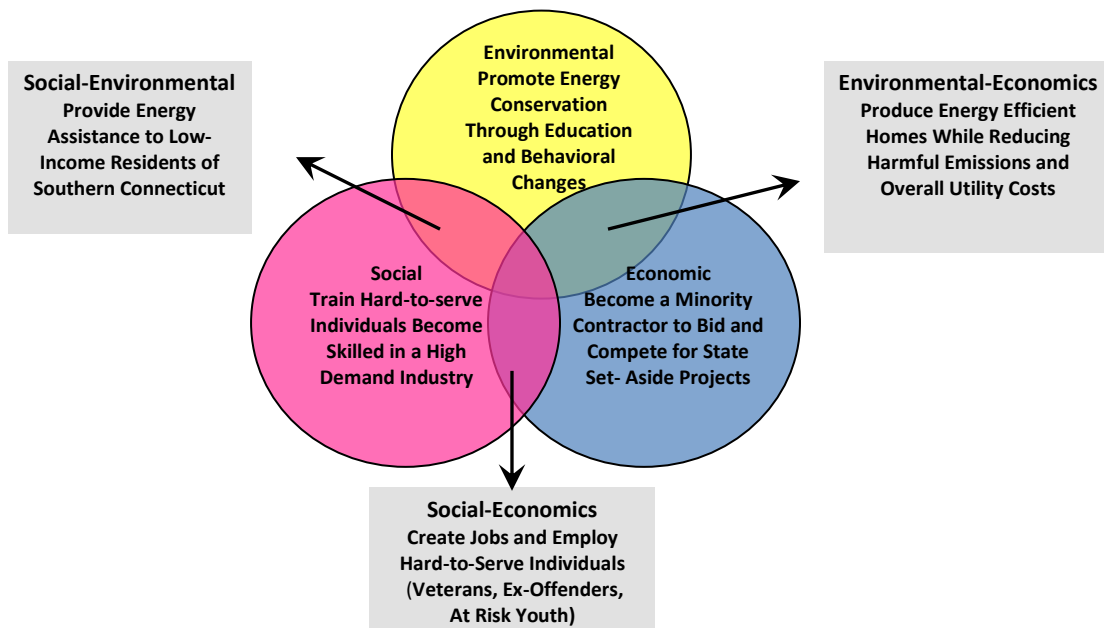
ULSC combined the Three Spheres of Sustainability Model ²to the current workforce development initiative to create a multi-dimensional approach to addressing some of the social, economical and environmental challenges our communities were facing:

- Increasingly high dropout rates among young adults resulting in a growing unskilled labor force
- Negative job growth combined with high rates of chronically unemployed and underemployed individuals
- Low income and elderly residents unable to afford increasingly high energy and heating costs
- Increase demand and dependency on foreign oil and negative impact on the environment.

Through an American Recovery Reinvestment Act (ARRA) grant, issued by the local Workforce Investment Board, ULSC trains ex-offenders and veterans to become nationally certified energy auditors and shell technicians in the high demand green industry. The sixteen week course combines classroom instruction with self-paced web based modules and hands-on field training to develop a personalized learning environment for individuals that are unsuccessful with learning by traditional methods. The customized curriculum also includes financial literacy and life skills component to help reintegrate individuals to the workforce. Upon completion of the program, graduates are bonded for up to six months to receive assistance with a job placement and obtain a meaningful and gainful employment.

Graduates of the training program may choose to receive additional training by entering into the apprenticeship program with SES where they can earn money as they continue to learn and enhance their new skill. Many consider this option, if they are intending to become independent contractors. In such cases, ULSC offers entrepreneurial education to assist individuals with licensing, registration and business development.

Three Spheres of Sustainability through Workforce Development Initiatives



² Three Spheres of Sustainability –2002 University of Michigan Sustainability Assessment