



ELEVATE



Solar Jobs Training Program Success Story: Jose Hernandez

Jose Hernandez participated in Elevate's Solar Jobs Training Program. Here's what Jose had to say about his experience!

Did you have experience working in energy field prior to Elevate's program?

I've been educating my community about renewable energy since I was in high school, through an After Schools Matters program called ComEd Youth Ambassadors. But I had never worked on the technical side of renewable energy until the Solar Jobs Training Program.

How did you learn about Elevate's program and why'd you decide to participate?

I had more free time during the COVID-19 pandemic, and I started browsing for opportunities. I knew about Elevate through previous work with the University of Illinois at Chicago's Office of Sustainability, and found out about the Solar Jobs Training Program in the Elevate newsletter.

What cohort did you participate in?

I participated in the fourth cohort of the Solar Jobs Training Program in Spring 2021. I finished that up and I applied to the position I'm in now the week before the program ended.

What was your experience in the program like? Challenges, what you liked, etc.

Towards the end of the program, the cohort was able to do hands-on solar photovoltaic training using outdoor spaces and following CDC guidelines. I think that was definitely my favorite part of the whole thing ... being able to see people in person is completely different. And getting hands-on training and getting your hands on the solar panels was super interesting and fun.



Jose Hernandez

Did participating in the Solar Jobs Training Program facilitate your new job opportunity?

The program manager is constantly sending out job opportunities to the cohort. One job opportunity that caught my interest was on Elevate's Community Resource team.

Flip over ►



ELEVATE

Solar Jobs Training Program Success Story: Jose Hernandez

Everyone in the jobs training program, they emphasize we find the role that fits us really well – not only with our personalities but also our past experience. They really spoke about thinking about the jobs we've done before and the skills we had and applying that to anything that's open. I saw the job posting from Elevate and I thought 'why wouldn't I apply?' The program team gave all of us the confidence to apply.

What will you do for new job at Elevate?

I now work at Elevate as a Senior Associate, Community Resources, where I work with communities across Chicago to provide education about solar, energy efficiency, and more of Elevate's services. I hope to work in Latinx communities especially. Everyone here is aware of people's strengths and community ties, and they really respect that and understand it's big part of creating connections.

What aspect of new job are you looking forward to the most?

The diversity of our team is super refreshing. Everyone is from different parts of the city or state, everyone's personalities are different and it translates into dynamic group. That's important to the work we're doing for community outreach and education.

Do you have any advice for anyone interested in going through the program?

Definitely do it! It can be intimidating because it's a technical program. But they really want you to succeed. They go above and beyond to make sure no matter what you succeed. Don't be afraid to take the program because it's such a great opportunity – it's like, renewable infrastructure is such a big thing for the coming years. Why wouldn't you do something like this? It's pretty much guaranteed job security.

Anything else you'd like to share?

I earned my OSHA-10 and NABCEP PV Associate certifications through the program. Having those two really adds to your value. And being a Future Energy Jobs Act (FEJA) solar graduate is a really big plus right now because of Illinois' state policy requirements.

Along with the Solar Jobs Training Program, I also took a City Colleges of Chicago Continuing Education Renewable Energy course that was offered. That course itself was one of my favorite parts of the whole program. The professor gave people a good feel of what the renewable energy industry was like.

Want to learn more?

Visit ElevateNP.org/Clean-Energy-Jobs-Accelerator to learn more about Elevate's workforce and small business development opportunities.