

# Solar & Clean Energy Success Story: Leticia Smith



*“Even when things don’t seem right, keep going. Focus and persistence are key. It can be one of the hardest things to stick to.”*

After stints within the healthcare and tech industries, with no reliable or consistent career in sight, Leticia Smith felt that something needed to change in her life. All it took to get this started was a fortunate email.

Raised in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, and the last of seven siblings, Smith felt that the world was moving forward with innovation, and she wanted to be a part of it. During her time with Elevate’s programs that focused on solar training and clean energy, she picked up a myriad of skills that she knew would help her enter into the clean energy economy. Other than the technical aspects of entering this new field, her own private life and experiences had a key role in shaping her decision to pursue this opportunity. sol

“I was a previous small business owner,” she explains. I sold handmade products and produced all-natural products, from vitamins to oils and body butter. I come from a family of holistic healers.”

When she heard of the opportunity to enter the clean energy sector, she understood that this was her chance to heal people and whole communities by implementing changes that can increase their quality of life.

“Being invited to attempt to heal individuals on a one-on-one basis, healing from the earth is just as, if not more important. It makes sense to me as an individual,” Smith explains. Smith came across the Elevate Clean Energy Workforce Training program purely by happenstance. She saw an email advertising the program and just went for it.

With the onset of the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic, Smith’s willingness to engage with others in a classroom setting was cut short as the world began shutting down, and interactions with others drastically lessened as the year went on.

When she was able to return to the classroom as the world reopened, Smith felt a deeper appreciation for everything the program had to offer. “I enjoyed all aspects of the program. Looking back, it was a great opportunity to socialize, network, and get back into the classroom without feeling uncomfortable anymore.”

Smith admitted that the program wasn’t all rainbows and butterflies. “By the third week, I started to question my ability to grasp what was being taught and it began to feel like I was being taught a foreign language. I questioned whether I even belonged there” she says, “But something told me to keep going and keep trying. I spent my third weekend re-reading and re-taking all of my notes and materials and used Elevate’s read-aloud feature to hear my notes back. I came back revived, and everything clicked and made sense.”

Now the future looks bright for Leticia Smith. She’s been networking with individuals from the clean energy sector to establish herself as an asset and has submitted job applications to a variety of companies she learned about through the program.

For future cohorts, Smith has this advice: “Even when things don’t make sense, keep going. Focus is key. Persistence is key. Don’t see your instructors as just instructors but as potential partners.”