

Wisconsin Weatherizer: Green Jobs Case Study

The new hires in the weatherization unit of the Central Wisconsin Community Action Council (CWCAC) are a motley assemblage of recession refugees. A list of their former professions reads like a who's who of manly labors: auto mechanic, carpenter, roofer, plumber. Adam Faul installed floors for 13 years. But in 2008 projects started drying up and by 2009 he was forced to look for other work. "When the economy nose-dived, I kind of went along with it," he says.

This spring, Faul came across a job listing for the CWCAC, which was hiring six new technicians to help low-income residents reduce their energy costs. The technicians are dispatched to homes, where, acting on recommendations from energy auditors, they install insulation, clean furnaces, seal air leaks, change light bulbs and replace inefficient appliances and windows. With his background in home renovation and experience with power tools, Faul thought it seemed like an ideal new career.

"Most of the guys who transitioned here from other jobs had construction skills, and they wanted to stay in that field because they enjoyed the work," says Brian Bauer, who once installed gutters but now supervises the CWCAC's four three-man weatherization crews. "There was no work left for them. Now they've got stable jobs."

Faul, who started in June, appreciates the stability, but finds the work rewarding in another way too. "It seems like we're really making a difference, like we're part of a bigger picture," he says. "What we do is hard, physical work, but to me it seems different. I don't consider it just another job."

From: <http://www.popularmechanics.com/science/environment/green-energy/4339164>