

City of Cambridge

Executive Department

YI-AN HUANG
City Manager

CMA 2026-46
IN CITY COUNCIL
March 9, 2026

To the Honorable, the City Council:

Please see the attached communication from Susan Walsh, Susan Mintz and Rebecca Arellano at the Department of Human Service Programs, regarding the 2025/2026 Green Jobs Initiative Report.

Very truly yours,

Yi-An Huang
City Manager



February 26, 2026

To: Yi-An Huang, City Manager
From: Susan Walsh, Susan Mintz and Rebecca Arellano
CC: Joseph Corazzini
Re: Green Jobs Initiative Report – 2025/2026

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Introduction

In 2023, the City Council adopted an Ordinance creating a Green Jobs Initiative to connect Cambridge residents with education, training and employment opportunities in industries essential to addressing climate change. The initiative supports the City and Commonwealth's goals for Net Zero carbon emissions by 2050 by preparing a skilled workforce for the transition away from fossil fuels. Making this shift with a commitment to economic justice - opening opportunities specifically for low-and-moderate income residents and residents of color – is embedded in the Ordinance and will continue to be the framework through which Green Jobs staff proceed.

At the federal level, support for clean energy and green jobs has shifted dramatically under the Trump administration, with rollbacks to the Inflation Reduction Act, canceled clean energy projects, and renewed prioritization of fossil fuels. While these reversals have created uncertainty for the industry nationally, the state of Massachusetts has reaffirmed its political and financial leadership in advancing clean energy and climate action.

Over the past year, Cambridge has strengthened its commitment to carbon reduction, climate mitigation, and sustainability by establishing the Office of Sustainability, hiring a Chief Climate Officer and Green Jobs Specialist, and advancing key initiatives. These include preparing for the launch of Building Energy Use Disclosure Ordinance (BEUDO) emissions reduction requirements for large commercial buildings in 2026, launching a new program to support commercial and large-residential buildings installing rooftop solar, and implementing a heat justice project to update the Climate Change Vulnerability Assessment (CCVA) heat strategy and guide a community-led seed project.

Massachusetts Climate Industry Overview

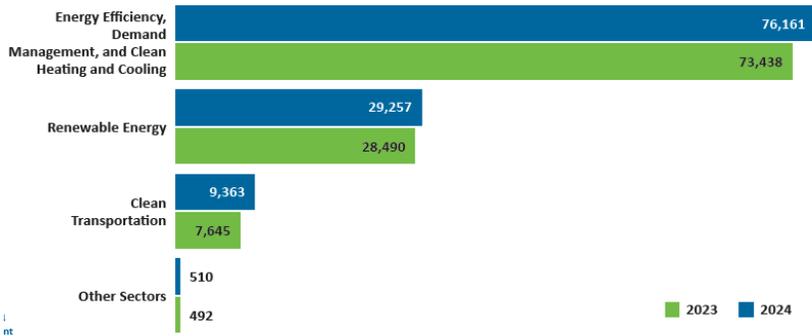
The clean energy and climate tech industry in Massachusetts continues to grow, supported by proactive state-level investment. The Mass Leads Act established a robust 10-year strategy to support climate tech companies, which include any business creating innovative technological solutions that mitigate the impacts of climate change, help communities adapt, and build resilience in systems and infrastructure. It provides approximately \$1.35 billion to the Massachusetts Clean Energy Center (MassCEC), covering such items as offshore wind, early deployment projects, and tax incentives. In total, the Act will sustain momentum in job creation and innovation across the state.

Clean Energy and Climate Tech in Massachusetts

Over the past year, Massachusetts continued to see growth in the clean energy sector. The 2024 MassCEC Industry Report highlights the following trends¹:

- In 2024, there was a total of 115,291 clean energy jobs in the state, a 5% increase from 2023 (compared to a 1% increase in overall jobs in MA)
- 22% increase in clean transportation jobs since 2023. MA was #1 nationally for the highest rate of growth in electric vehicle jobs in 2024.
- Women and minority workers continue to be underrepresented in the industry's high-growth and high paying positions. For example, Hispanic or Latine workers make up 40% of insulation workers in Massachusetts, but only 4% of mechanical or electrical engineers. Women are underrepresented industry-wide, particularly in some of the high-growth occupations, such as electricians, just 3% of whom are women.
- All clean energy sectors experienced a growth rate between 2023-2024.

All clean energy sectors experienced job growth between the 2023-2024 Reports.



- Installation businesses (e.g. solar, HVAC) represent the largest portion of the industry with the highest growth rate (7%), adding 2,239 workers between 2023 and 2024.

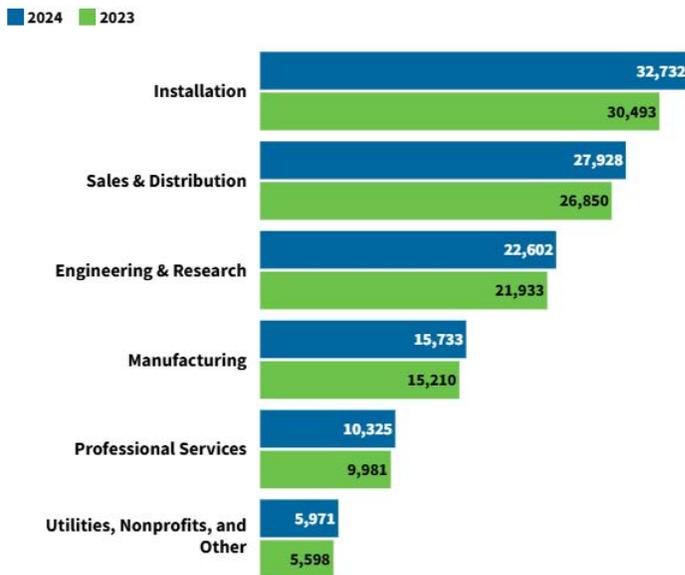


Image courtesy of MassCEC 2024 Industry Report.

Workforce Needs

In 2023 MassCEC completed “A Massachusetts Clean Energy Workforce Needs Assessment”, a comprehensive report analyzing the substantial investments needed to ramp up the clean energy workforce for Massachusetts to meet its 2030 climate goals and

forge a path to Net Zero. The study details the clean energy workforce needed by 2030 as seen through regional, occupational, and equity lenses. To meet the state's 2030 greenhouse gas emission reduction targets, the state will need to fill over 38,000 green jobs by 2030.²

Many of the fastest-growing occupations- such as electricians, HVAC-R mechanics and installers, and construction trades- already face supply shortages and aging workforces, underscoring the urgency of expanding training capacity and attracting new entrants. Specifically, electricians and Heating, Ventilation, Air Conditioning and Refrigeration (HVAC-R) Mechanics and Installers are at *severe* risk of experiencing labor shortages; Electric Power-Line Installers and Repairers, Construction Laborers and Construction and Building Inspectors (including Energy Analysts and Home Energy Raters raters) are at *high* risk of falling short of the need; and Insulation Workers, Cost Estimators, and Pipelayers, Plumbers, Pipefitters, and Steamfitters are at *moderate* risk of a supply shortage. Most of these occupations do not require a bachelor's degree, but do entail additional training or education and, in the case of electricians, an extended apprenticeship period of up to five years of training to reach the full licensed status needed to work independently on jobs. A 2025 MassINC report published in June underscored this need, estimating that meeting the state's 2030 greenhouse gas emissions targets would require almost 6,000 workers employed annually in the building trades, with electricians accounting for 75% of this total.³

Boston-Metro Area Green Jobs Landscape

The Greater Boston region is expected to experience the largest increase in clean energy workers of any other region in Massachusetts between 2022 and 2030, projected at 12,340 additional full-time jobs.² From 2023 to 2024 alone, the region added 2,277 new clean energy positions.¹ However, meeting this growing demand will require expanding the capacity of the education and training system to ensure that residents are prepared to enter and advance in these fields. The chart below shows the highest growth occupations in Metro Boston.

Highest-Growth Occupations	2022 Clean Energy Jobs	Increase in Jobs (2022-2030)
Electricians	2,385	1,699
Construction Laborers	2,541	839
General and Operations Managers	2,426	694
First-Line Supervisors of Construction Trades and Extraction Workers	1,381	491
Office Clerks, General	1,364	354
Insulation Workers	1,394	352
Secretaries and Administrative Assistants	1,538	312
Software and Web Developers, Programmers and Testers	2,301	301
Construction Managers	964	300
Electric Power-Line Installers and Repairers	285	290

Image courtesy of the MassCEC Clean Energy Workforce Needs Assessment Report, July 2023

Currently, there are approximately 100 identified training and academic programs in the Greater Boston area focused on clean energy priority occupations. While 42% of all projected clean energy jobs by 2030 will be located in the region, only 20% of related vocational and technical high school programs are based here, indicating a significant capacity gap.

Major organizations like community colleges, unions, non-profits and private institutions provide clean energy and green workforce training that are available to Cambridge residents. For example, IBEW 103’s Joint Apprentice Training Committee (JATC) offers a highly competitive, paid electrician apprenticeship. Most training opportunities are concentrated in and around downtown Boston, making them less accessible to residents in outlying neighborhoods. Although public transit improves regional access, “last-mile” travel, early work hours, limited program schedules, and training costs remain substantial barriers to accessing training and, ultimately, employment in the field—particularly for residents who are low-income or have other barriers to employment.

The clear need to create additional programs to address the workforce gap has resulted in two new efforts in Metro Boston. The City of Boston’s Boston Climate Jobs Alliance, launched in 2025 and supported by funding from the Inflation Reduction Act, seeks to “train and place Boston residents into over 1,200 jobs that enhance the City’s climate and coastal resilience over four years.” The grant funding will be used to develop additional programs and capacity to train and employ Boston residents.

In the MetroNorth workforce investment region, of which Cambridge is a part, a grant from MassCEC to the MetroNorth MassHire Workforce Investment Board will support a new HVAC Technical Training Program offered in partnership with Somerville High School's Vocational Tech Department. This 150-hour, 17-week in-person training equips participants with hands-on skills in HVAC systems, safety, customer service, and professionalism. Graduates will earn industry-recognized certifications and receive job placement support.

The program is designed to build a strong pipeline of trained residents ready to enter the clean energy and HVAC sectors, with a focus on serving Environmental Justice (EJ) communities. The grant will also fund a prevocational component, which will be delivered by Somerville Center for Adult Learning Experiences (SCALE) in Somerville, to prepare residents who don't have the academic skills to go directly into training. Cambridge residents are eligible for this new program and active recruitment is happening through the Office of Workforce Development (OWD) and the Community Learning Center (CLC).

The Metro Boston's clean energy economy includes employers across a range of industries—from energy efficiency and electrification to renewable energy installation, green building management, and climate technology. In Cambridge, a small sampling of employers in the clean energy and sustainability sectors include GE Vernova, Sunwealth Power, Zapotec Energy, Energy Allies, Midori Renewables, Hunter & Sons AC and Cooling, Sesame Sustainability, Great Sky Solar, Colman Electric, and Vicinity Energy.

Cambridge has also seen steady growth in climate technology and innovation, with numerous startups and research-based companies operating in this space. Many of these firms are based in collaborative environments such as The Engine, Greentown Labs (located in Somerville), or other accelerator/co-working spaces, where clean energy research, development, and commercialization activities continue to expand. It's important to note that OWD primarily serves residents who are looking for entry-level jobs or are hoping to make a career change/upgrade without a degree; these jobseekers are not typically seen as strong candidates for startups or R&D positions.

Despite the opportunities mentioned above, several challenges continue to limit equitable participation in the clean energy workforce. A particularly acute challenge is recruiting more women, people of color, and youth into the sector. A major barrier is the lack of awareness and accessible information about green career pathways among residents, educators, and career counselors. While the City has made long-standing efforts to promote green jobs, OWD's Cambridge Employment Program (CEP) career counselors

continue to encounter low interest among jobseekers in fields adjacent to green jobs such as construction and trades, limited information about job pathways, and barriers to access such as transportation, and extended training requirements for higher-skilled occupations like electrical and HVAC-R work.

Only 1% of Cambridge's employed residents work in construction—well below neighboring cities, reflecting broader workforce trends. These challenges have highlighted the continued need for targeted outreach, education, and support to connect residents to viable green career pathways. Collaboration with regional partners such as Building Pathways and MIT's Job Connector has increased exposure to the trades, though few residents have transitioned into apprenticeships or green careers. The Rindge School of Technical Arts (RSTA) currently does not offer pathways in the two most in-demand green occupations—electrician and HVAC-R technician—due to space, equipment, and scheduling constraints. However, RSTA is exploring potential partnerships with other career and technical schools to expand opportunities for students interested in these high-growth fields.

One small success story from OWD's Cambridge Employment Program in 2025 involved a young woman of color who came to OWD with a BS in Environmental Science. Her career counselor encouraged her to participate in the X-Cel Conservation Corps Wastewater program, and she ended up securing a position as a Staff Scientist at Civil & Environmental Consultants, Inc.

Addressing the challenges of access and awareness will require sustained collaboration among employers, training providers, community-based organizations, and workforce agencies to expand training closer to where residents live and to reduce barriers such as transportation and childcare. These collective efforts will be essential to ensuring an inclusive and equitable transition to a clean energy economy.

Green Jobs Initiative Support

The City's Green Jobs Specialist, Rebecca Arellano, joined the Office of Workforce Development in July 2025 to lead implementation of the Green Jobs Initiative. She brings a broad range of skills in clean energy and sustainability research, partnership development, and workforce engagement, and is actively building a citywide network of stakeholders that includes employers, residents, community-based organizations, educational institutions, utilities, contractors, and training providers.

Grounded in an equity-centered approach, the Green Jobs Specialist’s work focuses on ensuring that Cambridge residents—particularly those from low-income backgrounds—can access opportunities in the growing clean energy and climate workforce. Her key responsibilities include:

- Building and maintaining a network of green jobs stakeholders across sectors.
- Providing green career consulting to residents.
- Hosting information sessions and events to raise awareness of green career pathways.
- Developing green worksites for the Mayor’s Summer Youth Employment Program (MSYEP).
- Creating and maintaining a Green Jobs webpage under the Office of Workforce Development, also to be featured on the Office of Sustainability’s website
- Staying current on local and national clean energy trends, and emerging opportunities for Cambridge residents.
- Tracking all Green Jobs training and employment placements in the OWD data system.
- Preparing the City’s annual Green Jobs Report for City Council.

The Green Jobs Specialist provides individualized career consulting for two primary groups: residents seeking support to enter specific occupations such as electricians or HVAC technicians, and those exploring the broader clean energy field who need guidance identifying potential pathways. She is also tracking green jobs opportunities for residents—including available green jobs, internships, apprenticeships, and certification programs.

Since starting in her role, the Green Jobs Specialist has conducted 10 site visits, with 5 more planned, to learn about local training pipelines and identify potential MSYEP green worksites for Cambridge youth and for young adults participating in Next Up.

Looking ahead to 2026, she will expand outreach to Cambridge Rindge & Latin School and RSTA students and faculty to raise awareness around clean energy and green jobs pathways, launch public information sessions for residents, and build a centralized Green Jobs webpage to serve as a resource hub for residents for opportunities, training, and other information.

References

1. 2024 MassCEC Industry Report: https://reports.masscec.com/2024/wp-content/uploads/sites/5/2025/06/MassCEC_Industry_Report_2024.pdf
2. 2023 MassCEC Needs Assessment: <https://www.masscec.com/resources/massachusetts-clean-energy-workforce-needs-assessment>
3. 2025 MassINC Report, Constructing the Future: Workforce Strategies to Help Massachusetts Meet Its Clean Energy and Housing Goals <https://massinc.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/MassINC-Constructing-the-Future.pdf>