

CASE STUDY

How Alliant Energy drives impact and innovation



Alliant Energy provides regulated electric and natural gas services to more than 1.4 million electric and natural gas customers in Iowa and Wisconsin. They are committed to delivering the energy solutions and exceptional service that customers and communities count on—safely, efficiently, and responsibly. But their commitment to supporting the communities they serve doesn't stop there! Alliant Energy takes its role as responsible corporate citizens seriously and its work spans beyond providing power to Midwestern communities. Alliant Energy's purpose is to **serve customers** and **build stronger communities**. This is achieved through its Energy For Good programs which work to help customers thrive, communities innovate, and enhance the natural beauty of neighborhoods in Iowa and Wisconsin. To learn more about how Alliant Energy invests in its communities, the ways it engages employees in corporate giving, and how Bonterra Corporate Social Responsibility (formerly CyberGrants) helps them achieve their purpose, we sat down with Julie Bauer, executive director at the Alliant Energy Foundation.



Community giving strategy

In order to achieve its purpose and invest in community impact, Alliant Energy connects its CSR strategy and programming to four core focus areas: hunger and housing, workforce readiness, environmental stewardship, and diversity, safety, and well-being. Here's a snapshot of the programs and projects they support within these areas:

- **Hunger and Housing:** Alliant Energy provides household necessities such as clothing, cribs, car seats, and school supplies; invests in food delivery and school programs; and supports transition and permanent housing programs for individuals and families in need.
- **Workforce Readiness:** The energy company provides career exploration and job training to children, disadvantaged youth, and people with disabilities; invests in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) workshops; and facilitates leadership, mentoring, and anti-bullying after-school programs.
- **Environmental Stewardship:** Alliant Energy helps protect and conserve wildlife spaces; maintains public parks with benches, signage, and picnic tables; and invests in environmental education programs.
- **Diversity, Safety, and Well-Being:** The utility company invests in community programs that promote equal rights and inclusion for historically underrepresented groups; provides lifesaving and protective equipment to first responders; and implements disaster relief programs in response to emerging needs.



We engage our employees in these projects in a couple different ways. For example, employee-giving opportunities that support our hunger and housing focus area may involve volunteering with a local food pantry. A large portion of our service areas are rural and many individuals and families live in food deserts. As a result, we partner with food banks to deliver high-quality food and produce to these areas. Through these programs, we are able to build community relationships and better understand their needs and how we can help.”

- Julie Bauer | Executive Director at the Alliant Energy Foundation

Through their innovative programs and strategic partnerships, here's a look at what Alliant Energy achieved in 2021:

- Awarded \$1.9 million in [Impact Grants](#) to 40 organizations across Iowa and Wisconsin.
- Created the One Million Trees initiative which promises to donate and help plant more than 1 million trees by 2030. Supplied 1.2 million meals to seven food banks through the annual Drive Out Hunger golf event.
- Donated nearly \$2.2 million through the company's employee and retiree [matching gift](#) program.
- Recorded over 75,000 employee and retiree [volunteer hours](#).

Employee engagement programs

In order to engage employees in its community giving strategy, Alliant Energy offers multiple channels for participation so that its workforce can give where they want, how they want, and when they want. Here's an overview of their offerings!

- **Employee Giving:** When an employee or retiree is interested in making a monetary donation to a nonprofit organization, they can easily log into the Bonterra CSR portal and search for causes. They can also view their giving history and opt into recurring donations. Last year, employees, retirees, and the Alliant Energy Foundation gave a total of \$11.5 million to make a difference in the communities they serve.
- **Matching Gifts:** The energy company provides career exploration and job training to children, disadvantaged youth, and people with disabilities; invests in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) workshops; and facilitates leadership, mentoring, and anti-bullying after-school programs.



- **Volunteering:** Through the Bonterra CSR Volunteerism portal, Alliant Energy employees and retirees are able to search for volunteer opportunities, sign up for events, and log hours. Whether the volunteering is completed during working hours or on their personal time, each activity is eligible for a volunteer grant.
- **Volunteer Program Grants:** Volunteer work of any kind—delivering groceries to elderly neighbors, participating in a neighborhood cleanup, or coaching a little league team—qualifies for a Volunteer Program Grant from the Alliant Energy Foundation. By giving back and logging hours, employees and retirees are eligible to request grants for a nonprofit of their choice.

When it comes to employee giving, making it easy for them to get involved is key to increasing participation. And when all of your corporate giving programs are housed in one place, giving becomes a no-brainer! At Alliant Energy, employees can search for volunteer opportunities, record their hours, make a donation, and request a match within a matter of minutes by using the Volunteerism portal.



For all of our employee engagement programs, Bonterra CSR is instrumental in enabling participation. I always refer to them as our one-stop shop because when an employee wants to get involved, all we have to do is point them to the Bonterra CSR portal. It allows them to see what Alliant Energy is doing to give back but it also allows them to see what their colleagues are doing and the amazing ways they're giving back. I like to think of Bonterra CSR as the glue that pulls all of our programs together."

- Julie Bauer | Executive Director at the Alliant Energy Foundation

Energized about insights

Over the past several years, the ability to measure the impact of corporate giving has become a top-of-mind subject for CSR leaders. Simply collecting and reporting data points is no longer enough. Organizations need to take it a step further, understand what their data is telling them, and make decisions based on their findings. To equip our customers with the tools and resources they need to be agile in their CSR efforts, we launched [Bonterra's Insights solution](#) in 2020.

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We are so excited to implement Insights! There is such a difference between reports and insights, and we're eager to dive deeper into the data and better understand what it's telling us and how we can improve based on the information we've gathered. We have an excellent team at Bonterra supporting us through this process and we really just can't wait to get Insights implemented and to begin digging around.”

- Julie Bauer | Executive Director at the Alliant Energy Foundation



With customized dashboards, high-quality visualizations, and the ability to aggregate internal and external data sources, Insights allows organizations to quickly and easily see the effectiveness of their philanthropic efforts. For Alliant Energy, this capability will be key for unlocking new opportunities to give back and make a difference.



From the beginning, the thing that sparked my interest the most was being able to use external data sources to complement our internal findings and reduce gaps in our knowledge, support decision-making, and enable new opportunities. As we think about hunger and housing, for example, we can access free and reduced lunch information and compare that to our own data to identify opportunities we may have not been aware of. We are very excited about that component!”

- Julie Bauer | Executive Director at the Alliant Energy Foundation

We applaud the Alliant Energy team for its community-driven approach to CSR, comprehensive employee-giving programming, and willingness to embrace the power of impact analytics. We can't wait to see all the good they unlock while using Bonterra's Insights solution!

Wondering how Bonterra CSR can help your organization make an even greater impact? [Start by scheduling your free demo today!](#)