CASE STUDY

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

The Osborne Association's Green Career Center gave one man a second chance at success

Gary Smith. Credit: Solar One

When Gary Smith was released from the New York State Department of Corrections, he was determined to make right the wrongs of his past. Professionally, he knew he wanted to work in a field where he could help others, but was uncertain about how to achieve his goal in a struggling economy.

During his time in prison, Gary learned that The Osborne Association had received funds to start a program training formerly incarcerated individuals to compete in the clean energy sector. He immediately began searching for work upon his release without success. Feeling discouraged, he turned to The Osborne Association's Green Career Center where he studied building science, sharpened his public speaking skills, and learned the value of proper professional conduct. The Osborne Association offers a broad range of treatment, education, and vocational services to more than 6,000 people each year. Supported by funding from NYSERDA and the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, The Osborne Association launched the Green Career Center to positively impact the lives of formerly incarcerated individuals, as well as the economy, society, and the environment.

> "Without my career training, I would probably still be struggling to find work. Not only does this program provide the training necessary to build a career in our nation's green economy, it helps people find hope when hope has been misplaced."
>
> *— Gary Smith, Tenant Education Program Coordinator, Solar One*

Heading in a positive direction

As one of Solar One's six major training partners, The Osborne Association identifies 10 groups per year to receive additional training in Solar One's building performance, electrical retrofit and energy efficiency and renewable core courses. The trainers at the Green Career Center and the educators and staff at Solar One immediately recognized Gary as a top performer.

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Gary Smith. Credit: Solar One

Gary pursued further training and education that helped him earn his Building Analyst certification from the Building Performance Institute (BPI). He was also offered an internship with Envirolution's Win-Win training program for entry level energy auditors. Around the same time, Solar One was looking for someone to direct its tenant education program. That's when all the pieces of Gary's professional journey fell into place.

Giving back and helping others

With the skills and professional recommendations to back him, Solar One wasted no time hiring Gary as its Tenant Education Program Coordinator. His work in this role fits well with NYSERDA's efforts to address the energy and operational needs of multifamily buildings. Gary teaches tenants living in affordable housing how they can sustain the energy gains in buildings that have undergone weatherization and efficiency improvements. They learn how to cut energy costs, conserve water, properly recycle and improve indoor air quality, and Gary fulfills his dream of helping society, sustaining the planet and providing for his family.

Gary says his confidence is soaring and there is nothing he can't complete. He hopes to start his own company performing energy efficiency retrofits and upgrades for homes and small businesses. "I plan to give others the same chance that The Osborne Association, Envirolution, and Solar One have given me."

Get started

Call **1-866-NYSERDA** or visit **nyserda.ny.gov/workforce** today and take the first step toward making a positive change for our economy, our environment, and our world.

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