

# A.J. Patton Named Illinois Green Alliance Emerald Award Recipient for Work In Green Building Leadership

CHICAGO, IL, UNITED STATES, September 9, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Chicago, IL – The Illinois Green Alliance has named A.J. Patton, founder and CEO of [548 Enterprise](#), as a 2025 Emerald Award recipient for his leadership in advancing high-performance affordable housing and equitable workforce pathways.

Launched in 2008, the Emerald Awards honor individuals and organizations making Illinois a national leader in net-zero buildings. Patton is recognized as this year's Net Zero Hero for individual leadership.

"This year's honorees exemplify how leadership at every level—whether through bold, individual action or municipal policy—can chart a path toward a more equitable, sustainable future," said Brian Imus, Executive Director of Illinois Green Alliance. "Their work demonstrates the power of pairing vision with action to make net-zero buildings a reality for communities across Illinois."

Patton's projects, including a high-efficiency development in Auburn Gresham, a passive house in West Humboldt Park, and Humboldt Park Passive Living, Chicago's largest PHIUS design-certified building, showcase how innovative design can lower utility costs while expanding access to sustainable housing.

Through 548 Enterprise and the [548 Foundation](#), Patton has also worked to drive systemic change. In 2024, he secured \$9 million to launch clean energy pre-apprenticeship programs on Chicago's West and Southwest sides, building equitable workforce pathways in the green economy. His leadership has been recognized with honors, including Crain's 40 Under 40, the Northern Trust Inspiring Hope Award, and the Black Professional Network's Men of Honor

## 2025 EMERALD AWARDS *Winner — Individual Achievement*

### AJ PATTON FOUNDER & CEO | 548 ENTERPRISE

A.J. Patton, this year's Net Zero Hero honoree for individual leadership, has built a reputation as a champion for high-performance affordable housing and equitable development. His projects across Chicago demonstrate how innovative design can reduce resident utility bills while expanding access to sustainable, affordable housing.



Award.

"This recognition means a lot to me on a personal and professional level," said Patton.

"Innovating around development and equity is somewhat uncharted territory, so receiving validation from Illinois Green Alliance affirms the work our team puts in each day."

The Emerald Awards will be presented during Illinois Green Alliance's annual Limelight Celebration on September 25 at mHUB (1623 W. Fulton Street, Chicago). Tickets are available online. For more information regarding Limelight, contact Matt Watson at [mwatson@illinoisgreenalliance.org](mailto:mwatson@illinoisgreenalliance.org) or visit [www.illinoisgreenalliance.org](http://www.illinoisgreenalliance.org).

#### About 548 Enterprise

Founded in 2016, 548 Enterprise is a nationally recognized sustainable development firm that integrates real estate, renewable energy, capital investment, and workforce education under one mission: building wealth and equity in underserved communities.

#### About Illinois Green Alliance

Illinois Green Alliance is a membership-directed nonprofit organization working to transform the region's built environment to become ecologically sustainable, profitable, and healthy. To do so, we engage community leaders and utilize member expertise in education and community outreach through targeted programs and initiatives focused around green homes, communities, schools and existing buildings. With hundreds of passionate members and volunteers who lend their time and expertise, Illinois Green provides nearly 75 educational programs, community engagement events, tours and advocacy initiatives each year.

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