

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

Illinois 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

115,133

Clean energy jobs

-10,230

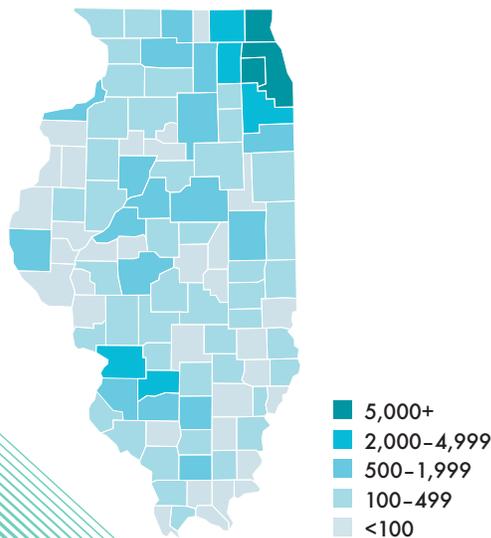
Clean energy jobs declined for the first time in years, but the industry bounced back strongly in the second half of the year.

+6%

Growth of jobs in advanced transportation, the state's fastest-growing sector

Clean energy companies employed 115,133 Illinoisans at the end of 2020, an 8 percent drop from 2019 and the first year-to-year decline since Clean Jobs Midwest began tracking Illinois clean energy jobs in 2017. But the state's clean energy sector grew by 7 percent in the second half of the year. Despite the industry's overall decline, more Illinoisans worked in clean energy than the number of lawyers, accountants and auditors, web developers, and real estate agents combined.

Clean Energy Jobs Illinois



The biggest sector of the Illinois clean energy industry is energy efficiency, accounting for more than 70 percent of the state'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 6 percent for a total of 10,695 workers.

Among advanced transportation subsectors, hybrid cars and electric vehicles were the state's bright spots. Hybrid vehicle manufacturing employees grew by 9 percent to 5,072 workers. Electric vehicle (EV) jobs grew by an even healthier 12 percent to 2,614 workers, and are poised for future growth with supportive policies and significant commitments to EVs by major vehicle manufacturers like Ford and GM and their suppliers. Wind energy jobs, another bright spot in Illinois, grew by 4 percent to 9,105 workers.

Clean energy jobs are found in every corner of Illinois. While Chicago (81,707) is the largest hub for clean energy jobs, more than 10 percent – or more than 12,300 jobs – are in rural areas.

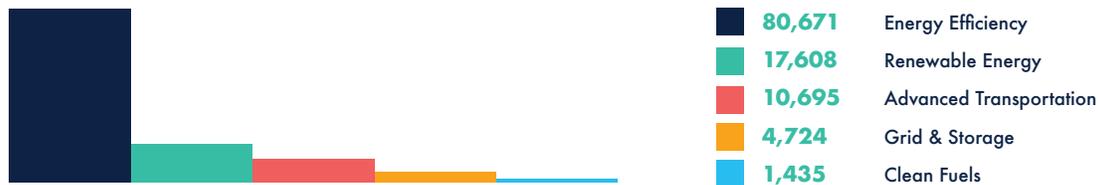
Policies Matter

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 Illinois. To keep clean energy jobs growing – and ensure that they’re available to all Americans – Congress must:

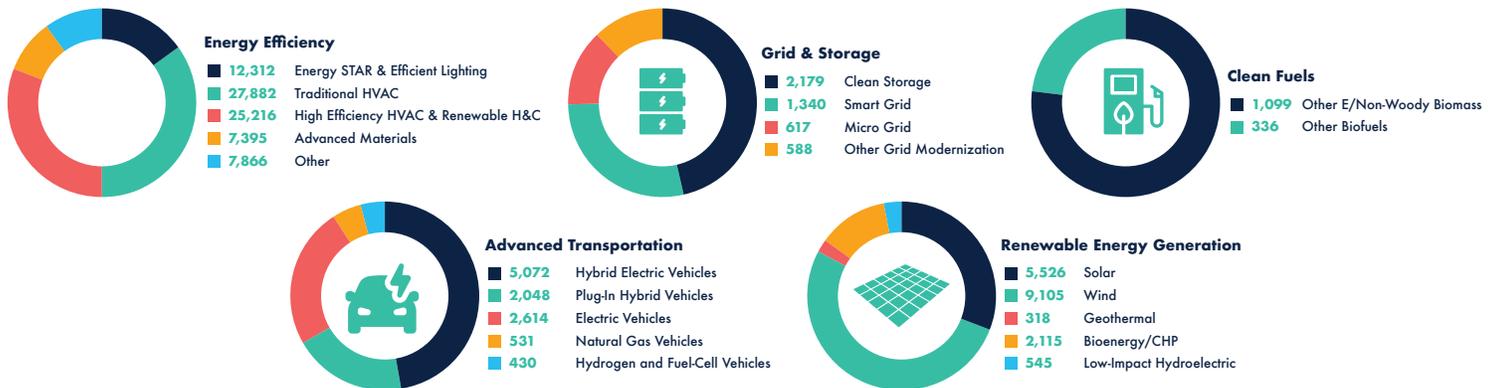
- **Infrastructure**—Pass and fund legislation to create a national car-charging network, expand building efficiency improvement, and modernize our electric grid.
- **Tax Policy**—Extend, expand, and improve accessibility of federal tax incentives for energy efficiency, wind, solar, energy storage, and 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.

Illinois can also expand clean energy jobs by enacting state policies that support renewable energy, energy efficiency and electric vehicles. Despite rapid solar adoption after Illinois passed strong energy legislation in 2016, the state has run out of funding for solar renewable energy credits. Illinois needs policies that will provide the certainty needed for the solar industry to remain and invest in the state as well as create thousands of new jobs as the post-pandemic recovery kicks into gear.

Jobs by Sector



Subsector Details



74%

Small businesses drive the state’s clean energy sector – in 2020, 74 percent of clean energy businesses in Illinois employed fewer than 20 people

10%

Nearly 10 percent of Illinois’ 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