

YOUTH ENGAGEMENT

Green Zone Environmental Program

Learn more about models for supporting workforce development and advancing equitable access to the clean jobs' sector



Green Zone Environmental Program organizers in Washington, DC

LOCATION

Washington, DC

ENTITY

Government

CLEAN JOB SECTOR

Energy efficiency, green infrastructure

Washington, DC has goals to become the greenest, healthiest, and most livable city in the country. Supporting this notion, the 2019 [Sustainable DC 2.0 Plan](#) addresses climate change and restoring the natural environment along with addressing the equally pressing economic and social needs of residents for DC under Mayor Muriel Bowser. The plan also includes many goals and targets related to creating more green jobs in DC. Through the Department of Energy and Environment (DOEE), the [Green Zone Environmental Program \(GZEP\)](#) partners with the Marion Barry Summer Youth Employment Program to provide youth and young adults, ages 14 to 24, the opportunity to learn about energy and environmental issues, complete community-based environmental work projects such as rain gardens and storm drain markers, and prepare for careers.

GZEP is one of the largest summer green jobs training programs for youth and young adults in the nation. Every year, over 300 youth and young adults throughout the District enroll in this six-week training and educational program with a focus on recruitment from under-represented communities. GZEP participants typically spend two days a week in the classroom learning about energy and environmental issues from local experts, followed by time spent with professionals working on career-related skills, such as resume writing, basic job skills, team building, and financial literacy seminars. GZEP partners with local businesses such as Anacostia Watershed Society, Earth Conservation Corps, and the Metropolitan Police Department to expose participants of the program to both classroom and hands-on training in the areas of stormwater management, solar energy installments, green infrastructure construction, landscaping, and more.

Youth training and employment programs are an excellent way to educate and train early-career professionals in sector-specific jobs. GZEP offers a range of positions, including Team Leader, Program Support Assistant, Field Manager, Communication Coordinator, and Site Manager. Projects from past years include building and maintaining urban farms, removal of invasive plants, tree planting and maintenance, neighborhood beautification, construction of rain gardens, and landscaping services for senior citizens.

DOEE provides GZEP participants with the opportunity to learn from experts about energy and environmental issues facing the District, gain experience working on projects that will expose participants to a variety of green infrastructure practices, develop the skills necessary to compete for today's green jobs, and establish or deepen their connection to the environment. Lastly, the learning outcomes from the GZEP allow participants to gain valuable knowledge from attending professional development workshops to enhance their skills in interview preparation, resume writing, and college and career planning.

Website: <https://doee.dc.gov/summer>