focus on energy®
Partnering with Wisconsin utilities

FUTURE FOCUS

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER
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The FOCUS ON ENERGY® Future Focus Initiative reviews new concepts and technologies that have the potential to expand the range and value of services available to Wisconsinites, as well as help the program achieve desired outcomes of energy savings, customer satisfaction, and/or market transformation. The process also helps test offerings for future expansion/inclusion in the Focus on Energy Program portfolio. The Future Focus team screens new ideas every quarter and administers pilot programs, demonstration projects, emerging technology accelerators, and Environmental and Economic Research and Development projects.

IDEA SUBMISSIONS IN REVIEW

Name	Description
Home Energy Analysis Tool	Proposes a field study to explore the use of a home energy analysis tool. The tool acquires data about homes from several publicly available data sources, such as property assessment data, building permits, and 3D GIS data to develop a detailed energy model. The tool then provides homeowners with specific site recommendations.
Energy Auditing Tool	Proposes development of a Focus analytical tool that analyzes 15-minute interval data and provides visuals and reports that can then be used during the initial conversation with a customer. The tool would conduct a preliminary energy use analysis prior to conducting an on-site audit.
Forced Air Duct Assessment and Load Estimation	Proposes research on conducting load calculations and duct performance measurements in Wisconsin residences. The research would incorporate duct assessments and better load calculations into high-performance HVAC installation best practices, including recommendations for condensing furnaces, air source heat pumps, and dual-fuel systems.
Hydronic Heating	Proposes research on methods for assessing existing hydronic distribution systems in residential homes. The assessments aim to understand current sizing practices, radiator and baseboard capacity, design circulation temperatures, and the opportunities for HVAC system improvement.

CURRENT PILOT PROGRAM AND DEMONSTRATION UPDATES

The Future Focus team continually engages in experimenting and researching new ideas, pilot programs, technologies, and delivery methods to support the viability of Focus on Energy into the Future. Additional information on each of the projects listed below is available on the Future Focus webpage.

Pilot	Description	Start Date	End Date	Q1 Project Activities
Air-to-Water Heat Pump (AWHP) Field Study	This field study assesses AWHP retrofits in existing and new construction residential single-family and multifamily buildings in Wisconsin. The field study will consist of two phases. The first phase includes identifying candidate buildings and then sourcing bids and modeling energy savings for an AWHP system in each building. The second phase will include procurement, installation, and monitoring of AWHP systems in each building.	Oct 2023	Sep 2026	• Continued data collection at all four sites. • Preliminary site analysis was completed in preparation for the ACEEE Hot Water Forum and ACEEE Summer Study Paper. • Presented at the ACEEE Hot Water Forum.
Community Impact	The Community Impact Pilot targets CBOs, utilities, and small businesses who service and impact their respective communities. The Program's intent is to provide community small businesses with the means to install energy-efficient solutions, increase their ROI, and better serve community members. A secondary intent is to demonstrate the success of partnerships between Focus on Energy, CBOs, utilities, and small businesses.	Jan 2023	Nov 2026	• Eleven proposals were sent to businesses in Waterford, the first 2026 community. • Assessments were completed for businesses in Tomah, Prairie Du Sac, and Waupun.
Empowering Faith Communities	This pilot aims to expand Focus' customer base by partnering with places of worship. The initiative involves conducting energy assessments at 20 places of worship and recommending energy efficiency upgrades using Focus measures. During this process, the implementation team will host workshops for congregations to educate them about energy efficiency improvements. Additionally, congregation	Oct 2024	Dec 2026	• Two new CBOs were accepted into the program. • Fifty-eight interest forms were submitted from potential places of worship.

Pilot	Description	Start Date	End Date	Q1 Project Activities
	members will receive a coupon for the Focus on Energy marketplace, allowing them to order a free pack and enable Focus to track the number of new customers reached through these interactions.			
Focus Force Milwaukee (FFMKE)	The FFMKE pilot aims to transition displaced workers into energy efficiency careers. The pilot offers technical training—including Building Performance Institute (BPI) certification, Building Sciences Principles (BSP), or Building Analyst Technician (BAT) and manufacturer certifications. Wraparound services such as transportation, childcare, case management, and cohort support are also provided. This pilot demonstrates how CBOs and state energy programs can collaborate to build a more inclusive and skilled workforce, including insights into workforce development implementation, program design, and relationship building. Silver Springs Neighborhood Center (SSNC) will provide a roadmap to show how similar organizations can support the energy efficiency workforce based on their findings from the pilot.	Oct 2023	Jul 2026	• Sixty-six participants enrolled in the pilot with 24 placed in energy-efficient related jobs. • Thirty-nine participants have completed BPI's Building Science Principles training. • Fifty-four employers are engaged in the pilot with four providing employment.
Home Energy Upgrade	This community-focused pilot provides whole home retrofits at no cost to single- and multi-family customers. The pilot targets residential customers in selected communities facing high energy burden and offers comprehensive energy efficiency and safety upgrades to save energy and money on	Jul 2024	Aug 2026	• Two trade allies enrolled in phase two of the pilot to complete projects. • Six projects eligible for window upgrades were identified in Q1 with installation scheduled for Q2.

Pilot	Description	Start Date	End Date	Q1 Project Activities
	utility bills. The pilot will build partnerships with advocates, CBOs, and local contractors to serve qualified customers.			

EMERGING TECHNOLOGY UPDATES

The Emerging Technology initiative seeks to identify emerging technologies new to Wisconsin that could benefit utility customers. It includes the **Emerging Technology Accelerator**, which looks at new technologies for residential and commercial businesses, and the **Industrial Technology Accelerator**, which focuses on understanding technologies that are most beneficial to industrial operations. Technologies identified undergo an initial screening and if they meet the opportunity threshold, they advance to comprehensive review. Additional information on each of the projects listed below is available on the Future Focus webpage.

Emerging Technology Accelerator Projects

Technology	Description	Target Customer	Status
Smart Diagnostic HVAC Tools and Connected Commissioning	Contractor-held tools to improve heat pump performance and maintenance through qualifying installation checks and real-time field analysis. The project is intended to profile existing tools, how they fit into the current suite of offerings, and potential contractor training.	Residential	Active
High Performance and Secondary Windows	Secondary windows are attached to the interior or exterior of existing windows, creating an insulating pocket of air that reduces air leakage and heat transfer.	Residential	Active
Waterpark Energy Efficiency	Identify the current energy-efficiency opportunities of energy-consuming systems in Wisconsin waterparks, especially where commercial heat pump water heaters could reduce peak demand and offer scalable energy savings.	Commercial	In review

Technology	Description	Target Customer	Status
Advanced Refrigeration Control	Advanced refrigeration controls add an advanced monitoring and control layer to existing refrigeration systems for better capacity utilization, control optimization, and peak demand reduction. Additionally, it enables fault detection for proactive operation and maintenance.	Commercial	In review
AI-Enabled HVAC Systems	Energy savings technology that is customizable to occupancy behavior and changing environmental conditions through the regulation of heating, cooling, ventilation, and energy consumption in buildings.	Commercial	In Review

Industrial Technology Accelerator Projects

Technology	Description	Target Customer	Status
Industrial Steam Generation	Heat pumps that capture low-temperature waste heat from industrial processes to generate steam.	Industrial	Ideation
Flat Plate Heat Pipe	Heat transfer device designed for faster temperature equalization and improved heat movement.	Industrial	Ideation
Nixtamal Process	Masa flour production method reducing water use by 84% and energy use by 52%.	Industrial - Food	Review complete
Hydrogen Flexible Flame	3D-printed, low-emission burner technology using hydrogen-flexible flame design.	Industrial - Food	Ideation
Vacuum Blower	Air pump using no water and up to 60% less energy by recovering waste heat through an integrated heat exchanger.	Industrial - Paper	In Review
UV LED	Curing technology using LED chips on aluminum/copper heat sinks for lower energy use and cooler operation.	Industrial - Printing	In Review

Technology	Description	Target Customer	Status
Motor Technology	Variable-speed motors maintaining high efficiency under low load, suitable for RTUs, fans, and pumps ≤15 HP.	Industrial, Commercial	In Review
Milled Refiner Plate	Paper refining plates requiring less horsepower and smaller diameters, reducing energy use.	Industrial - Paper	In Review
Vapor Recovery	Reconfigured vapor recovery for ethanol plants to utilize molecular sieve vapor more efficiently.	Industrial - Ethanol	In Review
Cast Metal Ladle	Flameless oxidation (FLOX) ladle heater with metal recuperator for improved energy efficiency.	Industrial – Cast Metals	In Review
High-emissivity coating	Coating that boosts heat transfer, energy efficiency, and productivity while lowering emissions.	Industrial - Ethanol	In Review
Wireless Steam Trap Monitor	Sensors that detect failed steam traps and enable faster repair, reducing steam loss.	Industrial, Commercial, Schools & Government	In Review
Steam Trap Technology	Venturi steam traps with no moving parts, offering longer life and lower failure rates.	Industrial, Commercial, Schools & Government	In Review

ENVIRONMENTAL AND ECONOMIC RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

The Environmental and Economic Research and Development (EERD) program seeks to support energy efficiency and renewable energy research that allows Wisconsin to further its efforts towards reducing energy waste, costs, and environmental impacts. Additional information on each of the projects listed below is available on the Future Focus webpage.

There are currently no active EERD Projects.

OTHER INNOVATION INTIATIVES

Pitch Day 2026

Description: Pitch Day 2026 is an opportunity for industry partners and stakeholders to showcase energy efficiency pilot program ideas to a panel of judges in an interactive way. Focus on Energy will release a Request for Concepts (RFC) seeking pilot programs addressing concept categories, which are currently being determined.

Q1 Project Updates

- Began coordination of Pitch Day 2026 RFC, which included the following tasks:
  - Developing timelines and tasks.
  - Establishing administrative processes and drafting communication documents.
  - Brainstorming category ideas.

MARKET ANALYTICS

Q1 Market Analytics consisted of the development of two market scans and one project.

Energy Efficiency/Demand Response Market Scan

This market scan will investigate what a statewide energy efficiency program like Focus can realistically do to support utility demand response (DR) efforts in a policy environment where no mandated DR programs yet exist, utility data sharing is unavailable, and regulatory direction is unclear. It will analyze program design options, portfolio structures, and budget implications across three potential Commission decision scenarios, ranging from authorizing incentives for DR-only technologies to emphasizing demand reduction as a primary program objective. Drawing on benchmarks from programs like Efficiency Vermont, the market scan will identify both scenario-specific recommendations and durable design principles that Focus can act on now, before final commission decisions are made.

Small Business Program Design Market Scan

Leveraging the Small Business Research that Focus has already conducted, this market scan will explore opportunities for Focus to support small businesses. It will investigate small business program design structures and how to best support small businesses through a distinguished Focus program. The market scan will explore other energy efficiency programs that have small business programs to provide Focus-specific recommendations.

GET INVOLVED WITH FUTURE FOCUS

Submit Your Ideas

The Future Focus Initiative seeks to improve the Focus on Energy program and promote a sustainable future for Wisconsin residents and businesses. This initiative is not possible without the support of your ideas and feedback. You can help accelerate energy and money savings by submitting your ideas for a research topic, pilot proposal, program suggestions, or energy-saving measures.

Learn More

For more details on active or completed projects, emerging technology reviews, and past newsletters, please visit our website:
Future Focus Initiative

Contact Us

Any questions about Future Focus projects may be directed to:
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