

A Return to Rapid Growth, with Clean Vehicle Jobs Driving Ahead

Illinois clean energy and clean transportation jobs grew by almost 5 percent in 2021, with electric vehicle manufacturing jobs leading the way

Quick Facts

120,775

Clean energy jobs

+28%

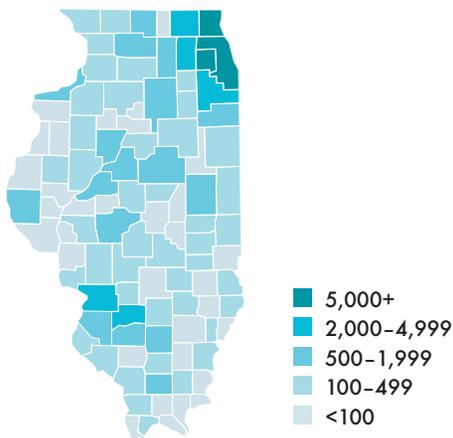
Growth of jobs in the clean transportation sector, the region's fastest-growing sector in 2021

4.9%

Growth in clean energy jobs in 2021

Clean energy companies employed more than 120,000 Illinoisans at the end of 2021, leading the Midwest region in clean energy jobs – an almost 5 percent increase from 2020 and a return to growth after an unprecedented decline in 2020. Approximately 55 percent of the clean energy jobs lost during the COVID-19 economic downturn were regained. More Illinoisans worked in clean energy than the number of lawyers, accountants and auditors, web developers, and real estate agents in the state combined.

Clean Energy Jobs* in Illinois



*Visualization based on 2020 data

The biggest sector of the Illinois clean energy industry is energy efficiency, over 68 percent of the state's clean energy workforce. The 82,592 energy efficiency workers in Illinois manufacture ENERGY STAR-rated appliances, install efficient lighting, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) systems, and install advanced building materials in homes and commercial buildings.

As more automakers and their suppliers continued to shift to electric vehicles, the advanced transportation sector saw an increase of 28 percent in Illinois. The sector added 2,973 new jobs for a total 13,668 workers. Hybrid, plug-in hybrid, and electric-vehicle sector jobs accounted for most of the sector's growth.

Solar energy jobs, another highlight in Illinois, grew by 10.2 percent to 6,087 workers.

Across all clean energy sectors, the majority of clean energy jobs in Illinois were in construction and professional services.

71%

Small businesses drive Illinois's clean energy sector – in 2021, 71 percent of the state's clean energy businesses employed fewer than 20 individuals

9%

Approximately 9 percent of Illinois's clean energy workers were veterans



Policies Matter

Recent federal policies like the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA), the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), and the CHIPS and Science Act, as well as state laws like the Climate and Equitable Jobs Act make unprecedented investments in the clean energy economy and create promise for strong future growth in clean energy jobs.

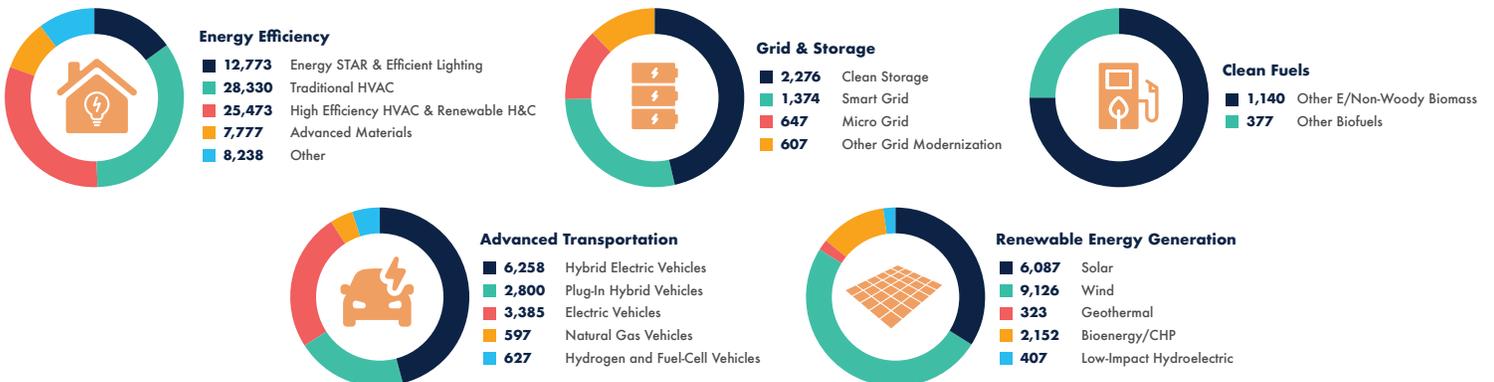
Still, there is more to do to meet the nation’s climate goals of reducing climate emissions by 50 percent by 2030, improving equity in the clean energy economy, and growing clean energy jobs:

- **Implement recently passed federal policies to support a rapid and just transition to clean energy.** The IRA, IIJA, and the CHIPS and Science Act include a combined investment of hundreds of billions of dollars in the clean energy economy. Coordination across federal, state, and local agencies will be integral to maximize the effectiveness of this historic level of funding.
- **Develop and fund federal and state workforce development programs.** Workforce training will be critical to the continued growth of the industry, as over 83 percent of employers in the state report at least some difficulty hiring workers.
- **Expand our regional transmission grid and increase access for clean energy projects.** The Midcontinent Independent System Operator (MISO)’s recent announcement of new transmission infrastructure will improve the region’s congested grid. More is needed from MISO and the Midwest’s other regional transmission organizations, PJM and the Southwest Power Pool, as many wind and solar projects will not be built if the transmission is not there to integrate them.
- **Advance state and local clean energy policies.** Illinois has the opportunity to strengthen the state’s clean energy industry by building on the success of the Climate and Equitable Jobs Act and electrifying the transportation and building sectors. Standards like the Advanced Clean Truck rule and the Zero Emissions Vehicle rule will hasten the transition to electric vehicles and position the state to be a leader in jobs and electric vehicle manufacturing. To accelerate the electrification of buildings, the city of Chicago should join other major cities in adopting a building performance standard and require that all new buildings be built to run solely on electricity.

Jobs by Sector



2021 Subsector Details



Unless otherwise stated, the data and analyses presented in this report by Evergreen Climate Innovations and Environmental Entrepreneurs (E2) are based on data collected for the 2021 U.S. Energy Employment Report (2021 USEER), produced by the United States Department of Energy (DOE) and collected and analyzed by BW Research Partnership (BWRP).