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## What is a green job, and how do I get one?

The increasingly popular phrases “green job” and “green-collar job” refer to any work that contributes to improving environmental quality. And despite the economic slump, the number of green jobs is growing.

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, also known as the stimulus package, includes billions of dollars to support energy efficiency activities nationwide.

**This public-private effort to transition to protect the planet is driving a new industry. Among the opportunities: weatherizing, or protecting houses and buildings from the elements; retrofitting old windows, pipes, and lighting to promote energy efficiency; and installing systems that harness energy from the sun and wind.**

There’s also need for workers—including lawyers, financiers, planners, and accountants—who have valuable experience across industries.

For example, a manager could become a sustainability director, a job in high demand in government, business, and universities, according to Kevin Doyle, president of Green Economy, a Boston-area consulting and training firm. Typical responsibilities include setting goals to reduce an institution’s harmful emissions, reducing waste, and conserving water.

“In these institutions, sustainability managers are often hired more for their leadership and communication abilities than for any detailed knowledge of technical sustainability practices,” Doyle says.

**For a budding green career, consider:**

**Taking classes.** Find out what local community or four-year colleges offer. Or, you can search for businesses and organizations that offer training, both in person and online. For example, the nonprofit Solar Energy International runs workshops in several green areas, including sustainable building, solar electricity, and renewable fuels.

[solarenergy.org](http://solarenergy.org)

**Get certified.** A LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) credential qualifies you to verify that building design and construction promote energy savings, water efficiency, carbon dioxide emissions reduction, and improved indoor environmental quality.

[usgbc.org/leed](http://usgbc.org/leed)

**Attend green conferences.** For upcoming meetings, check area community or four-year colleges or environmental groups. Identify speakers who interest you, and then begin to network like crazy.

**Use your current skills.** Experienced electricians, building engineers, and shop teachers, for example, are in demand to train and advise young people eager for entry-level green jobs.

**Get your hands dirty.** Try out different volunteer roles with environmentally friendly groups and see what you enjoy. Your service will link you to people in the industry who may lead you to a job.



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**Number, in millions, of U.S. green jobs estimated for 2030, up from 9 million in 2007.**

*American Solar Energy Society*

## PROFILE Judi Henderson-Townsend

### Judi Henderson-Townsend didn't start out thinking green.

She jokes that while she may live in the San Francisco Bay Area, she's never been a "save-the-planet, granola-eating, Birkenstock-wearing type of girl—an image that many people have about people doing environmentally conscious work."

"I stumbled upon my new career while searching for a used mannequin for an art project for my garden," Henderson-Townsend, a former account executive in the health care and travel industries, recalls.

She ended up buying 50 mannequins on impulse from someone closing a mannequin rental business. Having never touched a mannequin or worked in a retail environment before, it occurred to Henderson-Townsend that renting mannequins would be a fun part-time business.

But the move quickly led to a full-time venture. In 2001, Henderson-Townsend and her husband, Jay Townsend, formed Mannequin Madness to sell, rent, and recycle new and used mannequins to event planners, trade show vendors, museums, artists, and independent retailers.

Why recycling? It turns out that retailers routinely throw mannequins in landfills when the models are old or broken or if a store is closing. Because mannequins are made of materials that do not easily biodegrade, Henderson-Townsend persuaded major retailers to let the Townsends collect and recycle unwanted mannequins.

Though business has been rough the last year with the recession, Henderson-Townsend says she knows she's in the right line of work and is proud she has helped expand the notion of what's recyclable.



Now 52, she admits she wouldn't have had the confidence to start Mannequin Madness when she was younger: "I needed all my previous work experience to help me launch and sustain this business."

### ON THE FRONT LINES

#### Working green

Jim Cassio, co-author of *Green Careers: Choosing Work for a Sustainable Future*, has a lot to say about preparing for green work:

**Virtually all green jobs require some training or education** prior to employment. Some may require a Ph.D. Many others require a bachelor's degree. But there are also many technical and skilled positions that require a training certificate or one to two years of college.

**There are more education and training programs to choose from, but no directory from which to identify and compare the choices.** Community colleges typically offer some green classes and certificate programs, usually at a very reasonable cost. But those classes may fill quickly, given

the great demand that currently exists for green job training. Universities have degree and certificate programs that are designed at least in part to prepare people for green careers.

**Private schools and training providers offer green classes and programs,** and some are very effective, but they can also be

expensive—ranging from \$999 for a single class to several thousand dollars for a full program.



### INFORMATION

#### Essential resources

- **All for Good's Volunteer Search**  
[allforgood.org](http://allforgood.org)
- **GreenBiz.com's Green Jobs Search**  
[jobs.greenbiz.com](http://jobs.greenbiz.com)
- **Planet Green's Green Careers**  
[planetgreen.discovery.com/green-careers](http://planetgreen.discovery.com/green-careers)
- **Green Jobs: A Guide to Eco-Friendly Employment**  
A. Bronwyn Llewellyn, James P. Hendrix, and K.C. Golden
- **Careers in Renewable Energy: Get a Green Energy Job**  
Gregory McNamee
- **The Complete Idiot's Guide to Green Careers**  
Barbara Parks and Jodi Helmer



**"Green-collar jobs are created across the entire base of the economy, everything from high-end technical skilled jobs for engineers and architects all the way through to laborers and people who are actually going to do the solid blue-collar, entry-level jobs in the construction trades."**

BRACKEN HENDRICKS *senior fellow, Center for American Progress*