



ENVIRONMENTAL “GREEN” CAREERS

What is “Green”?

The field of environmental or “green” careers is very broad and encompasses many occupations. What ties them together is an interest in the environment. In this field a passion to conserve, preserve, protect and restore the environment is crucial and there are numerous options to apply that passion. Professionals working in the “green” industry can find themselves employed in a number of places, including:

- Science and research
- Technical consulting
- Engineering
- Urban and regional planning
- Policy analysis and advocacy
- Building development
- Education
- Community organization
- Manufacturing
- Energy
- Resource management and production

Environmental workers span a diverse range of career areas, skills, goals and backgrounds. Their ranks, by all industry estimates, will continue to expand, and “green” careers will offer an excellent career path well into the future.

The typical “environmental job” that most people think of actually only constitutes a small portion of all of the jobs created by environmental protection organizations. Many environmental companies must employ non-environmental employees such as accountants, engineers, computer analysts, clerks, factory workers, public relations specialists, administrative assistants, truck drivers and mechanics, making those people a part of the “environmental” industry as well.

Requirements/Skills

Traditionally, a background in science or a technical degree has been helpful or even necessary for entering into the field. However, as the industry grows people with liberal arts degrees are becoming more and more common. Many with this background do go on for formal or informal training in science through graduate degrees, internships, volunteerism, training or classes. The amount of education required depends on the position for which one is applying. For example, many policy positions require a Master’s degree, while academic positions require a PhD and many in the nonprofit sector enter with a just a Bachelor’s degree. As with any career path, internships and practical experience in the field are a great way to land a job. However, skills in communication (spoken and written), strategy development, media relations, community

education, outreach and organizing, and the ability to research and analyze technical materials are more important than experience in particular issues.

As the industry grows, new skills, training and certification will most likely be required. Find out what is important to your specific career path and make it a point to get the proper training. For example, if you are interested in green building or solar, you would want to pursue a LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) or NABCEP (North American Board of Certified Energy Practitioners) accreditation. Also consider volunteering with local green initiatives. Volunteering is an easy way to meet people and improve your eco-credentials.

Where to Find Opportunities

Environmental professionals are generally employed in three sectors; government agencies; (federal, state and local); private industry; and nonprofit organization/non-governmental organizations. Today, environmental practices and processes are a large part of government on all levels, and are a part of everyday business for many companies. There are a broad range of both government programs and private industry jobs focusing on the environment, showing the importance of working in this field in the 21st century. Many jobs will be opening up in the next several years as a large percentage of the current environmental and conservation workforce will be reaching retirement, especially in the federal and state agencies.

The environmental infrastructure in the United States and around the world will also be an expanding area for jobs over the next several years. Infrastructure includes water and wastewater systems, transportation systems, wildlife habitat and restoration, and more. In addition, the green or alternative economy such as organic products, recycling, alternative energy, conservation work, fair trade and green investments products from sustainable forestry practices and eco-tourism are all booming parts of this sector and are expected to increase rapidly. The environmental job market is considered “recession-proof” due to the industry’s basis on laws and regulations that are not buffeted by economic fluctuations.

Government agencies on the federal, state, and local levels provide many job opportunities. There are also a tremendous amount of opportunities in non-governmental organizations, non-profits, and all types of business. Private industry jobs can be found in manufacturing, hazardous waste remediation, oil and gas, timber, and chemical companies, so be sure to search for specific companies in those industries as well.

Government Agencies

The Environmental Protection Agency: www.epa.gov

The Forest Service: www.fs.fed.us

Fish and Wildlife Service: www.fws.gov

New York State Department of Environmental Conservation: www.dec.ny.gov

State of New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection: www.state.nj.us/dep

New York City Department of Parks and Recreation: www.nycgovparks.org

New York City Department of Environmental Protection:

www.nyc.gov/html/dep/html/home/home.shtml

National Park Service: www.nps.gov

New York State Energy Research and Development Authority: www.nyserda.org

Non-Governmental Organizations and Nonprofits

The Green Corps: www.greencorps.org
Earth Watch Institute: www.earthwatch.org
The National Wildlife Federation: www.nwf.org
The Student Conservation Association: <http://thesca.org>
The Nature Conservancy: www.nature.org
The Online Environmental Community: www.envirolink.org
Roots & Shoots: www.rootsandshoots.org
Just Means: www.justmeans.com
Earth Science World: www.earthscienceworld.org
The Environmental Careers Organization: www.eco.org
The Trust for Public Land: www.tpl.org
Natural Resources Defense Council: www.nrdc.org
The National Association of Environment, Health & Safety Management: www.naem.org

Business

Green Order: www.greenorder.com
Center for Clean Air Policy: www.ccap.org
Green Century Capital Management: www.greencentury.com
Ethical Corporation: www.ethicalcorp.com
Ecology and Environment, Inc.: www.ene.com
Green House Gas Management Institute: www.ghginstitute.org

Jewish Community Green Initiatives

www.coejl.org
www.hazon.org
www.hazon.org/teva
www.canfeinesharim.org
www.jewishnaturecenter.org
www.arava.org
www.socialaction.com
www.shalominstitute.com

Additional Green Websites

www.greencareercentral.com
www.greencareers.biz
www.ecojobs.com
www.environmentalcareer.com
www.sustainablebusiness.com
www.wiser.org
<http://jobs.greenbiz.com>
www.greenbiz.com/collections/computing-it
www.greenmaven.com
www.greenjobs.com
www.powernaturally.org
www.cleantech.com
www.greenjobsready.com
www.retale.com/sustainable-careers