

INTRODUCTION TO THE GUIDE

WHY IS GREEN GOOD FOR WOMEN?

GREEN OCCUPATIONS

EDUCATING YOURSELF FOR A GREEN CAREER

FINDING YOUR GREEN JOB

GREEN ENTREPRENEURSHIP

WOMEN SUCCEEDING IN GREEN JOBS

OVERCOMING CHALLENGES ON YOUR CAREER PATH

PLANNING YOUR GREEN CAREER

TABLE OF
CONTENTS 

HOW TO USE
THIS GUIDE 

GLOSSARY 



WHY IS GREEN GOOD FOR WOMEN?

The growing green economy is creating new opportunities across the country, industries, and educational levels. Green companies need women who can design, build, install, retrofit, lead, and much more. Many green jobs have high wages and good benefits. Why not explore a rewarding career path that will provide family-supporting wages and benefits such as health care and paid leave?

SEVEN REASONS FOR A GREEN JOB

Here are seven reasons green jobs are good for women:

REASON 1: A GREEN JOB CAN PROVIDE THE CHANCE TO EARN MORE.

Many of the jobs that are considered green are jobs that women haven't traditionally held. As a result, women miss out on earning good wages and benefits. For instance, green jobs in environmental engineering pay a median wage of \$37.04 an hour or \$77,040 a year.¹³ The position of environmental engineer was projected to be among the fastest-growing occupations from 2008 to 2018, with an expected 31 percent job growth rate.¹⁴

Construction carpenter is a green occupation projected to have 325,400 job openings from 2008-2018.¹⁵ Carpenters, 98 percent of whom are men,¹⁶ earned a median wage of \$18.98 an hour in 2009.¹⁷ In contrast, preschool teachers, 98 percent of whom are women,¹⁸ earned \$11.80 an hour.¹⁹ With these wages, a preschool teacher would have to work 24 more hours per week to earn the same amount as a carpenter.

Women workers continue to be concentrated in traditionally female occupations. In 2009, women held 97 percent of all secretary and administrative assistant positions; 82 percent of all elementary and middle school teaching positions; 88 percent of all nursing, psychiatric, and home health aide positions; and 74 percent of the nation's cashier positions.²⁰ Other opportunities are open to women; it's up to you to take advantage of them.

REASON 2: YOU CAN START WITH ANY SKILL LEVEL AND MOVE ALONG A CAREER PATH.

Green jobs provide opportunities to advance from low-skill, entry-level positions to high-skill, higher-paying jobs. For example, an entry-level worker might gain hands-on experience by assisting a more experienced worker while working toward a certificate. After a few years of work and further training, she can advance to both higher-level responsibilities and higher pay. This path is an opportunity for a woman who hasn't attended college.

Not every job will put you on a career path, but each job you have can be used as a stepping stone to improve your skills and move you toward your ultimate career goal. The skills you acquire in an entry-level job can advance your career. You will acquire stackable credentials and portable skills.

REASON 3: GREEN JOBS APPEAL TO WORKERS WITH DIVERSE SKILLS AND INTERESTS.

No matter what your interests are, there is probably a green job out there for you. A green job can mean working as a training and development specialist, urban planner, green business owner, agricultural technician, or landscape architect. Here are a few more examples of green jobs for a variety of interests:

- **Recycling coordinators** supervise recycling programs and facility staff and volunteers. They also set collection schedules, track materials, give presentations, and develop budgets.²¹
- **Home insulators** install materials to prevent energy loss, reduce noise, and ensure safety. They do this by covering pipes and insulating walls.²²
- **Energy auditors** assess the energy efficiency of houses or buildings by running tests and recommend certain repairs or changes to lower energy costs.²³

REASON 4: GREEN JOBS CAN GIVE YOU GREATER SATISFACTION.

When you take a green job, you become part of an important effort to protect and restore our environment. Whether you help reduce energy usage, greenhouse gas emissions, or water consumption; conserve natural resources; or minimize waste and pollution, you can take pride in knowing that your work is contributing to the health and sustainability of life on our planet.

REASON 5: GREEN JOB OPPORTUNITIES ARE AVAILABLE FOR WORKERS OF ANY AGE.

Green jobs are for those just starting out and those in need or want of a career change. Federal funding is currently spurring an increase in green jobs training programs that offer opportunities for younger workers to get started and for more seasoned workers to use their skills in new ways.

REASON 6: GREEN EMPLOYERS ARE LOOKING TO HIRE.

When selecting a career, it is important to look for opportunities in fields where employers are currently seeking — or will be seeking — new employees. One of the best things you can do for yourself is to track down national and local information about where job growth is occurring. For example, according to a recent survey by the Association of Energy Engineers, a nonprofit group that supports workers in energy and related fields, there are too few qualified workers to fill the jobs in the energy efficiency and renewable energy fields, and this deficit is holding up growth in green industries.²⁴

The expected national job prospects of hundreds of occupations in the United States can be found in the *Occupational Outlook Handbook* (<http://www.bls.gov/oco>), a publication of the U.S. Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS). For instance, BLS reported that the demand for agricultural and food scientists is expected to grow at a rate of 16 percent (4,800 additional jobs) between 2008 and 2018,²⁵ and the demand for environmental science and protection technicians is expected to grow by 29 percent (or 10,100 jobs) between 2008 and 2018.²⁶ BLS also has green jobs career information at <http://www.bls.gov/green>.

MYTH: Women aren't strong enough for physically demanding green jobs.

FACT: Many women can handle the physical demands equally as well as their male counterparts. Many traditional women's jobs, such as nursing and waitressing, are just as physically demanding as some nontraditional jobs. Other green jobs are less physically demanding than housework. The strength requirements for jobs in sectors such as transportation and construction are often exaggerated. There is no reason for most women to avoid employment in those well-paying occupations.

MANY WOMEN PURSUE A SECOND CAREER IN THE GREEN ECONOMY.

Rebecca Lundberg was working as a school teacher when she started exploring the field of solar energy installation. "I didn't have any background with the hands-on trade at all," she says. Rebecca took a course on photovoltaic design and installation and then approached state officials to find out what certifications would be required for starting a solar energy installation business. "They asked me to describe what I wanted to do, and they said, 'Oh, you're going to be on a roof? That means you're a roofer. And you're going to be doing electric panels; therefore, you're an electrician. And if you're a roofer and an electrician, [then] you're a general contractor.'" After passing the certification exam to become a general contractor, Rebecca and her partner obtained their first job experience by installing solar panels on their own house. Next, they made presentations about solar energy to local homeowners, which brought them their first clients. Today Rebecca is chief executive officer of Powerfully Green, a full-service solar installation business that serves the Twin Cities area of Minnesota.

INTRODUCTION TO THE GUIDE

WHY IS GREEN GOOD FOR WOMEN?

GREEN OCCUPATIONS

EDUCATING YOURSELF FOR A GREEN CAREER

FINDING YOUR GREEN JOB

GREEN ENTREPRENEURSHIP

WOMEN SUCCEEDING IN GREEN JOBS

OVERCOMING CHALLENGES ON YOUR CAREER PATH

PLANNING YOUR GREEN CAREER

REASON 7: THERE ARE MULTIPLE WAYS TO GET STARTED IN A GREEN JOB.

There are a variety of ways to gain the initial skills you need to be part of the green economy. You don't have to go to college to get a green job, but a college degree can increase your job opportunities and earning potential, and is necessary for some green jobs.

Green job training ranges from on-the-job work experience to paid apprenticeship programs to certification programs sponsored by independent, professional organizations. Electricians, for example, can begin their training with a high school or vocational education, and then go on to a community college, trade school, apprenticeship, or certification program.²⁷

WOMEN FORGING NEW PATHS

Over the past several decades, women have been entering nontraditional jobs and experiencing the exciting career opportunities and greater earning potential these jobs offer. Yet many occupations in green industries remain relatively untapped by women looking to earn a family-supporting wage. Though these occupations remain nontraditional, don't let the unfamiliar stop you! Green jobs offer a broad set of opportunities from which to choose. Explore your options and choose a green career that can provide the future you want.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

You may find these resources helpful in planning for a green career. Web links can change, so you may need to do Internet searches to find the latest information.

GOVERNMENT RESOURCES

- U.S. Department of Labor (DOL). DOL has information about green jobs and green training grants through its Green Jobs Initiative. <http://www.dol.gov/dol/green>
 - Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS). BLS provides green jobs information. <http://www.bls.gov/green> and www.bls.gov/green/wind_energy
 - Employment and Training Administration produced a report titled *The Greening of Registered Apprenticeship* (June 2009). http://www.doleta.gov/OA/pdf/Greening_Apprenticeship.pdf
 - Occupational Information Network (O*NET). O*NET is a comprehensive, user-friendly career exploration tool created for DOL's Employment and Training Administration with a special section on the green economy. <http://onetcenter.org/green.html>
 - Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP). SCSEP is a community service program and work-based training program sponsored by DOL's Employment and Training Administration for low-income persons age 55 or older. http://www.doleta.gov/seniors/html_docs/AboutSCSEP.cfm

TABLE OF
CONTENTS



HOW TO USE
THIS GUIDE



GLOSSARY



NON-GOVERNMENT RESOURCES

- Wider Opportunities for Women (WOW). WOW's fact sheet "Women and Nontraditional Work" defines nontraditional jobs, illustrates women's progress, and discusses why women would want a nontraditional job. <http://www.wowonline.org/publicpolicy/documents/womennontradsheet2005.pdf>
- Women's Economic Security Campaign in conjunction with Wider Opportunities for Women (WOW). The campaign issued a report *Creating Opportunity for Low-Income Women in the Green Economy* that highlights green job opportunities, identifies barriers to women in accessing those jobs, and provides recommendations. <http://www.womensfundingnetwork.org/sites/wfnet.org/files/WESC/WESCGreenEconFINAL.pdf>

This list is not exhaustive and inclusion on this list does not represent an endorsement of any institution or program. While all efforts are made to ensure that hyperlinks are working and the information contained at the referenced websites is useful, the authors do not endorse, take responsibility for, or exercise control over the websites or organizations, nor do they vouch for the accuracy or accessibility of the information contained on these sites. The authors also cannot authorize the use of copyrighted materials contained in these sites. Users must request such authorization from the sponsor of the website.

End Notes

¹³ O*NET OnLine. "Summary Report for: 17-2081.00 - Environmental Engineer." <http://online.onetcenter.org/link/summary/17-2081.00>

¹⁴ Lacey, T. Alan and Benjamin Wright. "Occupational Employment Projections to 2018." *Monthly Labor Review*. Bureau of Labor Statistics (2009 Nov.): 91. <http://www.bls.gov/opub/mlr/2009/11/art5full.pdf>

¹⁵ O*NET OnLine. "Summary Report for: 47-2031.01 - Construction Carpenters." <http://online.onetcenter.org/link/summary/47-2031.01>

¹⁶ Bureau of Labor Statistics. "Employed Persons by Detailed Occupation, Sex, Race, and Hispanic or Latino Ethnicity." U.S. Department of Labor (2009). <http://www.bls.gov/cps/cpsaat11.pdf>

¹⁷ O*NET OnLine, "Construction Carpenters."

¹⁸ Bureau of Labor Statistics, "Employed Persons," 206.

¹⁹ O*NET OnLine. "Summary Report for: 25-2011.00 - Preschool Teachers, Except Special Education." <http://online.onetcenter.org/link/summary/25-2011.00>

²⁰ Bureau of Labor Statistics, "Employed Persons," 206-209.

²¹ America's Career InfoNet. "Recycling Coordinators: Occupation Specific Tasks" in "First-Line Supervisors of Helpers, Laborers, and Material Movers, Hand: Occupational Profile." http://www.careerinfonet.org/occ_rep.asp?nodeid=2&optstaus=000110111&next=occ_rep&jobfam=53&soccode=531021&stfips=&level=&id=1&ES=Y&EST=recycling+coordinators#task53-1021.01.

²² Careers.org. "Occupational Profile for Insulation Workers, Floor, Ceiling, and Wall." <http://occupations.careers.org/47-2131.00/insulation-workers-floor-ceiling-and-wall>

²³ O*NET OnLine. "Summary Report for: 13-1199.01 - Energy Auditors." <http://online.onetcenter.org/link/summary/13-1199.01>

²⁴ The Association of Energy Engineers. "Green Jobs: Survey of the Energy Industry 2009." (2009). <http://aeecenter.i4adev.com/files/reports/SurveyofTheGreenEnergyIndustry.pdf>

²⁵ Bureau of Labor Statistics. "Agricultural and Food Scientists." *Occupational Outlook Handbook, 2010-11 Edition*. U.S. Department of Labor (2009). <http://www.bls.gov/oco/ocos046.htm>

²⁶ Bureau of Labor Statistics. "Science Technicians." *Occupational Outlook Handbook, 2010-11 Edition*. U.S. Department of Labor (2009). <http://www.bls.gov/oco/ocos115.htm>

²⁷ Wisconsin Women's Council. "Training Requirements for Green Jobs." <http://womenscouncil.wi.gov/docview.asp?docid=18242&locid=2>