

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

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

Quick Facts

28,953

Clean energy jobs

-3,103

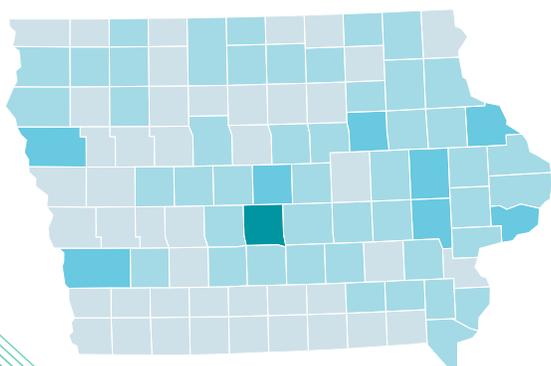
Clean energy jobs declined for the first time in years, but the industry bounced back strongly in the second half of 2020

+4%

Growth of jobs in advanced transportation, the state's fastest-growing sector in 2020

Clean energy companies employed 28,953 Iowans at the end of 2020, a 9.7 percent drop from 2019 and the first year-to-year decline since Clean Jobs Midwest began tracking Iowa clean energy jobs in 2017. But Iowa's clean energy sector grew by 8 percent in the second half of the year, exceeding the growth rate for jobs in the overall economy. Despite the industry's overall decline, more than twice as many Iowans worked in clean energy than the number of lawyers, accountants and auditors, web developers, and real estate agents combined.

Clean Energy Jobs Iowa



The biggest sector of Iowa's clean energy industry is energy efficiency, accounting for 63 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 4 percent for a total of 2,581 workers.

Among advanced transportation subsectors, hybrid cars and electric vehicles were the state's bright spots. Hybrid vehicle manufacturing employees grew by 6.5 percent to 1,367 workers. Electric vehicle (EV) jobs grew by an even healthier 9 percent to 705 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 highlight in Iowa, grew by 1 percent to 3,953 workers.

Clean energy jobs are found in every corner of Iowa. While big cities like Des Moines (12,869) and Cedar Rapids (2,543) are some of the largest hubs for clean energy jobs, more than 40 percent – more than 12,800 jobs – are located 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 Iowa. To keep clean energy jobs growing – and ensure that they’re available to all Americans – Congress must:

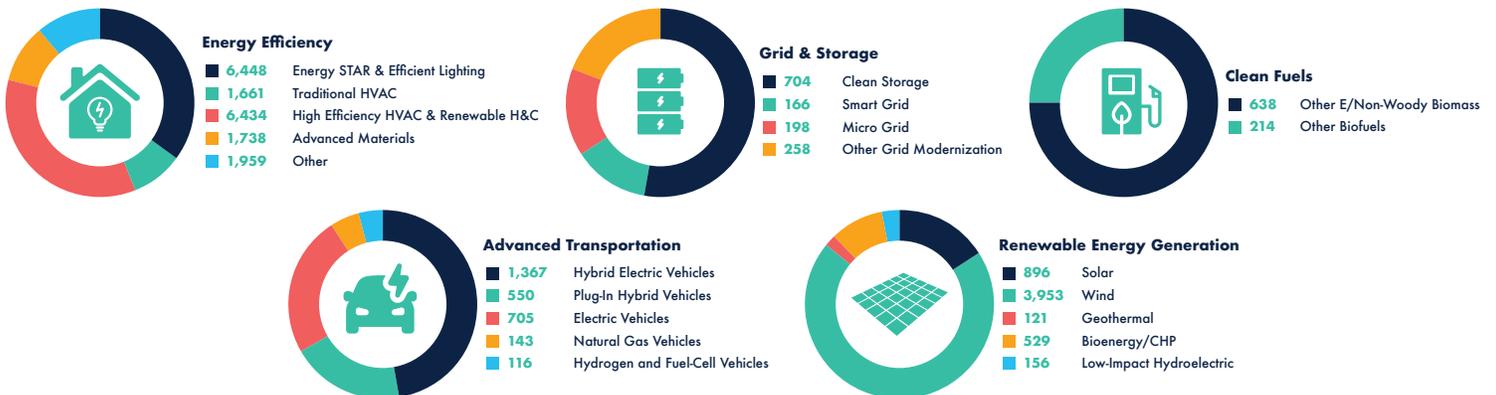
- **Transportation and Grid Modernization**—Pass and fund legislation to create a national car-charging network, expand building efficiency improvement, and modernize our electric grid.
- **Tax Policy**—Extend, expand, and improve accessibility of federal tax incentives for energy efficiency, wind, solar,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

Iowa 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. Iowa lawmakers should also include equity, wage, and benefit considerations as they consider clean energy projects and policies.

Jobs by Sector



Subsector Details



77% Small businesses drive the state’s clean energy sector – in 2020, 77 percent of Iowa’s clean energy businesses employed fewer than 20 people

10% More than 10 percent of Iowa’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