



# Wisconsin Energy Workforce Consortium (WEWC)

Strategic Plan

2020-2024

*Updated Feb 2022*

# Table of Contents

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I.	Executive Summary .....	3
II.	WEWC Strategic Plan 2020 – 2024 .....	4
	– Vision, Mission, and Objectives	
III.	Consortium Overview .....	10
	– History	
	– Organizational Members and Structure	
IV.	More about the WEWC Strategic Objectives.....	13
	– Action Planning Templates	
	• Career Awareness	
	• Education	
	• Workforce Planning	
	• Structure & Support	
V.	Background Data for WEWC Strategic Plan .....	22
	– Game Changers	
	– Additional Workforce Challenges	
	– WEWC SWOT Analysis	
VI.	Summary of Current State of the WEWC.....	27

# Executive Summary

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The Wisconsin Energy Workforce Consortium (WEWC) is a 501(c)3 organization in the State of Wisconsin. The WEWC Strategic Plan was originally developed in 2014 in conjunction with the start-up of the WEWC. The work of the WEWC is led by the efforts of energy companies, contractors, educators and government across the State of Wisconsin.

The work to initiate the consortium in Wisconsin and develop the strategic workforce plan was supported by the Center for Energy Workforce Development (CEWD) and funded through a grant provided by The Joyce Foundation.

The WEWC strategic plan focuses on the industry's needs for skilled craft and technical workers and engineers while factoring in the unique industry and workforce challenges in Wisconsin and the need to diversify the utility workforce.

Following is the summary of the WEWC Strategic Workforce Plan.

# Section II

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## **Wisconsin Energy Workforce Consortium (WEWC) Strategic Plan**

# Wisconsin Energy Workforce Consortium Strategic Plan 2020-2024

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**Vision:** The Wisconsin energy industry is comprised of a qualified and diverse workforce of engineering, craft, and technical workers to provide safe, reliable and efficient energy.

**Mission:** The mission of the Wisconsin Energy Workforce Consortium is to identify and develop solutions that Consortium members use to meet the current and future workforce needs of the energy industry in Wisconsin. This will be accomplished through active engagement and partnerships with investor-owned, municipal and cooperative energy companies, contractors, energy and contractor associations, state economic development, workforce development, and education partners.

The WEWC Strategic Plan is organized around the four strategic pillars used in the CEWD Strategic Plan:

- Career Awareness
- Education
- Workforce Planning
- Structure & Support

Each area of focus developed by the Consortium aligns within one of the plan's strategic pillars. Detail is provided on the coming pages.

This organization methodology enables the Consortium to compare and contrast its work easily to strategic plans from other State Consortium plans across the country, as they are all organized similarly.

Website: <http://www.wi-energyworkforce.org/>

# Career Awareness

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**Objective:** Create awareness among targeted populations of the critical need for a skilled energy workforce and the opportunities for education that can lead to employment and career progression.

**Strategies:**

- Build awareness of careers and career progression in energy among Wisconsin's K-12, undergraduate, and veteran population.
  - Careers in Energy Week
  - Investigate opportunities to participate in STEM related events.
  - Determine best practices
- Increase awareness of career progression in energy in our perspective workforce.
- Increase the diversity of the applicant pool for skilled energy positions.

# Education

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**Objective:** Implement clearly defined education solutions that link industry recognized competencies to employment opportunities and advancement in the energy industry

**Strategies:**

- Partner with educators to identify the basic foundational skills, knowledge and abilities required to create a diverse pool of qualified workers for energy jobs.
  - Research the underemployed workforce that with targeted education could become employable in the energy industry.
- Assess the skill impact of new technologies and integrate into education pathways.
  - Potential creation of a 17<sup>th</sup> career clusters (Energy) in WI  
–Educate WI stakeholders
- Develop Mentorships in the industry.

# Workforce Planning

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**Objective:** Balance the supply and demand for a qualified and diverse energy workforce

**Strategies:**

- Validate state workforce demand numbers (utility and contractors) to verify key in-demand jobs for career awareness and strategic planning purposes.
- Analyze supply data for key energy programs from educators to verify educational system capacity to meet energy workforce needs.
- Measure workforce development initiatives to determine impact on critical skill and workforce gaps.
- Retention and development of existing industry workforce.



# Structure and Support

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## **Objective:**

Support the internal, organizational structure of the WEWC by defining and managing data and logistics, by developing and maintaining partnerships, and by determining and administering resources.

## **Areas of Focus:**

1. Data and Logistics
  - a. Surveys – Gather and analyze
    - i. Graduate Follow up Studies
    - ii. Supply & Demand Survey
    - iii. Diversity in hiring
  - b. Structure
  - c. Governing docs and Bylaws
  
1. Partnerships
  - a. Membership
  - b. Recruiting
  - c. Member contributions
  - d. Language and Value Proposition
  - e. Establishing partnerships
  
1. Resources
  - a. MDS management
  - b. External Funding opportunities
    - i. Grants
    - ii. Donations (monetary and/or in-kind)
  - c. Website
  - d. Newsletter

# Section III

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## Consortium Overview

# History of the Wisconsin Energy Workforce Consortium

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In late 2013, representatives from Wisconsin Public Service and Integrys Group began discussions with CEWD about starting an energy workforce consortium for Wisconsin. Subsequently, they invited involvement from four other energy companies with service territory in Wisconsin: Alliant Energy, Madison Gas & Electric, We Energies and Xcel Energy.

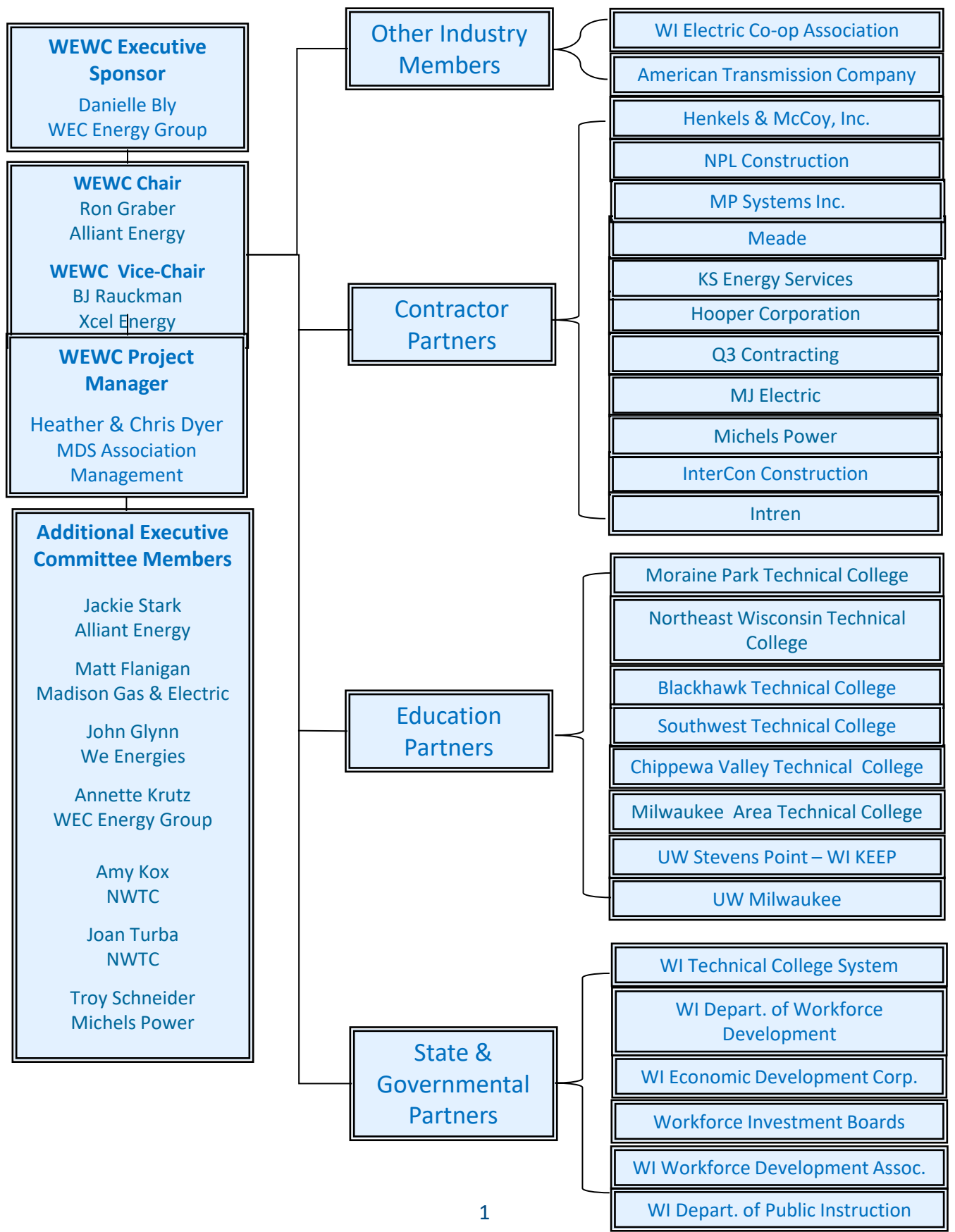
Following initial discussions with leaders from the five companies, the group began a simultaneous effort to charter the scope of the WEWC and develop a 3-5 year strategic workforce plan for the state in early 2014. The WEWC's first full consortium meeting was held April 16, 2014 in Madison, WI. A subsequent meeting, during which the framework for their strategic plan was formalized, was held June 12, 2014.

Additionally, the WEWC Executive Committee has identified an Executive Sponsor to help champion its efforts across the state and has developed the consortium's organizing structure and meeting schedule.

Industry members have been very effective in quickly involving co-ops, utility contractors, the Department of Workforce Development, municipalities, the Dept of Public Instruction, education partners and others in the work of the consortium, both at the full consortium level and through its task forces.

In 2018 WEWC formed a non profit 501(c)3 and hired a project manager.

# WEWC Members and Structure (02/22)



# Section IV

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## More About the WEWC Strategic Objectives

## Wisconsin Energy Workforce Consortium Strategic Planning Template

*Career Awareness Objective: Create awareness among targeted populations of the critical need for a skilled energy workforce and the opportunities for education that can lead to employment and career progression.*

Strategy:	Actions:	Timeframe:	Accountability:	Resources Required:
Build awareness of careers in energy among Wisconsin's K-12, undergraduate, and veteran population.				
Measures of Success:				
Strategy:	Actions:	Timeframe:	Accountability:	Resources Required:
Increase awareness of career progression in energy in our perspective workforce.				
Measure of Success:				

**EXAMPLE PAGE: separate working document**

# Section V

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## Background Data for WEWC Strategic Plan

# Industry Game Changers

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- Fuel mix is changing
- Emerging markets-CNG batteries, alternative fuel vehicles
- Focus on compliance and pending regulation
- Increased demand for natural gas service
- Fewer internal employees and more contractors
- Infrastructure upgrades – Modern reliability project: lines underground/ renewing distribution projects
- Employability skills
- Increasingly competitive labor markets
- Attrition and retention
- Technology changes that will drive new skill sets
- Impact of centralized generation versus decentralized
- Work culture - need to be more flexible, adaptive and innovative
- Generational mix
- Employment longevity not as attractive
- Work flexibility



# Additional Workforce Challenges in Wisconsin

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- Lack of awareness of career opportunities in energy
- Lack of qualified engineers
- Industry perception
- Attracting strong diverse candidates
- Lack of qualified technical instructors
- Passing pre-employment testing
- Passing physical ability testing (climbing poles)
- Lack of interviewing skills
- High School graduates without basic skills or linear skills
- Ups and downs of hiring and work for contractors
- Cross training to account for attrition and knowledge
- Utility is not accustomed to today's younger labor market
- Employee value proposition
- Cultural issues - company needs to foster creativity, innovation and flexibility
- Low unemployment rate
- Decline/Flux in number of students entering workforce (Rural/City)
- Decline in rural population
- Increase in hiring direct from High School
- Career progression – employee wants their own progression defined
- Instructor salaries

# WEWC SWOT Analysis

## S Strengths

- Diverse perspectives/Operations focused
- Lots of partners in the room
- Workforce system has the capability to help
- Collective focus
- Draw upon the consortia that already exist - CEWD
- Leverage perception collectively
- More resources (funding available)
- Learning from each other/ industry - education – workforce
- Sr. leadership buys into the need for workforce development

*What factors internal to the consortium membership strengthen its ability to meet its objectives and goals?*

## W Weaknesses

- Job requirements and testing may not be the same across various jobs
- Contractor hiring gaps
- Lack of focus on millennials
- Engage others from each member organization
- Lack of time availability
- Spread beyond Madison area
- Lack of representation across generations and diverse populations in workforce and committee

*What factors internal to the consortium membership weaken its ability to meet its goals?*

# WEWC SWOT Analysis

## O Opportunities

- Internal training - New ideas for bringing people up more quickly
- Veterans/community based organization
- Consider programs that already exist - Project Lead the Way/robotics
- Include Career and Tech Education person- engage DPI & Universities/Colleges for Career Path
- Career awareness for parents/counselors
- Careers in Energy Week
- Identify external funding sources/partnerships
- Leverage state government programs
- Utilize WEWC website to share information
- Partner with K-12 educators and target diverse high schools
- Bring millennials to consortium
- Develop a means for members to disseminate information through their organization
- Provide opportunity to identify, prioritize and invest in initiatives
- Develop visible career progression in energy careers
- Identify value to the membership

*What external factors threaten the ongoing effectiveness of the consortium and its ability to meet its goals?*

*What external opportunities exist to leverage the effectiveness of the consortium?*

## T Threats

- Very competitive job market
- Utilities are very conservative
- Need to bring people in and create new opportunities
- Takes too long to get people trained
- See training as an investment in the future – not a cost
- Influx of hiring-growing economy
- Lack of engagement/contacts at the state level
- Cost pressure/budget constraints
- Data accuracy and viability
- Nimbleness of evolving programs and training
- ROI for membership value

# Section VI

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## Summary of Current State of the WEWC

# Summary of State of the WEWC in 2022

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The WEWC achieved the following milestones in 2021:

- The membership agreed there is continued value in maintaining a state energy workforce consortium for Wisconsin
- Analyzed CEWD industry Demand Report data
- Collected company specific demand data to inform CEWD's Demand Report
- Collected associated supply data from all Wisconsin Technical Colleges
- Identified game changers in Wisconsin
- Identified other workforce challenges
- Revised a SWOT analysis for the Consortium
- Strengthened areas of focus for the plan by refining our strategic objectives
- Identified and added additional stakeholders to join the Consortium

The WEWC Executive Committee holds an annual Strategic Planning Day to work through revisions to its strategies to achieve its objectives.

The WEWC meets 3 times per year, its Executive Committee has agreed to meet monthly, and the task forces/project teams are convening regularly to address actions identified in their planning meetings.

# Summary of State of the WEWC in 2020

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The WEWC achieved the following milestones in preparation for updating its five year strategic plan:

- The membership agreed there is continued value in maintaining a state energy workforce consortium for Wisconsin
- Analyzed CEWD industry Demand Report data
- Collected company specific demand data to inform CEWD's Demand Report
- Collected associated supply data from all Wisconsin Technical Colleges
- Identified game changers in Wisconsin
- Identified other workforce challenges
- Revised a SWOT analysis for the Consortium
- Strengthened areas of focus for the plan by refining our strategic objectives
- Identified and added additional stakeholders to join the Consortium
- Continued collaboration with governmental, education and workforce leaders to provide additional data to the Consortium
- Reviewed and further defined the structure and support model for the Consortium
- Updated the Executive Committee to include educator and contractor representation
- Transformed the WEWC into a 501c3 in order to generate funds to support the work of the consortium
- Increased consortium membership by reaching out to other energy related companies working in the state of WI





Development of the Wisconsin Energy Workforce Consortium Strategic Plan was made possible by generous support from

## **TheJoyceFoundation**

*The Joyce Foundation supports the development of policies that both improve the quality of life for people in the Great Lakes region and serve as models for the rest of the country. The Joyce Foundation's grant making supports research into Great Lakes protection and restoration, energy efficiency, teacher quality and early reading, workforce development, gun violence prevention, diverse art for diverse audiences, and a strong, thriving democracy.*

*The Foundation encourages innovative and collaborative approaches with a regional focus and the potential for a national reach.*