

BREAKING THE MOLD

Erica Crespo

Plumbing & Heating

Erica Crespo has always had an interest in the trades. When she decided to continue her college education, the Plumbing and Heating Program at Northern Maine Community College felt like a natural fit. Now in her last semester of the program, Erica reflects on her positive experiences with her instructors, classmates, and others at NMCC while looking ahead to a career in the field.



Erica wiring zone valve controls in the Plumbing & Heating Lab at NMCC.



A mom of three from Oakfield, Maine, Erica was originally nervous about entering a field predominantly made up of men. However, after beginning her plumbing classes last fall, she realized the environment was not as intimidating as she expected. While her prior experience in the trades was limited to seeing her dad's work in carpentry and masonry and a few homeownership projects, Erica has thoroughly enjoyed learning about plumbing in this program. "Heating is also something I enjoy, and at first I didn't expect that," says Erica, explaining how she worried about the difficulty of the electrical components.

This year, Erica has been working with her plumbing and heating instructor, Loren Gordon, as a lab assistant, where she can support students in their first year of the program. Many of these first-year students already have prior experience in the field, so Erica finds herself both teaching and learning from this group of peers.

Erica encourages other women who are considering a career in plumbing and heating. "It may seem intimidating at first, but it's not. Don't be scared to ask questions just because you're a girl and all the other guys in the room may know the answer. It doesn't matter. Always ask the questions." This spring, Erica will be entering the Plumbing and Heating field in a new career. She looks forward to building connections and continuing to learn from others in the industry. One day, Erica hopes to run her own business using the skills and knowledge she's gained at NMCC.

QUICK FACTS

PLUMBING & HEATING

Job Duties

- Shut off steam, water, or other gases or liquids from pipe sections, using valve keys or wrenches.
- Install underground storm, sanitary, or water piping systems, extending piping as needed to connect fixtures and plumbing.
- Assemble pipe sections, tubing, or fittings, using couplings, clamps, screws, bolts, cement, plastic solvent, caulking, or soldering, brazing, or welding equipment.
- Locate and mark the position of pipe installations, connections, passage holes, or fixtures in structures, using measuring instruments such as rulers or levels.
- Cut, thread, or hammer pipes to specifications, using tools such as saws, cutting torches, pipe threaders, or pipe benders.

Skills Needed

- Critical Thinking
- Judgment and Decision Making
- Repairing
- Troubleshooting
- Monitoring

2024 National Average Pay

\$30.27 hourly, \$62,970 annual



Projected Job Openings (2024-2034)

44,000 jobs

Source: O'NET Online