

# ENVIRONMENTAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AND JOB TRAINING SUCCESS STORY

## Civic Works' Baltimore Center for Green Careers Baltimore, Maryland

### HIGHLIGHTS

Within the program's six week curriculum, students receive a minimum of six certifications.

BCGC has trained over 80 people, yielding a 90 percent graduation rate and 90 percent employment rate upon graduating.

Graduates make an average of \$12.00 to \$16.00 per hour.

Baltimore, Maryland's industrial past left city areas in desolate disarray in the 1970s. Since then, the city, with the help of local groups, has worked to rejuvenate and rebuild neglected parts of the metropolitan area. The Civic Works Service Corps, a non-profit and an AmeriCorps program, is one of Baltimore's strongest promoters of community works. Through the help of grants from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Civic Works is able to provide urban service programs, such as environmental job training, to create new opportunities for residents who have typically had limited employment options.

Civic Works was awarded their first Brownfields Job Training Grant from EPA in 2001. The success of the grant led Civic Works to expand, including an initiative to provide additional occupational skills training for local residents looking to develop environmental careers. The Baltimore Center for Green Careers (BCGC), a division of Civic Works, opened in 2010 using a \$200,000 EPA Brownfields Job Training Grant awarded to Civic Works. The BCGC was developed mainly in response to the high unemployment rates and other economic and social barriers affecting residents who may have been incarcerated or did not graduate high school. The BCGC's mission is to "create business and employment development initiatives that contribute to environmental sustainability and are open to all



BCGC student wrapping water pipes with insulation

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—BCGC Graduate  
Ketorus Gooding

Baltimore job seekers.” John Mello, Projects Director at BCGC, explains that the idea for the center evolved because Civic Works “wanted to achieve social justice goals while achieving environmental goals.”

Since its launch, the BCGC has trained over 80 people, yielding a 90 percent graduation rate and 90 percent employment rate upon graduating. BCGC graduates have gone on to work on regional environmental cleanup projects ranging from asbestos abatement to hazardous waste removal and weatherization of buildings and homes.

Within the program’s six week curriculum, students receive a minimum of six certifications including but not limited to: OSHA Hazardous Waste Site Worker (HAZWOPER); Asbestos Abatement Supervisor; Lead Abatement Worker; and Confined Space Operations. After completing training and earning their certifications, graduates are then placed with regional or local revitalization companies in the greater Baltimore area and surrounding tri-state area. Graduates make an average of \$12.00 to \$16.00 per hour.



EnergyReady installer  
Dontae Burgess using  
spray foam to air seal  
an unfinished basement  
as part of a home  
weatherization project

The program’s success is not only due to the education it provides but also by the relationships that the program has built with local employers—a dynamic network where companies have come to anticipate and request program graduates for employment. BCGC graduate Marvin Carver still works with the Baltimore company that hired him initially; the company went on to hire eight additional program graduates because of his personal recommendations. As Marvin explains, the program gave him the chance to “enjoy work and save the planet” at the same time.

Another BCGC graduate, Ketorus Gooding, was hired for weatherization of commercial buildings the day after graduation by a local construction company. The company went on to sponsor Ketorus for further training and certifications. According to Ketorus, “I [now] have the opportunity to live my life with a wage while still having fun... [the program] was like having a big cheering section where they are saying, ‘you can do this, the past doesn’t matter’.”