

# CASE STUDY: WENDEL

ENGAGING THE COMMUNITY AND SUPPORTING STEM EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS



## COMPANY

*A A/E/C firm working towards a more sustainable future*

Wendel is an innovative architecture, engineering, energy efficiency, and construction management firm established in 1940. Wendel started out as a civil engineering firm by its founder, Leon Wendel, out of his garage in Lockport, NY, but has since grown to 270 employees in offices across 15 cities of the United States. As an engineering and architecture firm, Wendel is committed to helping make projects more sustainable and creating more livable communities. Wendel incorporates sustainability in all its projects and has to date reduced 701,815 metric tons of CO<sub>2</sub> in the form of energy savings through its projects.



# CHALLENGES

## *Engaging the community*

Wendel recognizes the importance of community engagement in the process of working towards a more sustainable future. As such, climate resiliency, equity, education, and supporting minorities in STEM were a few of the issues that Wendel recognized and worked towards in 2020.

# SOLUTIONS

In 2020, Wendel focused on community engagement and the social pillar of sustainability. They worked towards supporting educational programs in STEM and increasing community engagement on the topic of clean energy through three main projects. First, Wendel supported the American Public Transportation Association's (APTA) sustainability initiatives to promote climate resilience, equity, and environmental stewardship through staff participation on the APTA Sustainability Committee and serving as Chair of the Climate Action Guidelines committee. More than 90% of people using public transportation in the US and Canada are riding APTA member systems. Second, Wendel supports sustainability and climate resilience through engagement with the National Academies of Science, notably by supporting staff participation on Transit Cooperative Research Program (TCRP) research panels. Lastly, Wendel sponsored educational competitions and promoted STEM in minority communities of Buffalo. The Wendel team partners with schools, communities, and educational organizations to promote STEAM in the classroom. Efforts include presentations to students by design, energy, and sustainability professionals; financial support of existing programs through WNYSTEM and BEAM; and in-person career days. Wendel also supported staff participation in the SUNY Clean Energy Consortium initiative and the development of clean energy courses to address the need for greater access to clean energy curriculum and courses through an online platform.

# RESULTS

The climate guidelines will help support transit agencies as they develop their climate action plans for greenhouse gas mitigation and adaptation to climate impacts.

The National Academy of Science will help promote equity, sustainability in public transportation.

Wendel's STEM initiatives and career days presented opportunities for students to engage with design professionals and learn how projects come to life through the lens of various disciplines and contributors. This collaboration provided valuable insight and opportunities for students to explore careers in architecture, sustainability, and engineering.

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Incentivizing WNY companies to get involved in the community and encouraging them to become more sustainable. Knowledge sharing of best practices and good stories can help improve how we give back to the city of Buffalo.



**Wendel's actions and results have been reported within the framework of The WNYsBR's Recognition Program, a continuous improvement program structured to help businesses reach achievable sustainable targets. The program encourages companies to implement a comprehensive sustainability plan. This includes systematic benchmarking, identifying further environmental efficiency opportunities, and quantifying results when improvements are put into place.**

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