

After Rough Year, Clean Energy Jobs on the Upswing in the Midwest

Midwest clean energy jobs declined in 2020's pandemic-wracked economy, but the second half of the year showed significant recovery and strong promise for the future

Quick Facts

677,000

Clean energy jobs

+3%

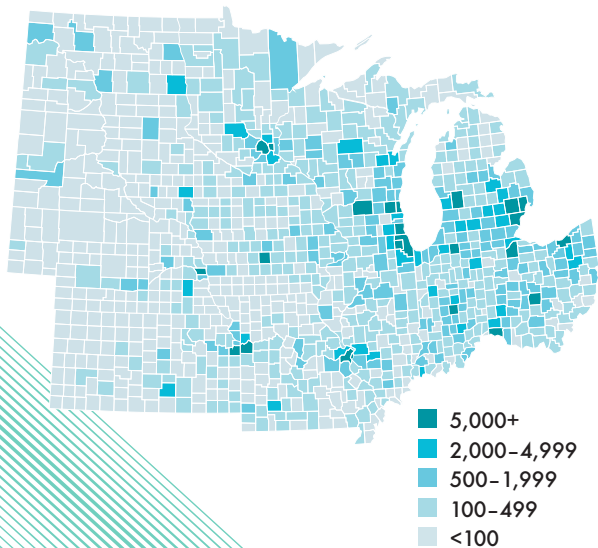
Growth of jobs in the clean transportation sector, the region's fastest-growing sector in 2020

>22%

More than 22 percent of U.S. clean energy jobs are located in the Midwest

Clean energy companies employed more than 677,000 Midwesterners at the end of 2020, a 9 percent drop from 2019 and the first year-to-year decline since Clean Jobs Midwest began tracking Midwest clean energy jobs in 2017. But the region's clean energy sector grew by about 11 percent in the second half of the year. Clean energy jobs in 9 of the 12 Midwest states exceeded their overall economies' job growth rate in that period, with 6 states exceeding 10 percent. Despite the industry's overall decline, more Midwesterners worked in clean energy than worked as accountants, auditors, computer programmers, web developers, and real estate agents and brokers combined.

Clean Energy Jobs Midwest



The biggest sector of the Midwest's clean energy industry is energy efficiency, accounting for nearly 70 percent of the region's clean energy jobs. But as more automakers and their suppliers continue to shift to electric vehicles, the advanced transportation sector saw a job increase of 3 percent across the region, with growth in most states. The sector added nearly 3,000 new jobs for a total of more than 90,000 workers.

Among clean energy subsectors, wind power, hybrid cars, and electric vehicles were the region's brightest spots. Wind energy jobs in the region grew by more than 4 percent to 37,800 workers and the number of hybrid vehicle manufacturing employees grew by 6 percent to 43,000 workers. Electric vehicle (EV) jobs grew by an even healthier 8.5 percent, and are poised for future growth with supportive policies and significant commitments to EVs by major regional employers such as Ford and GM.

Clean energy jobs are found in every corner of the region. While big cities like Chicago (81,707), Detroit (50,229), and Minneapolis (34,958) were some of the largest hubs for clean energy jobs, more than one in five – or more than 143,800 – jobs are in rural areas.

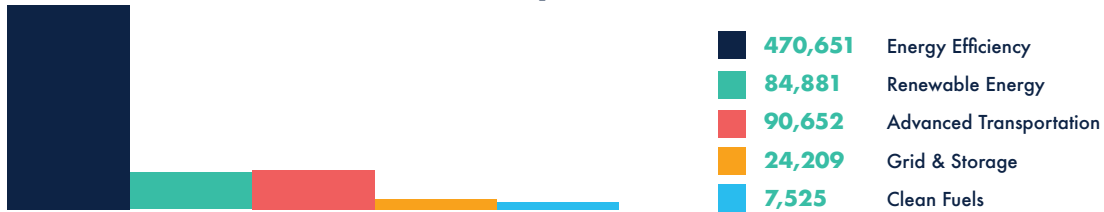
Policies Matter

As lawmakers look to rebuild a better, cleaner, more equitable economy, the clean energy sector is a proven and solid foundation on which to build in the Midwest. To keep clean energy jobs growing – and ensure that they’re available to all Americans – Congress must:

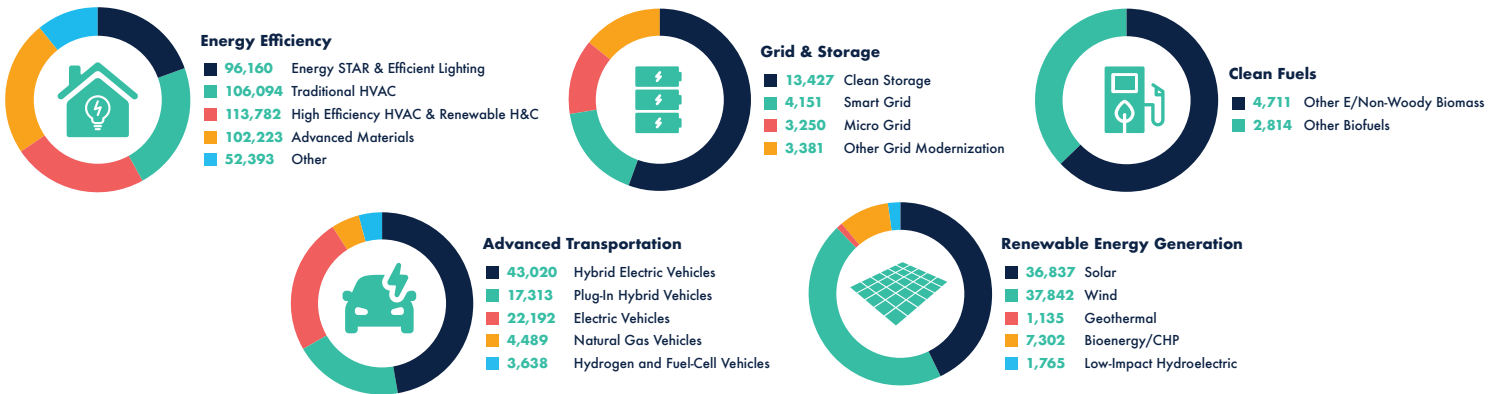
- **Infrastructure**—Pass and fund legislation to create a national car-charging network, expand building efficiency improvement, and modernize our electric grid.
- **Tax Policy**—Extend, expand, and improve accessibility of federal tax incentives for energy efficiency, wind, solar, energy storage, and zero-emission vehicles.
- **Innovation**—Make federal Investments in clean energy, vehicle and battery storage, energy efficiency, and regenerative and low-carbon agriculture.
- **Workforce Training**—Better fund existing programs and pass new programs to create new employment opportunities, improve equity, and meet the workforce requirements of a better, cleaner economy.
- **Clean Energy Finance**—Facilitate and leverage privately financed clean energy projects and improve equity.

States and municipalities across the Midwest can also expand clean energy jobs by enacting state policies that support renewable energy, energy efficiency and electric vehicles. These policies can help create thousands of new jobs as the post-pandemic recovery kicks into gear. State lawmakers should also include equity, wage, and benefit considerations when they consider clean energy projects and policies.

Jobs by Sector



Subsector Details



71%

Small businesses drive the region’s clean energy sector – in 2020, 71 percent of the region’s clean energy businesses employed fewer than 20 individuals

11%

Approximately 11 percent of the Midwest’s clean energy workers were veterans in 2020

Unless otherwise stated, the data and analyses presented in this report by Clean Energy Trust and Environmental Entrepreneurs (E2) are based on data collected for the 2021 U.S. Energy Employment Report (2021 USEER), produced by the Department of Energy (DOE) and collected and analyzed by BW Research Partnership (BWRP) in partnership with the Energy Futures Initiative (EFI) and the National Association of State Energy Officials (NASEO). For more information on the survey methodology please visit cleanjobsmidwest.com/about