



Daphany Rose Sanchez

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Please briefly describe your career path and what led you to work in energy efficiency.

I started out in the energy sector early on. I grew up in public housing and then my parents bought their own home on Staten Island. But the new home was flooded and was lost in Hurricane Sandy. In the process of getting a structural analysis of the house, I was translating from English to Spanish.

I saw that the simplest of things were not easily accessible because information wasn't provided in Spanish. In addition to translating between Spanish and English I was translating technical terminology into more easily understandable language and found that this aspect of translation was essential to help Sandy victims understand what stage of a retrofit their homes were in. A lot of people in our industry think about just therms and kilowatts, but people in diverse communities have a relationship with the built environment. Acknowledging this was important. I love doing this work because I get to meet people that remind me of my family and friends.

In your own words, describe your company.

Kinetic Communities Consulting works with utilities, governments, and municipalities to help them anchor their energy goals by injecting energy systems into existing local ecosystems. We partner with nontraditional organizations and give trainings on how the energy systems work and build membership to take ownership on different energy efficiency projects.

What aspects of your work are most important?

It is important to bring community and cultural knowledge to this work. The industry wants to pump scalable solutions as quickly as possible without thinking about unintended consequences, especially of initiatives that are one-size-fits-all. These types of solutions don't

work in diverse communities and can cause a lot of harm. It is important to help partners understand redlining and the impacts of hundreds of years of disinvestment. In today's world people want things done immediately but this isn't always the best solution. The goal isn't just to pump in money but to transform the market to show that custom approaches for diverse communities and communities of color are necessary to make sure they are not left behind.

What aspects of your work are most challenging?

One of the hard things about doing my job is the interconnection of energy use and culture. It is difficult. This is especially true when working with communities that have been heavily disenfranchised. One of my concerns about addressing our climate goals and the transition off of fossil fuels is that this transition, like past transitions in history, will be carried out on the backs of Black and brown communities. We are working to elevate our communities, and it is challenging work.

We recognize that there are many aspects of identity and workplace experiences. If you would like, please comment on how your identities (which could include race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, ability, economic status, languages you speak, military background, and/or religious beliefs) have impacted your career working in energy efficiency.

I am 4'11". Earlier in my career, people would often think I was an intern and ask to speak with the project manager even though I was the project manager. I have experienced many instances where unfortunately I was the only woman of color in the room. I think this industry has a bad habit of perpetuating microaggressions. On the other hand, I have had the privilege of having all women managers which has been a very positive experience. And on my current team, twelve of fourteen people are women and many of my teammates are folks who come from the communities we serve.

Can you comment more on Kinetic Communities Consulting's strategies for developing the next generation of energy efficiency leaders?

We hire folks from the community regardless of their backgrounds. For instance, we hire people with backgrounds in health, housing, and data. We also have an energy equity fellowship for high school and college students. Fellows work on initiatives focused on their communities and hear about job opportunities. One of the former fellows is now a current employee. My job is to try and convince students to stay in this sector. When I meet new people, I love giving them strategies for career pathways and giving them ideas for certifications. New York City is one of the most diverse cities on the planet, we need to get more people in the field.

I think there is this conception within the sector where folks believe they've struggled to get to the position where they are now, so others have to struggle too. But this is incorrect. If we are fighting to improve the standards for the next generation, we must eliminate arbitrary barriers so that the next person shouldn't have to go through the same struggle. This is very out of date. People should be valued for who they are and the work that they are doing.

Learn more:

**In
Conversation**

**Daphany
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[Pratt Center Interview](#) (2021)

[Design the Future Podcast](#) (2021)

[Urban Design Forum Interview](#) (2020)

[ImportantNotImportant podcast #96: A Just Alternative to Climate Disaster *and* Gentrification](#) (2020)

Selected awards/honors:

[Virtual 2020 Women Entrepreneur Empowerment Summit](#)

[The 2020 GreenBiz 30 Under 30](#)

Grist50: [She brings solar to public housing](#)

CityandStateNY: [The 2021 Real Estate/Construction 40 Under 40](#)