

## **Illinois Climate Jobs Institute: Summary and Overview**

The Illinois Climate Jobs Institute (ICJI) at the University of Illinois conducts high-quality empirical research at the intersections of clean energy, economic and labor market impacts, and climate justice. ICJI produces research that supports the state's clean energy transition as well as the academic study of economic and labor market impacts of decarbonization. It is one of the first academic institutes dedicated to the study of jobs, work, and decarbonization. At the University of Illinois, ICJI leverages pioneering interdisciplinary research related to the environment, clean energy, economics, and public policy.

ICJI was established within the School of Labor and Employment Relations by the Illinois State Legislature in 2023. The legislation establishes ICJI as a centerpiece of Illinois' clean energy transition, focused on research and educational programming that support the state's transition to a strong, equitable decarbonized economy. ICJI's activities support workers and employers in the state of Illinois affected by decarbonization.

The Climate Jobs Institute's activities include:

- Evaluating how workforce opportunities in the clean-energy industry can provide just transitions for displaced energy workers in the State of Illinois and beyond.
- Quantifying the impacts of decarbonization on economic development, employment, and growth in the State of Illinois and beyond.
- Identifying opportunities to maximize job creation and workforce development in the State's clean-energy industry, particularly mindful of job creation in historically underrepresented populations and environmental justice communities.
- Recommending policies that will create high-quality family- and community-sustaining jobs in the clean-energy economy.
- Developing strategies to address current and future supply chain vulnerabilities and challenges in the clean-energy manufacturing industry.
- Identifying how to expand access to high-quality clean energy jobs for environmental justice communities and other frontline communities that have faced historical inequities (e.g., best practices for building pipelines of workers through on-the-job training programs, job hubs, and apprenticeship programs).
- Assessing the types of support that local governments will need to help communities develop their own community energy, climate, and jobs plans.
- Evaluating initiatives, identifying research support and promulgating best practices for specific programs (e.g., Public Schools Carbon-Free Assessment programs).
- Collaborating with related Institutes and Centers at the University of Illinois on joint/interdisciplinary research, policy recommendations, academic publications, and external funding proposals related to clean energy initiatives.
- Publicly disseminating research and recommendations through a wide range of outlets, including public policy reports, top tier peer-reviewed academic articles, interactive web platforms, and other outreach and education programs for labor, communities, law makers, and media.

### **Contact:**

Dr. Richard A. Benton ([rabenton@illinois.edu](mailto:rabenton@illinois.edu))

Executive Director, Climate Jobs Institute

Associate Professor, School of Labor and Employment Relations

University of Illinois