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Startup News

Greening of Detroit program helps unemployed harvest careers

JON ZEMKE | MONDAY, JULY 11, 2016



[The Greening of Detroit](#) is heading up a new initiative that aims to give the chronically unemployed careers, while also beautifying the city.

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[The Detroit Conservation Corps](#) provides unemployed residents in Detroit, Hamtramck, and Highland Park job training and certification in the landscape industry. It's recruiting people who have struggled to overcome barriers to maintaining a full-time job, such as incarceration, substance abuse, homelessness, lack of education or job skills.

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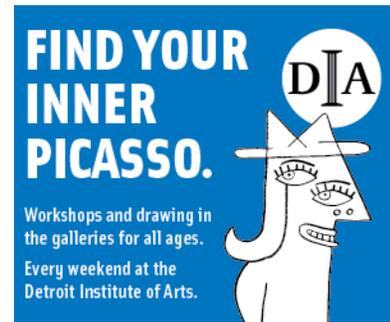
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Helping these people become part of the everyday workforce isn't a simple task.

"Being able to recreate hope in the first couple of weeks is the biggest challenge," says Devon Buskin, workforce development director of the Greening of Detroit. "We have to build a trust because they have been disappointed so many times before."

The Detroit Conservation Corps does this by harnessing the wrap-around services and resources of several partners, including [Focus: HOPE](#), [Neighborhood Services Organization](#), and the [McGregor Fund](#).

The hope is for members of the Corps to start over and stabilize their lives. Participants receive training in landscaping, forestry, snow removal, and floral



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some caveats.

In recent years, there's been a proliferation of art galleries in Detroit. While that's mostly been a positive, it does come with

decor. Each eight-week session provides participants with technical training, work readiness skills, and case management services. Upon graduation, trainees are placed directly into jobs. It graduated 54 people from the program in June.

The Detroit Conservation Corps is partnering with the city of Detroit so they can work on local projects that are transforming the neighborhoods where the participants live into healthier, greener spaces. One such project is clearing and prepping nearly 300 vacant lots in the Fitzgerald neighborhood on the city's west side.

Greening of Detroit has set a goal to train and employ 2,500 Detroiters by 2020.

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Jon Zemke is a news editor with [Model D](#) and its sister publications, [Metromode](#) and [Concentrate](#). He's also a small-scale real-estate developer and landlord in the greater downtown Detroit area.

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