

Midwest Clean Energy Jobs Rebound After COVID-19

Delaine Thorud, Communications Associate • Nov. 15, 2022

2021 was a year of growth for the clean energy industry with jobs growing more than [5 percent](#), following significant job losses in 2020 as a result of COVID-19 and related economic contraction. Now, more than 75 percent of clean energy jobs lost during the COVID-19 pandemic have been regained.

Clean energy now employs [3.5 times](#) more Americans than fossil fuels with 3.2 million Americans working in the clean energy industry in 2021. In the Midwest, [714,323 Americans](#) work clean energy jobs and 561,408 work clean energy jobs in the 9 state CGA footprint.

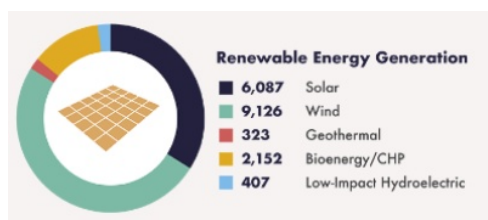
While Illinois leads the Upper Midwest for the most clean energy jobs overall, at 120,775, South Dakota stood out above the pack in the recovery of jobs. In 2021, the Mount Rushmore state gained more clean energy jobs than it lost during the COVID-19 economic downturn, with a 4 percent increase in the sector. And, those jobs grew 50 percent faster than the overall economy. The South Dakota clean energy industry now employs 11,860 South Dakotans and the renewable energy industry employs 2,743.

In addition to overall job growth, the solar energy sector saw significant growth in all 9 states. The North Dakota solar energy sector saw the most growth, growing by an astounding 17.2 percent in 2021, but Wisconsin leads in solar jobs. Read on to see the progress other states have made in recovering from the COVID-19 economic downturn.

State	Growth of Solar Sector	Jobs in Solar Sector
Illinois	10.2 %	6,087
Indiana	7.5 %	3,882
Iowa	14.9 %	1,030
Michigan	9.3 %	4,981
Minnesota	9.7 %	4,873
Missouri	9.8 %	3,153
North Dakota	17.2 %	268
South Dakota	6.5 %	645
Wisconsin	6.2 %	4,001

*Clean Jobs Midwest 2022

Illinois

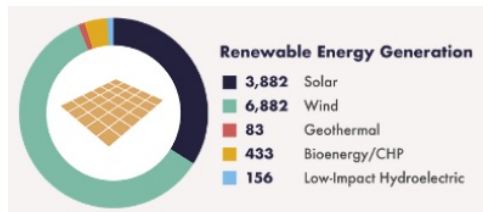


In the Prairie State, more than 55 percent of jobs lost during the COVID-19 economic downturn have been regained. In 2021, there was a 4.9 percent increase in clean energy jobs in Illinois, making the state the Midwest's clean energy industry employment leader with 120,775 Illinoisans being employed by the clean energy industry. The renewable energy sector is currently the second largest clean energy sector in the state

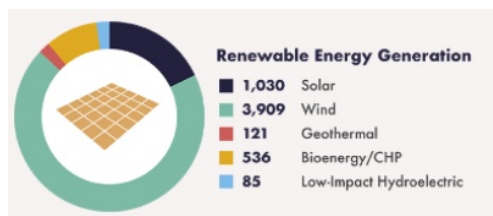
with 18,096 jobs, behind the energy efficiency sector.

Indiana

Indiana has seen an outstanding recovery of its clean energy jobs. More than 89 percent of jobs lost during the COVID-19 economic downturn have been regained. In 2021, there was a 6.9 percent increase in clean energy jobs in Indiana, leading to 86,215 Hoosiers being employed by the clean energy industry. Clean energy jobs in Indiana grew twice as fast as the overall economy. The renewable energy sector is currently the second largest clean energy sector in the state with 11,435 jobs, behind the energy efficiency sector.



Iowa

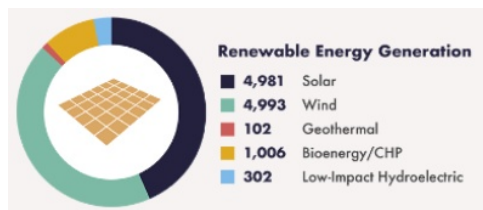


In Iowa, more than 46 percent of jobs lost during the COVID-19 economic downturn have been regained. In 2021, there was a 5 percent increase in clean energy jobs in Iowa, leading to 30,393 Iowans being employed by the clean energy industry. Clean energy jobs, which includes energy efficiency jobs, in Iowa grew twice as fast as the overall economy. The renewable energy

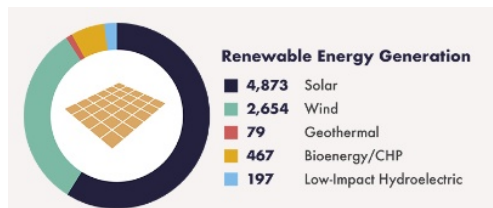
sector is currently the second largest clean energy sector in the state with 5,682 jobs, behind the energy efficiency sector.

Michigan

In Michigan, more than 54 percent of jobs lost during the COVID-19 economic downturn have been regained. Michigan ranks second in the Midwest for its 119,853 clean energy jobs. In 2021, there was a 5.6 percent increase in clean energy jobs in Michigan. The renewable energy sector is currently the second largest clean energy sector in the state with 11,384 jobs, behind the energy efficiency sector.



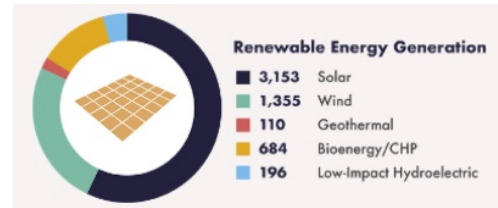
Minnesota



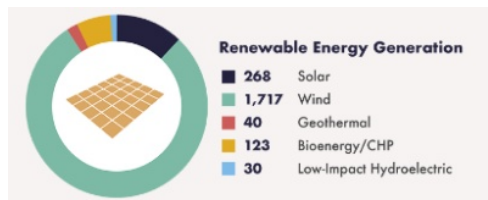
In Minnesota, more than 40 percent of jobs lost during the COVID-19 economic downturn have been regained. In 2021, there was a 4.7 percent increase in clean energy jobs in Minnesota, leading to 57,931 Minnesotans being employed by the clean energy industry. The renewable energy sector in Minnesota is currently the second largest clean energy sector with 8,270 jobs, behind the energy efficiency sector.

Missouri

In Missouri, more than 57 percent of jobs lost during the COVID-19 economic downturn have been regained. In 2021, there was a 5.5 percent increase in clean energy jobs in Missouri, leading to 54,397 Missourians being employed by the clean energy industry. Clean energy jobs in Missouri grew twice as fast as the overall economy. The renewable energy sector in Missouri is currently the second largest clean energy sector with 5,497 jobs, behind the energy efficiency sector.



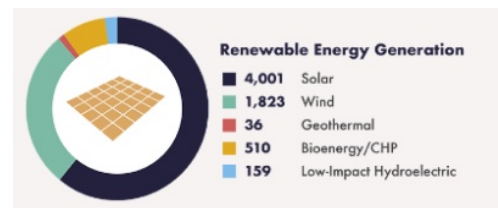
North Dakota



In North Dakota, more than 38 percent of jobs lost during the COVID-19 economic downturn have been regained. In 2021, there was a 4.3 percent increase in clean energy jobs in North Dakota, leading to 8,614 North Dakotans being employed by the clean energy industry. Clean energy jobs in North Dakota grew 25 percent faster than the overall economy.

Wisconsin

In Wisconsin, more than 28 percent of jobs lost during the COVID-19 economic downturn have been regained. In 2021, there was a 2.9 percent increase in clean energy jobs in Wisconsin, leading to 71,370 Wisconsinites being employed by the clean energy industry. Clean energy jobs in Wisconsin grew 20 percent faster than the overall economy. The renewable energy sector is currently the second largest clean energy sector in the state with 6,529 jobs, behind the energy efficiency sector.



State	Percent of Clean Energy Employers Reporting Difficulties in Hiring Workers
Illinois	83%
Indiana	87%
Iowa	85%
Michigan	87%
Minnesota	84%
Missouri	86%
North Dakota	90%
South Dakota	81%
Wisconsin	84%

*Clean Jobs Midwest 2022

Nationwide, roughly 156,000 clean energy and clean transportation jobs were added in 2021 and the industry now employs more than 40 percent of all energy workers in America. Despite the strong comeback in most of the MISO North states, an average of 85 percent of clean energy employers report at least some difficulties in hiring workers.

Clean Energy Job Opportunities

With countless clean energy opportunities available and thousands of positions to be filled, workforce development and training are imperative to the growth of the clean energy industry. Organizations such as the [Midwest Renewable Energy Association \(MREA\)](#) offer education and training in solar photovoltaics (PV). If wind energy is more your speed, the U.S. Office of Energy

Efficiency and Renewable Energy has a [map of all wind energy education and training programs](#) located in the United States. These programs will help prepare the next generation of American energy workers for well-paying and family-supporting jobs in the clean energy industry.

As the industry continues to rebound from the economic downturn of COVID-19, it is more important than ever to support the clean energy policies within the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA), the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), and the CHIPS and Science Act. These policies will invest hundreds of billions of dollars in the clean energy economy and will help create thousands of new clean energy jobs. And, that's a fact!