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SKILLWORKS Launches Green Automotive Jobs Program Grant to Fill Local Need for Hybrid Auto Technicians

July 12, 2011 (Boston, MA) - [SkillWorks](#), the Greater Boston funders' collaborative that has invested over \$18 million to train area workers with competitive skills, has launched a new initiative to train and place people in jobs servicing hybrid cars through their [Green Jobs Initiative](#).

“Thanks to a grant from the Green Jobs Innovation Fund at the US Department of Labor, we will be able to train and place 70 people in skilled jobs in the auto industry, repairing hybrid cars,” stated Loh-Sze Leung, the Director of SkillWorks. “We heard about this skills gap from local auto dealers and worked with them to design this innovative response.” The \$850,000 grant will be administered by SkillWorks and Jobs for the Future, a national workforce development organization and implemented by the Partnership for Automotive Career Education, known as PACE. PACE is led by the Asian American Civic Association and includes Benjamin Franklin Institute of Technology and the Boston Public Schools Department of Adult Education and Community Services.

As Chris McKeen of Auto Service and Tire in Mattapan commented, “Hybrid technology is here to stay. As a shop owner, we have to address the rising needs for alternative fuels and the hybrid technology of our customers. We cannot ignore how important it is to keep up with the technology and training.”

Nigel deSilva, Service Director of Herb Chambers Honda in Boston added, “We need good candidates to fill technician positions of all levels. With the increasing sales of Hybrid cars in Massachusetts, we expect the needs for technicians with hybrid technology to be on the rise. PACE has provided great entry level technicians for our company in the past six years.”

There is rapidly growing demand in Boston for higher skilled automotive specialty technicians, especially hybrid technicians, due to growing local sales of hybrid-electric vehicles. There were over 750 job openings statewide in late March, indicating a strong need even in a slow economy, and there is serious concern among employers about replacing their aging workforce. Interviews with employers, including Sullivan Tire, Jiffy Lube, and Herb Chambers Honda confirmed a need for new and incumbent workers with hybrid technology knowledge and for bilingual technicians to address the increasing linguistic diversity of their customers.

“This grant through SkillWorks allows us to add hybrid technology and alternative fuels to the PACE curriculum; making PACE graduates more competitive in the job market and responding to the needs of employers,” says Chau-ming Lee, Executive Director of the Asian American Civic Association.

[SkillWorks](#) is a ten-year, \$25-million investment partnership among local and national foundations, the City of Boston, and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts designed to create opportunities for people to gain skills needed to be successful in the MA economy. SkillWorks does this by investing in training programs, preparing people for and connecting them to post-secondary education, working on public policy efforts to create better pathways to post-secondary training and education, and prioritizing growing sectors in our state's economy. For more information please contact SkillWorks Director Loh-Sze Leung at 617-338-4377, Loh-Sze.Leung@tbf.org or visit www.skill-works.org.