



Green Equity Partnership

BACKGROUND

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Program overview

The Green Equity Partnership (GEP), led by Action for Equity, is an incumbent worker training and advancement project. Our initial focus is on the deep skills needed for building decarbonization, particularly for heat pump installation and energy auditing. Both experienced workers needing green upskilling and new hires will receive training. We expect between 15 and 20 employers will be part of the GEP. We are focused on inclusion so will be recruiting Black and BIPOC employers and employers committed to upskilling Black and BIPOC workers.

What is building decarbonization? Why are heat pump and energy auditor (HERS Rater) skills needed?

Building decarbonization removes the heating and cooking systems that use fossil fuels (gas, oil) from a building and replaces them with systems that use electricity in order to reduce carbon emissions.

Heat pumps and new refrigerants. New heating and cooling systems using heat pumps are installed. Heat pumps use technology similar to that found in a refrigerator or an air conditioner. In addition, in the past year, the US has signed a global agreement requiring using new refrigerants in order to reduce climate polluting emissions. Refrigerants flow through piping both inside an air conditioner and also throughout a building carrying heat or cold. The need for new refrigerants impacts cooler and freezer units in all grocery stores too. Skills and certifications to remove old and install new refrigerants will also be required. Manufacturers are just now making new equipment available that meet these new requirements. We expect many new products to hit the market in the next few years. Each manufacturer will also require certifications to be able to install and service their equipment without voiding their warranties.

HERS Raters and Green Project Leads. Reducing energy emissions also requires reducing energy use, so building envelopes need to be improved and air loss reduced. A Home Energy Rating System Rater (HERS Rater) is trained and certified to

inspect, test and certify air flow, as well as mechanical systems, in both new builds and retrofits. Some of the construction and features that need to be tested are inside walls, so need to be tested before construction is complete. As a result, new forms of coordination between energy auditors and contractors at building sites are needed. The new Green Project Lead position will be trained to play this new role.

Why are we training employed workers at multiple companies? Most of what people learn for work happens on the job, through on-the-job training, sequences of new assignments and some off-site formal training. Building decarbonization is at a moment of technology change, too. So skills need to keep up with changing technology. Most employers are not big enough to run a whole program themselves. Our partnership model meets the needs of both workers and employers.

A growing market for building decarbonization work. Both public policy and funding are driving the expansion of the green economy. Over 6,000 larger buildings in the City of Boston are being required to reduce carbon emissions. Publicly funded subsidies for installing green building equipment are creating incentives to make the change now.

Building inclusion into the expanding green economy now. MassCEC's July 2023 report estimated needing an addition 13,000 workers in building decarbonization jobs by 2030. The current building decarbonization workforce and employer base are overwhelmingly white. Contractors certified to receive MassSave (state) subsidies for green energy equipment and installations are estimated to be 95% white. There is an opportunity to increase inclusion now.