

GREEN JOBS

Because “green jobs” have become a popular topic, we thought you might like to test your knowledge by answering three questions below. The answers are on the next pages.

1. Which of the following are not “green jobs”?

- a) Building solar panels and windmills
- b) Working at the Natural Resources Defense Council
- c) Working in the nuclear power industry
- d) Driving a bus
- e) Working at a power plant that burns natural gas
- f) Organic farming
- g) Working at EPA
- h) Installing insulation
- i) Making cosmetics for Whole Foods
- j) An Iowa corn farmer

2. How many green jobs are there nationwide?

- a) 20 million
- b) 10 million
- c) 5 million
- d) Less than 5 million

3. How many green jobs are there in the U.S. electric power industry?

- a) More than 500,000
- b) Less than 500,000

ANSWERS

1. **All of these are green jobs because there are so many different definitions of “green job.”**

For example, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) defines green jobs as those that produce goods or services that benefit the environment and those that make business production processes more environmentally friendly or use fewer natural resources. In estimating the number of green jobs, BLS includes not only jobs in renewable energy and energy efficiency but also jobs in nuclear energy; organic agriculture; sustainable forestry; mass transit; environmental compliance; jobs that increase public awareness of environmental issues; and certain local, state, and Federal government jobs.¹ The definition used by the California Employment Development Department includes renewable energy, energy efficiency, sustainable agriculture, the manufacture of natural or sustainable products, and private sector employees involved in environmental compliance.² In addition, the term green jobs is often used interchangeably with “clean energy” jobs or “advanced energy” jobs, which can result in different definitions as well. For example, a study conducted for the Advanced Energy Economy Institute included in its definition of “advanced energy-related activities” jobs related to advanced natural gas turbines.³

2. **The answer is “d.”**

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, there were 3.4 million green jobs in 2011. Nearly 900,000 of these were Federal, state, or local government employees.⁴

3. **The answer can be either “a” or “b,” depending on which definition of a green job you prefer and which study you use.**

For example, the Bureau of Labor Statistics found that electric utilities had 50,000 green jobs in 2011. Most of these (40,000 jobs)

were in nuclear power generation.⁵ However, a January 2017 study for DOE uses a more expansive definition to estimate 573,000 jobs in renewable electric power generation alone. Some 65% of these renewable energy jobs were involved in some aspect of solar electric power generation.⁶

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¹ U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), www.bls.gov/green/#definition;
<https://www.bls.gov/ggs/#news>

² State of California Employment Development Department, *California's Green Economy: Summary of Survey Results*, October 2010.

³ AEE Institute, *California Advanced Energy Employment Survey*, prepared by BW Research Partnership, December 2014.

⁴ BLS, "Green Goods and Services," www.bls.gov/ggs/home.htm.

⁵ BLS News Release, "Employment in Green Goods and Services – 2011," March 19, 2013.

⁶ U.S. Department of Energy (report prepared by BW Research), *U.S. Energy and Employment Report*, January 2017. This report relies on a broad definition that includes, for example, "solar electric generation" workers that "spend some portion of their time working to manufacture, install, distribute, or provide professional services to solar technologies across the nation."