WOMEN IN ENERGY

CELEBRATING WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

Girls in STEM

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WOMEN IN ENERGY

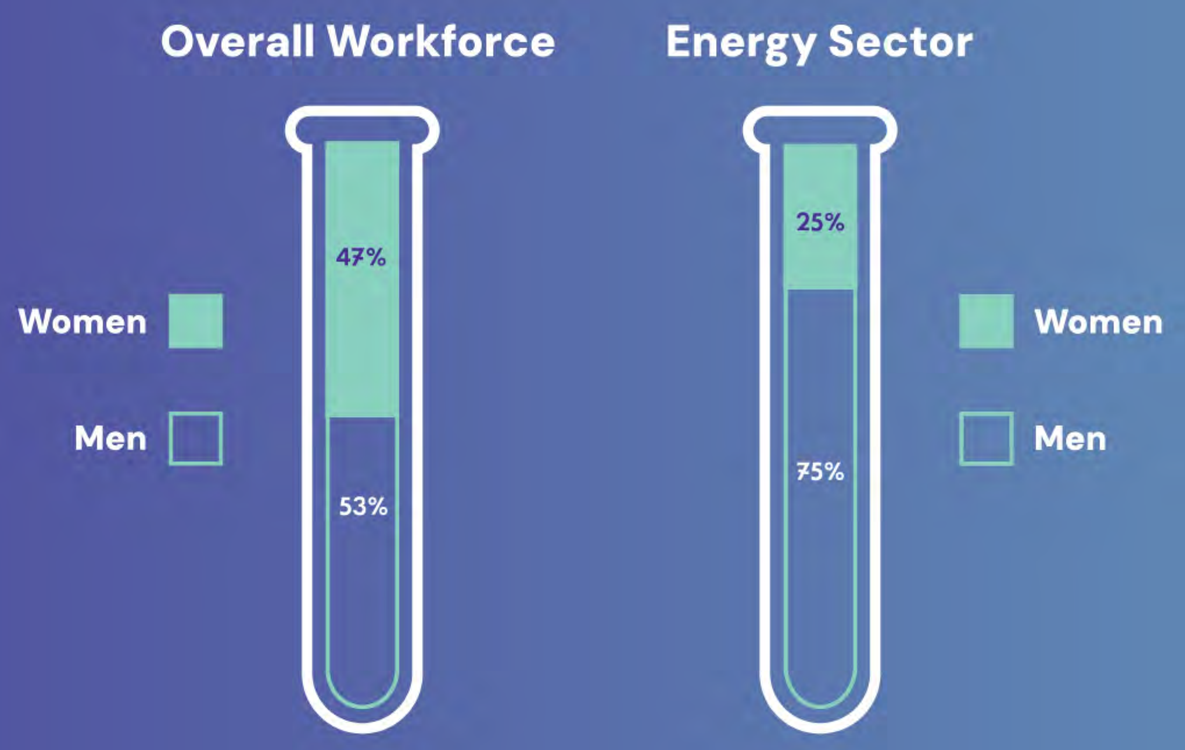
Women's ingenuity has always powered innovation in energy.

In the 1850s, Eunice Foote discovered the greenhouse effect but wasn't credited for her contributions until 2011. In 1948, pioneering scientist Maria Telkes harnessed the power of the sun to create the first solar-heated home.

Though today women make up only 25% of the energy workforce, they continue to shape its future. The professionals featured here demonstrate knowledge, expertise and vision for guiding society toward cleaner, more efficient and responsible energy use. They also represent the breadth of energy careers: technicians, engineers and scientists, alongside economists, educators, community collaborators, organizational leaders and project managers. They design, install, evaluate, communicate, collaborate and dream. They dismantle barriers, create solutions and inspire girls and women to imagine new possibilities for themselves.

Explore their stories and imagine your own future!

We are thankful to the American Association For The Advancement of Science and the IF/THEN® Initiative for providing content. Learn more at ifthencollection.org



WOMEN IN ENERGY

ANGELA ADDUCI

Supports clients in a rapidly changing energy landscape through her work developing banking products, services and research related to climate change and energy transition

Director of Strategic Initiatives | BMO Climate Institute, Chicago

> “I’m encouraged by the talent and brainpower driving our transition to more sustainable energy resources. I see incredible potential for economic growth and technological progress thanks to efforts underway today. My hope is that this work will lead to improved quality of life and stronger, more resilient households, communities and societies.”

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WOMEN IN ENERGY

LARISSA AFFOLABI

Designs and oversees the development of software helping power companies manage the electric grid and rely more on clean energy

Power Systems Engineer | OATI

> “We are facing big challenges like climate change, growing demand for electricity and aging infrastructure, but I’m excited because each challenge offers an opportunity to build something better. The energy choices we make today shape the kind of world we’ll live in tomorrow.”

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WOMEN IN ENERGY

NIVEDITA ARORA

Creates innovations for devices powered by energy from their surroundings to monitor the environment and use resources more wisely

Breed Assistant Professor | Departments of Electrical and Computer Engineering and Computer Science, Northwestern University

> “My research lab is driven by an ancient Sanskrit phrase, ‘Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam,’ meaning ‘the world is one family.’ This vision of interconnection guides how we think about energy and responsibility to next generations. I'm excited about a future when technology becomes something that abides with nature instead of working against it.”

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WOMEN IN ENERGY

SAMANTHA ATHEY

Leads a program advancing youth action on plastic pollution through policy, education and community solution

Marine Plastics Program Manager | EarthEcho International

> “A sustainable energy future depends on cleaner energy sources, more thoughtful material use and consideration of product lifecycles in decision-making. I work to advance those goals by supporting youth-led action.”

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WOMEN IN ENERGY

SUSAN BABINEC

Leads scientists in developing new battery technologies which will create a robust and affordable system for delivering electricity across the U.S.

Program Lead-Grid Storage | Argonne National Laboratory

> “After years spent unraveling the fundamental physics and chemistry of batteries, I now focus on extending the U.S. science ecosystem to efficiently manufacture technologies we have developed in the lab. That way everyone can benefit from them as quickly as possible.”

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WOMEN IN ENERGY

ANAHITA BAHRAMI

Works to make power grids stronger and more reliable so they are less likely to fail during outages, storms or extreme weather

Engineer | Danovo Energy Solutions

> “What gives me hope is seeing real momentum from utilities, engineers, policymakers and communities working together to transition toward cleaner energy. Advances in technology, increased investment in renewable energy and growing commitment to grid resilience demonstrate that a sustainable energy future is not just possible, but already underway.”

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WOMEN IN ENERGY

ADRIANA RAUDZENS BAILEY

Studies how moisture moves to understand the important role water plays in shaping how we experience changes in climate

Assistant Professor | Department of Climate and Space Science, University of Michigan

> “My research probes questions about the water cycle — from as small as clouds to as big as the globe — and asks how variations in climate affect water availability. So much of science is the analysis part and trying to understand what the data are representing. I really like that aspect of trying to understand and explore how the Earth system works.”

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WOMEN IN ENERGY

JOHANA BEDOLLA

Leads a program providing high school students with hands-on STEM learning and supports national efforts to help businesses adopt more efficient energy generation systems

Energy Engineer | University of Illinois Chicago

> “I am inspired by progress at both the human and system levels. As an educator, I admire students' determination to create a more sustainable world. As an engineer, I am heartened by the idea that we can design devices, machines and systems to do the same work using less energy.”

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HOLLY TROY BENZ

Leads a graduate program where she teaches and mentors students to solve real-world energy and sustainability problems

Clinical Professor and Director of the Master of Science in Energy and Sustainability Program | Northwestern University, McCormick School of Engineering and Paula Trienens Institute for Sustainability and Energy

> “I love innovation, and energy is the most exciting frontier to me. Energy technology can change society. Developing markets have great potential to leap forward from an economic and societal perspective in a way that wasn’t possible with traditional energy systems.”

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WOMEN IN ENERGY

LAUREN BOLDON

Applies knowledge of nuclear engineering for nuclear trade and to help harness nuclear energy safely and securely around the world

Principal Nuclear Engineer/Group Leader | Argonne National Laboratory

“In the field of nuclear energy, I am excited by progress in developing advanced nuclear reactors, especially when pairing these innovations with other emerging technologies like artificial intelligence. For example, new types of small nuclear reactors could power AI data centers which require a lot of electricity.”

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WOMEN IN ENERGY

LINDA BROADBELT

Guides students to research new questions related to the intersection of chemistry and energy with an emphasis on recovering energy and value from waste materials

Sarah Rebecca Roland Professor of Chemical and Biological Engineering | Northwestern University Paula Trienens Institute for Sustainability and Energy

> “Plastics were a great innovation for modern society, but were primarily designed for their properties in use, not for after use. Today, we are making great strides in designing easier to recycle plastics, leading to a new class of materials known as recyclable by design or RBD polymers.”

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WOMEN IN ENERGY

FIONA BURLIG

Researches energy and the environment in countries around the world, using data to answer questions about the impact of energy and the environment on society

Assistant Professor | Harris School of Public Policy and the Energy Policy Institute (EPIC), University of Chicago

> “We still have a long way to go, but now is the best time in our history for women in energy-related fields. Opportunities are expanding in these areas and women are gaining a foothold in segments where key training is happening.”

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WOMEN IN ENERGY

MICHELLE CARR

Manages a fund that finds and invests in early-stage companies working to solve climate change

CEO | Evergreen Climate Innovations

> “Climate change can feel like an unwieldy challenge, but the companies we back are solving tangible problems — making energy more affordable, keeping lights on during extreme weather and creating good jobs. We invest in them because we’re confident their work will make life better for people and we're committed to helping them get there.”

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WOMEN IN ENERGY

MEGAN CLIFFORD

Helps scientists partner with companies, universities and organizations to solve complex challenges and turn science into real-world impact for a better future

Associate Laboratory Director, Science and Technology Partnerships and Outreach | Argonne National Laboratory

> “You don’t have to be a scientist or engineer to work in energy. I’m not. There are many types of people with all kinds of skillsets and interests who work in various energy-related fields. Keep exploring different subjects and let curiosity be your guide!”

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WOMEN IN ENERGY

EDOARDA CORRADI DELL'ACQUA

Teaches university students — mostly engineers and architects — how to collaborate to design high-performance buildings that foster a more sustainable built environment

Teaching Professor, Department of Civil, Architectural, and Environmental Engineering; Director, IPRO Program | Illinois Institute of Technology

> “Buildings account for about 40% of our country’s energy use and contribute significantly to greenhouse gas emissions. I enjoy exploring how buildings — especially older buildings — can use less energy, rely less on fossil fuels and even produce energy through renewable systems, honoring their history while supporting surrounding communities.”

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WOMEN IN ENERGY

LISA DHAR

Works with faculty, researchers and students to move inventions and innovations from Northwestern University out to the public

Associate Vice President for Innovation and New Ventures | Northwestern University

> “Northwestern-led polymer (molecules with repeating subunits) recycling technologies hold great promise. Chemists here have developed new catalyst systems that make it possible to recycle plastic waste back to starting materials in a way that is eco-friendly, circular and cost-effective. Advancements like these demonstrate how chemistry can help us solve plastic pollution!”

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WOMEN IN ENERGY

NINA DUDNIK

Helps scientists and entrepreneurs turn their discoveries into products and companies that solve real-world problems like clean water and water reuse in the Great Lakes and around the world

Chief Commercial Officer | Current and Great Lakes RENEW

> “I was inspired to become a scientist by a school assignment when I was 12. As I progressed in science, I discovered what I really loved was helping other scientists take their ideas from their minds to the lab, and from their labs out into the world to benefit as many people as possible.”

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WOMEN IN ENERGY

JENNIFER DUNN

Applies engineering skills to develop low-cost solutions to address environmental challenges

Professor, Chemical and Biological Engineering | Northwestern University Paula Trienens Institute for Sustainability and Energy

> “The energy industry needs engineers who are great at harnessing science and math to solve problems and are skilled at communicating complicated ideas to different people. Engineers don't necessarily have to like machines or building things — I don't!”

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WOMEN IN ENERGY

LAURA GAGLIARDI

Develops chemical theories, applies high-performance computers and chemistry to design new materials that can help create cleaner energy

Professor of Chemistry and Director, Catalyst Design for Decarbonization Center | University of Chicago

> “A challenge I find exciting is designing materials that can capture carbon dioxide (CO_2) from the air and turn it into useful fuels and chemicals. Instead of treating CO_2 only as waste, if we can find the right catalysts, it can be a resource.”

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WOMEN IN ENERGY

JUANITA GARCIA

Works to reduce energy, water and material waste in building construction and operations to improve the health of occupants and the surrounding communities

Project Executive, High Performance and Sustainable Construction | Pepper Construction Corporation

> “I am inspired by current initiatives of several organizations working together to advance the industry. Our common goals: greater transparency and advocacy for reduced environmental impact and fewer health risks.”

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WOMEN IN ENERGY

GEORGIE GERAGHTY

Protects and improves management of the lands and waters that people, plants and animals depend upon — not just here in Illinois, but around the world

Executive Director and Midwest Partner, Illinois | The Nature Conservancy

> “Every day at The Nature Conservancy feels like an adventure. I get to see our science in action — from cutting greenhouse gas emissions by placing solar and wind in places that don’t harm nature or people, to learning more about how wetlands help filter our water and keep our rivers clean.”

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WOMEN IN ENERGY

SOSSINA HAILE

Creates new materials for sustainable energy technologies — fuel cells, electrolyzers, batteries and more

Walter P. Murphy Professor, Materials Science and Engineering | Northwestern University

> “Fuel cells, electrolyzers and batteries are devices that make it possible to overcome the intermittency of solar and wind energy — our best options for a sustainable energy future. I aim to discover better materials to make devices like these more efficient, less costly and easier to manufacture.”

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WOMEN IN ENERGY

EVE HANSON

Researches and invests in breakthrough energy technologies, like carbon capture and advanced materials, that make a more sustainable world

Senior Vice President, Research and Innovation | Energy Impact Partners

> “I first became inspired by the power of the scientific method to generate new knowledge and technologies. I then saw how scientific inventions, like solar cells and light emitting diodes, have enabled our energy sources and economy to grow. I wanted to help grow sustainable technologies — to protect our planet and create enough energy for all.”

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WOMEN IN ENERGY

ALAINA HARKNESS

Leads a coalition of scientists, inventors, entrepreneurs, investors, community leaders and policymakers to safeguard and secure water resources in the Great Lakes region and beyond

CEO | Current and Great Lakes RENEW

> “There’s a need for a new generation of inventions, technologies, policies and processes that will help us secure energy and water resources for the future. Every day I get to work with people who are helping us build that future.”

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WOMEN IN ENERGY

J'TIA HART

Provides leadership for and oversight of her division and for the National and Homeland Security Directorate, protecting science and technology from being misused

Director Nuclear Nonproliferation Division | Idaho National Laboratory

> “My interest in nuclear engineering was sparked when I went on a naval submarine. A submarine uses nuclear power for propulsion, and nuclear power is also used in weapons systems. I wanted to be able to make sure people use nuclear for peaceful purposes — little did I know there was a whole field that pertains to that.”

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WOMEN IN ENERGY

CAROLINE HERNANDEZ

Collaborates with energy companies and transportation agencies to create and conserve habitats for pollinators like bees and butterflies

Assistant Director, Sustainable Landscapes | University of Illinois Chicago

> “Our energy dependence will continue to grow and impact our planet. By working with companies to create habitats around energy infrastructure, we can ensure that increased energy needs don't inherently mean a negative impact on the environment.”

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WOMEN IN ENERGY

KATY HUFF

Advancing nuclear energy systems that support energy security, reducing carbon emissions and our growing electricity needs

Associate Professor, Nuclear Plasma and Radiological Engineering | University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign

> “Energy research and engineering now encompass a wide range of scientific disciplines and technical pathways. These fields demand strong technical foundations and will benefit from diverse perspectives, creating significant opportunities for women to lead scientific discovery and technological innovation.”

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WOMEN IN ENERGY

TORI HUNT

Supports ocean advocates, creating space, resources and training for young people to make an impact in their communities

Associate Manager of Youth Engagement | EarthEcho International

> “To build a more just and sustainable future, we need diversity in every sense: skills, interests, experiences and perspectives. The energy field needs scientists and engineers and also policy experts, communicators, artists, organizers and storytellers. There are so many ways to make an impact!”

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WOMEN IN ENERGY

SANJANA KARTIK

Evaluates solar PV module and battery storage options to guide her company's purchasing decisions for renewable energy projects

Senior Manager, Renewable Project Technology | Leeward Renewable Energy

> “It is rewarding to me that my work supports the future of clean energy. By helping bring projects like solar, wind and energy storage online, I contribute to generating electricity from clean, renewable sources that can reliably meet growing energy demand while reducing environmental impact.”

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WOMEN IN ENERGY

DOMINIQUE LUECKENHOFF

Helps transform energy efficiency, clean and renewable energy and environmental restoration developments into sustainable solutions for people and the planet

Vice President Corporate Affairs, Environmental Health and Safety and Sustainability | Hugo Neu Corporation

> “My career began in science and public service, where I saw firsthand that energy is central to environmental health, economic stability and climate resilience. Clean energy can protect natural systems, strengthen communities and expand opportunities.”

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WOMEN IN ENERGY

GLORIA LI

Conducts and manages energy data projects for clients

Lead Energy Data Scientist | Booz Allen and EarthEcho

> “My work exists at the intersection of technology, society and the evolving energy landscape. I focus on understanding how emerging tools and new ways of accessing energy along with smarter infrastructure can help us build systems that are more resilient to challenges of today and tomorrow.”

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WOMEN IN ENERGY

MICHELLE LIBBY

Equips neighbors with knowledge, tools and confidence to turn the daunting challenges of climate change into empowering everyday action

MBA Candidate, University of Chicago Booth School of Business

Board Member | Greener Grove

> “I’m continually inspired by grassroots efforts in communities across Illinois. Organizations like Greener Grove equip individuals with tools and resources to drive change in their own neighborhoods. If you are passionate about climate action, connect with a local group or consider starting one if none exists!”

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WOMEN IN ENERGY

SONITA LONTOH

Helps guide the largest home storage and solar company in the U.S. to provide more affordable, reliable and resilient clean energy for families

Board Member | Sunrun Inc.

> “It's exciting that we're reimagining how energy is delivered. As electricity demand rises, we need smarter, faster, more innovative solutions, such as distributed power plants, where networked home batteries and solar can provide electricity back to the grid during peak demand period.”

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WOMEN IN ENERGY

KRISTY MARDIS

Leads a research group with students, other universities and research institutions to understand and improve catalysts for solar fuel production

Professor of Chemistry and Associate Provost for Academic Innovation | Chicago State University

> “Energy needs continue to increase, so as I look ahead to future opportunities, photocatalysis (using the energy from light to change something) is exciting. We take models that work in living systems and apply them in new ways toward conservation and sustainability. The field is interdisciplinary so people of diverse scientific interests can contribute.”

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WOMEN IN ENERGY

TINA MARQUEZ

Ensures the gas that goes to homes is safe to use

Transmission Superintendent | Nicor Gas

> “What I love most about my job is the chance it has given me to grow and learn. I’ve gained a deep understanding of the natural gas industry and the vital role it plays in keeping our customers safe and comfortable, especially during Chicago’s harsh winters.”

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WOMEN IN ENERGY

XOCHITL MENCHACA

Provides education, resources and technical assistance to energy users and producers to help create a strong, resilient and renewable grid

Energy Engineer | University of Illinois Chicago Energy Resources Center

> “Energy is a thrilling place to be — no matter what we do, we need energy in some form to fuel it. As society changes and develops over time, where and how we get our energy also advances. Every single day is a learning experience and the industry is constantly evolving!”

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WOMEN IN ENERGY

KIMBERLEY RAIN MINER

Researches and forecasts climate risks around the world, from Antarctica to Mount Everest

Earth and Climate Scientist | California Institute of Technology

> “Resilience has been key to my journey as a scientist. Experiments are rarely perfect on the first try — resilience can help define which succeed and become breakthroughs. My work has always been to figure out what is going to happen next.”

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WOMEN IN ENERGY

MELISSA PIERCE

Helps test new ways to keep water clean and reusable, working with scientists to turn ideas into tools that help people and the planet

Technical Program Director | Current and Great Lakes RENEW

> “Responsibly using water and energy to power our society is a complex challenge requiring many different experts to come together. I’m heartened to see more cross-organizational and cross-industry collaborations: scientists, nonprofits, corporations, governments, entrepreneurs and others teaming up to find solutions.”

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WOMEN IN ENERGY

TAYLOR QUINN

Analyzes how supply chains and international trade affects the global energy economy

Energy Economist | Argonne National Laboratory

> “Opportunities for women in energy are rapidly expanding, which is amazing! I see encouraging growth in the energy sector, particularly as the U.S. strives to be a global energy leader. Another emerging field is critical materials for energy, where engineers, scientists and economists collaborate to solve problems related to these supply chains.”

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WOMEN IN ENERGY

KATE RENDAK

Designs the pipelines that deliver gas to homes and businesses so people can cook, stay warm and have hot water

Director of Engineering | Nicor Gas

> “Energy isn’t just wires and pipelines — it’s everything coming together to fuel people's lives. I'm passionate about using my technical skills, innovation and leadership to help our communities thrive.”

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WOMEN IN ENERGY

BARBARA RIEGGER

Co-founded and heads a global initiative to transform plastic waste into sustainable building materials

Co-Founder, President | Bottles2Bricks

> “Energy is not just about power — it’s about opportunity, health, education and resilience. I’ve seen firsthand how innovative, low-carbon solutions can turn waste into resources and create safer, more sustainable communities.”

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WOMEN IN ENERGY

KELSEY RIFFLE

Evaluates energy measurement products to ensure they work as intended

Senior Engineer, Measurement Department | Nicor Gas

> “I became an engineer to improve lives and drive meaningful change by harnessing technological advances in the natural gas industry and data analytics. I’m continuously learning, sharing new expertise and contributing to energy system solutions.”

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WOMEN IN ENERGY

OLGA ROSTAPSHOVA

Leads research teams that use economics and AI to help governments design, test and scale programs to protect the environment and make the way we produce energy cleaner

Executive Director | University of Chicago Energy and Environment Lab

> “One challenge I find especially interesting is how to make energy production cleaner while keeping it reliable and affordable. I’m excited about using satellite data and artificial intelligence to help spot problems faster, reduce harmful emissions and design smarter policies that encourage cleaner ways of producing energy.”

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WOMEN IN ENERGY

QUINN RUIZ

Studies environmental planning, and as an SIP leader, connects students with meaningful internships in sustainable development

Master's Candidate, Urban Planning and Policy and Sustainability Internship Program (SIP) Instructor | University of Illinois Chicago

> “The Sustainability Internship Program enables students to explore different careers in sustainability, connecting them to professionals from diverse fields. This program intertwines education and experiential learning for students, establishing a strong foundation for their own path toward a sustainable future.”

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WOMEN IN ENERGY

LINSEY SEITZ

Works with a team of students to turn waste and simple materials into clean energy and everyday products

Associate Professor of Chemical and Biological Engineering | Northwestern University, Paula Trienens Institute for Sustainability and Energy

> “I used to avoid electrochemistry because it felt so confusing. Then, a mentor convinced me to take a leap and pursue my PhD in that very subject. Today, it is the heart of my career. I've learned the most exciting part of science isn't knowing every answer, it's the process of discovery.”

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WOMEN IN ENERGY

ANNA SERVIS

Makes nuclear energy cleaner and more sustainable by inventing better ways to sort and recycle materials from used nuclear fuel

Radiochemist | Argonne National Laboratory

> “I've always loved reading science fiction, and it shaped how I imagine the kind of future I’d like to see. It was important to me to put myself in a position to help solve big challenges. Right now, that's energy. After that? Space exploration. Someone has to power the starships!”

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WOMEN IN ENERGY

EMILY SHEMON

Develops computer software that models processes within nuclear reactors to design and improve them based on real-world data

Principal Nuclear Engineer | Argonne National Laboratory

> “The availability of energy is fundamental to our quality of life, but not everyone who needs energy has access to it. We must grow energy capacity responsibly for our planet. One way is to invest in nuclear energy, a bountiful resource for diverse needs and zero carbon emissions during operation.”

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WOMEN IN ENERGY

LORI WARD

Collaborates with communities around the world to turn discarded bottles into needed structures like schools and water tanks

Co-Founder, Director Strategic Initiatives | Bottles2Bricks

> “Innovative energy solutions can not only reduce environmental harm but also empower communities and create long-term stability and hope for them and our planet.”

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WOMEN IN ENERGY

AMY WATRUD

Oversees environmental compliance for renewable energy projects, guiding decisions from inception through operation

Director, Environmental Compliance and Strategy | Invenergy

> “It is incredibly rewarding to apply my education in environmental biology to large-scale renewable energy projects. Seeing that foundation contribute to energy infrastructure and environmental stewardship at scale never stops being thrilling. I’m proud to be part of a generation of women leading in STEM.”

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WOMEN IN ENERGY

KAMILA M. WIADEREK

Applies advanced X-ray tools to see inside batteries to improve quality and lifespan and leads a facility helping researchers from around the world prepare batteries for these kinds of studies

Beamline Scientist, Electrochemist | Argonne National Laboratory

> “A sustainable energy future depends on technologies we can trust. My work helps make new energy systems safer, longer-lasting and more reliable — essential for building sustainable solutions. By uncovering hidden processes that limit performance and longevity, we can design better systems from the start instead of relying on trial and error.”

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WOMEN IN ENERGY

KYRA WOODS

Cultivates innovative partnerships and directs resources to local climate leaders to create a sustainable future that leaves no community behind

Sustainability Director |
Sustain Our Future Foundation

> “New, vibrant futures are possible when communities have real leadership to guide and gain from sustainable energy innovation. Bold partnerships support communities receiving what they need to be healthy, safe and resilient.”

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WOMEN IN ENERGY

SERA YOUNG

Led creation of Water Insecurity Experience Scales, a survey tool to assess people's experiences of problems with water around the world

Professor of Anthropology and affiliate of Paula Trienens Institute for Sustainability and Energy | Northwestern University

> "I cannot think of anything more valuable than water — we literally cannot live without it. Our survey work informs us who is struggling with water for basic tasks like drinking, bathing and cooking. This tells us who to help and how."

Girls in STEM

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GRIFFIN MUSEUM OF SCIENCE+INDUSTRY

WOMEN IN ENERGY

MENGMENG ZHUANG

Uses AI and data-driven tools to help energy (power) systems run more efficiently and reliably as we transition to cleaner energy

Principal Engineer | Danovo Energy Solutions (formerly Quanta Technology)

> “I believe the future of energy will be shaped by smart grids, renewable integration and AI-driven decision-making. As renewable energy like wind and solar are added to the grid, balancing supply and demand in real time becomes trickier. AI helps improve forecasting, planning and decision-making so we can reduce energy waste and improve grid resilience toward a more sustainable, low-carbon energy future.”

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