

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

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

Quick Facts

30,393

Clean energy jobs

+25%

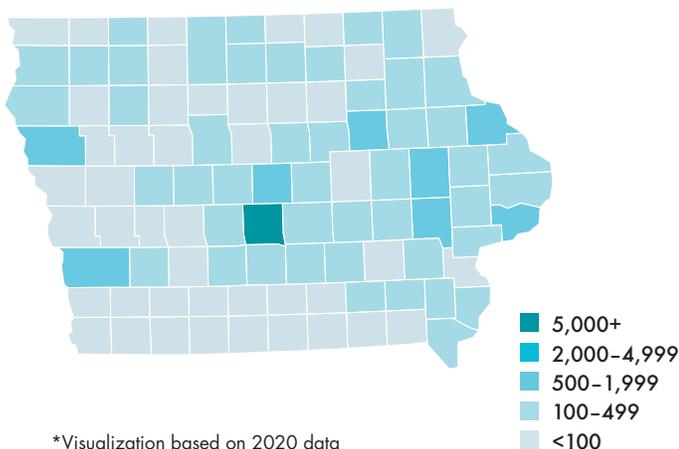
Growth of jobs in the clean transportation sector, the region's fastest-growing sector in 2021

5%

Growth in clean energy jobs in 2021

Clean energy companies employed more than 30,000 Iowans at the end of 2021, a five percent increase from 2020 and a return to growth after an unprecedented decline in 2020. Approximately 46 percent of the clean energy jobs lost during the COVID-19 economic downturn were regained. In 2021, clean energy jobs grew over 2 times faster than the overall economy. Almost twice as many Iowans 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 Iowa



*Visualization based on 2020 data

The biggest sector of the Iowa clean energy industry is energy efficiency, over 62 percent of the state's clean energy workforce. The 18,864 energy efficiency workers in Iowa 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 continue to shift to electric vehicles, the advanced transportation sector saw an increase of 25 percent in Iowa. The sector added 713 new jobs for a total of 3,594 workers. Hybrid, plug-in hybrid, and electric-vehicle sector jobs accounted for most of the sector's growth.

Solar energy jobs, another highlight in Iowa, grew by 14.9 percent to 1,030 workers.

Across all clean energy sectors, the majority of clean energy jobs in Iowa were in construction and manufacturing.

74%

Small businesses drive Iowa's clean energy sector – in 2021, 74 percent of the region's clean energy businesses employed fewer than 20 individuals

10%

Approximately 10 percent of Iowa'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 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 nearly 85 percent of employers in the state report at least some difficulty hiring workers.
- **Expand our regional transmission grid and increase ease of 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-level clean energy policies.** It will be important for Iowa to enact state policies that support renewable energy, energy efficiency and electric vehicles to leverage federal investment and help create thousands of new jobs.

Jobs by Sector



2021 Subsector Details



Energy Efficiency



Grid & Storage



Clean Fuels



Advanced Transportation



Renewable Energy Generation



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).