



ReMaine Clean Energy Internship Program Guidelines and Results

October 2024

In October 2022, Northeast Energy Efficiency Partnerships (NEEP) began the [ReMaine Clean Energy Internship Program](#) in partnership with [The JPI Group](#), [IntWork](#), [E2Tech](#), [Building Performance Association](#), and the [NECEC Institute](#). The project was funded through the Maine Governor’s Energy Office (ME GEO) as part of a workforce development initiative called the [Clean Energy Partnerships \(CEP\)](#).¹ This initiative is supported by the [Maine Jobs and Recovery Plan \(MJRP\)](#) with funding through the [American Rescue Plan Act \(ARPA\)](#). In September 2023, ME GEO awarded a contract amendment to continue the program for a second year until September 2024.

The purpose of this brief is to provide useful information on the program’s guidelines for other organizations launching similar workforce development programs.

ReMaine Program Guidelines

The ReMaine Clean Energy Internship Program provides entry-level paid positions for people of all ages and backgrounds in the state of Maine who are interested in working in the clean energy industry. The program also supports clean energy employers by identifying appropriate internship roles and job descriptions, recruiting and screening candidates, and subsidizing 50 percent of intern wages (up to a total wage of \$22 per hour) for 240 hours of work. The program targets positions with wages ranging from \$18 to \$22 an hour.

The Maine Governor’s Energy Office defines a clean energy job as one in which “...any worker... ..is directly involved with the research, development, production, manufacture, distribution, sales, implementation, installation, or repair of components, goods, or services related to the following sectors of clean energy: clean energy generation, clean grid and storage, energy efficiency, clean fuels, and alternative transportation. These jobs also include supporting services such as consulting, finance, tax, and legal services related to energy.” NEEP and the JPI Group agreed not to narrow the scope further, so all roles that fit this definition are eligible.

Internships are open to any Maine resident over the age of 18 who resides in the state for the duration of the program. Interns start with an orientation from NEEP and The JPI Group on the clean energy industry, resources for considering different career pathways within clean energy, soft skills, and payroll and HR expectations. Throughout the program, interns have weekly touch points with a contact at The JPI Group in the human resources department. Participants can work part-time or full-time. A full-time commitment of 240 hours can be completed in six weeks. Participants may also spread their internship out over a longer time if they choose a part-time commitment.

¹ The CEP awarded nine workforce development projects funding between \$180,000 and \$300,000 each.



This brief outlines the program guidelines created by NEEP and The JPI Group for the ReMaine pilot project, including approaches to employer onboarding and intern recruitment, screening, and onboarding. Additionally, it includes details on payroll and human resources (HR) processes and methods for collecting feedback on the program.

Employer Outreach

Project Partners' Connections

To raise awareness of this program among prospective employers and secure participation from them as hosts for interns, the project team pursued many avenues of outreach across the two years. Project partners IntWork, E2Tech, and NECEC are Maine-based recruitment firms with extensive experience and strong relationships in both recruiting and the clean energy sectors which allowed them to establish numerous personal connections with employers in their networks. E2Tech and IntWork also advertised the project at events around the state, such as career fairs, the E2Tech Annual Legislative Breakfast, the ClimateWork Maine Summit, and more. During Year One, 10 of the 18 employers who hosted interns found the program directly through IntWork, E2Tech, or NECEC.

During the program's first year, BPA was pursuing its own workforce initiative with Clean Energy Partnerships funding that complemented ReMaine in multiple ways. BPA developed a Maine chapter and held hour-long meetings on various topics throughout the year with an audience of contractors, nonprofits, workforce development organizations, and more. BPA invited NEEP to advertise the ReMaine program at many of these gatherings, which provided direct connections to at least 5 of the employers who hosted interns. [Maine BPA](#), and held hour-long meetings on various topics throughout the year with an audience of contractors, nonprofits, workforce development organizations, and other relevant stakeholders. BPA invited NEEP to advertise the ReMaine program at many of these gatherings, which provided direct connections to at least 5 of the employers who hosted interns.

During Year One, The JPI Group began recruiting employers and intern candidates to help fill gaps in program placements, which was not part of their original scope of work. During Year Two, when the contract was amended, recruiting was included as a central part of The JPI Group's role.

Other Outreach Avenues

The project team leveraged other networks in Maine, including [Efficiency Maine's](#) registered vendors. Throughout the program, NEEP worked to raise awareness about the program among Efficiency Maine's contractors by email, through Efficiency Maine's regular newsletter, and by word of mouth.

To reach employers in other membership-based organizations in the state, NEEP and other project partners contacted several associations around the state involved in clean energy or energy efficiency. These included the Main Municipal Association, passivhausMAINE, Maine Renewable Energy Association, Maine Clean Energy Industries Association, Maine Energy Marketers Association, Maine Energy Efficiency Alliance, and Maine Green Power Connection. These outreach efforts yielded little interest. Fortunately, NEEP was able to build more productive relationships with other organizations in the state, such as Jobs for Maine Graduates ([JMG](#)),



[MaineHousing](#), and [ClimateWork Maine](#). These organizations helped spread the word about the program within their networks or provided opportunities for NEEP to engage with their members, leading to more productive conversations.

JPI utilized several avenues to recruit employers for the program. In Year One, The JPI Group engaged existing clients with offices in Maine to host candidates for the program and used their network of clean energy partners to spread the word about hosting interns. In Year Two, The JPI Group contacted each interested company from Year One and discussed what hosting an intern in Year Two would look like, maintaining the relationships with Year One employers.

To engage a larger number of prospective employers simultaneously, NEEP and The JPI Group hosted multiple noontime sessions called “Lunch and Learns.” These sessions were an opportunity for employers to learn about the program’s guidelines and for NEEP to gauge employers’ interest in a subsequent one-on-one meeting to discuss the program in greater detail. Over the course of the two years, the project team hosted roughly 10 Lunch and Learn sessions, some hosted by BPA or E2Tech to reach their audiences more directly.

After initial contact with prospective employers, NEEP and The JPI Group followed up over email and phone as needed. Several employers needed repeated follow-ups and reminders before committing to join the program and allowing The JPI Group to recruit on their behalf.

Employer Outreach Results

Over the course of the program, NEEP and The JPI Group held introductory calls with nearly 50 interested employers, the majority of whom completed some amount of the onboarding process (filling out the intake form, having a second call with recruiters, etc.). Several employers never followed through on completing the onboarding process, leading The JPI Group to pause recruiting efforts on their behalf. Additionally, some employers never approved or hosted a candidate due to unsuccessful recruitment attempts. Overall, 24 employers hosted at least one intern between October 2022 – September 2024.

Employer outreach required more effort in Year One, because the program was new and lacked name recognition. Of the 47 employers NEEP and The JPI Group spoke with over the two years, 36 of them first engaged with the program in Year One.

The original goal for the first year was to place 32 interns. During Year One, the program successfully placed 26 interns with 18 employers, or 81 percent toward that goal. In Year Two, the team used remaining on-the-job training (OJT) funds from Year One to place 15 interns with 12 employers. Intern and employer recruiting required more time and resources than originally anticipated, but the OJT cost for each intern was lower than expected. This was because most employers were willing and able to pay the 50 percent subsidy, and few interns required wrap-around support for things like transportation and childcare. For these reasons, the team was able to place a total of 41 interns over two years with the original OJT budget.

Of the 24 total participating employers, 17 were E2Tech members or subscribers and seven were Efficiency Maine contractors. All employer participants are listed below. Employers number one through 18 on the list



below participated in the first year, and numbers 13-24 participated in the second year. Six of the employers participated both years.

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| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Androscoggin Valley Council of Governments* 2. Evergreen Home Performance*† 3. Dojo Research & Consulting* 4. Maine Indoor Air Quality Council*† 5. passivhausMAINE* 6. Shred LX* 7. Fresh Air Ventilation† 8. GO Logic 9. The Breathable Home† 10. TRC Companies* 11. Sierra Club 12. Maine Community Solar | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 13. City of Sanford* 14. ClimateWork Maine* 15. Croft * 16. Ocean Renewable Power Co.* 17. Quoddy Spray Foam† 18. Worthmore Group† 19. EcoHeat Maine*† 20. EcoMaine* 21. VIEWSHED* 22. Solect Energy* 23. Spark Applied Efficiency* 24. Dave's Mechanical Maintenance |
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*E2Tech member or subscriber

†Efficiency Maine registered vendor

Employers by the Numbers	
Intake Call During Year One vs. Year Two	77%
E2Tech Members or Subscribers	71%
Connected Directly via Project Partners	58%
Intake Calls Leading to Program Participation	51%
Efficiency Maine Registered Vendors	33%



Employer Onboarding

The first step for interested employers is to have a conversation with a staff member from NEEP and The JPI Group to discuss the program rules, scope, and timeline. The project team works with the employer to identify an entry-level clean energy role that fits within the program's scope. The project team then determines the time commitment of the internship (part-time or full-time), any special requirements (i.e. pursuing a four-year degree in a particular field), employer preferences for the internship timeline, whether the position would be appropriate for a hybrid or remote role, and any other details relevant to the proposed internship. After the initial call, The JPI Group sends the employer an intake form for the employer to provide more details related to the job description and relevant qualifications. The JPI Group then organizes a second call between their sourcing team and the employer to discuss sourcing and recruiting needs in more detail.

In most cases, the employer and the program each pay 50 percent of the intern's wages (plus a 30 percent employment burden discussed more below). If an employer elects to pay the intern more than \$22 per hour, the employer is responsible for 100 percent of the hourly wage above \$22. In some cases, when the employer cannot cover the full 50 percent, the program was able to pay up to 75 percent of the intern pay rate within the \$18-22 per hour range. Entities that benefitted from this increased subsidy were primarily non-profit organizations or companies that had already identified an internship candidate but were unable to afford the \$18 per hour base rate when subsidized at 50 percent.

Employers participating in the program can take advantage of The JPI Group's sourcing and recruiting services to find new interns. Employers are also allowed to identify a preferred candidate, an arrangement known as a reverse referral. When employers have already posted the role or have identified a prospective candidate, The JPI Group can onboard that person and they can begin working on a mutually agreed upon date with the employer.

Candidate Outreach

Sourcing and Recruiting

To increase diversity in the clean energy industry and expand opportunities for historically underrepresented groups, the project partners established a goal of 40 percent of interns being women and 30 percent being Black, Indigenous, or People of Color (BIPOC). To achieve this goal, the project partners invited IntWork, a Maine-based recruiting firm that specializes in sourcing diverse candidates, to join the team. In year one, IntWork referred approximately 25 candidates to the program.

In addition to the candidates referred by IntWork, the JPI Group recruited extensively using online platforms including Handshake, LinkedIn, Facebook, Indeed, and ZipRecruiter. During Year One, The JPI Group sourced over 3,000 candidates to screen and refer to employers.



Intern Recruiting Results

Over the course of two years, the program placed candidates in 31 unique positions. The wide diversity of roles within the scope of the project presented a challenge for The JPI Group's client delivery team. During Year One there were five roles that The JPI Group was unable to fill, due to factors such as low population density in the area or a lack of alignment between candidate experience and employer expectations. In Year Two there was just one role that The JPI Group was unable to fill, which was for a hands-on position doing prototype assembly and water-front testing for a hydroelectric generator.

The project team met, and in most cases exceeded its goals for intern diversity in both Year One and Year Two. In Year One, 57 percent of the interns were women and 38 percent were BIPOC. In Year Two, 40 percent of interns were women and 40 percent were BIPOC.

Interns also had a variety of backgrounds and educational attainment. Some participants were undergraduate or graduate students gaining hands-on experience to supplement their education. The program also hosted mid-career candidates who used the ReMaine internship to gain new skills in a new industry.

Candidate Onboarding

After a candidate is identified, the JPI Group holds introductory calls to discuss their interests, background, skills, location, and work availability. The JPI Group then assesses whether there are open positions that would be suitable for that candidate before referring the individual to employers for interviews as appropriate. When employers and candidates agree to move forward, the JPI Group can also provide other human resource services such as background checks and/or drug screening if required by the position. Finally, The JPI Group onboards the candidates into their payroll system and the intern is ready to start work.

Payroll and Human Resources

During year one, The JPI Group and NEEP decided to place all ReMaine interns on The JPI Group's payroll to ensure that the program had the necessary documentation for intern hours worked and wages paid. Some employers wanted to host the interns for longer than six weeks full-time. In these instances, The JPI Group continued to offer payroll services beyond the 240 hours supported by the program, but employers paid 100 percent of the interns' wages after 240 hours.

The JPI Group charges an additional 30 percent administrative fee to cover the cost of payroll tax, insurance, and HR services. The fee also covers worker's compensation insurance and recruitment for employers. The host employers share the cost of the 30 percent fee with the program.

The JPI Group's HR staff check in once a week with interns to ask them how the program is going, if they need support, and if they have any anecdotes to share. The JPI Group also checks in with employers via email every two weeks. Before employers host the intern, they meet with HR from The JPI Group to



review a handbook on expectations, strategies for being an effective mentor, and how to verify interns' work hours.

Intern Successes

Of the 41 interns that participated in the program, 35 completed 240 hours of work and 14 were offered full-time roles with their host employer. This represents roughly a 40 percent conversion rate to full-time placements among candidates who completed the program, which is especially compelling given that not all roles or interns were open to full-time conversion. The average wage was \$20 per hour, \$2 per hour more than the program's required minimum, and the interns were diverse in race, gender, educational attainment, and previous work experience.

Collecting Program Feedback

When the interns have finished their 240 hours of work, an HR generalist at The JPI Group reaches out for an exit interview to ask about the intern's experience, any feedback on the program, and next steps in the intern's career. If the intern has been offered a full-time role with their host, The JPI Group asks if they are willing to share their new salary or hourly wage. They then contact the employers for feedback on the program and any information they are willing to share about the employee's salary. The JPI Group collects wage or salary information from both the new employee and the employer, as wage growth is a metric the Maine Governor's Energy Office aims to track. However, this data can be difficult to obtain. Overall, many interns expressed that this opportunity exposed to the clean energy industry for the first time and showed them whole new possible career paths, and employers expressed that the program worked well for them and they had a positive experience hosting an intern.