



FUTURE FOCUS

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER Quarter 2 2026

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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
Building Thermal Heat Loss at City Scale	Proposes using thermal infrared imaging to detect and map heat loss buildings to target potential program customers. The technology is designed as a visual engagement tool to help effectively target potential customers for energy efficiency upgrades.
Water Infrastructure Leak Detection	This technology aims to reduce water loss through detecting and fixing water leaks in water utility infrastructure including customer service connections, fire hydrants, valves, and water mains. Electric energy savings can be achieved through reduction in water loss and the reduced need for upstream pumping and processing energy.

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	Q2 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	Oct 2023	Sep 2026	- Continued data collection at four sites. - Presented preliminary results at the ACEEE Hot Air and Water Forum.

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Pilot	Description	Start Date	End Date	Q2 Project Activities
	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.			- Coordinated and scheduled monitoring equipment removals at all sites. - Began to draft the final report and workpaper due at the end of Q3.
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.	Jan 2023	Nov 2026	- Launched four communities in Q2: Merrill, Waupun, Prairie du Sac, and Superior. - News coverage occurred during the assessment for the Superior project, which highlighted opportunities for businesses participating in a Focus on Energy program. - Six projects were completed between Waterford and Tomah with another 24 currently in progress.
Empowering Faith Communities	This pilot seeks to broaden Focus' customer base by partnering with places of worship. The initiative will include conducting energy assessments 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.	Oct 2024	Dec 2026	- Improvements were made to the application process to streamline project completion; including giving customers timelines to accept proposals. - Pilot pipeline was completed and has been filled barring unanticipated dropouts from places of worship.

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Pilot	Description	Start Date	End Date	Q2 Project Activities
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	Dec 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. • Nine 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 utility bills. The pilot will build partnerships with advocates, CBOs, and local contractors to serve qualified customers.	Jul 2024	Dec 2026	• Thirty-six new leads provided to the program by four different CBOs. • Three multifamily projects were completed, and three additional leads were secured. • Seventeen potential customers were recruited through a community event.

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
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	Active

Industrial Technology Accelerator Projects

Technology	Description	Target Customer	Status
Energy Recovery and Storage	Waste heat to power with battery storage targeting foundries. An Organic Rankine Cycle (ORC) device is used to generate power and combined with a battery storage system to improve and optimize the economics of a stand-alone WHP project.	Foundries	New in Q2 – Rejected due to payback concerns.
SPI Coatings	SPI has several ceramic coatings that were co-developed with NASA. These coatings can be applied anywhere traditional insulation is used. They are much thinner, can be applied to hot surfaces, and are claimed to be more effective than conventional insulation.	Industrial	New in Q2 – initial screening in progress.
MAC Valves	Spool-type pulse-jet valve retrofit of traditional diaphragm pulse-jet valves. In a bag house application, valves open and close in a shorter period of time which results with less compressed air being used per pulse.	Various; metals, wood, food manufacturing.	New in Q2 – pursuing demonstration site.
Various	Packaged propane (R-290) refrigeration systems for walk-in coolers and freezers provide energy savings and greenhouse gas reductions.	Commercial refrigeration	New in Q2 - initial screening in progress.
Fluid Quip	Low Energy Distillation (LED). Reconfiguration of ethanol distillation process which utilizes each Btu five times, providing significant reduction in energy usage.	Ethanol	New in Q2 - initial screening in progress.
BostonDynamics	Dog-like robot that continually moves through an industrial facility with on-board acoustic sensors that can detect leaks and equipment anomalies.	Industrial	New in Q2 - initial screening in progress.

Technology	Description	Target Customer	Status
Advanced Motor Technology	Electric motors rated at IE4 and IE5 efficiency levels, exceeding current NEMA Premium standards.	Industrial, Commercial, Municipal, Schools	Complete; Transitioned to Best Practice
AI-Driven Refrigeration Controls	Physics-based machine learning software that optimizes energy use in large-scale refrigeration facilities.	Industrial	Demonstration site secured, project underway.
Air Assisted Doctor Blades	A hybrid mechanical and fluid dynamic dewatering device for tissue processing that reduces energy consumption compared to conventional approaches.	Paper	Project underway.
Smart Compressor Controls for RTUs	An intelligent controller for rooftop units, chillers, and refrigeration rack systems with remote monitoring capability and variable refrigerant flow integration.	Industrial, Commercial, Municipal, Schools	Initial review complete. Evaluating the opportunity for an M&V study.
Polymer Drying	An energy-efficient drying system for extrusion and injection molding operations that minimizes drying time and energy use, available as new equipment or a retrofit.	Industrial	Review complete. Identifying potential customers.

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.

There are currently no active EERD Projects.

You can learn more about completed EERD projects at the [Future Focus webpage](#).

OTHER INNOVATION INITIATIVES

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 released a Request for Concepts (RFC) seeking pilot programs addressing

concept categories in June with submissions due in July. The Future Focus team will review ideas and select concepts for Pitch Day. Pitch Day will take place in October.

Q2 Project Updates

- Continued coordination of Pitch Day 2026 RFC, which included the following tasks:
 - Finalized Pitch Day 2026 categories.
 - Released soft announcement of RFC for Pitch Day.
 - Released RFC for Pitch Day.

Pitches will be reviewed by the Future Focus team with concepts selected for Pitch Day by the end of Q3.

MARKET ANALYTICS

Market Analytics consisted of the development of four market scans.

Energy Efficiency/Demand Response Market Scan

This market scan was completed in Q2.

It investigated 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 analyzed 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 identified both scenario-specific recommendations and durable design principles that Focus can act on.

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.

Refrigeration/Refrigerant Management Market Scan

This market scan will explore opportunities for increased energy efficiency in refrigeration systems, specifically focusing on the commercial sector. It will investigate what opportunities exist in Wisconsin's commercial refrigeration sector, the regulatory and code landscape, the energy demand and emissions impacts, and commercial leak detection and repair. National

program models will also be researched to develop Focus-specific program design recommendations.

Complementing Weatherization Programs with Energy Efficiency Programming Design Market Scan

This market scan will explore the potential for Focus and Weatherization programs to combine efforts with the statewide Weatherization Assistance Program (WAP). It will investigate how Focus and WAP have interacted or complemented one another historically and how income-qualified programs can be coordinated across the Focus and WAP. National examples of how other programs have complimented WAP will be explored.

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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REDUCING ENERGY WASTE ACROSS WISCONSIN Focus on Energy, Wisconsin utilities' statewide program for energy efficiency and renewable energy, helps eligible residents and businesses save energy and money while protecting the environment. Focus on Energy information, resources, and financial incentives help to implement energy efficiency and renewable energy projects that otherwise would not be completed.

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