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From 2020 to 2023, Earth Advantage participated as a partner in [Better Buildings Workforce Accelerator](#) (BBWA). The BBWA is a Department of Energy initiative seeking to raise the level of building science and energy efficiency knowledge in the nation's building-related workforce. Through the BBWA, DOE engaged industry partners in activities that build interest and awareness, streamline pathways, and improve skills for people pursuing green building careers.

Earth Advantage expanded access to the existing Sustainable Homes Professional Training Program for Latinx contractors in the home retrofit industry.

About the Partner

Earth Advantage is a non-profit organization working to ensure the US housing market recognizes the elements of homes that create climate risk and values the characteristics of homes that provide climate solutions. The organization partners with entities across the country to develop tangible, systemic solutions for climate-friendly housing, including:

- ▶ Delivering the use of credible, nationally recognized certifications, scores and rating that document a home's climate and health impacts
- ▶ Enabling the disclosure of verified climate-related information in residential real estate transactions
- ▶ Helping develop a knowledgeable and diverse workforce to build, remodel, sell, and lease climate-friendly homes
- ▶ Addressing climate vulnerability through direct services, advocacy, and housing reform

Earth Advantage operates several programs across these areas. The impact of Earth Advantage's work includes over 17,000 individuals trained, nearly 40,000 high performance residential units certified, over 30,000 Home Energy Scores delivered, and over 2 million homes in their Green Building Registry[®]. To support green skills attainment among building professionals, Earth Advantage works in collaboration with utility, government, and community-based partners to provide online, in-field, and classroom-based training that complements existing partner programs.

About the Program

Earth Advantage delivers workforce training programs that advance the development of a knowledgeable and diverse workforce. The program featured in this case study focuses on expanding access to the existing Sustainable Homes Professional (SHP) Training Program for wider audiences, including those that are not native English speakers. This program also served as an opportunity to expand SHP training course materials to cover new material on home retrofits.

AT A GLANCE

- ▶ **Partner:** Earth Advantage
- ▶ **Project:** Sustainable Homes Professional (SHP) Training Program for LatinoBuilt Members
- ▶ **Program Location:** Portland, OR
- ▶ **Audience Served:** Jobseekers; Diverse and Underrepresented Jobseekers; Incumbent Workforce
- ▶ **Better Buildings Workforce Accelerator Focus Area(s):** Improve Skills; Streamline Career Pathways



In 2008, Earth Advantage launched the [Sustainable Homes Professional \(SHP\)](#) training, a six-module program that is available online or in-person and aims to train Northwest building professionals seeking an understanding of residential green building practices. In 2023, Earth Advantage partnered with [EnerCity Collaborative](#) and [LatinoBuilt](#) to launch a new version of the SHP program designed to serve Latinx contractors looking to enter the home retrofit industry.

Challenges and Solutions

Historically, technical training in the energy-efficiency industry has not catered to Latinx people even though Latinx contractors make up a significant portion of the industry. This type of training has also not historically been led by Latinx people or made available in Spanish. To address this gap, the project team developed and delivered a new 30-hour [SHP for Home Retrofits](#) training program specifically designed for contractors of Latinx-owned businesses who are looking to add or expand their energy efficiency services within the home retrofit industry and under the [Portland Clean Energy Fund](#). This training is Latinx-led, offered in both English and Spanish, and addresses common barriers that Latinx-owned businesses face. The full training program is a two-year contractor development project that will provide up to 32 Latinx-owned businesses with technical training and ongoing 1:1 mentorship support. The program will also release of an online Spanish-language version of the training.

Outcomes and Impact

This program began in 2023 and has already directly increased Latinx contractor capacity for green and energy efficient residential home retrofit

“This training prepares business owners for a new wave of technologies, opportunities, and building codes so they can teach their employees to create a greener world.”

Anonymous SHP Trainee



LatinoBuilt SHP cohort in training



LatinoBuilt SHP cohort upon graduation

projects. In its first year, 17 Latinx businesses (24 total contractors) completed the SHP course, providing business owners and their contractors with information to better access energy efficiency building opportunities. This work supports a community of Latinx contractors with green skills to meaningfully contribute to climate justice goals. It has also received positive feedback and demonstrated impact from participants according to a post-program survey. To date, 100% of participants have stated they intend to provide new energy efficiency services through their businesses and will recommend the program to their professional peers. Most participants, 86%, also expressed they intend to become [Home Energy Score Assessors](#) to further their qualifications in the energy efficiency industry.

Lessons Learned

The development of this program filled a critical gap in the success of Latinx contractors and the adaptation of a culturally specific curriculum proved to be an extensive and iterative process. It required a high level of collaboration among the project team and other partners to make sure that the

program is culturally appropriate and technically accurate, especially considering some technical building industry terms do not have universal consensus in Spanish.

This case study was developed with content from Earth Advantage's presentation to Better Buildings Workforce Accelerator's partners, [Earth Advantage's website](#), and LatinoBuilt's webpage about the [SHP training course](#).