Women IN Energy Conference
2026 Award Nominees

Woman Making an Impact Award Nominees

These remarkable women have made a lasting impact on our industry—driving progress, uplifting others, and championing career growth. Their nominators believe their leadership and generosity deserve recognition and celebration.

Amy Doner • Membership Services Advisor • MISO



Amy Doner is an energy industry professional whose work at the Midcontinent Independent System Operator (MISO) focuses on transmission owner integrations and strategic initiatives. She leads complex, cross-functional efforts, bringing together utilities, stakeholders, and internal teams to navigate operational, regulatory, and market requirements. Known for her collaborative leadership, adaptability, and commitment to building strong relationships, Amy continually seeks opportunities to improve processes and support others. She served a two-year term as Chair of MISO's Women's Resource Group and is passionate about mentoring colleagues, sharing knowledge, and helping others develop the confidence and expertise to succeed.

April Edwards • Director, Power Grid Operations Project Management • Duke Energy



April Edwards is a transformational leader who is passionate about helping people and projects succeed. During her 25 years at Duke Energy, she has built a diverse career across engineering, planning, project management, and operations. Today, she serves as Director of Power Grid Operations Project Management, leading a team that delivers Indiana transmission projects while fostering strong relationships and continuous improvement. April holds degrees from Indiana University Purdue University Indianapolis (IUPUI) and Indiana Wesleyan University, along with PMP certification, and especially enjoys supporting others as they grow and advance in their own career journeys.

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Christina Owens • Director, Resource Planning • ACES



At ACES, Christina Owens leads integrated resource planning and long-term portfolio analysis for ACES' Members and Customers. Her work focuses on evaluating future capacity and energy needs, generation and storage alternatives, market conditions, regulatory developments, and long-term portfolio costs and risks.

Christina brings more than eight years of portfolio modeling experience to her current role, including leading analyses of native-load costs, generation assets, hedging strategies, and portfolio risk. She has also helped advance ACES' analytical capabilities by implementing new modeling platforms and stochastic methodologies.

Christina began her career at ACES in 2012 as a Settlements Analyst and earned her bachelor's degree from Purdue University, where she studied actuarial science, business, and economics.

Claire Rice • Senior Director, Corporate Affairs & Impact • AES



Claire Rice is the Senior Director of Corporate Affairs and Impact for AES Indiana and AES Ohio, where she leads communications, stakeholder engagement, community impact, media relations, and corporate reputation strategy. In this role, Claire serves as a strategic advisor to executive leadership on stakeholder engagement, communications, crisis management, and community relations. She has led engagement efforts supporting major infrastructure investments, economic development opportunities, large-scale community partnerships, and communications to strengthen perception and trust between customers and AES.

Prior to joining AES, Claire led communications at Project Lead The Way (PLTW), where she guided communications, public affairs, and engagement strategies for organizations with significant impact on workforce and educational outcomes. She is a graduate of the Stanley K. Lacy Executive Leadership Series (SKL) and serves on the Indy Chamber Accelerate Indy Council and Keep Indianapolis Beautiful Board of Directors.

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Diana Cairns • Construction Coordinator • CoVolt Power



Diana Cairns is a construction and materials management professional supporting utility-scale solar and renewable energy projects with CoVolt Power. Diana specializes in construction coordination, procurement, logistics, materials management, and field operations, helping teams execute projects efficiently and collaboratively. Passionate about advancing women in energy and construction, Diana values mentorship, professional growth, and opportunities for women to lead and make an impact. A Power Performer nominee, Diana is recognized for collaboration, operational excellence, and service. Diana graduated Summa Cum Laude with a B.S. in Business Management and is committed to continued growth in the renewable energy industry.

Jenna Pearcy • Director, Process & Productivity • Duke Energy



At Duke Energy, Jenna Pearcy leads a team focused on driving operational excellence and smarter ways of working. With more than 15 years in audit services, project management, and regulatory strategy, Jenna has guided major initiatives and built tools that help leaders make better decisions. She holds an MBA from Indiana University and is a licensed CPA and certified PMP. A former Division I basketball player, she brings teamwork and determination to every challenge. Jenna is committed to fostering collaboration and inspiring others to achieve meaningful results—and she's especially passionate about mentoring future leaders in the energy industry.

Jennifer Mrzlack • President • Sage Initiatives



Jennifer Mrzlack is the Founder & CEO of Sage Initiatives, a consulting and advisory firm focused on strategy, workforce development, supply chain optimization, community engagement, and energy initiatives. She partners with organizations to evaluate opportunities, solve complex challenges, and execute initiatives that drive sustainable growth and measurable impact. Jennifer is the former President of PSG Energy Group, a Midwest-based engineering, procurement, and construction (EPC) firm specializing in distributed energy solutions. Under her leadership, PSG installed more than 50 MW of solar generation across more than 130 sites. Her work in renewable energy, sustainability, and stakeholder engagement led to the formation of Sage Initiatives in

2023. Jennifer was elected to the Solar Energy Industries Association (SEIA) Board of Directors, Chair, Distributed Generation and is a member of the Indiana Chamber of Commerce Energy Policy Committee.

Jennifer is a graduate of Rose-Hulman Institute of Technology and Carnegie Mellon University. She has more than 24 years of experience across renewable energy, manufacturing, HVAC, power transmission equipment, and consumer products.

Nandini Sankara • Vice President, Marketing & Brand Strategy • Suburban Propane



Nandini Sankara is the Vice President of Marketing and Brand Strategy, and Spokesperson for Suburban Propane Partners, Nandini is a passionate advocate for sustainability and a driving force for modernizing brands with leading technologies. She joined Suburban Propane in 2017, and in her tenure, she has re-imagined their Digital & Social Strategy, Media Relations, Market Research, and spearheaded a complete brand refresh, The Three Pillars of the Suburban Propane Experience. She was also instrumental in launching Suburban Renewable Energy, LLC in March 2022 to support the Company's strategic goal of building a renewable-energy platform. She is the first female person of color Officer and Vice President at Suburban Propane.

Nandini commissioned the brand refresh that amplified Suburban Propane's strengths in customer service, employee commitment, community engagement, and propane's role as a clean American energy source. Furthermore, she led the marketing launch of Suburban Renewables to advance the company's renewable energy investments. Her brand leadership has garnered Suburban Propane consecutive finalist nominations for Sustainability and Corporate Impact awards with the S&P Global Platts Energy Awards. She has also spearheaded impactful partnerships with major organizations including NASCAR, HGTV, the American Red Cross, the Guy Fieri Foundation, Major League Baseball's New York Yankees and Baltimore Orioles, NHL teams such as the Pittsburgh Penguins, New Jersey Devils, and Anaheim Ducks, as well as Syracuse University Athletics, Rutgers Athletics, and University of Maryland Terrapins Basketball. A published author, Nandini has been featured in multiple media outlets including Forbes, Medium.com, Bold Journey, Newsweek, NJBiz, Yahoo, LPGas, and numerous national and regional media outlets for her industry experience, and expertise in omnichannel marketing, brand strategy, high-level partnerships, AI, renewable energy, and philanthropy. Recently, her work was featured on Amazon's bestselling list for Voices for Impact. She is a sought-after speaker and panelist at global conferences including for the American Red Cross, SXSW, WLPGA, the Millennium Alliance CMO Summit, Clarity, Claritas, Total Retail Tech, Consero, Brand Innovators, and the World Liquid Gas Association.

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Natalie Azuara Ramirez • **Commissioning Superintendent** • **CoVolt Power**



Natalie serves as a Commissioning (Cx) Superintendent with an extensive track record of bringing utility-scale renewable energy and complex electrical infrastructure from testing to full operational turnover. Natalie takes end-to-end accountability for verifying system performance, managing quality documentation, and guiding projects through Substantial Completion. Known for a collaborative leadership style, Natalie bridges the gap between multidisciplinary technical teams and client expectations, providing comprehensive O&M training when needed. Natalie's mission is simple: to build safe, high-performing, and dependable energy assets through rigorous standards, technical expertise, and strong team collaboration.

Sarah Oblon-Distelrath • **Business Development Director** • **EDP**



Sarah Oblon-Distelrath is Development Director, Repower & Hybrid, at EDP Renewables North America, where she has spent the past 18 years developing and repowering renewable energy projects across North America. Before joining EDPR, she served as a Peace Corps Volunteer in Malawi, teaching high school math and science, and later taught 6th grade Earth Science in Houston, Texas. Those experiences fostered her lifelong passion for education, environmental stewardship, and creating opportunities for others. Sarah is also a proud mom to two teenage daughters, who inspire her daily with their curiosity, integrity, and sense of humor.

Shawn Mundy • **Director, Business Insights & Organizational Analytics** • **CenterPoint Energy**



Shawn Mundy is Director of Business Insights and Organizational Change Management at CenterPoint Energy, leading the Delivery Assurance & Operations Services organization. With more than 20 years of experience in the utility industry, Shawn has built her career connecting people, operations, data, and technology to solve complex challenges and drive meaningful change. She is passionate about helping teams turn insights into action while creating opportunities for others to grow, lead, and embrace new possibilities. Whether advancing operational improvements, enabling technology transformation, or mentoring others, Shawn believes lasting impact comes from improving how we work while investing in the people who make it possible.

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Rising Powerhouse Award Nominees

A "powerhouse" is someone with great power,
is a source of influence or inspiration, and has great drive, energy, or ability.

These incredible women were nominated for their outstanding commitment, work ethic, and ambition to shape the future of our industry. Their nominators believe their talents deserve recognition and a spotlight on the impact they're already making.

Caroline Kelly • Senior Origination Associate • EDP Renewables NA



Caroline Kelly joined EDP Renewables North America in 2022 and is a Senior Origination Associate on the Commercial and Industrial team. She works with corporate customers to bring new wind, solar and storage projects to market through long-term clean energy agreements. Caroline started her career studying sea turtles and eagle rays as a marine science student at The University of Alabama, and that love of the ocean led her to clean energy. She is passionate about connecting companies that want clean power with the projects that can deliver it.

Christina Owens • Director, Resource Planning • ACES



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Christina began her career at ACES in 2012 as a Settlements Analyst and earned her bachelor's degree from Purdue University, where she studied actuarial science, business, and economics.

Claire Howard • Senior Origination Associate • EDP Renewables NA



Claire is a member of the Origination team at EDP Renewables. In this role, she supports the negotiation of long-term commercial agreements for EDPR's utility-scale solar, wind, and storage projects, and also manages relationships with utility customers across the central and western United States. Her career has bridged the technical, policy, and commercial sides of energy and environmental projects. Before joining EDPR, she managed community solar clients at Arcadia, and earlier she worked as a water resources engineer developing groundwater management plans in California's Central Valley. Claire holds a B.S. in Environmental Engineering from Northwestern University and an M.A. in Public Policy from the University of Chicago. She lives in Denver, where you'll usually find her running, hiking, or skiing on the weekends.

Erin Borissov • Partner • Parr Richey



Ms. Borissov focuses on infrastructure in Indiana. She represents energy, communications, and infrastructure companies in a variety of practice areas including regulatory law, cooperative law, carbon capture and sequestration and CO2 pipeline law, labor and employment matters, real estate, right-of-way acquisition, commercial transactions, and corporate compliance. In addition, Ms. Borissov works extensively with corporate boards to cultivate sound governance practices, improve decision-making methods, navigate evolving industry trends, prioritize corporate compliance, and identify and manage risk. Areas of concentration include:

- Understanding Indiana's laws on carbon capture and sequestration (CCS) and carbon dioxide pipelines and advising clients on how to navigate those untested laws.
- Assisting energy clients as they develop renewable and clean energy projects and providing solutions when third party projects intersect with existing infrastructure.
- Supporting electric cooperatives and broadband companies as they expand fiber infrastructure and broadband service to unserved rural areas in Indiana.
- Navigating grant and loan programs funded under the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) Inflation Reduction Act (IRA), Broadband Equity Access and Deployment Program (BEAD), and other federal and state funding programs.
- Recognizing the interplay of Section 45 investment and production tax credits with project finance and construction and helping clients comply with prevailing wage,

apprenticeship, community benefits plan, and domestic content requirements to ensure maximum loan and grant funding eligibility and Section 45 tax credit realization.
- Collaborating with new large energy consumers ("Megaloads") to craft customized solutions to meet unprecedented energy and infrastructure needs.

Ms. Borissov began her professional career as a consultant, working with utilities on rate design, cost of service studies, and rate case filings. In addition, before attending law school, she gained valuable regulatory experience as a public utility analyst with the Arizona Corporation Commission.

As an attorney, Ms. Borissov has served in the role of outside counsel with Parr Richey and in-house counsel with NiSource, Inc., a large investor-owned utility company. While in-house, she concentrated on regulatory and business matters including rate cases, financing cases, regulatory compliance, infrastructure investment decisions, and customer complaints.

Through her experience as a consultant and as an attorney, Ms. Borissov honed a deep understanding of corporate business functions, industry trends, and a client's position in its industry. Ms. Borissov leverages her substantial technical and business experience to understand complex governance, economic, financial, and accounting issues that affect her clients. Ms. Borissov serves as a trusted business advisor by creating valued business partnerships with clients and external stakeholders, proactively identifying opportunities for the client, and maintaining a firm understanding of her clients' business and political drivers.

Jean Renk • Government & Community Relations Manager • Duke Energy



Jean Renk serves Duke Energy as a Government and Community Relations Manager. In this role since 2018, she supports Central Indiana and serves as a trusted partner between local communities and Duke Energy.

Jean works to navigate the complexities of the energy business and advocates for communities when business protocols and processes seem unfavorable. She regularly facilitates conversations with community stakeholders and customers on the important role utilities play in building stronger communities.

In addition to community support, Jean is a strong advocate for women. Through her work with Duke Energy's Business Women's Leadership employee resource group, she strives to bring meaningful conversations and connections. She recognizes that women balance life differently and supporting one another supports all. Jean is a graduate of Indiana University. She lives in Plainfield with her husband and son.

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Paula Marques Merlin • Contract Management Advisor II • MISO



Paula Marques Merlin is a strategic contracts professional at MISO, bringing legal insight, business judgment, and high standards to complex agreements. Her career has been shaped by reinvention, from leaving a growing legal practice she built from the ground up in Brazil to earning a Master of Laws with honors and admission to the New York and Indiana bars. Drawn to energy by the confidence and presence of a woman whose leadership inspired her, Paula pays that influence forward through mentorship and lifting others, while showing her daughters the power of perseverance and the lasting impact of women who inspire and elevate one another.

Sucharitha Kudapa • Data Analyst, Operational Digital Products • Consumers Energy



Sucharitha is a Data & AI Professional specializing in AI-powered data products, big data analytics and data science for the Energy & Utilities sector for around 4 years. Currently working on Data & Insights at Consumers Energy through Fast Switch Great Lakes LLC, she builds automated data pipelines and executive dashboards that empower stakeholders to make smarter, strategic decisions supporting electric supply operations, clean energy, field reports and renewable energy initiatives. Her work drives data analysis and business process automation, improving operational efficiency, enabling data-driven decisions, and delivering measurable business impact. Previously, she contributed to Avangrid through Deloitte, earning a Spot Award for her contribution. She holds an M.S. in Computer Science from the University of North Texas and a B.E. in ECE as a Gold Medalist. She is deeply passionate about the intersection of energy, data, and AI, driving energy transformation through high-impact innovation and strategic vision.

Talia Boyne • FERC Compliance Manager • MISO



Talia Boyne is the Manager of FERC Compliance at MISO, where she oversees a team responsible for SOC 1 compliance, tariff change analysis, tariff monitoring and testing, internal control oversight, compliance issue assessments, and engagement with the industry. With more than a decade of experience in regulatory compliance, and stakeholder engagement, she partners with internal teams and industry stakeholders to advance compliance excellence. Talia

also served as Vice Chair of the ReliabilityFirst Compliance User Group for two years, helping promote industry collaboration and best practices. She focuses on fostering strong partnerships, driving process improvements, and promoting a culture of accountability, integrity, and operational excellence.

Vicki Duncan Gardner • Vice President, Marketing, Communications & Strategy • WVPA



Vicki Duncan Gardner joined Wabash Valley Power Alliance in 2023 and serves as Vice President of External Affairs & Engagement. In this role, she leads the organization's communications, marketing, government relations, economic development, and board engagement efforts.

Gardner brings experience spanning journalism, government, public affairs, and strategic communications. Prior to joining Wabash, she served as Director of Communications for the City of Westfield, Press Secretary in the Indiana Lieutenant Governor's Office, and a leader at several Indiana-based public affairs and strategic communications agencies. Before transitioning to public affairs, she spent more than a decade as a television news reporter covering communities and major issues across the Midwest.

A graduate of DePauw University, Vicki and her husband, Troy, live in Carmel, Indiana and have three children. Outside of work, she is a member of the Carmel Fire Merit Commission and enjoys sports, travel, wine and musical theater.

Allyship Award Nominees

These allies have demonstrated a strong commitment to advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion in the workplace. Their nominators believe their leadership, values, and advocacy for others deserve recognition and celebration.

Christina Owens • Director, Resource Planning • ACES



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Christina began her career at ACES in 2012 as a Settlements Analyst and earned her bachelor's degree from Purdue University, where she studied actuarial science, business, and economics.

Ginger Hodge • Director, Market IQ – Midcontinent • Customized Energy Solutions



Ginger Hodge has been with Customized Energy Solutions since 2009. She has the privilege of leading a team of three other amazing women, each with her own talents and experience, who keep clients current on MISO's stakeholder process. Ginger is happiest when a messy problem needs a solution that works for a lot of competing interests.

Ginger has had a winding career path. After a degree in Political Science and Sociology from Malone University (then Malone College), she worked with juvenile offenders at the Stark County Family Court in Ohio, and then helped refugees in Salt Lake City build the skills needed to support themselves. In 2007, she joined MISO as a founding member of the Stakeholder Relations team, supporting committees including the Resource Adequacy Working Group (then Supply Adequacy Working Group). She earned her MBA at Indiana University's Kelley School of Business while she was there. Away from work, she's usually cooking for family and friends. That includes her husband Josh, her daughter London and son-in-law Drew, and of course her two dogs, Henry and Whiskey.

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Joe Martin • Director, Legal Operations • MISO



Joseph S. Martin, MBA, is Director of Legal Operations at MISO, where he leads the department's strategic and operational initiatives. Prior to joining MISO, he built a successful career in technology and telecommunications and founded Emergent Services Group in 2006, a consulting firm focused on helping corporate legal departments and law firms scale legal operations, implement technology, and respond to market disruption. Joe views his work as a mentoring opportunity and creates an environment where talent is cultivated and everyone can have a seat at the table to achieve their highest potential.

Stan Pinegar • State President – Indiana • Duke Energy



Since 2018, Stan Pinegar has served as president of Duke Energy Indiana, the state's largest electric utility, serving approximately 930,000 customers in 69 of Indiana's 92 counties. He joined Duke Energy in July 2012 as vice president of government affairs after eight years in leadership roles at the Indiana Energy Association.

Pinegar currently serves as board chair for the Indiana Energy Association and the Indiana Legal Foundation and on the executive committee of the Indiana Chamber of Commerce. In 2025 and 2026, the Indianapolis Business Journal named Pinegar among Indiana's 250 most influential and impactful leaders.