

Educators Communications Kit

Frequently Asked Questions

Where can I find out more about the work energy companies do?

A great place to start is the *Get Into Energy* website at www.getintoenergy.com. The site contains information about the energy industry, such as *Behind the Technology* videos, as well as interviews with industry employees.

What is the difference between the types of utilities—investor-owned, municipal or cooperative?

Utilities fall within three categories—investor-owned, municipal, or cooperative. The difference between the three is who owns the company. Investor-owned utilities are owned by stockholders (for more information go to www.eei.org), municipal power companies are government-owned and are also called public power districts (for more information, go to www.publicpower.org), and electric cooperatives are owned by members of the community (for more information, go to www.nreca.coop).

Do all utilities do the same thing?

Utilities, in general, generate power (or capture and store natural gas) and distribute to residential, commercial and industrial customers. After electricity is generated, it must be “stepped-down” to the voltage that transports the electricity (called “transmission” equipment) and then “stepped-up” again for distribution lines to reach the customers. Employees serve at all points in this process or may work in corporate offices as customer service representatives, accountants, human resources representatives, or in the many other areas that are necessary to run a business.

What are the required knowledge and skill sets for jobs in the energy industry?

The *Get Into Energy* web site was designed for students who want to learn more about the energy industry and the exciting careers available within energy companies. The knowledge and skill sets for the high-growth jobs are linked from this page: <http://www.getintoenergy.com/skills.asp>.

Is post-secondary education required for these jobs?

Education requirements vary depending on the position. All positions require a minimum of a high school diploma or a GED. Some positions such as engineering require a four-year degree. For education requirements for the high-growth jobs, check out each job category at <http://www.getintoenergy.com/skills.asp>.

What high school courses are needed to prepare students for energy industry jobs?

Energy company employees need a well-rounded high school education. While English, History, etc. are important, STEM courses are especially important. This includes Algebra I and II, Geometry, Trigonometry, Earth/Environmental Science, Biology, Chemistry and Physics. The skills developed in these STEM courses are used on the job. Therefore, it is recommended that teachers introduce students to energy industry careers in middle school or early high school to ensure students take these courses before graduation.

If a student is interested in energy industry careers but is years from high school graduation, what do you recommend they do?

Contact your local energy company to see what programs they have available for middle and high school students. Many companies sponsor energy summer camps, career days, and mentoring programs. The best way to find out which utility you are served by is to check your electric or gas bill. You may be served by more than one company, such as one for electric and another for gas. Or you can use the Google Map feature and put in your zip code at www.getintoenergy.com. Please note that not all utilities are on the map.

If a student is interested in an energy industry job that requires a college degree, where can he or she learn about local colleges and universities who have related programs?

The Google Map on the Get Into Energy web site allows users to search for training programs. Go to: <http://www.getintoenergy.com/careerresources.asp>. Many, but not all, training programs are on this site. You can also ask the Human Resources Department at your local utility.
