



## Graduate Profile: Vincent W.

"Growing up as a young man in the streets of St. Petersburg, Florida is difficult. Its easy to find trouble" related Vincent. "I've been to jail 14 times and prison twice. I'm 32 years old and its been eight years since my last conviction. I had to leave St. Pete and my so-called friends and I moved to Titusville four years ago. I feel blessed and fortunate to close that door and open this new door for the future."

Vincent has been working hard to make positive changes and part of that is finding steady, well-paying work that has growth for the future. But without a formal education in the trades, the promise of a good job seemed like an unobtainable dream.



Vincent was working with CareerSource when staff suggested that he consider attending the environmental training cohort being delivered by the Sustainable Workplace Alliance (SWA). SWA is a non-profit training organization and under a grant program with the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences (NIEHS) SWA is conducting training and job placement activities in Brevard County, Florida. For 25 years, the Environmental Career Worker Training Program (ECWTP) has made enormous impacts on individual lives and communities across the nation. Since 1995, the ECWTP has assisted thousands of under served workers in more than 40 communities and 20 states.

*"I felt really fortunate to take the class. You meet a lot of great people who really want to see you succeed and it feels good to be a part of that. If they can help me, they can help anybody."*

"I was teetering on whether or not I was going to take this course. Before this training I tried so many different opportunities to find stable employment, but I wasn't having much success. Within a week of completing this cohort, I was hired at a great company with great benefits and pay.

"I felt really fortunate to take the class. It helped my self-esteem. You meet a lot of great people who really want to see you succeed and it feels good to be a part of that. If they can help me, they can help anybody."

The advice from Vincent for future students of this environmental training cohort – "Don't give up! The course work was difficult at times, but its worth it to stick with the program." Vincent explained further, "The class goes by really fast, stick with it and don't get discouraged because these people will help you and you'll get that environmental job."

By the end of the cohort Vincent was pleasantly surprised to be offered two jobs by environmental companies that were eager to welcome him on board.