



COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA
VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY

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Virginia Energy Launches \$1.3 Million SPARK Youth Workforce Pilot Program

Proposals Must Be Submitted by September 26, 2025

Richmond, VA — The Virginia Department of Energy (Virginia Energy) has announced the launch of the [Skilled Pathways for Advancement, Resilience & Knowledge \(SPARK\)](#) Youth Workforce Pilot Program, a new initiative aimed at preparing young Virginians for high-demand careers in the energy sector.

“Where energy goes, economic opportunity follows,” said Virginia Energy Director Glenn Davis. “With this investment, we’re not just preparing the next generation of Virginians for high-paying, high-impact careers—we’re building the workforce that will power Virginia’s economic growth for decades to come.”

Funded through \$1.3 million in federal Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) funds, SPARK will support up to five regional workforce development programs with sub-awards of up to \$500,000 each.

Designed for youth ages 14–25, particularly those from rural and low-income communities, the SPARK program will provide paid work-based learning opportunities, industry-recognized certifications, and mentorship with employers in fields such as power generation, transmission, grid modernization, and energy efficiency.

The SPARK initiative directly addresses growing labor shortages in Virginia’s energy sector, as employers prepare for a wave of retirements while facing unprecedented infrastructure expansion. By training local talent, SPARK aims to keep these jobs—and their economic benefits—rooted in Virginia communities.

Virginia Energy will prioritize proposals that:

- Expand dual enrollment and early exposure to energy careers starting at age 14;
- Offer paid pre-apprenticeships and technical training;
- Provide wraparound supports such as transportation and life skills coaching;
- Partner with employers to support job placement and career mentoring.

Eligible applicants—including workforce training organizations, educational institutions, nonprofits, and community-based groups—must [submit proposals by September 26, 2025](#), at 11:59 PM EST.

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