



# Getting In the Front Door—The Many Pathways to a Career in Decarbonization

Webinar – July 8, 2026



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This webinar was developed in partnership with the LEARN Program.

The LEARN Program is a San Diego-based workforce education and training program that has partnered with New Buildings Institute to offer free energy efficiency and electrification webinars. Please visit the LEARN website for more information: [www.sandiegolearn.com](http://www.sandiegolearn.com)



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## Energy Trust of Oregon New Buildings Program

### ▪ Incentives and support

- Commercial new construction and major renovation projects, from early design through post-construction.

### ▪ Trainings and events

- In-person events, live webinars and on-demand trainings.

### ▪ Net Zero grants

- **Net Zero Fellowship** — Research that advances net-zero design and technologies and addresses barriers.
- **Net Zero Emerging Leaders Internship (NZELI)** — Internship funding for architecture and engineering firms to support their carbon commitments.

#### For more information:

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Senior market engagement manager  
[kriya.kaping@clearresult.com](mailto:kriya.kaping@clearresult.com)



[energytrust.org/commercial/newbuildings/education/training-and-events/](https://energytrust.org/commercial/newbuildings/education/training-and-events/)



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## Energy Trust of Oregon New Buildings Internship Opportunities

### Studio 2050

- A new student cohort that brings together aspiring architects, engineers, construction managers and real estate developers to learn from peers and engage with industry leaders for a career in sustainable design and development
- Offering a stipend of \$4,000 and paid internship of at least \$8,000
- Check back for application period in Spring of 2027

### Net Zero Emerging Leaders Internship (NZELI)

- Internship funding for architecture and engineering firms to support their carbon commitments
- 12-week internship from January 2027 to April 2027
- Accepting applications: May 4 to July 17

#### For more information:

Naomi Cole  
Energy Trust New Buildings grants  
[naomi@konstrukt.com](mailto:naomi@konstrukt.com)



[energytrust.org/commercial/new-buildings/education](https://energytrust.org/commercial/new-buildings/education)



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## Getting In the Front Door—The Many Pathways to a Career in Decarbonization

In today's webinar we'll discuss:

- Entry-level and advanced opportunities in the green workforce, with a focus on expanding access and inclusion
- Workforce training, professional development, and hiring practices that open doors to careers
- Utility contractor training, undergraduate career development, and hands-on technical training programs



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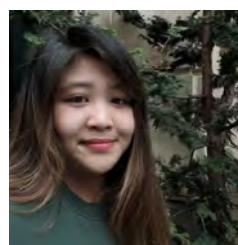
## Today's Panelists



**Caitlin Peerson**  
Earth Advantage



**Emma Ricardi**  
New Buildings  
Institute



**Dewi Ali**  
Emerald Cities  
Collaborative



**Monica Guevara**  
Emerald Cities  
Collaborative

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**Home Energy Retrofit Occupations (HERO) Academy**  
*Supported by the Portland Clean Energy Community Benefit Fund*



Caitlin Peerson,  
Earth Advantage



Oscar Chavez,  
Great Northwest  
Installations

An educational initiative of  
 earthadvantage.

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**OUR MISSION**  
Advancing an informed & humane housing market




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# OUR WORK


We're working to ensure the U.S. housing market **recognizes** the elements of homes that create climate risk and **values** the characteristics of homes that provide climate solutions.

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**CLIMATE-FRIENDLY HOUSING**

Delivering the use of credible, nationally recognized certifications, scores and ratings that document a home's climate and health impacts.




**WORKFORCE TRAINING**

Helping grow a knowledgeable and diverse workforce to build, remodel, sell, and lease climate-friendly homes.



**CLIMATE JUSTICE**

Addressing climate vulnerability through direct services, advocacy, and housing reform.



**GREEN DATA SOLUTIONS**

Creating technology tools to support a decarbonized housing market.

/ HOLDING OUT FOR A HERO / EARTH ADVANTAGE /

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Residential Construction Labor Challenges

## The residential sector needs new workers & career pathways

**Trainees** experience difficulty finding entry points into the residential sector.

**Employers** face challenges finding new workers who are dependable and have foundational skills.

**What is Needed:**

- Motivated & job-ready **workforce trainees**
- A clear, supportive, and sustainable **career pathway**
- **Paid training** specific to high road jobs
- **Connections to employers** who are hiring

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- Program structure involves **partnership** with pre-apprenticeship programs & contractors
- **Pre-apprenticeship** programs provide trainee applicants
- **Contractor** partnerships provide in-field training experience

**HERO Academy Program Partners**

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# Career Pathways

HVAC & HEAT PUMPS

Heat Pump Installer

**Heat Pumps** are a key technology to reach climate goals and ensure effective implementation of home energy upgrade programs


PLUMBING & WATER HEATERS

Water Heater Installer


HERO Academy addresses crucial **skills gaps** and ensure trainees have access to specialized training that leads to **high road jobs** and sustainable careers

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# Program Overview




## Home Energy Retrofit Occupations (HERO) Academy




**Step 1:  
PRE-APPRENTICESHIP TRAINING**

- 8-10 weeks classroom/ workshop training
- State-certified & offered quarterly
- Participants are low-income, people of color & women
- Core construction skills + employment readiness
- HERO Academy exposure
- Wrap-around support services




**Step 2:  
SPECIALIZATION TRAINING**

- 3 weeks classroom and hands-on training
- Taught by industry experts
- \$25/ hour trainee wage stipend
- Prepares trainees to be field-ready
- Earn professional credentials – EPA 608, EA BEST, or Oregon Water Heater Installer License
- Wrap-around support services



**Step 3:  
WORK-BASED LEARNING**

- 12 weeks training in the field
- Perform real-world work within the specialty track
- \$25/hour trainee wage stipend
- Biweekly classroom training
- Employer Partners complete safe & inclusive workplace training
- Employer's existing workers can attend trainings





**Post-Graduation:  
SUPPORTED JOB SEARCH**

- Trainees seek permanent positions
- Job offer with Employer Partners
- Ongoing Employer support & New Worker check-ins
- Partial wage offsets available through local WFD board
- New Workers continue earning professional credentials to ensure advancement

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# Trainee Perspective





- Oscar Chavez participated in the second cohort of the HERO Academy in early 2026 focused on Heat Pump Water Heaters
- Hired at Great Northwest Installations
- Over to you, Oscar!

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Thank you!  
More info here...



[workforce@earthadvantage.org](mailto:workforce@earthadvantage.org)



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Next Gen Students at GTZ Forum | Charlotte, NC

**nbi** new buildings institute

# NBI's Next Gen Program

July 8, 2026



**Emma Ricardi**  
New Buildings Institute



**Lena Essak**  
New Leaf Energy

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## The Challenge

- Clean energy jobs are growing
- Employers are finding it difficult to hire qualified workers
- Clean energy jobs are misunderstood
- Early-career professionals often lack peer support, mentorship, and clear pathways for growth



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## Next Gen is Part of the Solution

Professional Certification	Education	Mentorship	Professional Development	Cohort Building
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students can choose one professional certification to pursue, sponsored by the program</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monthly discussion groups, featuring presentations from industry leaders</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students are matched with a mentor, based on their career goals and lived experience</li> <li>• Mentors receive training in equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) and mentorship topics</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Opportunity to participate in informational or mock interviews with real employers</li> <li>• Attend the 2026 GTZ Forum</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students develop relationships with their fellow cohort members and create a peer support network</li> </ul>

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## Program Impact

- Since 2021, Next Gen has hosted **five** program years and **144 students**
  - **69%** female or non-binary and **72%** people of color or bi-racial
- **70%** of Next Gen students had little or no familiarity with resilient building or clean energy concepts upon starting the program
- **100% of respondents** said they have remained interested and/or involved in resilient building and clean energy since completing the program
- **89% of respondents** said they are pursuing internships, part-time or full-time positions in the sector

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## Alumni Perspective: Lena Essak, '24



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What were some major takeaways from the program and how did these lessons prepare you for entering the industry?

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How did your mentor relationship support your career search?

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## What advice do you have for emerging professionals and/or the workforce development programs that support them?

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## Thank You!

- Reach out if you have any questions

Emma Riccardi :

[emma@newbuildings.org](mailto:emma@newbuildings.org)

Lena Essak :

[lessak@newleafenergy.com](mailto:lessak@newleafenergy.com)



From left: Alexander Avila ('24), Lena Essak ('24), Emma Riccardi (NBI) at 2024 GTZ Forum in Charlotte NC

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# HVAC Academy



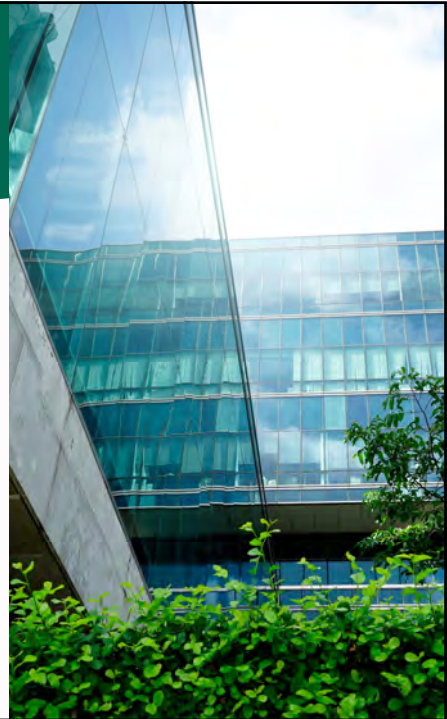
**Dewi Ali**  
Emerald Cities  
Collaborative



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A national non-profit organization partnering with communities, contractors, labor, government, developers and others to advance sustainable, just and inclusive economies with opportunities for all – what we call "the high road".



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# Clean Energy Opportunity Hub

**Clean Energy Opportunity Hub**  
 The Hub will connect diverse trainees, incumbent workers, and businesses to real opportunities for advancement. The program is aligned with both industry and community needs to address worker shortages, diverse contractor shortages, and support wealth building, especially for people of color and women in the technical trades.

Empowering diverse workers in clean energy

Positioning small business for clean energy projects

Connecting communities to home efficiency services



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**ECC's HVAC Career Preparation Academy** provides **16 weeks of technical training** in skills needed to succeed in entry-level HVAC technician roles.

Graduates earn **OSHA-10** certification, **EPA Core & Type-2** training and licensure.

**JOHNSTONE SUPPLY**

**Emerald Cities COLLABORATIVE**  
America empowered.

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## Curriculum covers...

Basic Electrical Theory, Ohm's Law	Zoning Systems, Indoor Air Quality
Variable Speed Motors	Thermal Dynamics, Heat Transfer
Electrical Troubleshooting	Precision Tune Up, Super Heat, Sub-Cooling
Size Ductwork, Velocity & Static Pressure	Vacuum Pump and Recovery Machine Best Practices
Gas Furnace Operation	



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## Our industry partners

- MacDonald Miller
- Allred Heating & Cooling
- Integrity Energy
- ABM
- JLL
- CBRE
- Wright Runstad & Co.
- Seattle Housing Authority
- Seattle Public Libraries
- Bellevue College
- King County Parks Department



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## Alumni Success Story: **Woody & Patty Loyko**

Woody leveraged his training to land an internship with **MacDonald Miller Facility Solutions**.

He is now interviewing for an apprenticeship with **UA Local 32**.

At the age of 18, Woody is already on track to a fulfilling career and eventually owning his own business.



Woody posing for a picture with his mother, Patty Loyko.

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## Alumni Success Story: **Daniel & Diego de la Rosa**

Diego participated in our Electrical Pathways program at the recommendation of his dad, Daniel.

After graduating, Diego entered into the demanding (01) Inside Wire apprenticeship.

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**THANK YOU**  
For joining us for this presentation

**Dewi Ali**

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 [www.emeraldcities.org](http://www.emeraldcities.org)



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*America empowered.*

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**E-Contractor Program**

Monica Guevara




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# Clean Energy Opportunity Hub

## Clean Energy Opportunity Hub

The Hub will connect diverse trainees, incumbent workers, and businesses to real opportunities for advancement. The program is aligned with both industry and community needs to address worker shortages, diverse contractor shortages, and support wealth building, especially for people of color and women in the technical trades.

Empowering diverse workers in clean energy

Positioning small business for clean energy projects

Connecting communities to home efficiency services



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# What We Do

**Contractors We Work with**

- Minority, Woman, Veteran and other Disadvantaged Owned Construction Firms
- Climate Critical Trades (Mechanical, Electrical, Plumbing, Weatherization)

**Services we offer**

- E-Contractor Academy
- E-Contractor Network
- Workshops and trainings on clean energy and business topics
- Networking
- Individual consulting
- Connection to work opportunities

Contractor Development Information:  
<https://www.econtractornw.org>

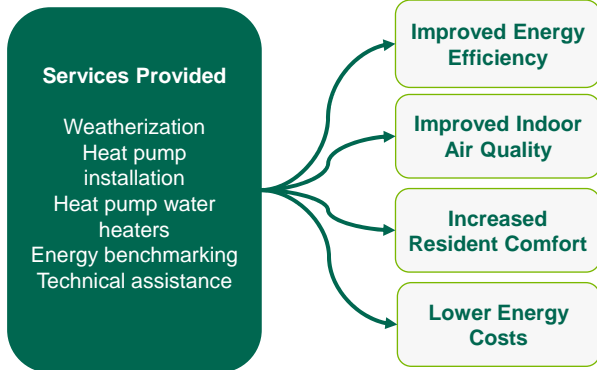
Photo Credits: CYC Mechanical, Vulpine Electric, OP Electric, and Apex Electrical Group



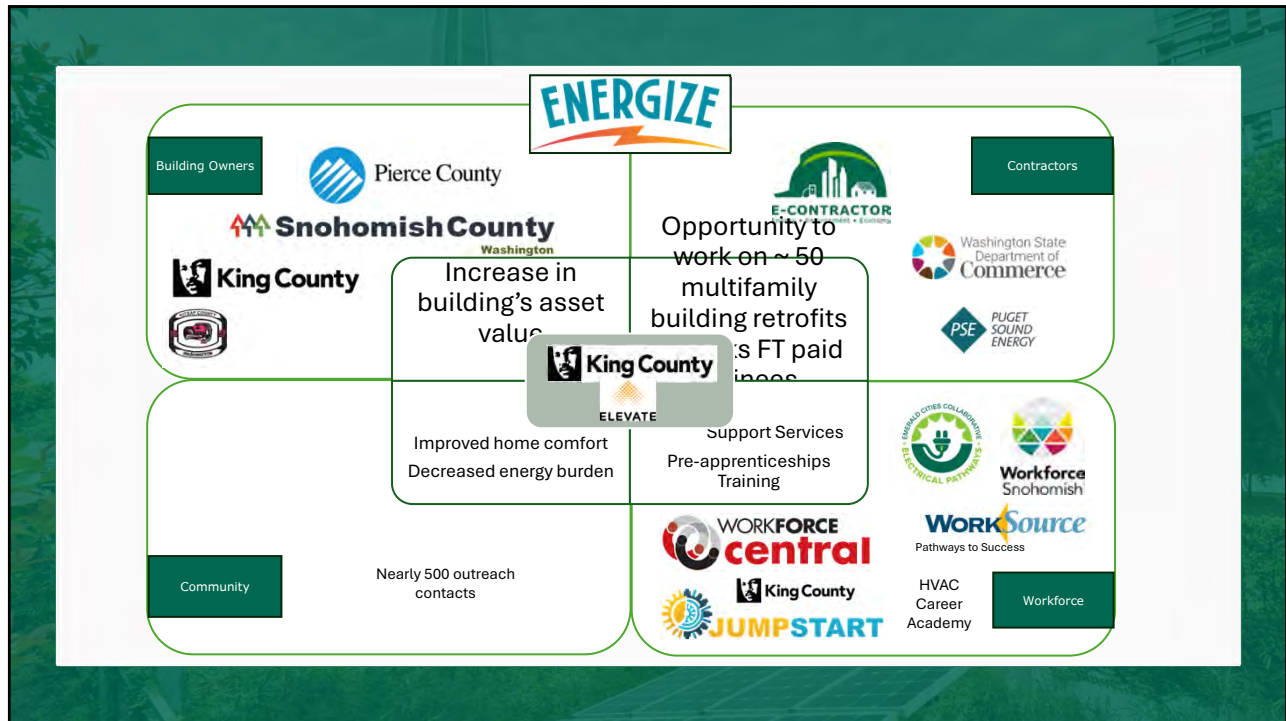
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# Energize – Multifamily Program

- Energy Efficiency retrofits on 500-750 affordable housing units
- 4 county region – King, Pierce, Snohomish, Kitsap counties



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# Key Takeaways

## Think about the entire ecosystem

Supporting Employers is also important

## Setup Incentives Appropriately

Incentives allow for growth beyond your people power

## Partnership

The right partners make the work easy



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## THANK YOU

For joining us for this presentation

### Monica Guevara

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# Questions?

Thank you for your interest and joining us today!



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# Share your feedback in this short survey

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Power up your electrification knowledge with the San Diego LEARN program:  
[www.sandiegolearn.com](http://www.sandiegolearn.com)



www.newbuildings.org

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## Other LEARN courses of interest:

### Building Science Principles

Part 1: Introduction to Building Science

Part 1 of series to prepare for the Building Performance Institute's (BPI) Building Science Principles exam.



### Urban Heat Island Effect

Explore innovative and sustainable cooling technologies being implemented globally.



### Building Design and Public Health

Explore the social determinants between where people live, the climate and ones health.

