



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

Webinar – July 8, 2026

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1



**SAN DIEGO
LEARN**

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

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2

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:

Kriya Kaping
Senior market engagement manager
kriya.kaping@clearesult.com



energytrust.org/commercial/newbuildings/education/training-and-events/



3

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



energytrust.org/commercial/new-buildings/education



4

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



5

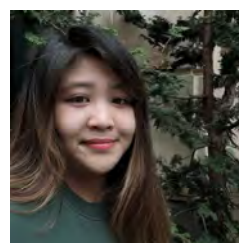
Today's Panelists



Caitlin Peerson
Earth Advantage



Emma Ricardi
New Buildings
Institute



Dewi Ali
Emerald Cities
Collaborative



Monica Guevara
Emerald Cities
Collaborative

6



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.

7



OUR MISSION

Advancing an
informed & humane
housing market

8

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.



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 /

9

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

10

HERO Academy Program Partners

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







11

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



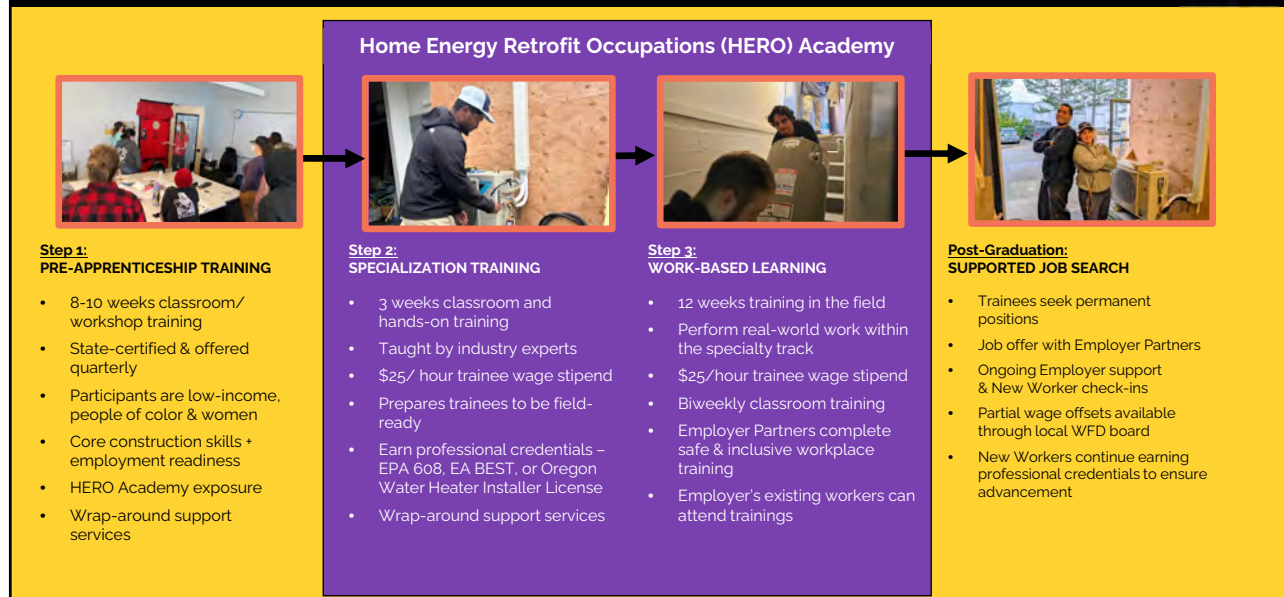
PLUMBING & WATER HEATERS

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

12

Program Overview



13

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!

14



Thank you!

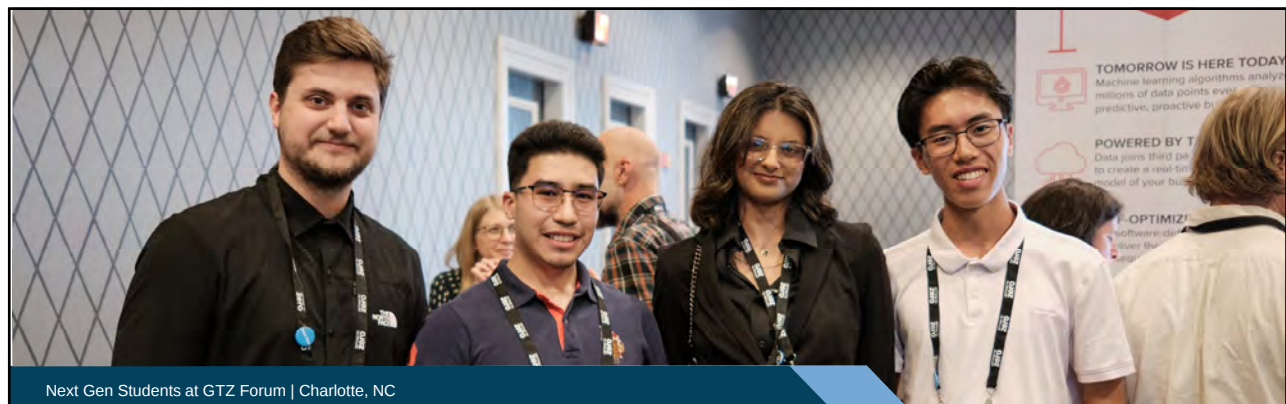
More info here...



workforce@earthadvantage.org



15



Next Gen Students at GTZ Forum | Charlotte, NC

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NBI's Next Gen Program

July 8, 2026



Emma Ricardi
New Buildings Institute



Lena Essak
New Leaf Energy

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16

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



17

Next Gen is Part of the Solution

Professional Certification	Education	Mentorship	Professional Development	Cohort Building
• Students can choose one professional certification to pursue, sponsored by the program	• Monthly discussion groups, featuring presentations from industry leaders	• Students are matched with a mentor, based on their career goals and lived experience • Mentors receive training in equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) and mentorship topics	• Opportunity to participate in informational or mock interviews with real employers • Attend the 2026 GTZ Forum	• Students develop relationships with their fellow cohort members and create a peer support network

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18

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

19

Alumni Perspective: Lena Essak, '24



20

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

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21

How did your mentor relationship support your career search?

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22

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

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23

Thank You!

- Reach out if you have any questions

Emma Riccardi :

emma@newbuildings.org

Lena Essak :

lessak@newleafenergy.com



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

24



HVAC Academy

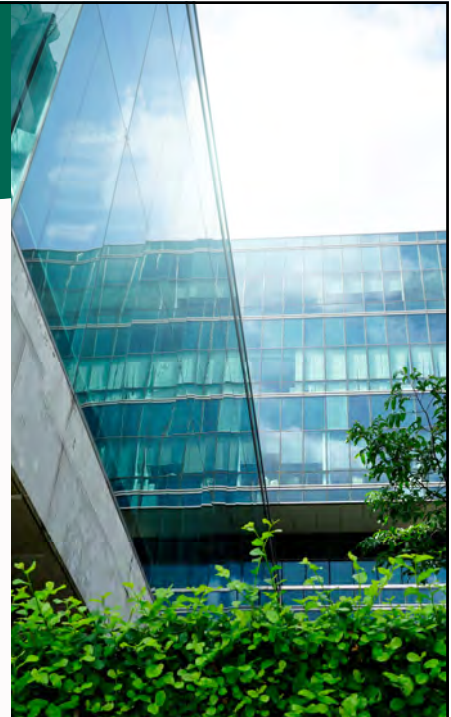
Dewi Ali
Emerald Cities
Collaborative



25



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".



26

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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America empowered.

27

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.



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28

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	



29

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



30

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.

31

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.

32



THANK YOU

For joining us for this presentation

Dewi Ali

 dali@emeraldcities.org

 www.emeraldcities.org



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E-Contractor Program

Monica Guevara



1

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2

What We Do

Contractors We Work with

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

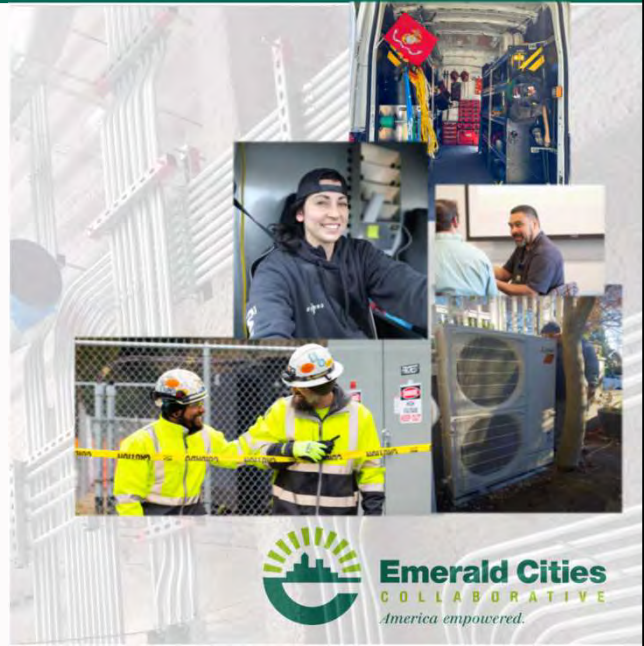
Services we offer

- 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>

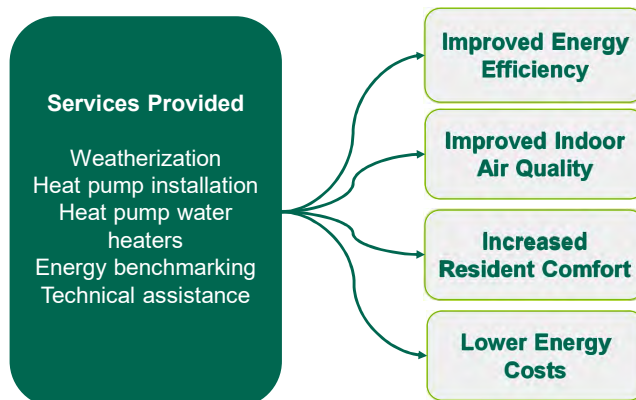
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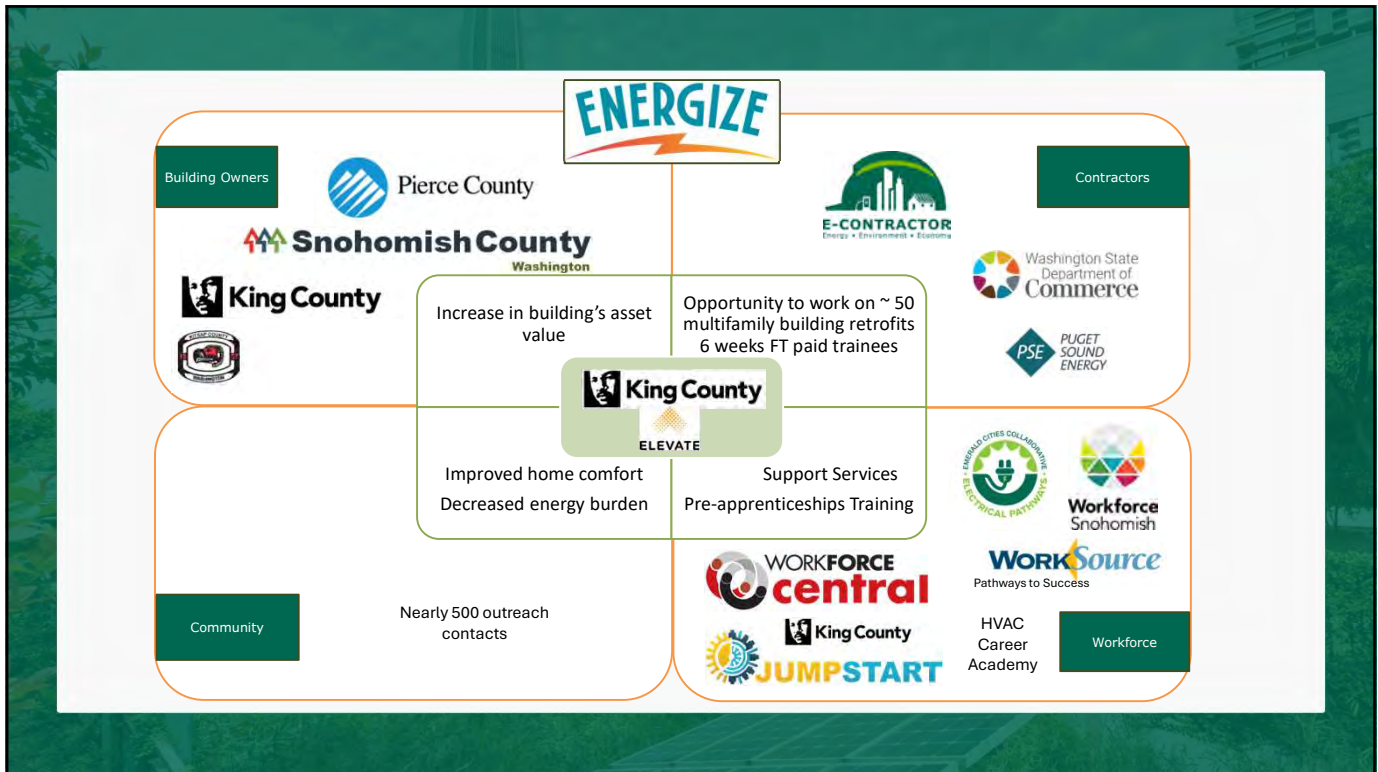
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Energize – Multifamily Program

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



4



5

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



6



THANK YOU

For joining us for this presentation

Monica Guevara

-  <https://www.linkedin.com/in/monica-guevara-econdev/>
-  mguevara@emeraldcities.org
-  www.emeraldcities.org

