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Report: More Than 115,000 Illinoisans Work in Clean Energy; Jobs Located in Every County

Proposed federal, state policies could create thousands more jobs

CHICAGO – (August 11, 2021) – More than 115,000 Illinoisans worked in clean energy and clean vehicles at the end of 2020, making the sector a major – and promising – part of the state’s economy, according to a comprehensive [analysis of employment data](#) released today by the national, nonpartisan business group E2 (Environmental Entrepreneurs) and Clean Energy Trust. The report comes as negotiations continue around comprehensive state energy legislation and Congress and the Biden administration are considering federal legislation to boost federal investments in clean energy and clean vehicles.

Like most of the economy, clean energy was hit hard by the COVID-19 pandemic and economic downturn in 2020. According to this year’s [Clean Jobs Midwest](#), 2020 was the first year-to-year decline since E2 and Clean Energy Trust began tracking Illinois clean energy jobs. At one point, more than 17,450 clean energy workers had filed for unemployment, but the sector surged back 6.7 percent in the second half of the year to recover nearly half of the jobs initially lost. The final 2020 job numbers represent an 8.2 percent drop in Illinois’ clean energy workforce from 2019, or 10,230 jobs. Last year’s job losses were a dramatic change of pace for the industry. In the 3 years leading up to 2020, for example, clean energy jobs grew 5 times as fast as overall statewide employment.

Illinois can take advantage of the sector’s high job growth potential by enacting policies that support renewable energy, energy efficiency and electric vehicles. Federal policies like the American Jobs Plan and state comprehensive energy legislation would help create tens of thousands of new jobs for decades as Illinois moves beyond the immediate recovery. Without action, Illinois is faced with further job loss because the state has run out of funding for renewable energy credits that help finance solar projects.

[According to the analysis](#), energy efficiency jobs saw the biggest drop, declining about 11.4 percent over the year as workers were prevented from entering homes and offices because of the pandemic lockdowns. Other clean energy sectors also saw significant declines in 2020, including grid and storage [7 percent], and clean fuels [2.3 percent].

Several clean energy sectors did see job gains in 2020, including Electric Vehicles (EVs) and Hybrid Electric Vehicles, which combined now employs about 3,045 workers as an increasing number of automakers announced shifts to producing 100 percent zero-emission vehicles.

Nationwide, clean energy employment finished 2020 down about 307,000 jobs from 2019's high of nearly 3.4 million, recovering about 300,000 jobs nationally from June to December— a rate faster than nationwide employment growth during that period.

Micaela Preskill, Midwest Advocate of the national, nonpartisan business group E2 said:

"2020's unprecedented crisis showed why Illinois needs a strong clean energy economy more than ever before. Despite the decline, the data shows clean energy is rebounding back in every state and every county in the Midwest. Our state and federal lawmakers should take note: if you want these good paying jobs in your backyard, you need to support the policies that will turbocharge clean energy economy and keep it growing."

Ian Adams, Managing Director at Clean Energy Trust said:

"Now in its sixth year, the Clean Jobs Midwest report offers a snapshot of the Midwest's clean energy industry. These jobs prove to be resilient, rebounding faster than the overall Midwest workforce. We see the clean energy industry as ripe with opportunity for innovation and growth - and look forward to supporting the impressive climate entrepreneurs in this space."

Maria Onesto Moran, Owner of Green Home Experts in Lyons, IL said:

"I own a company that provides energy efficiency services throughout Chicagoland – from the installation of smart thermostats for senior citizens to shipping and packing energy efficiency kits to utility customers. My company is an example of the industry's growth potential. Five years ago I was the only employee and now we have 38 staff. Comprehensive energy legislation in Illinois and bold action from Congress will set the energy efficiency industry up to continue to grow, create jobs, and provide new opportunities to communities of color. If our lawmakers act now, clean energy can be a key part of Illinois's post pandemic future and economic recovery."

Other Findings:

- Energy efficiency, Illinois' largest clean energy employer, now employs 80,671. The sector was hardest hit in 2020 – losing 10,353 jobs or 11.4 percent of its total workforce.
- Renewable energy now employs 17,608 Illinoisans, including 9,105 in wind and 5,526 in solar.
- Clean vehicles employ 10,695 Illinoisans.
- Grid and storage employ 4,724 Illinoisans.
- Clean fuels employ 1,435 Illinoisans.
- Small businesses drive Illinois' clean energy sector – in 2020, 74 percent of Illinois clean energy businesses employed fewer than 20 people.
- Clean energy employed workers in all 102 counties in Illinois.
- Clean energy employed workers in all 18 congressional districts in Illinois.
- 9.6 percent of Illinoisans employed in clean energy are veterans.

For a full breakdown of clean energy jobs in each sector and for every state in the Midwest, see the detailed breakdowns available at www.cleanjobsmidwest.com – including job totals for every county, congressional district, and state legislative district.

Methodology:

The analysis is based on preliminary employment data collected and analyzed by BW Research Partnership for the 2021 U.S. Energy and Employment Report (USEER, forthcoming). The USEER analyzes data from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW)

to track employment across many energy production, transmission, and distribution subsectors. In addition, the 2021 USEER relies on a unique supplemental survey of 35,000 business representatives across the United States.

Previous E2 and Clean Energy Trust Jobs Reports:

- [Clean Jobs Midwest 2020](#)
- [Clean Jobs Midwest 2019](#)
- [Clean Jobs Midwest 2018](#)
- [Clean Jobs Midwest 2017](#)
- [Clean Jobs Midwest 2016](#)

Additional Information:

- Report: [Clean Jobs America 2021 \(April 2020\)](#)
- Report: [Clean Jobs, Better Jobs: An examination of clean energy job wages \(October 2020\)](#)
- Report: [Build Back Better, Faster: How a federal stimulus focusing on clean energy can create millions of jobs and restart America's economy \(July 2020\)](#)
- Report: [Clean Energy & COVID-19 Economic Crisis, May Impact Analysis \(June 2020\)](#)

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[Environmental Entrepreneurs \(E2\)](#) is a national, nonpartisan group of business leaders, investors, and professionals from every sector of the economy who advocate for smart policies that are good for the economy and good for the environment. Our members have founded or funded more than 2,500 companies, created more than 600,000 jobs, and manage more than \$100 billion in venture and private equity capital. For more information, see www.e2.org or follow us on Twitter at [@e2org](https://twitter.com/e2org).

Clean Energy Trust provides catalytic capital and support to early-stage startups in the Greater Midwest working on solutions for clean energy, decarbonization, and environmental sustainability. Based in Chicago, Clean Energy Trust invests in and provides hands-on support to help entrepreneurs scale and succeed. To date, Clean Energy Trust has helped its 36 portfolio companies raise \$34 for every \$1 Clean Energy Trust has invested. Learn more at www.CleanEnergyTrust.org.