

# Finding a green job that's right for you

**Focus on a particular industry and be willing to relocate**



Duane Hoffmann / msnbc.com

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There's a lot of talk about so-called "green" jobs lately, and many of you are wondering how you can get a piece of the action, especially if you're out of work.

Well, you're going to have to think beyond just wanting a green job because these positions are so varied and are in so many industries. Saying you want green employment is almost like saying you want employment. And even though federal dollars earmarked for sustainable industries are starting to trickle in to projects and job-training programs across the country, that doesn't mean green jobs are plentiful.

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"Almost every job has a green component. Even bartenders have to learn how to recycle," he explained. "But to look for a job that exists because it's green is not good career planning if you want a job right now."

The key is figuring out where the opportunities are and what type of job is right for you.

Green jobs run the gamut, everything from solar installers to pollution auditors. The question you need to ask yourself is whether it's something you'd enjoy and whether your skills are transferable — even if you might require some training — because it will make the transition smoother.

Laci Gilmore, a former diesel mechanic for Ford in Denver, was interested in a job in wind energy but wasn't sure she'd be capable of working on large wind turbines. Turns out, her mechanical skills were just right for the job. She's now an operation and maintenance technician for Suzlon, a large wind turbine company.

"I did a lot of this work — reading schematics, troubleshooting — at Ford," she said, which made for an easy transition into the industry. She took some classes and relocated to Arlington, Ore., but 99 percent of her training has been on the job.

### **Relocating for a job**

Many employment experts advised that people be willing to move if they want to work for companies that are clearly focused on the environment.

The West Coast and parts of the Northeast, including the Boston area, are key areas where green companies are sprouting up, thanks to venture capital money, said Chuck Pappalardo, managing director for recruiting firm Trilogy Search. Green-manufacturing jobs can be found in cities such as Cleveland and Indianapolis.

“I had a conversation recently with a woman at the vice president level who didn’t want to move. But people have to be opportunistic when looking for these jobs, and that’s always been the case,” he added.

Once you figure out where the jobs are and in which industries, you can start figuring out if a job is a good fit for you.

“You have to self-educate,” advised Gayle Oliver-Plath, founder of green jobs Web site and community CareerEco.com. She suggested checking out [cleantech.com](http://cleantech.com) and [greenbiz.com](http://greenbiz.com) to see what’s out there, and reading about what different jobs and different industries are like.

“People don’t like to hear that it takes a lot of work to go about getting a job, and a green job is the same,” she said. “Start the research process, take a look at your skill sets and then say, ‘How can I take what I’m good at and get some new training, or volunteer, or get nonprofit experience, and turn things around and move into a new job?’”