

### Better Buildings Workforce Accelerator

From 2020 to 2023, NEEP participated as a partner in the 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.

Northeast Energy Efficiency Partnerships facilitates a statewide internship program in Maine as part of the state's goal of increasing the clean energy workforce.

### About the Partner

[Northeast Energy Efficiency Partnerships \(NEEP\)](#) is a regional nonprofit working to accelerate energy efficiency, electrification, and grid flexibility in the building sector as a core strategy to reduce climate pollution and build an affordable, sustainable, and resilient energy future. NEEP focuses on the components key to rapid, equitable decarbonization of the regional buildings sector—strong policies and regulations, market transformation, community-led solutions, a diverse and experienced workforce, and replicable programs and business models.

NEEP is part of a national network of six regional energy efficiency organizations (REEOs). The REEOs work through funded partnerships with U.S. Department of Energy (DOE), as well as with utilities, third party program administrators, public officials, advocacy groups, businesses, and foundations. For over 25 years, NEEP has worked to transform the energy efficiency market in areas where industry, the workforce, program administrators, and other components of the marketplace benefit from a collaborative, multi-state approach.

### About the Project

The [ReMaine Clean Energy Internship Program](#) is part of [Maine's Clean Energy Partnership Program](#) and funded by the Maine Governor's Energy Office. The ReMaine program aims to place entry-level candidates in 240-hour, paid internship positions with clean energy employers, and is modeled after the [Massachusetts Clean Energy Center's \(MassCEC\) internship program](#). The ReMaine program uses



*Northeast Energy Efficiency Partnerships logo. Find more content, programs, events, and resources at [neep.org](http://neep.org).*

### AT A GLANCE

- ▶ **Partner:** Northeast Energy Efficiency Partnerships (NEEP)
- ▶ **Project:** The ReMaine Clean Energy Internship Program
- ▶ **Program Location:** Maine
- ▶ **Technology:** Heat Pumps, Envelope/Enclosure, Renewable Energy
- ▶ **Audience served:** Diverse and Underrepresented Jobseekers
- ▶ **Better Buildings Workforce Accelerator Focus Area:** Building Interest and Awareness

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grant funding to subsidize 50 percent of wages, manage payroll and HR, offer travel stipends, and provide additional training. The program connects interns with a wide range of employers. Positions include weatherization technicians, heat pump installers, engineers, building code enforcement support interns, community resilience and energy efficiency interns, and more. NEEP is working in collaboration with several key partners including the JPI Group, IntWork, E2Tech, Building Performance Association, and Northeast Clean Energy Council.

### Program Goals

- ▶ Place 32 interns by September 2023, place women (40 percent of overall participants) and BIPOC (30 percent of overall participants) candidates into internships, and support wages at \$18-22 an hour.

### Challenges

The state of Maine currently supports 14,000 clean energy jobs, with a goal of doubling the workforce to 30,000 jobs by 2030. Respondents to the [2022 Maine Clean Energy Economy Workforce Survey](#) highlighted three key challenges:

- ▶ **A lack of workforce with necessary skills**
- ▶ **A lack of workforce seeking relevant employment opportunities**
- ▶ **A lack of industry-focused training and educational programs**

### Solutions

#### ▶ Intern Matching

To find the best candidates for employers, NEEP and project partners provide tailored internship matches by comparing resumes and job descriptions.

#### ▶ Wraparound Services and Support for Jobseekers

NEEP connects interns with flexible wraparound services like childcare assistance, transport stipends, and materials like laptops for remote work. If at the end of the 240 hours, the position

is not a good fit or the employer cannot hire the intern, NEEP will support the intern in finding subsequent training or credentialing opportunities or other work placements beyond the program.

#### ▶ **Industry-focused Training through the Building Performance Institute (BPI) Building Science Principles Certificate**

All candidates will have the opportunity to receive training on the BPI Building Science Principles Certificate of Knowledge and take the online, open-book exam with all fees covered.

### Lessons Learned

John Balfe, Senior Manager of State and Community Solutions at NEEP describes lessons learned so far.

#### ▶ **Get the Word Out**

As a new initiative, the ReMaine program focused on forming new connections with clean energy employers. NEEP worked to bring attention to the program, answer questions, build an employer database, and reach potential interns.

#### ▶ **Ensure a Statewide Program**

Many clean energy employers and interns are clustered around Portland, Maine's largest city. This encourages growth in southern Maine, without the same opportunities in rural and northern communities.

#### ▶ **Standardize Wraparound Services**

NEEP's goal is to standardize wraparound services. Balfe noted candidates are more likely to take full advantage of wraparound services if clear options are presented. He described the importance of communicating comprehensive support offerings to all intern candidates, as many have not encountered these options before.

#### ▶ **Succession Planning**

NEEP is seeking funding for future years of the program and is looking to find the internship program a permanent home with a relevant clean energy organization in Maine.

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## Outcomes & Impact

As of July 2023, NEEP has placed 18 interns with employers. By September 2023, NEEP aims to have placed 32 candidates into clean energy positions.

*This case study was developed with content from [NEEP's blog](#) and the state of Maine's Governor's Energy Office.*