

Green Streets/Better Building Unama'ki

A COMMUNITY-LED HOME REPAIR, ENERGY RETROFIT & WORKFORCE INITIATIVE

Ecology Action Centre (EAC) | Cape Breton-Unama'ki

What Is Green Streets?

Green Streets is a community-driven initiative designed to reduce Cape Breton's energy poverty while creating meaningful employment opportunities for locals, especially marginalized people, people with criminal backgrounds, African Nova Scotians, and people from Mi'kmaw communities.

The project connects the following:

- Home repair & Small maintenance needs
- Energy efficiency and affordability
- Climate action
- Employment pathways for marginalized communities
- Social enterprise development

While the creation of a new program or social enterprise remains a possibility in the long term, our immediate focus through Green Streets works to coordinate and strengthen what already exists, filling gaps and building bridges between organizations.





Why This Project

Cape Breton communities face overlapping pressures:

- Outsized rates of energy poverty
- Aging housing stock
- High energy costs
- Gaps in small repair services
- Lower uptake of energy efficiency programs
- Barriers to employment for marginalized populations
- Fragmented funding and service systems
- Many homes need basic repairs. Many people need meaningful work. The system exists — but it's not coordinated. Green Streets fills that gap.
- Create Sustainable Employment Pathways
- Train individuals in small repair & retrofit skills
- Focus on skills that do not require Red Seal certification
- Provide extended supported employment (up to 12 months)
- Pay living wages

Priority populations may include:

- Formerly incarcerated individuals
- Newcomers & immigrants
- Indigenous community members
- Youth transitioning from school
- People on social assistance
- People with disabilities

Develop a Community Construction Social Enterprise Model

- Fill gaps that large contractors cannot service
- Circulate income within the local economy
- Strengthen procurement awareness in nonprofits
- Create dignified, meaningful work

Focus Areas of Work

- Small repairs & maintenance
- Heat pump cleaning
- Weatherization & air sealing
- Accessibility upgrades
- Basic carpentry & renovation
- Retrofit integration

Collaboration Is the Backbone

This initiative cannot function in silos.

Green Streets brings together the following:

- Government departments (DNR, DOSD, DOE, Nova Scotia works)
- Skilled trades & unions (HCC, Building it Green)
- Educational institutions (e.g., NSCC)
- Social Enterprises (Build Inc.)
- Community organizations (New Dawn, Ally Centre, Correction Centre, Pathways CB)
- Housing & accessibility programs (HARP, Home Warming, Affordable Housing Program)
- Energy program partners (Efficiency NS)

Long-Term Impact

Green Streets aims to create:

- Healthier, more efficient homes
- Local employment pipelines
- Reduced recidivism & social exclusion
- Stronger local procurement systems
- A coordinated home repair & retrofit ecosystem
- This initiative positions Cape Breton as a leader in community-driven climate and workforce integration.