



Climate & Equitable Jobs Act

Economic Development Programs & Grant Status

Aaron McEvoy, Grant Manager
DCEO Office of Energy & Business Utility
Illinois Clean Energy Equity Summit
February 26-27, 2025



Illinois
Department of Commerce
& Economic Opportunity
JB Pritzker, Governor

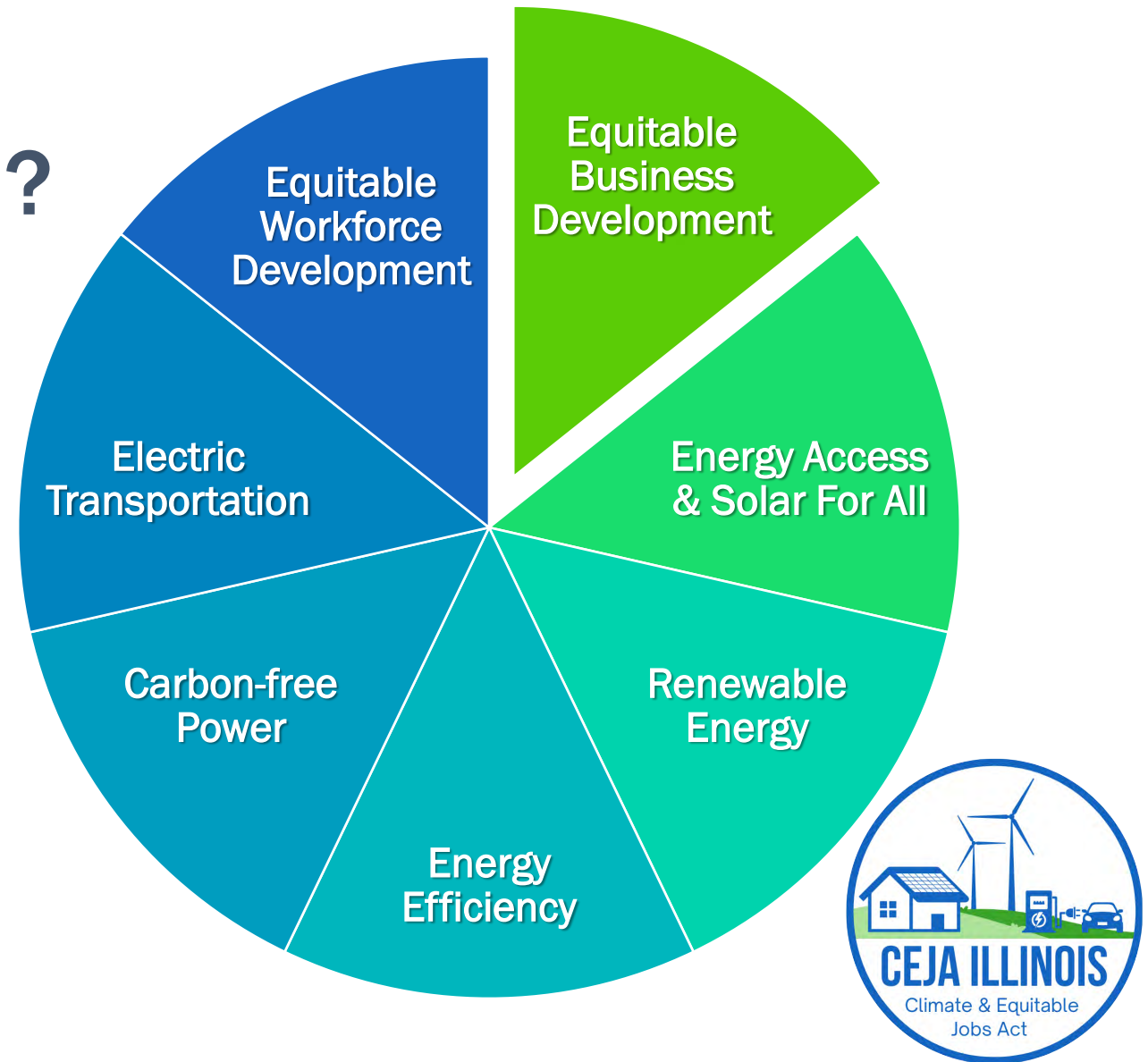
Overview & Objectives

1. CEJA & DCEO CEJA Programs
2. Office of Energy & Business Utility Grant Programs Status
3. DCEO Grant Process
4. Building Your Capital Stack with IL's Clean Energy Ecosystem



What is the Climate and Equitable Jobs Act (CEJA) ?

Comprehensive energy legislation that centers equity and puts Illinois on track to achieve 100 % renewable energy by 2050.



CEJA Workforce and Contractor Programs*

Economic Development Jobs & Environmental Justice (OEBU)



Coal to Solar



Energy Transition
Community Grant
\$40M/yr



Equitable Energy
Future Grant
Up to \$25.5M/yr



Solar Energy
Sovereignty Grant
Up to \$8.5M

\$74M

Workforce training programs (OET)



Clean Jobs
Workforce Network
\$21M/yr.



Climate Works
Pre-apprenticeship
\$9M/yr



Returning Resident
Clean Jobs
\$6M/yr



FEJA
workforce
programs

Workforce support programs (OET)



Energy Transition
Navigators
\$6M/yr.



Energy Transition
Barrier Reduction
\$15M/yr

\$57M+

Contractor support programs (OEIT)



Contractor
Incubator
\$21M/yr.



Contractor
Primes Accelerator
\$9M/yr.

\$30M+

Councils & Boards

- Energy Workforce Advisory Council
- Clean Energy Jobs and Justice Fund \$1M

* Each grant opportunity is awarded annually. Closed grants have awarded all available grants for the year, although some grantees may be open to additional partners. Please note that open grants may only be open for certain areas. Refer to [CEJA Updates & Program Status \(illinois.gov\)](https://www.illinois.gov/ceja/updates) for currently available grants and open areas.



CEJA Workforce Programs

Clean Jobs Workforce Network Programs

Provides training to prepare people for entry level clean energy jobs located in 14 regional hubs across Illinois (Kankakee beginning in 2025)

Energy Transition Navigator Program

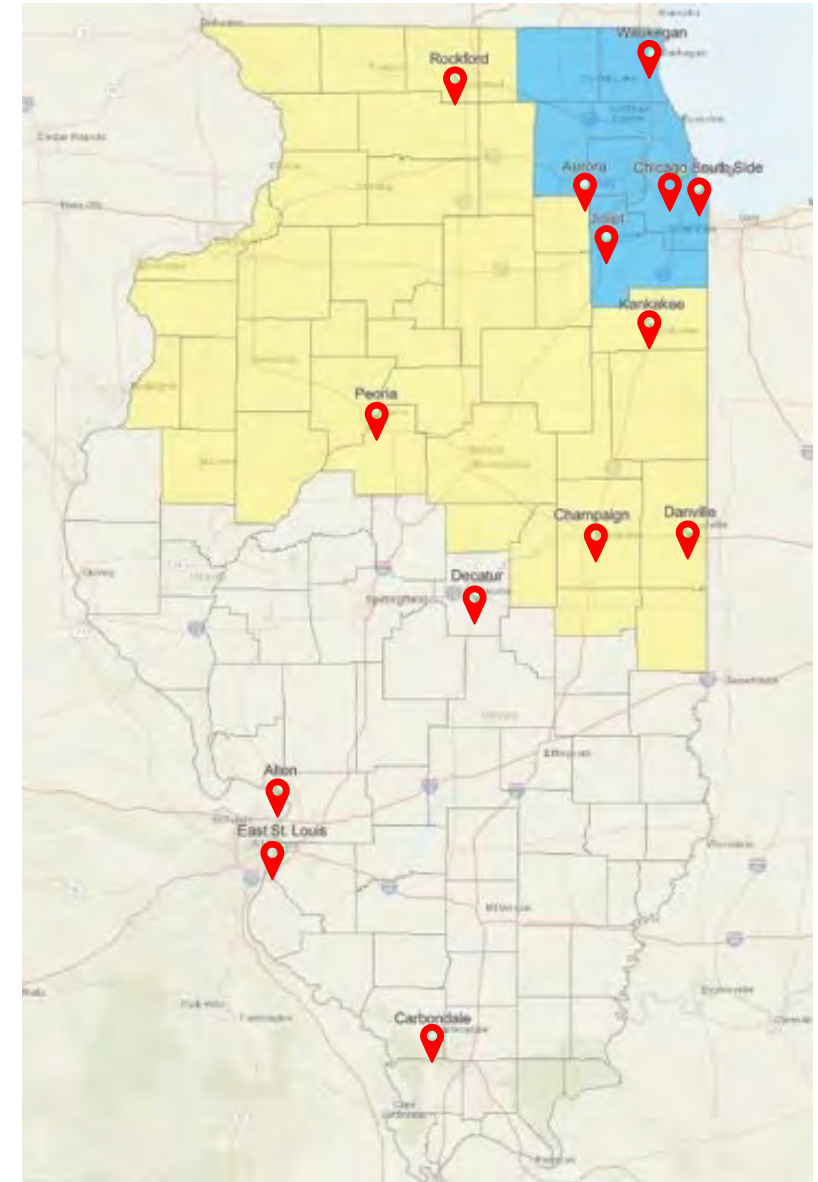
This program acts as the recruiting arm for the Climate Works Pre-apprenticeship Program and the Clean Jobs Workforce Network Program.

Climate Works Pre-Apprenticeship Program

Provides training to prepare people for Department of Labor Registered Apprenticeship Programs in the construction and building trades with an emphasis on clean energy.

Returning Residents

This program will provide training within Illinois Department of Corrections (DOC) correctional facilities to prepare people in custody for entry-level clean energy jobs.





CEJA Contractor Programs

Contractor Incubator Program

The Clean Energy Contractor Incubator Program (“Contractor Incubator Program”) will provide eligible contractors with **access to low-cost capital, support for obtaining insurance, assistance registering to become vendors for state incentive programs, connections with firms hiring contractors and subcontractors, and other vital services.** Participating contractors will receive **training, mentoring and support** to build their businesses, connect to projects, compete for capital, and execute clean energy-related project installations and subcontracts.

\$21 million per year will be allocated for the program, subject to appropriation.

Applicants have been identified for: Chicago South Side, Chicago West/Southwest Sides, Rockford, Aurora, Joliet, Peoria, Decatur

Applications are under review for: Waukegan, Champaign, Danville, Carbondale, East St. Louis , Alton



CEJA Contractor Programs

Contractor Primes Accelerator Program

The Clean Energy Primes Contractor Accelerator Program will provide **multi-year one-on-one coaching to assist contractor participants in developing 5-year business plans** and growing their businesses.

Participating contractors will also be eligible for **operational support grants** and will have **access to capital for upfront project costs and pre-development funding**.

Participants will receive **mentorship, assistance preparing bids and Request for Proposal** applications, assistance **connecting to state and federal programs**, and more.

\$9 million per year will be allocated for this program, subject to appropriation.

Applications are currently under review for North, Central, and Southern Regions





Equitable Energy Future Grant Program (EEF)

The Equitable Energy Future Grant (EEF) provides **\$25.5 million annually in pre-development funding** to eligible contractors to support the development of renewable energy and energy efficiency projects benefitting historically disadvantaged communities.

Eligible Applicants:

- Illinois Power Agency certified Equity Eligible Contractors
- Contractors that meet equity building criteria based on submitted CEJA Ecosystem Utilization Plan (CEUP).

Grant funds can be utilized to fund an array of activities taking place during Phase 1: Planning and Feasibility and/or Phase 2: Pre-Development

Will re-open in 2025 and will accept applications until the funds have been exhausted or until the end of the calendar year.



Professional Services



Applications & Deposits



Purchase/Lease Land



Permits & Zoning



Interconnection Costs



Equipment & Supplies



Marketing & Outreach



Staff & Operations



Workforce Development

Allowable costs include but are not limited to the items above.



Community Solar Energy Sovereignty Grant Program (CSES)

CSES provides \$8.5 million annually in pre-development funding to support activities related to community solar projects and/or development of programs or entities to assist in the long-term governance, management, and maintenance of community solar projects.

Eligible Applicants:

- Community-based Organizations (CBOs)
- A public entity (if no CBO is the surrounding community has the ability/capacity)
- Technical service provider in partnership with a CBO

Grant funds can be utilized to fund an array of activities taking place during Phase 1: Planning and Feasibility and/or Phase 2: Pre-Development

Will re-open in 2025 and will accept applications until the funds have been exhausted or until the end of the calendar year.



Marketing & Outreach



Purchase/Lease Land



Financing



Community Ownership Model Development



Staff & Operations



Site Identification & Assessments



Interconnection Costs



Permits, Zoning, Fixing Code Violations



Equipment & Supplies

Allowable costs include but are not limited to the items above.

Energy Transition Community Grant (ETCG)

ETCG provides grant funds to support economic development in communities impacted by a closure or reduced operation of a fossil fuel power plant or coal mine.

Eligible Applicants:

- Local units of government within 30 miles of a closed or closing plant/mine. Including municipalities, counties, school districts, or other taxing districts.
- Areas containing a fossil fuel, nuclear, or coal mine that was or will be closed/operations reduced within 6 years of grant application

Grant funds can be utilized to fund an array of economic development activities to redevelop, revitalize, and support the local workforce community.



**Workforce
Development**



**Financial
Assistance**



**Public
Infrastructure**



**Environmental
Clean Up**



**Grants &
Investment**



**Affordable
Housing**



**Community
Health**

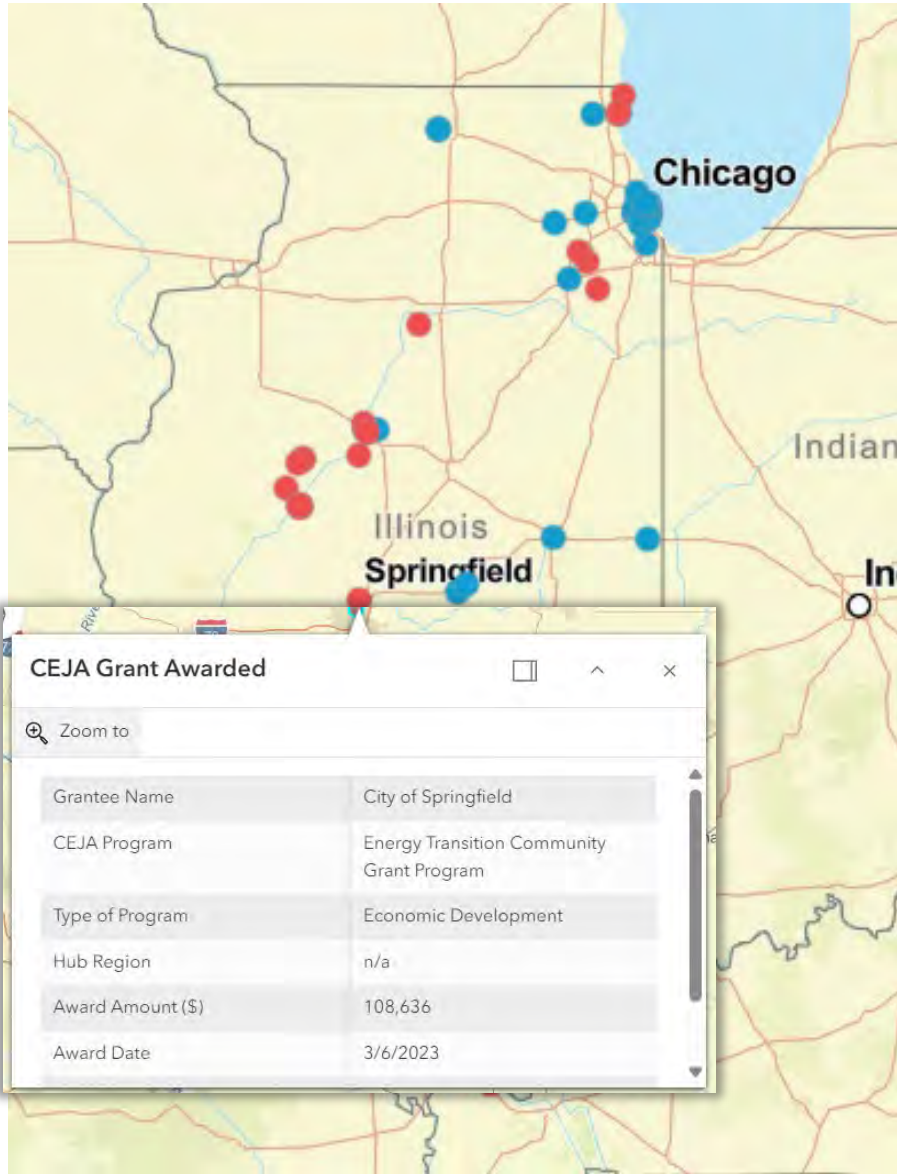


**Commercial
Redevelopment**



**Community
Planning**

Allowable costs include but are not limited to the items above.



DCEO CEJA Map

Select any of the blue or red dots to access information about each DCEO CEJA grantee.

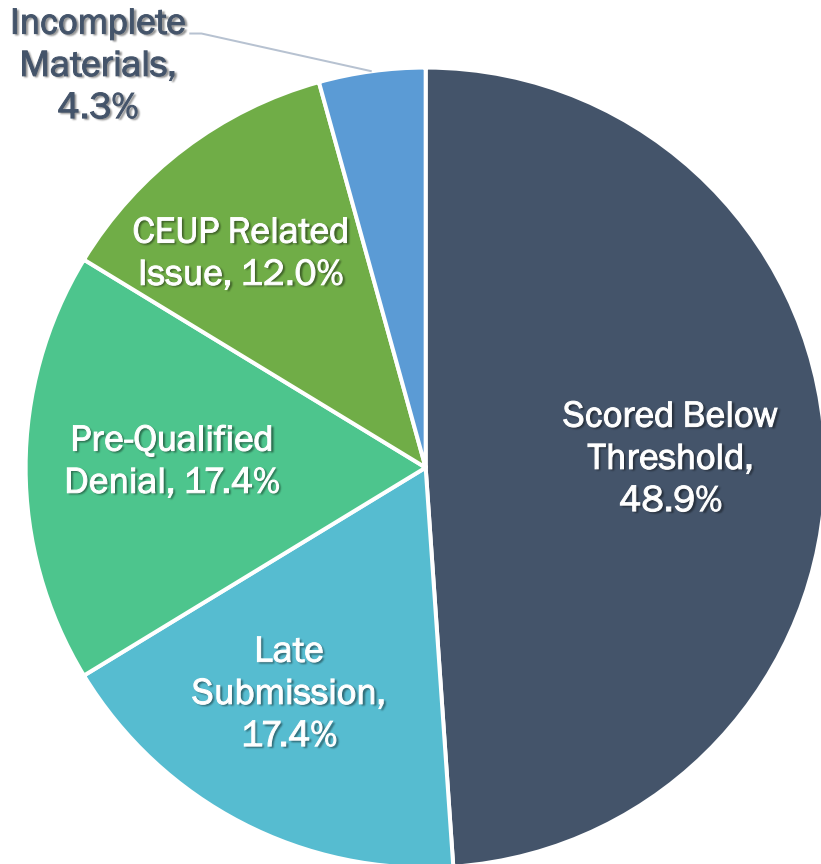
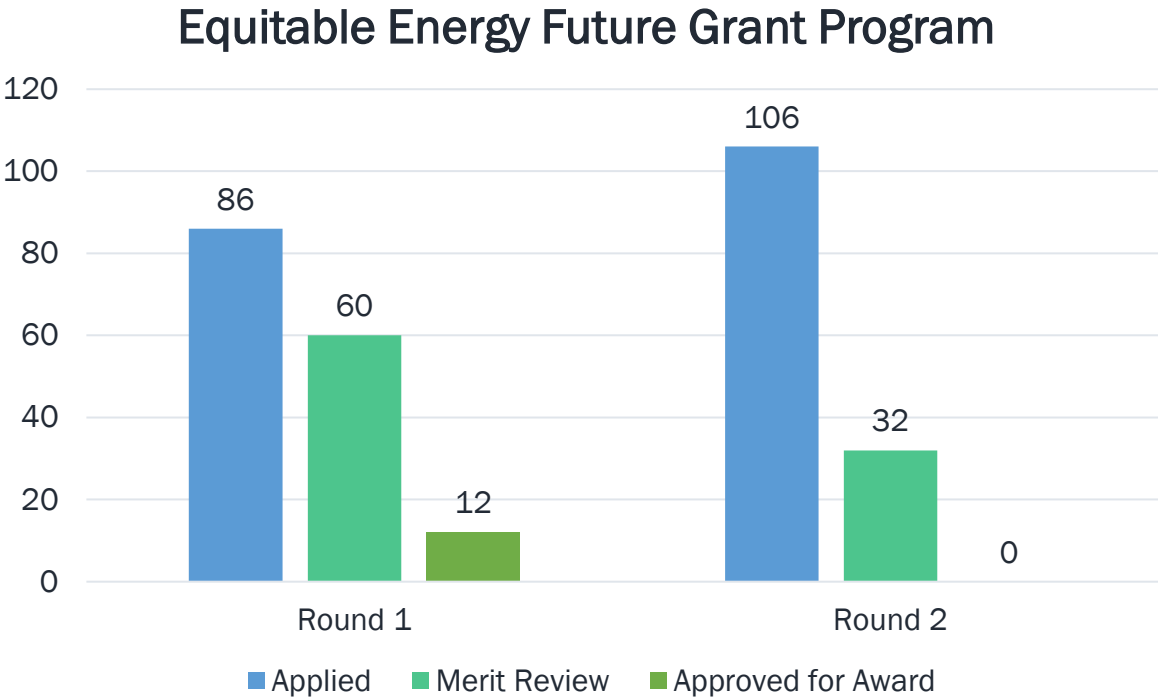
- Workforce/Contractor Development Programs
- Economic/Community Development Programs

This resource can help identify workforce or potential partners in each region.

DCEO CEJA Map: dceo.illinois.gov/ceja/map



Equitable Energy Future – Grant Results



Amount Awarded **\$10,299,581.65**

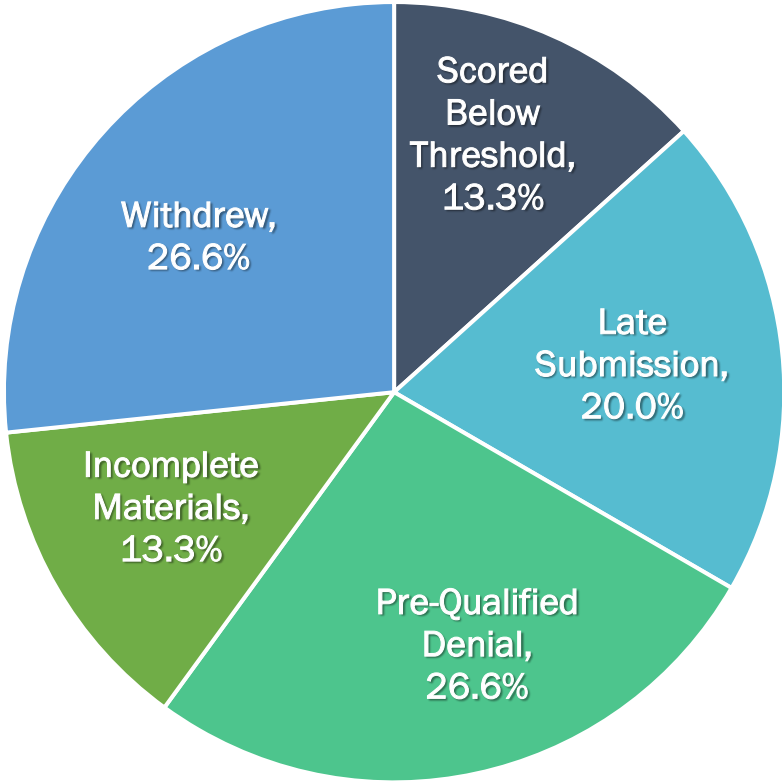
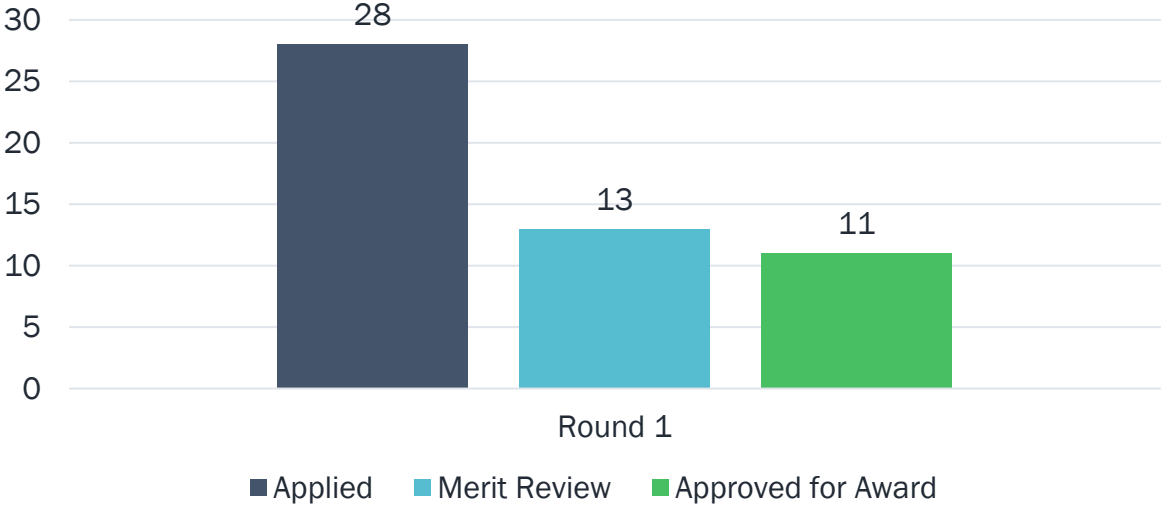
Breakdown of Application Denials Round 1

**Equitable Energy Future Round 2 is currently being processed*

**CEJA Ecosystem Utilization Plan (CEUP)*

Community Solar Energy – Grant Results

Community Solar Energy Sovereignty Grant Program

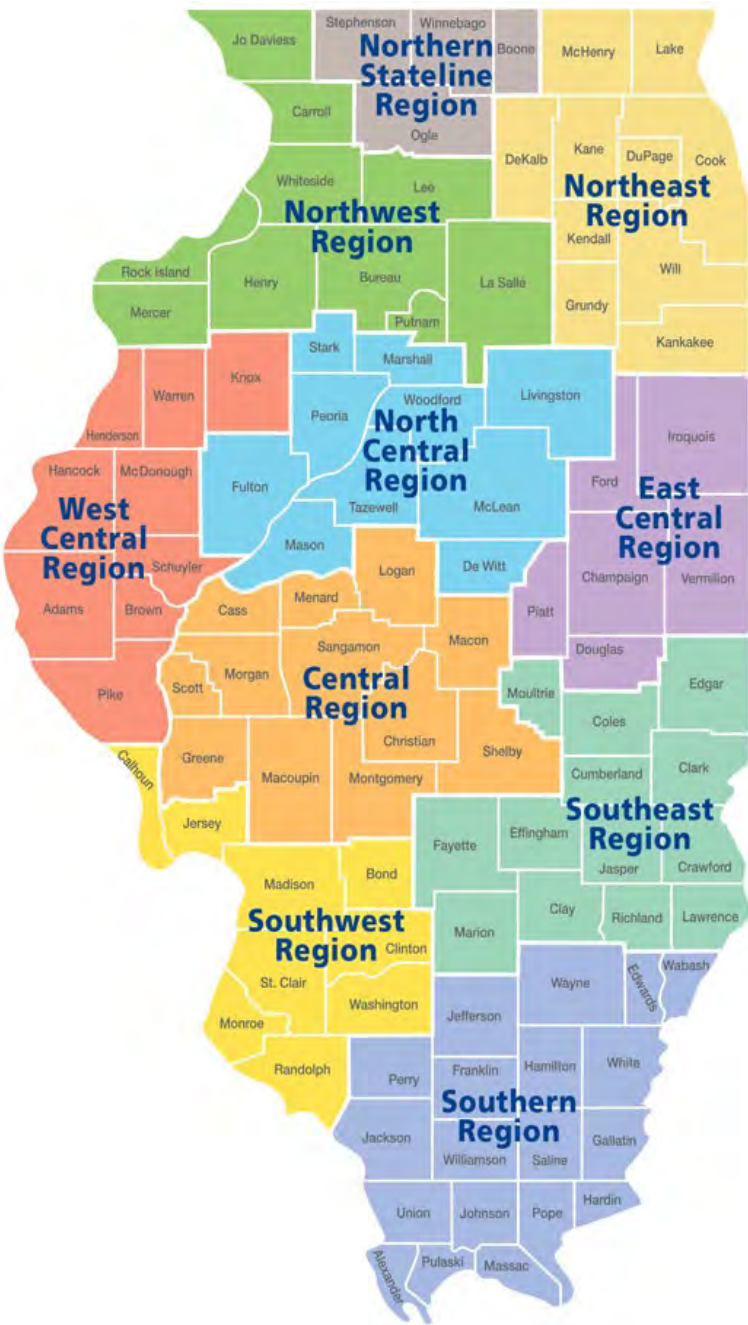


Amount
Awarded **\$7,667,625**

Breakdown of Application Denials
Round 1

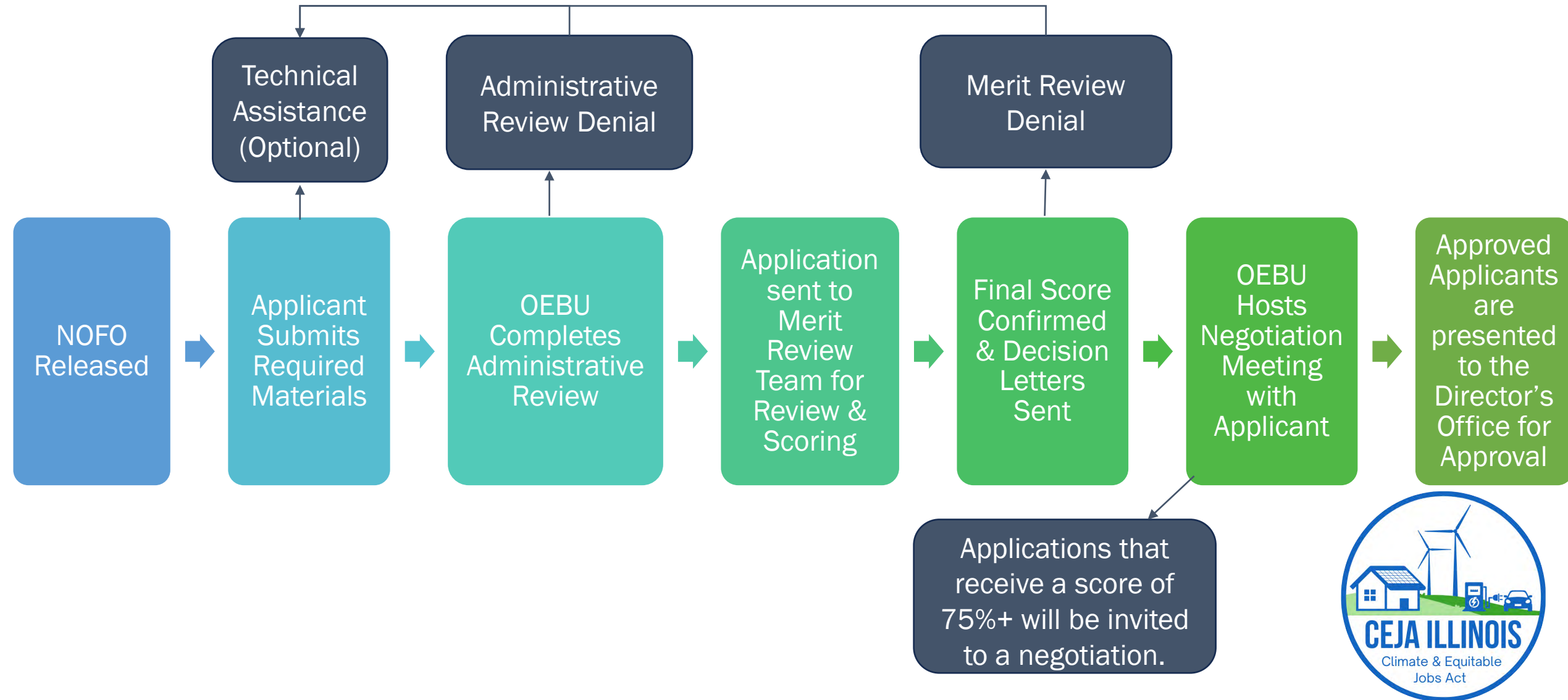
Grant Award Project Locations

Economic Development Region	Equitable Energy Future Grant Program	Community Solar Energy Sovereignty	Energy Transition Community Grant	Total
Central	1	1	8	10
East Central	0	0	0	0
North Central	2	1	10	13
Northeast	7	9	7	23
Northern Stateline	1	0	0	1
Northwest	0	0	1	1
Southeast	0	0	5	5
Southern	0	0	18	18
Southwest	1	0	4	5
West Central	0	0	0	0
Total	12	11	53	76



**Based on Round 1 of all programs.
Round 2 of EEF is currently under review. Round 2 of CSES and ETCG will begin in 2025*

Grant Process



Grant Process

NOSA
created &
signed by
Applicant



Office of Grants
Management
Develops Grant
Agreement



DCEO Legal
Reviews and
Approves
Grant
Agreement



Grantee
Signs Grant
Agreement



DCEO
Accounting
Reviews and
Approves
Grant
Agreement



Grant Award
sent to the
Comptroller's
Office to
Obligate the
Award



2024 DCEO Improvements

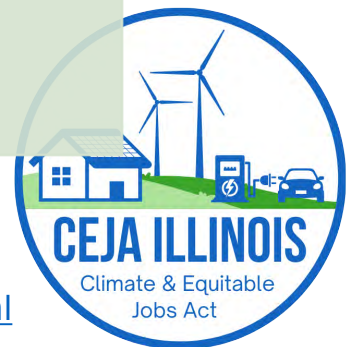
OEBU

- Increased Staff Dedicated to Administrative Review
- Increased Merit Review Teams
- Issue NOSAs upon
- Release of NOFO Scoring Sheet

Other DCEO Teams

- Office of Accountability expanded virtual office hours, pre-qualification and grant-based live and recorded training, and accessible resources.

Recorded Trainings and Resources: <https://dceo.illinois.gov/aboutdceo/grantopportunities/learning-library.html>
Virtual Office Hours, Live Trainings and More: <https://dceo.illinois.gov/aboutdceo/grantopportunities/upcoming-grant-trainings.html>



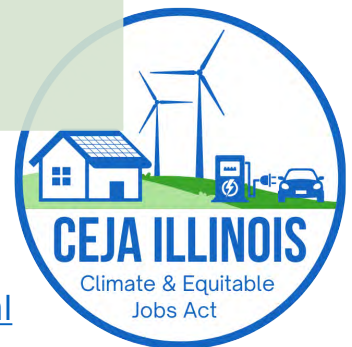
2025 DCEO Goals

OEBU

- Increased communications re: application status
- Negotiation meetings involving OEBU, the applicant, and OGM

Other DCEO Teams

- Office of Accountability continue improving quality of information published and continue hosting virtual office hour, pre-qualification and grant-based trainings
- Hiring staff across DCEO offices



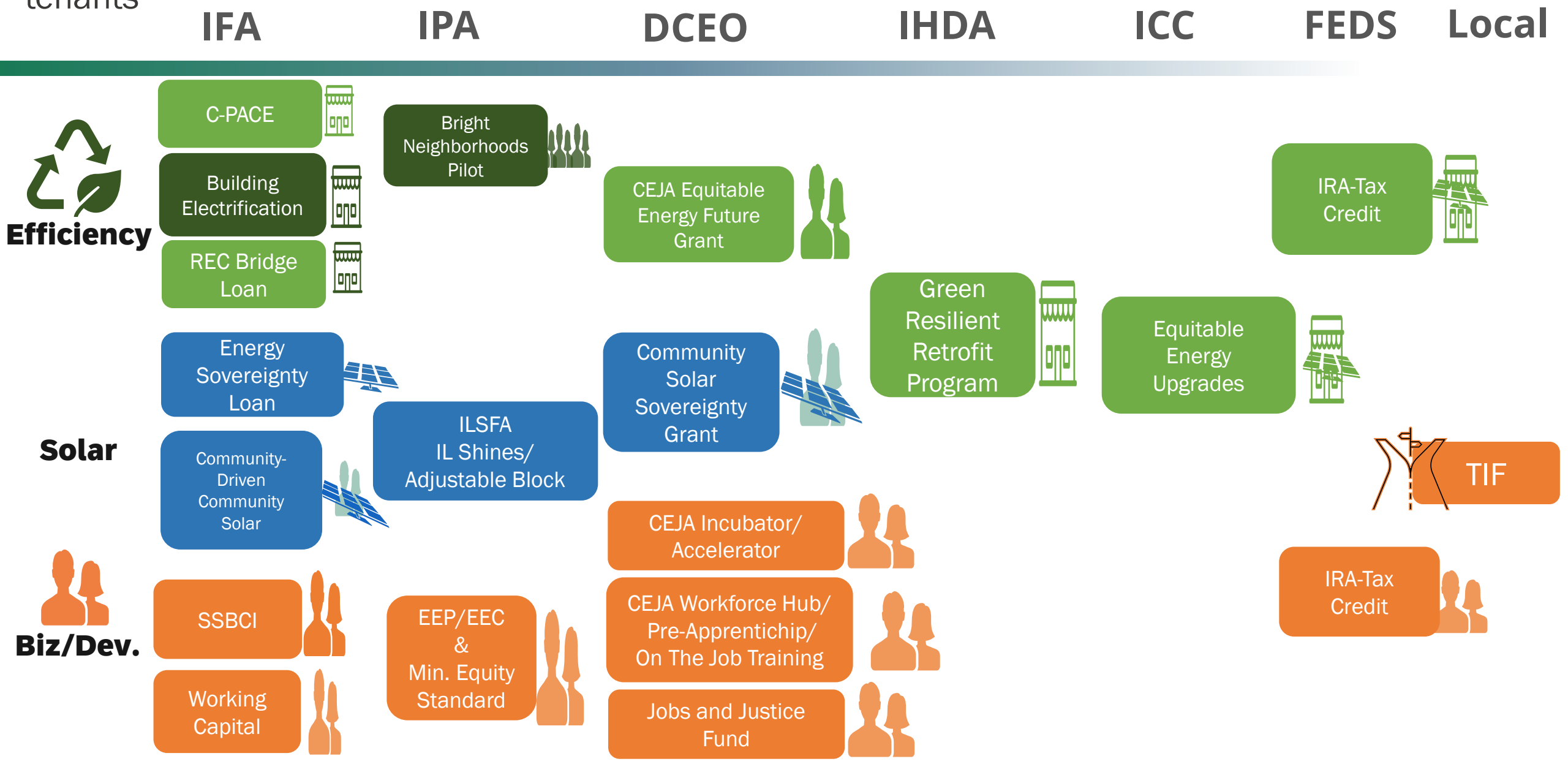


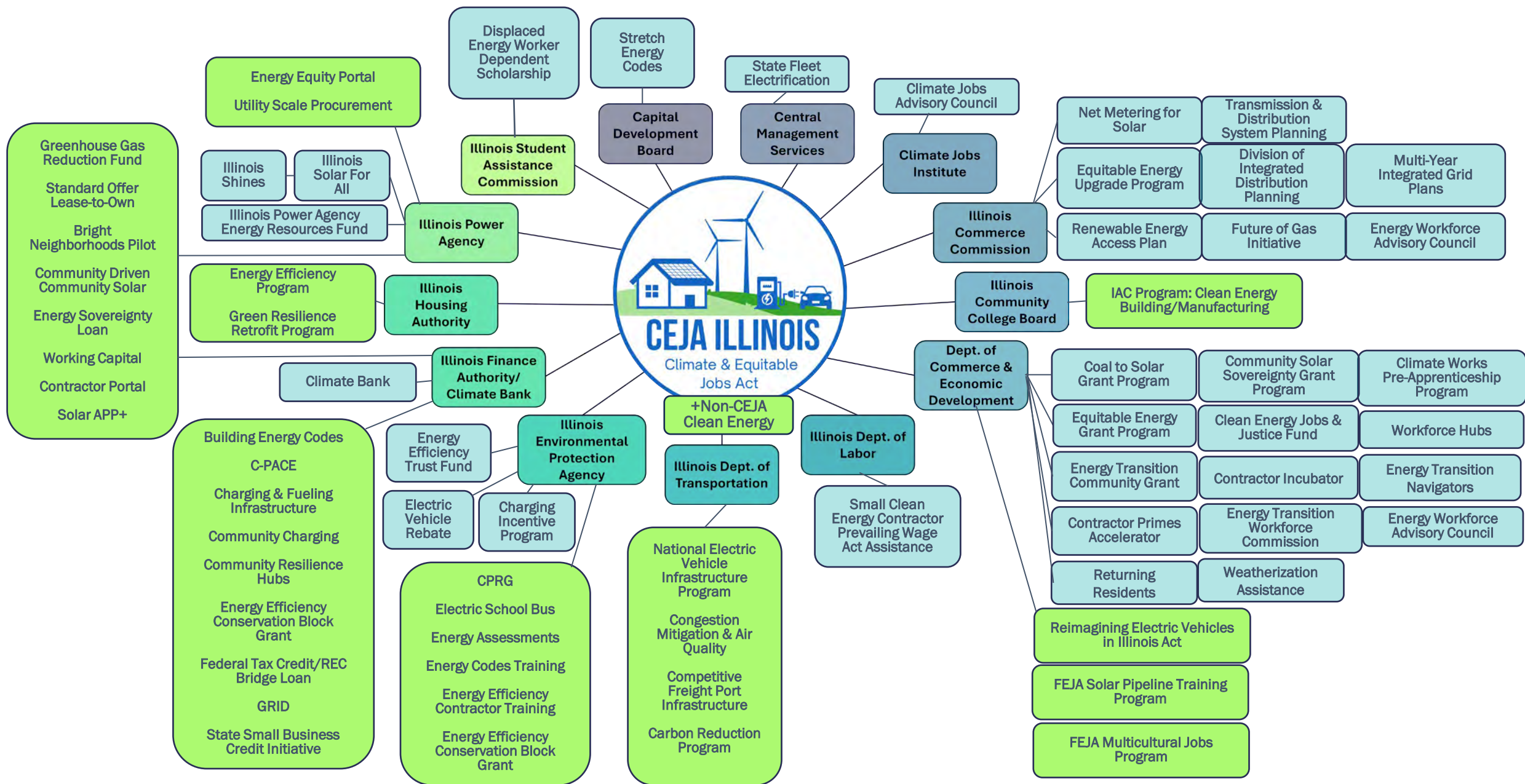
**When spiders unite,
they can tie down a lion**

-Ethiopian Proverb



Project Scenario: Non-profit organization, Net Zero/Near Net Zero Retrofit, located in and/or serves EJ/R3/DAC, mixed use commercial/residential building with market rate and low-income tenants









**In the next 60 days, what
will you do to advance your
clean energy project?**





Contact Us

CEO.OEBU@illinois.gov



Illinois
Department of Commerce
& Economic Opportunity
JB Pritzker, Governor

ILLINOIS FINANCE AUTHORITY/CLIMATE BANK

SSBCI Loan Participation Program
Energy Efficiency Revolving Loan Fund

07/25/2024



**THE IFA WAS DESIGNATED AS THE
CLIMATE BANK BY CEJA**



CLIMATE BANK PURPOSE

- (1) the distribution of the benefits of clean energy in an equitable manner;
 - (2) making clean energy accessible to all; and
 - (3) *accelerating the investment of private capital into clean energy projects in a manner reflective of the geographic, racial, ethnic, gender, and income-level diversity of the State.*
- Climate & Equitable Jobs Act,
2021 (20 ILCS 3501/850-15)

Update on Solar for All

EPA has approved the Illinois Climate Bank's Solar for All Expansion Workplan - a major step forward for the program.



The Climate Bank secured \$11 million from US EPA for IL Solar for All Community Solar projects. The Illinois Power Agency has begun its process to distribute the funding.



The funded projects will benefit income-eligible households and provide new opportunities for developers and contractors.



The Climate Bank is continuing its work to secure Solar for All funding and implement the programs in its Workplan.





In May 2024, U.S. Department of Energy (US DOE) allocated \$15,963,220 to the Illinois Climate Bank through an agreement with Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA) for purposes of establishing an Energy Efficiency Revolving Loan Fund.



90% of the funds allocated (\$14,366,898) have been received by the Illinois Climate Bank and are available for project use.



The loan is intended to help finance energy efficiency projects throughout Illinois.

Energy Efficiency Revolving Loan Fund (EE RLF) Capitalization Grant Program

- The fund will provide Direct Bridge Loans to finance costs eligible for **federal IRA Tax Credits/Direct Pay provisions** for projects in Illinois that need financing for qualifying energy efficiency projects.
- Owners can use these loans to **bridge the gap between project installation and receiving their Direct Pay/Tax Credit**. The loan shall be repaid upon receipt of its refundable tax credit payment or incentive payment or maturity, whichever occurs first.
- For projects approved for the Illinois Solar For All (ILSFA) Program, the Bridge Loan will also finance the eligible ILSFA incentive.

Buildings Eligible for the EE RLF Bridge Loan include:

- Nonprofit- and publicly-owned commercial buildings,
- Privately- owned commercial buildings, and
- Multifamily buildings with **five or more units** located in Illinois.
- *Single-family residential projects are not eligible for financing for this program.*

Units of local government*



Other Public & Non-Profit



Commercial Buildings and Clean Energy Project Developers



Borrowers must be eligible for Direct Pay or Tax Credit provisions pursuant to Inflation Reduction Act **and/or** Illinois Solar For All Program Incentives

*Pursuant to Public Acts [103-0187](#) and [103-1023](#), units of local government may borrow directly from the Illinois Finance Authority/Climate Bank.

To qualify, the project *must* address at least one of the following:

1. Energy efficiency of the building or facility
2. Physical comfort of the building or facility occupants
3. Quality of the air in the building or facility

Solar + energy storage or **solar + energy efficiency** (but not solar on its own) projects meet these requirements.

Audits

- Each project **must be recommended by a qualifying Energy Audit** and demonstrate that anticipated lifetime energy savings will equal or exceed the total cost of such improvements.
- Department of Energy requires the use of software that uses **BuildingSync** for all commercial energy audits.
- Check with your utility – energy audits may be available for free or low cost.

Bridge Loan Program Details

Key Features

- **Loan Amounts:** Ranging from \$50,000 to \$1,000,000.
- **Term:** Up to 24 months.
- **Interest Rate:** Below market, low interest rate (6% per annum or less).
- **Fees:** Upfront origination fee capped at 2%.
- **Payments:**
 - Interest shall be due at time of the final payment of principal on the Bridge Loan or at maturity, whichever occurs first.
 - The Borrower shall be required to make payment on principal within 30 days of receipt of any refundable tax credit payment or Illinois Solar for All project incentive for the amount received or at maturity, whichever occurs first.

In certain cases, the fund can participate with Lenders to provide additional financing for project costs, to be repaid with the energy savings, Illinois Shines Solar Renewable Energy Credit payments, or other incentives not included in the Bridge Loan.

***All Eligible Projects must comply with laborer wage and benefit requirements and reporting under the Davis-Bacon Act.**

Pre-applications are now open, please submit your applications [here](#).

The Building Energy Resource Hub is screening and answering questions. If you need help filling out your pre-application or have any questions, please contact the Hub help desk [here](#).



State Small Business Credit Initiative (“SSBCI”)

SSBCI:

- is a federal program that empowers small businesses to access capital.
- provides increased support for markets that have been underserved or discriminated against.
- focuses on support for Socially and Economically Disadvantaged Communities and Individuals (SEDI) as well as Very Small Businesses, with less than 10 employees (VSB).
- The Climate Bank has received \$20 million for SSBCI-funded programs from DCEO, the implementing agency.



Examples of Eligible Projects



ELIGIBLE PROJECTS

- Clean air/clean water projects and wastewater treatment
- Production/installation/servicing of wind/hydro/solar power equipment
- Production/installation/servicing of electric vehicles and EV charging stations
- Clean energy generation, alternative fuels, and new battery technologies
- Energy conservation
- Broadband expansion for rural and other underserved communities
- Other efforts providing environmental benefit/counter the impacts of climate change



Applicable Borrower Criteria



1. No more than 750 employees



2. Must operate in the State of Illinois



3. Be in good standing with the Illinois Secretary of State



4. Clear of any back taxes



5. No bankruptcies, judgements, or liens in the past 5 years

A business is considered “SEDI-owned” if it meets any of the criteria below:



Individual Status:

Owners of the business have had credit access diminished due to:

- Member of a group subjected to racial/ethnic prejudice or cultural bias Gender,
- Veteran status,
- Limited English proficiency,
- Disability,
- Membership of an Indian Tribe, or
- Membership of an underserved community



Residence:

Individuals have had credit access diminished due to residence in:

- A U.S. territory,
- A rural community,
- A community undergoing economic transitions, or
- An environment isolated from the mainstream of American society



Business Status:

A business enterprise that:

- Is owned by individuals who reside in CDFI Investment Areas,
- Will build, open, or operate in a CDFI Investment Area, or
- Is located in a CDFI Area

Participation Loan Program Type – Standard

IFA can participate at the lesser of:

- 25% of the Total Project
- 50% of the Loan
- \$2 Million

Loan Terms:



Maximum term of 7 years



2% Per annum



For each \$50k participated, there should be one full time job estimated to be created or at-risk jobs to be retained in the next two years

IFA can participate at the lesser of:

- 50% of the Total Project
- 50% of the Loan
- \$2 Million

Loan Terms:



Maximum term of 7 years



1% Per annum

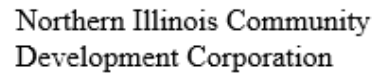


For each \$65k participated, there should be one full time job estimated to be created or at-risk jobs to be retained in the next two years

Examples of Working Capital Participations

1. \$375,000 working capital term loan (Peoria developer) SSBCI 50% participation at 1%.
2. \$400,000 working capital term loan (Chicagoland developer), SSBCI 50% participation at 1%.
3. \$150,000 working capital term loan (Rockford developer/installer) SSBCI 50% participation at 1%.

SSBCI Approved Lenders





We want to hear from you!

Maria Colangelo
Senior Vice President
mcolangelo@il-fa.com
www.il-fa.com

Claire Brinley
Program Manager
cbrinley@il-fa.com
www.il-fa.com

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Illinois Shines Program Metrics

Presented by Illinois Shines
Program Administrator



Agenda

1 History of Illinois Shines
Under FEJA and CEJA

2 Project Metrics

3 Participation Metrics

4 Equity Eligible Contractor
Metrics

5 Advance of Capital

6 Questions





History of Illinois Shines Under FEJA and CEJA

What is Illinois Shines?

Program Overview

- Illinois Shines is a state-administered incentive program supporting the development of new solar energy generation in Illinois.

How do Illinois Shines Incentives Work?

- The Illinois Shines program incentivizes Approved Vendors to develop solar projects by payment for RECs, or Renewable Energy Credits. A single REC is equal to 1 megawatt hour of renewable energy produced by a solar project.
 - Illinois Shines has set incentive amounts that are paid for RECs produced by solar projects participating in the Program. The incentives are paid to participating Approved Vendors and savings are passed on to customers.



Small DG



Large DG



Traditional
Community Solar



Community-Driven
Community Solar



Equity Eligible
Contractor



Public Schools

History of Illinois Shines

The Illinois Shines program (statutorily known as the Adjustable Block Program) was created under the Future Energy Jobs Act of 2016 ("FEJA") and expanded under the Climate and Equitable Jobs Act ("CEJA") in 2021.

Future Energy Jobs Act ("FEJA")

- FEJA helped facilitate the growth of solar in Illinois from 80 megawatts ("MW") to 2000 MW.
- Over 670 MW of new distributed generation and community solar developed under FEJA.

Challenges

- Illinois Shines capacity largely exhausted, due to high participation levels.
- Benefits of the clean energy economy weren't being spread equitably across Illinois.

Clean Energy Jobs Act ("CEJA")

- CEJA was passed by the General Assembly and signed into law by Governor Pritzker on September 15, 2021.
- The Program began operating under CEJA in December 2021.
- This law addressed previous funding issues and expanded the Illinois Shines program.
- The passage of CEJA focused on expanding the Program and bringing important equity requirements to the Program.

Illinois Shines Under FEJA vs. CEJA

FEJA (Public Act 99-0906)

3 Project Types

10 kW
Small Distributed
Generation ("DG")

10 kW-2 MW
Large Distributed
Generation

2 MW
Community Solar

\$235 Million Renewable Portfolio Standards ("RPS")
Budget (across all Programs & procurements)

CEJA (Public Act 102-0662 Passed September 2021)

6 Project Types

25 kW
Small DG

25 kW-5 MW
Large DG

5 MW
Community Solar

≤25 kW-5 MW
Public Schools

≤ 10 kW-5 MW
Community-Driven
Community Solar

≤ 25 kW-5 MW
Equity Eligible
Contractor

\$557 Million RPS Budget (across all Programs &
procurements)

Equity & Prevailing Wage Requirements

- Prevailing wage is required for projects participating in Illinois Shines (*with some exceptions)
- New Equity Eligible Contractor Block
- New Equity Eligible Workforce Requirements



Participation Metrics

Program Participation

	Program Year 2024-2025 to date (06/03/2024 - 01/31/2025)	Lifetime Program to date (2019 - 01/31/2025)
Participating Vendors		
Approved Vendors (AVs)*	193 (New this Program Year)	787 (Total Registered Vendors)
Designees	116	682
Equity Eligible Contractor (EEC) AVs*	89	145
EEC Designees	6	21
EEC Subcontractors	11	11
Minimum Equity Standard (MES) Compliance Data		
2024-25 MES Compliance Plans received	1,076	1,076
2023-24 MES Compliance Plans received	N/A	884

*Totals include Single Project Approved Vendors



Project Metrics

Program Projects

	Program Year 2024-2025 to date (06/03/2024 - 01/31/2025)	Lifetime Program to date (2019 - 01/31/2025)
ICC-Approved Applications (Project Pipeline)		
Applications	16,522 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small DG: 15,968 • Large DG: 421 • CS: 55 • CDCS: 30 • EEC CS: 35 • EEC DG: 0 • Public School CS: 2 • Public School DG: 11 	88,571 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small DG: 84,434 • Large DG: 3,461 • CS: 419 • CDCS: 99 • EEC CS: 130 • EEC DG: 1 • Public School CS: 8 • Public School DG: 19
Total MW of all applications	626.4	2,910.4
Total expected REC (Renewable Energy Credit) Delivery Quantities	22,347,312	97,522,508
Sum of Incentives Approved	\$1,027,137,429	\$5,123,072,052



Equity Eligible Contractor Metrics

Equity Eligible Contractors ("EECs")



An Equity Eligible Contractor is "a business that is majority-owned by Equity Eligible Persons ("EEPs"), or a nonprofit or cooperative that is majority-governed by eligible persons or is a natural person that is an eligible person offering personal services as an independent contractor."
([Section 1 of the Program Guidebook](#))

Equity Eligible Person:

- a) people who graduated from or are current or former participants in the Clean Jobs Workforce Network Program, the Clean Energy Contractor Incubator Program, the Illinois Climate Works Preapprenticeship Program, Returning Residents Clean Jobs Training Program, or the Clean Energy Primes Contractor Accelerator Program, and the solar training pipeline and multi-cultural jobs program created in paragraphs (a)(1) and (a)(3) of Section 16-108.21 of the Public Utilities Act;
- b) people who are graduates of or currently enrolled in the foster care system;
- c) people who were formerly incarcerated
- d) people whose primary residence is in an equity investment eligible community (energyequity.illinois.gov/resources/equity-investment-eligible-community-map.html)

Equity Eligible Contractor Metrics



	Program Year 2021 - 2022 (12/14/2021 – 5/31/2022)	Program Year 2022 - 2023 (6/1/2022 – 5/31/2023)	Program Year 2023 - 2024 (6/1/2023 – 5/31/2024)	Program Year 2024 - 2025 Program Year to Date (6/3/2024 - Today)
Projects Submitted to EEC Program Category	N/A	57	50	24
EEC Category Percentage of Program Capacity	10%	24%	21%	20%
Number of EEC AVs Certified	3	18	37	89
Advance of Capital Requests	0	0	30	2



Advance of Capital

Advance of Capital Metrics

Equity Eligible Contractor Approved Vendors can request an advance on the total Renewable Energy Credit ("REC") incentive value of a project up to 50% of the total REC Contract value for a project.

After evaluation criteria was published in December of 2023, the Illinois Power Agency has received five advance of capital requests.

- Two requests have been awarded for the amounts of:
 - \$520,000
 - \$1,950,000
- Three were not approved due to ineligibility, non-responsiveness, and being retracted.



Equity Eligible
Contractor



Advance of Capital Requirements

Eligibility Criteria

- Must be an EEC Approved Vendor in the Illinois Shines program submitting to the EEC Program category.
- Have a REC incentive value of \$1.5 million or less

How the Advance of Capital Works

- EEC Approved Vendor submits a request for advance of capital in the Program portal during Part I application submission.
- Instead of receiving the Solar Renewable Energy Credit ("SREC") incentive after project completion, a portion is provided upfront.
- The remaining incentive payment is adjusted accordingly after project completion.

Benefits for EEC Approved Vendors

- Reduces financial strain by covering a portion of project costs upfront.
- Encourages participation of diverse and small contractors in the solar industry.



Equity Eligible
Contractor



Request for Advance of Capital Template and Scoring



Equity Eligible
Contractor

Threshold Criteria	
Company Information	Employed: Full-time? Part-time?
Number of Submitted Projects	Number of Illinois Shines and Illinois Solar for All projects
Ownership Structure	List of all owners and their roles
Solar Market Participation	Solar market participation both in Illinois and elsewhere
Completed Projects	Completed projects by size, project type, and location
Other Government Funding	Source and status of other funding opportunities being pursued
Annual Revenue	Documentation showing annual revenue
Private Funding	Private financing received for other solar or non-solar projects
Additional Criteria	
Business Type(s)	MBE, WBE, veteran-owned, or disabled-owned
Partnerships	Project partners and their annual revenue
EEP Status	Challenges and difficulties associated with EEP status



Questions

**For Further Comments, Questions,
and Discussion – Please contact:**

Ola Tomaszewski

Illinois Shines Program Associate

otomaszewski@energy-solution.com

104 S. Michigan Ave., Suite 725

Chicago, IL 60603





Equity Accountability System Assessment

Kelly Turner & Ella Johnson-McGowan
February 26, 2025

Agenda

- 1. IPA Overview**
- 2. Definitions & Background**
- 3. Equity Accountability System Assessment – Scope**
- 4. Key Findings from the EAS Assessment**
- 5. The Energy Workforce Equity Portal**
- 6. What's Next?**

The Illinois Power Agency



About the IPA

Vision:

"A clean, reliable, and cost-effective energy future for residents and businesses across Illinois"

- Independent State Agency created in 2007
- Responsible for the development of an annual Electricity Procurement Plan for customers of electric utilities
- Supports the Illinois Renewable Portfolio Standard (RPS) through the development and implementation of:
 - Long-Term Renewable Resources Procurement Plan
 - Competitive procurement for utility-scale projects
 - Solar incentive programs for homes and businesses

Objectives of the IPA Act



- Establishes the objective of providing **“priority access to the clean energy economy for businesses and workers from communities that have been excluded from economic opportunities in the energy sector, have been subject to disproportionate levels of pollution, and have disproportionately experienced negative public health outcomes”**
- Directs the Agency to establish an Equity Accountability System (EAS) to ensure that underserved and disadvantaged communities have access to the opportunities created by the clean energy economy. The Act further establishes several data collection and reporting requirements, including an EAS Assessment, to improve transparency regarding who participates in and benefits from the clean energy economy.

Climate and Equitable Jobs Act (CEJA)



- Enacted in 2021, CEJA strengthens equity and diversity requirements for IPA-administered incentive programs and procurements
- Implementation of the new CEJA provisions include:
 - **Equity Accountability System (EAS)**
 - Minimum Equity Standard
 - EEC Category of Illinois Shines
 - Equity Bid Adjustments for Competitive Procurements
 - **Data Transparency and Accountability**
 - EAS Assessment
 - Racial Disparity and Availability Study
 - Energy Workforce Equity Portal

Equity Eligible Persons

The law defines **Equity Eligible Persons** as :

- (1) persons who graduate from or are current or former participants in the Clean Jobs Workforce Network Program, the Clean Energy Contractor Incubator Program, the Illinois Climate Works Pre-apprenticeship Program, Returning Residents Clean Jobs Training Program, or the Clean Energy Primes Contractor Accelerator Program, and the solar training pipeline and multi-cultural jobs program
- (2) persons who are graduates of or currently enrolled in the foster care system;
- (3) persons who were formerly incarcerated;
- (4) persons whose primary residence is in an **equity investment eligible community**.”

Equity Eligible Contractors

The law defines **Equity Eligible Contractors** as:

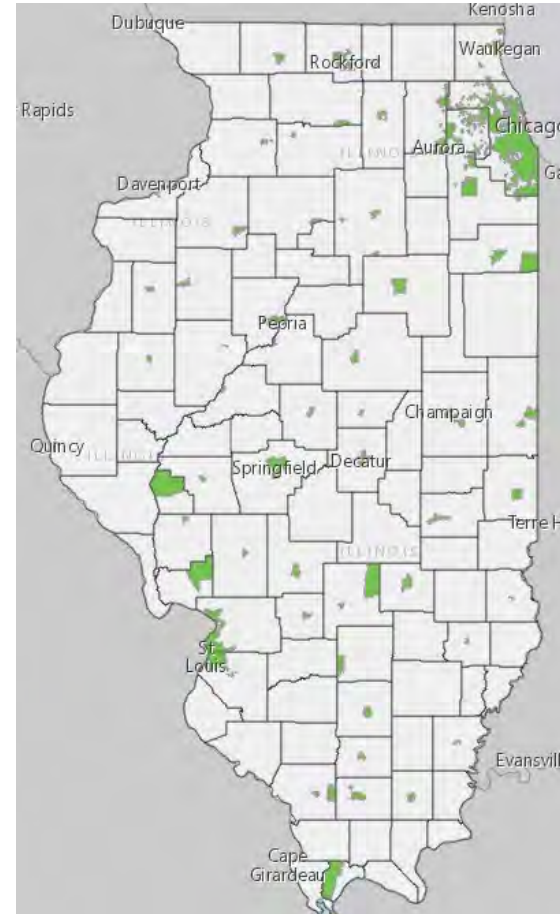
- A business that is majority-owned by equity eligible persons, or a nonprofit or cooperative that is majority-governed by equity eligible persons, or is a natural person that is an eligible person offering personal services as an independent contractor.
- The EEC Project Category is a designated capacity block available for projects submitted by EECs. CEJA requires minimum 10% of program capacity, increasing to 40% by 2030.
 - Only EEC AVs may submit projects to this category. EEC certified AVs are **NOT** limited to EEC Block.
 - EECs may apply for Advance of Capital up to 50% of contract value predating project development.

Equity Investment Eligible Community (EIEC) Map

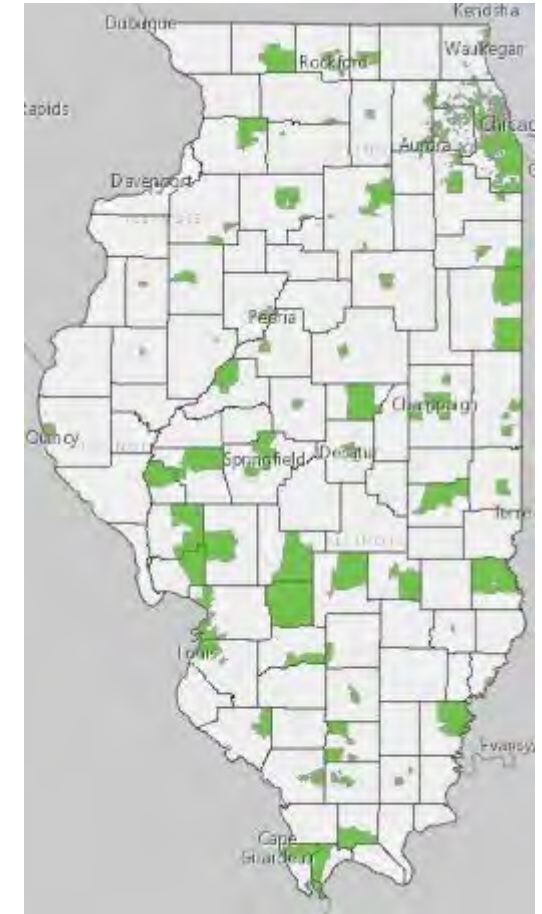
Equity investment eligible communities are geographic areas throughout Illinois which would most benefit from equitable investments by the State designed to combat discrimination.

The eligible communities are:

- (1) R3 Areas as established by the Cannabis Regulation Tax Act, where residents have historically been excluded from economic opportunities.
- (2) Environmental Justice Communities, as defined by the Illinois Power Agency, where residents have historically been subject to disproportionate burdens of pollution, including pollution from the energy sector.



EIEC Map (Feb. 2023)



EIEC Map (Current)

Minimum Equity Standard

- **Minimum Equity Standard** is the minimum percentage of project workforce for participating projects that consists of equity eligible persons or contractors.
- **For Program Year 2023-2024 and 2024-2025:**
At least 10% of project workforce for each entity must be comprised of Equity Eligible Persons or Equity Eligible Contractors.
- **By 2030:**
At least 30% of the project workforce for each entity participating in a procurement program is comprised of EEPs.

Years	Scheduled MES Increase	% Increased
2024-2025	10%	-
2025-2026	14%	+4%
2026-2027	18%	+4%
2027-2028	22%	+4%
2028-2029	26%	+4%
2029-2030	30%	+4%

Minimum Equity Standard: Recap

CEJA created an Equity Accountability System mandating minimum equity standards for certain IPA-administered renewable energy programs and procurements.

The Minimum Equity Standard (“MES”) helps ensure that the growing clean energy economy is accessible by everyone.

Under the MES, an increasing portion of the workforce of an entity participating in the IPA’s Illinois Shines Program or competitive renewable energy procurements must meet baseline equity requirements.

Equity Accountability System Assessment IPA

ILLINOIS POWER AGENCY

- The EAS Assessment evaluates the effectiveness of statutory Equity Accountability System provisions in promoting equity across the clean energy economy.
 - Part 1- Focuses on available data and insights, covering several key areas: MES Compliance Plans and Mid-Year Reports, EEC Project Category, Competitive Procurement Bid Adjustments, and the Energy Workforce Equity Portal ([Part 1 Assessment](#) published August 2024).
 - Part 2 – Focuses on delving deeper into MES Year-End Reports, MES Waivers, Workforce Demographics, Annual Reporting Data, and culminates in an overall assessment of the EAS complete with recommendations for improvements ([Part 2 Assessment](#) published February 2025).



Equity Accountability System Assessment Part II

February 14, 2025



Prepared in accordance with Section 1-75(c-15)(2)(A) of the
Illinois Power Agency Act (20 ILCS 3855)

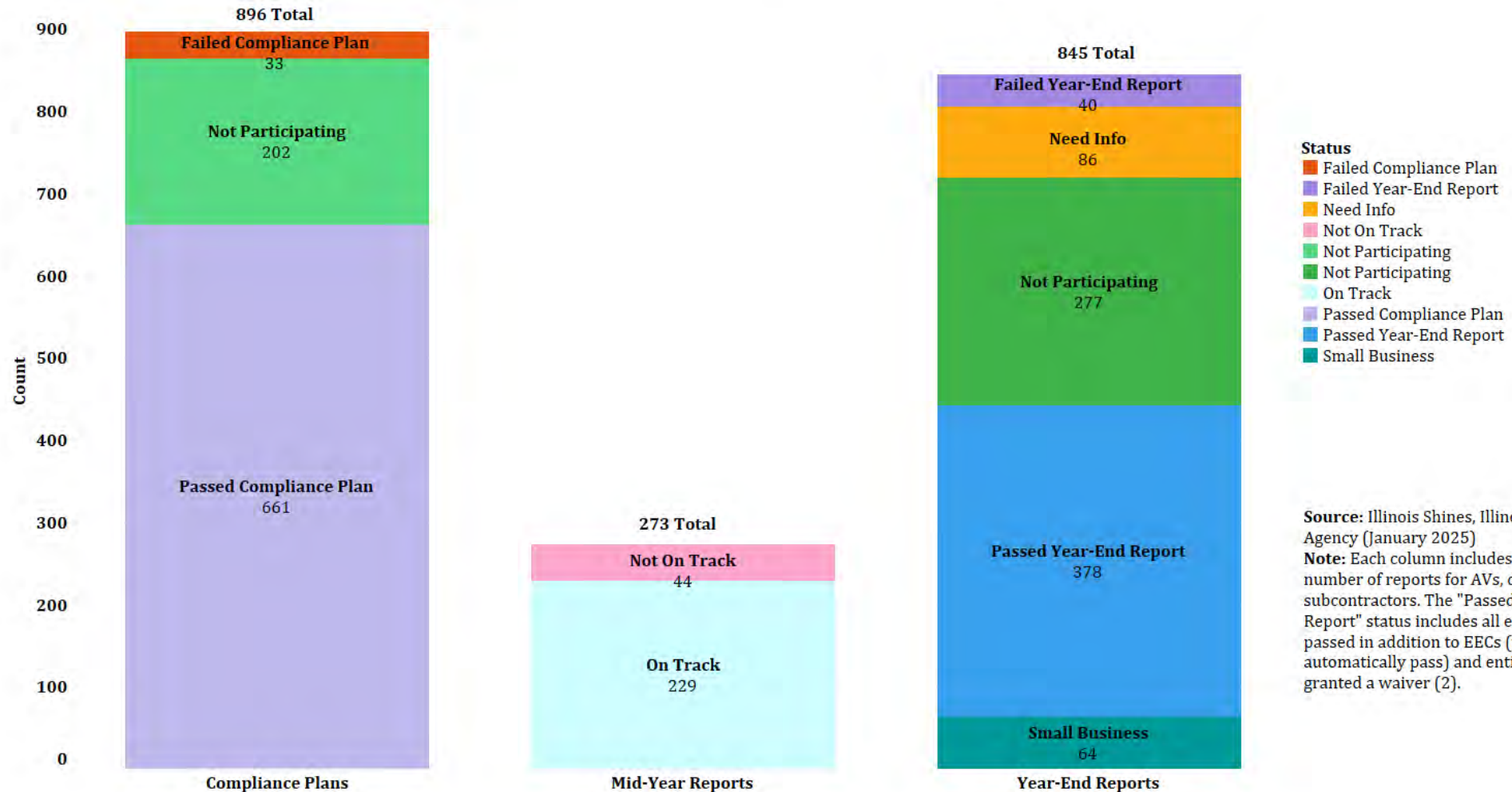
ipa.illinois.gov

EAS Assessment Findings: Workforce Demographics

Minimum Equity Standard: Compliance Overview

PY 2023-2024 MES Reports

Compliance Plans, Mid-Year Reports, and Year-End Reports from AVs, Designees, and Subcontractors in Illinois Shines



Source: Illinois Shines, Illinois Power Agency (January 2025)
Note: Each column includes the total number of reports for AVs, designees, and subcontractors. The "Passed Year-End Report" status includes all entities that passed in addition to EECs (who automatically pass) and entities that were granted a waiver (2).

Minimum Equity Standard: Compliance Overview

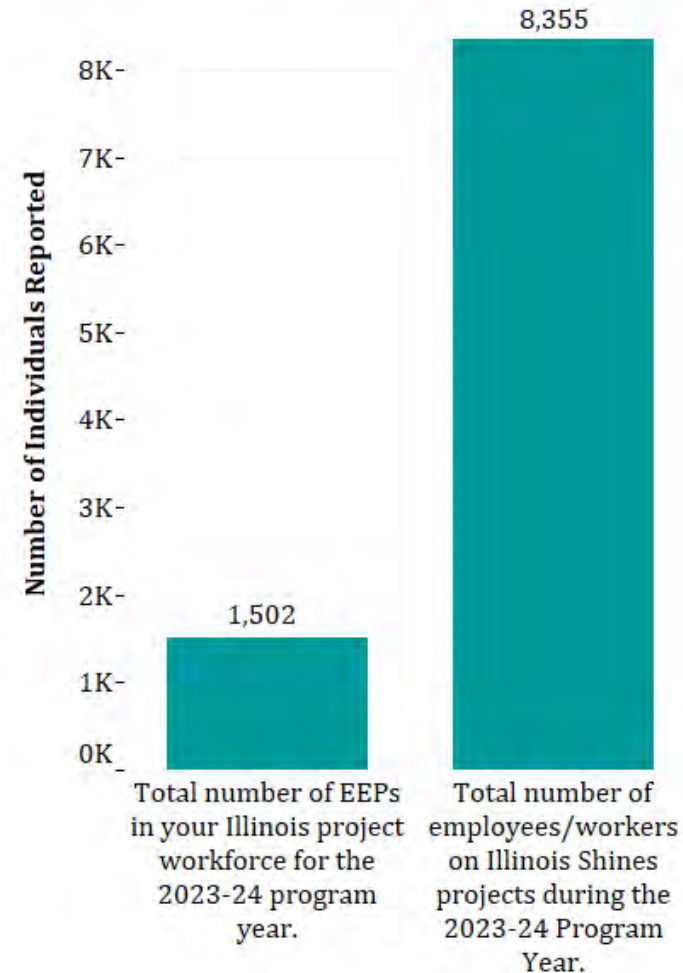
Reported Minimum Equity Standard (MES) Activity in Year-End Reports Submitted by AVs, Designees and Subcontractors in the Illinois Shines Program

Did you partner with
Equity Eligible Contractor
Approved Vendors or
Designees for project
applications associated
with your organization?

No	360
Yes	170

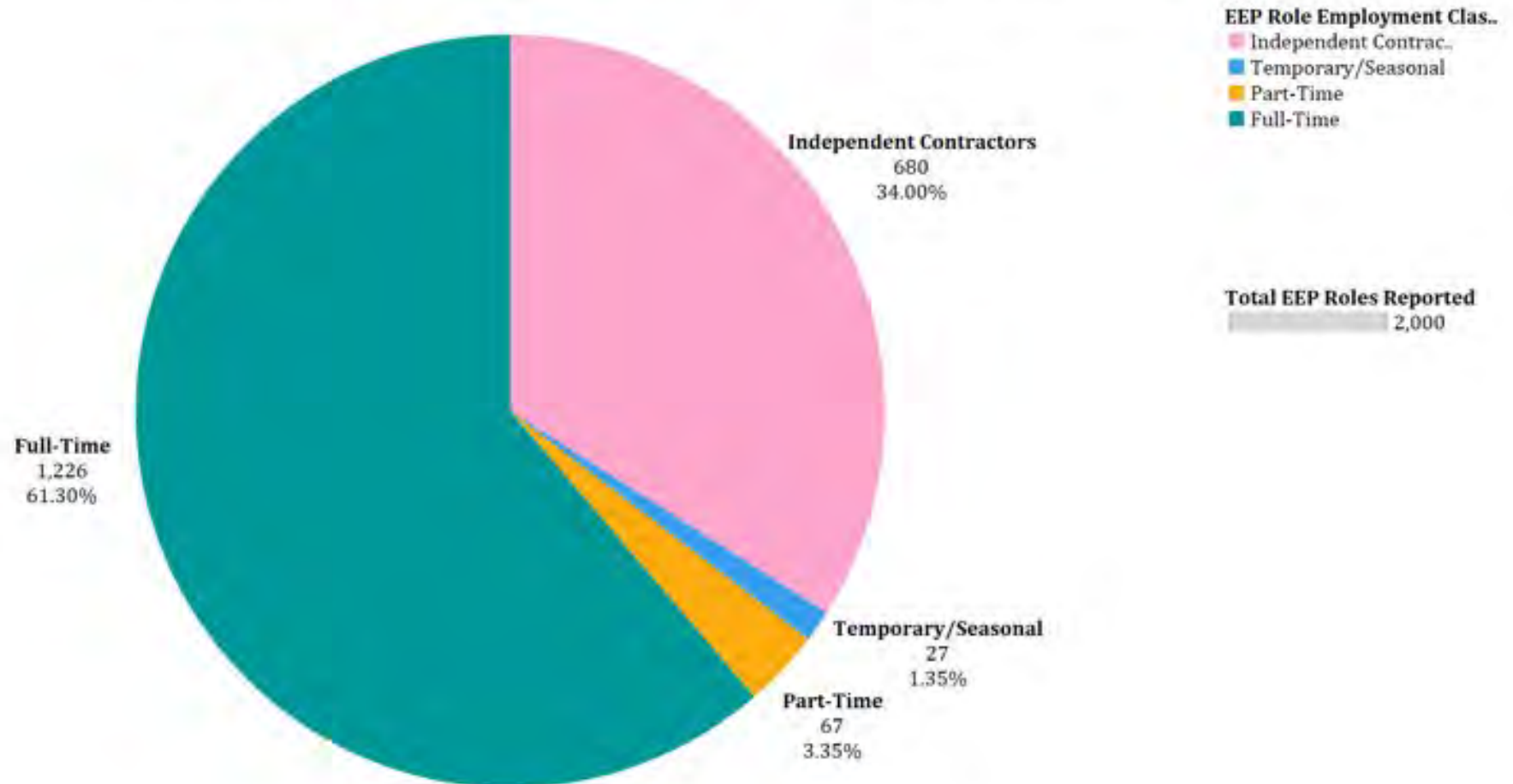
During the 2023-24
Program Year (June 1,
2023 – May 31, 2024), did
your organization hire any
new employees? This can
include full-time,
part-time, contractors, or
any other type of
employee.

No	230
Yes	300



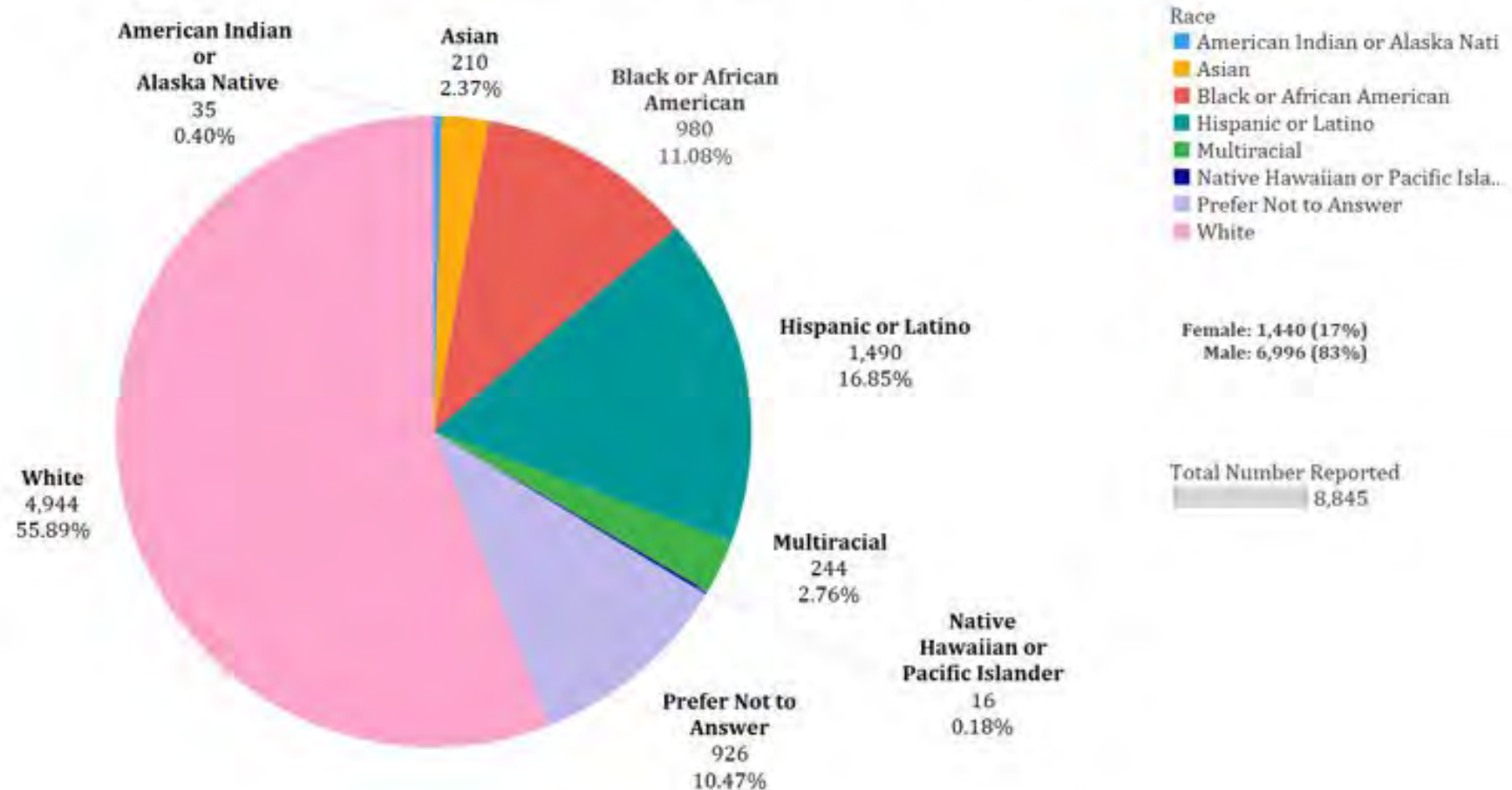
PY23-24 Workforce Overview

Equity Eligible Person (EEP) Roles by Employment Classification
Reported by AVs, Designees, and Subcontractors in Illinois Shines' Year-End Reports



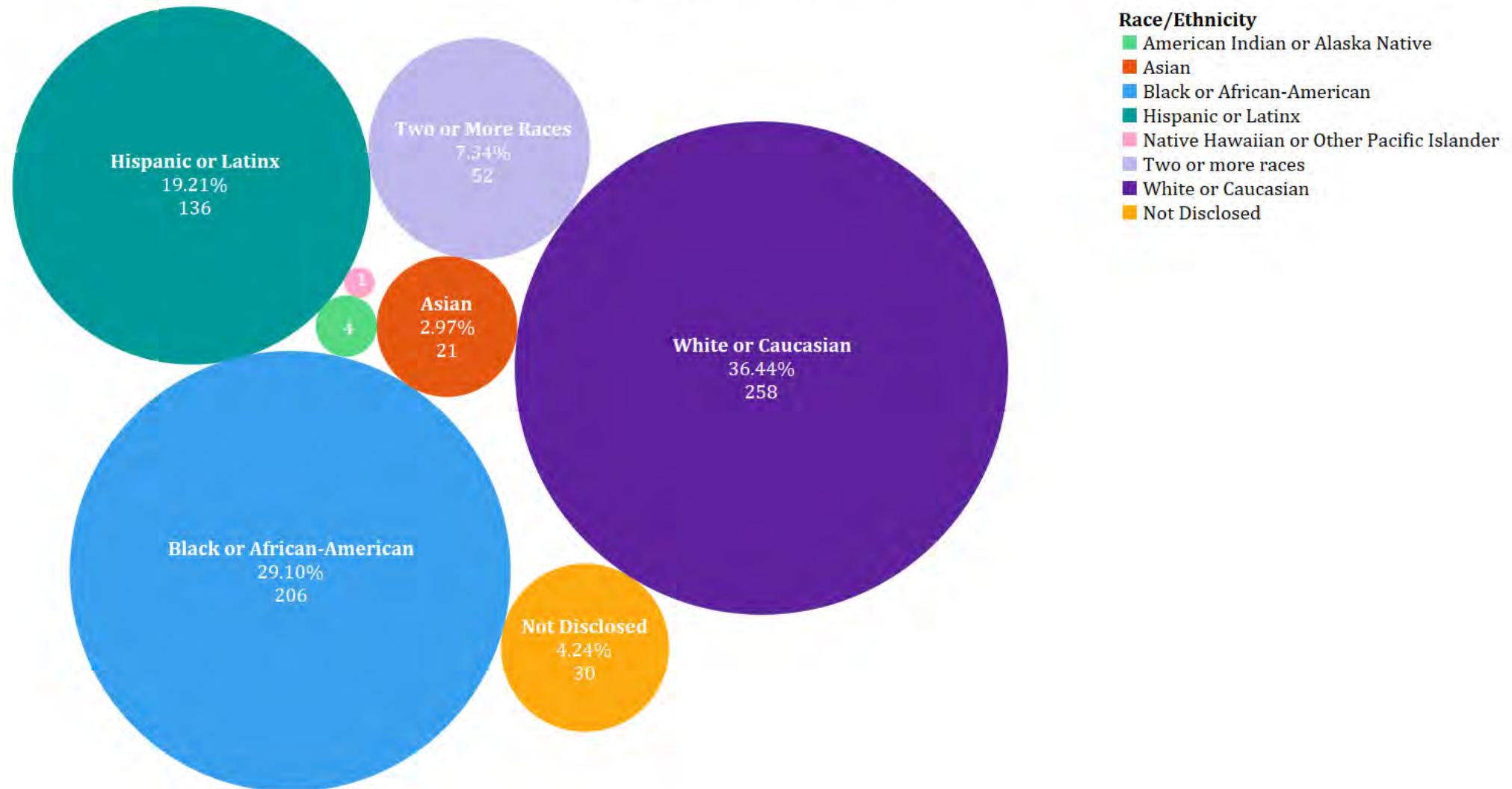
PY23-24 Workforce Overview

Total Reported Workforce Demographics
Submitted by AVs, Designees and Subcontractors in Illinois Shines' Year-End Reports



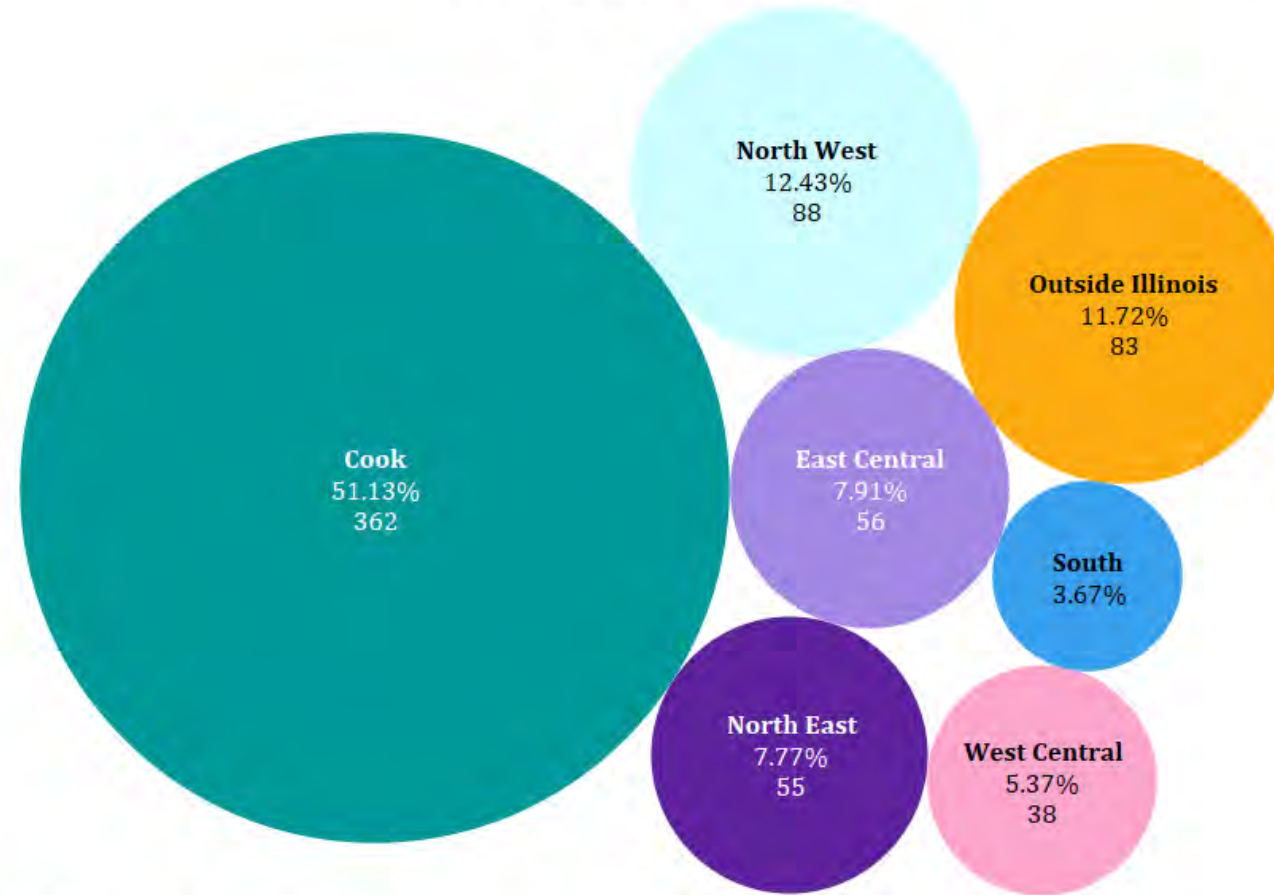
Equity Eligible Persons

Equity Eligible Persons (EEPs) Registered in the Energy Workforce Equity Portal by Race/Ethnicity



Equity Eligible Persons

Equity Eligible Persons (EEPs) Registered in the Energy Workforce Equity Portal by Zip Code of Residence

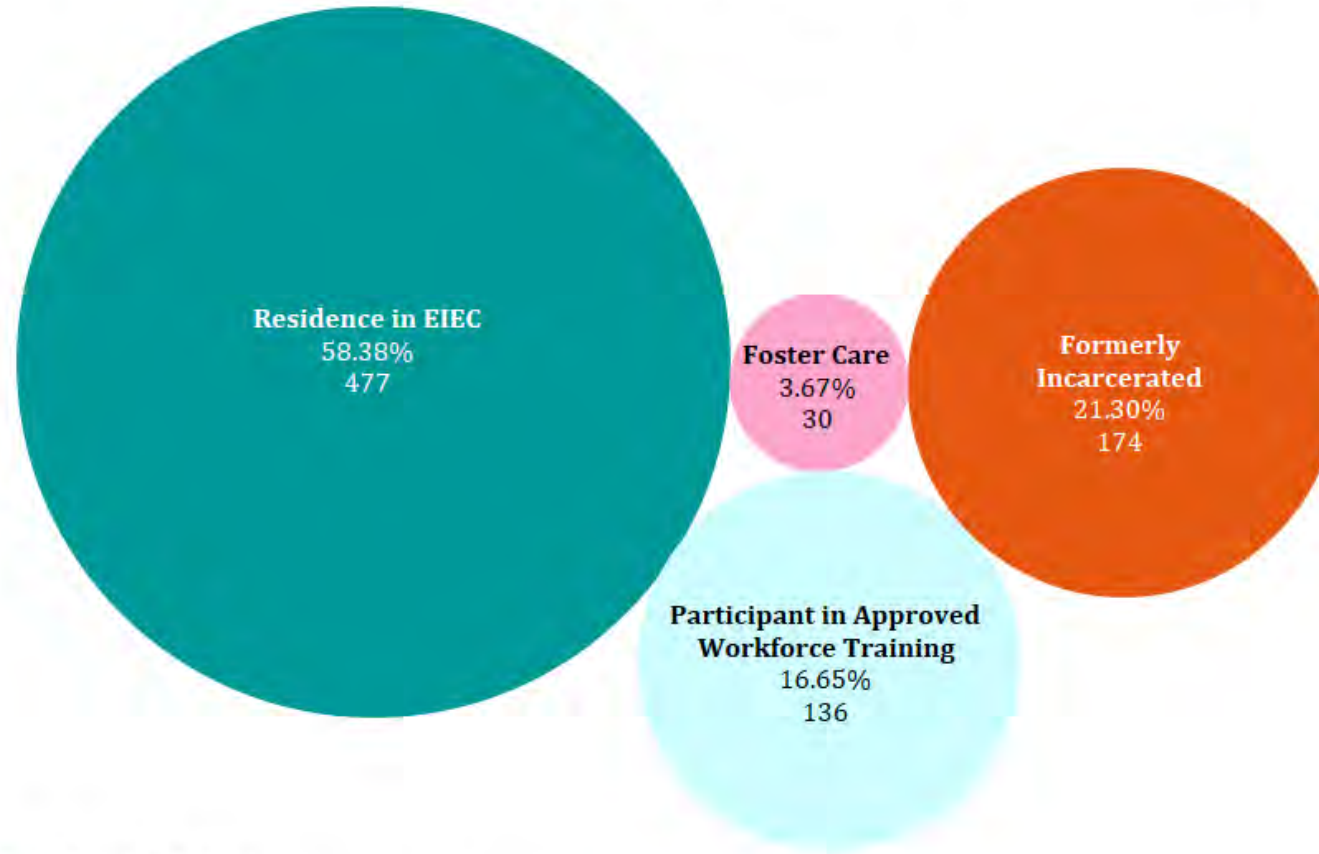


EEP Residence Zip Codes

Cook	North East	Outside Illinois	West Central
East Central	North West	South	

Equity Eligible Persons

Equity Eligible Persons (EEPs) Registered in the Energy Workforce Equity Portal by Qualification Criteria

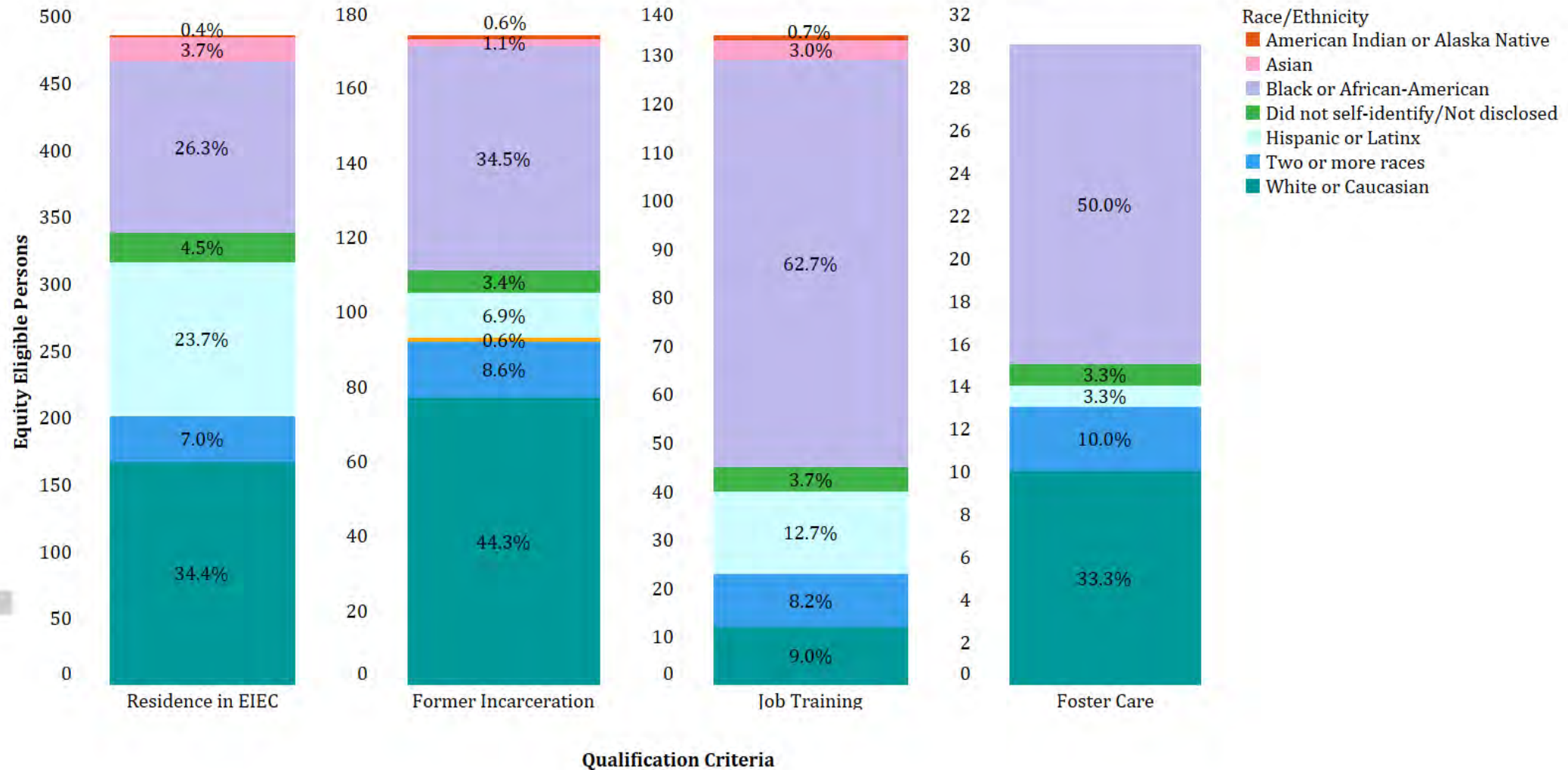


Qualification Criteria

- Formerly or Currently Enrolled in Foster Care
- Formerly Incarcerated
- Graduate, Current, or Former Participant in Eligible Job Training/Workforce Development Program
- Primary Residence is in an Equity Investment Eligible Community (EIEC)

Equity Eligible Persons

Equity Eligible Persons (EEPs) Registered in the Energy Workforce Equity Portal
by Qualification Criteria with Race Breakdown

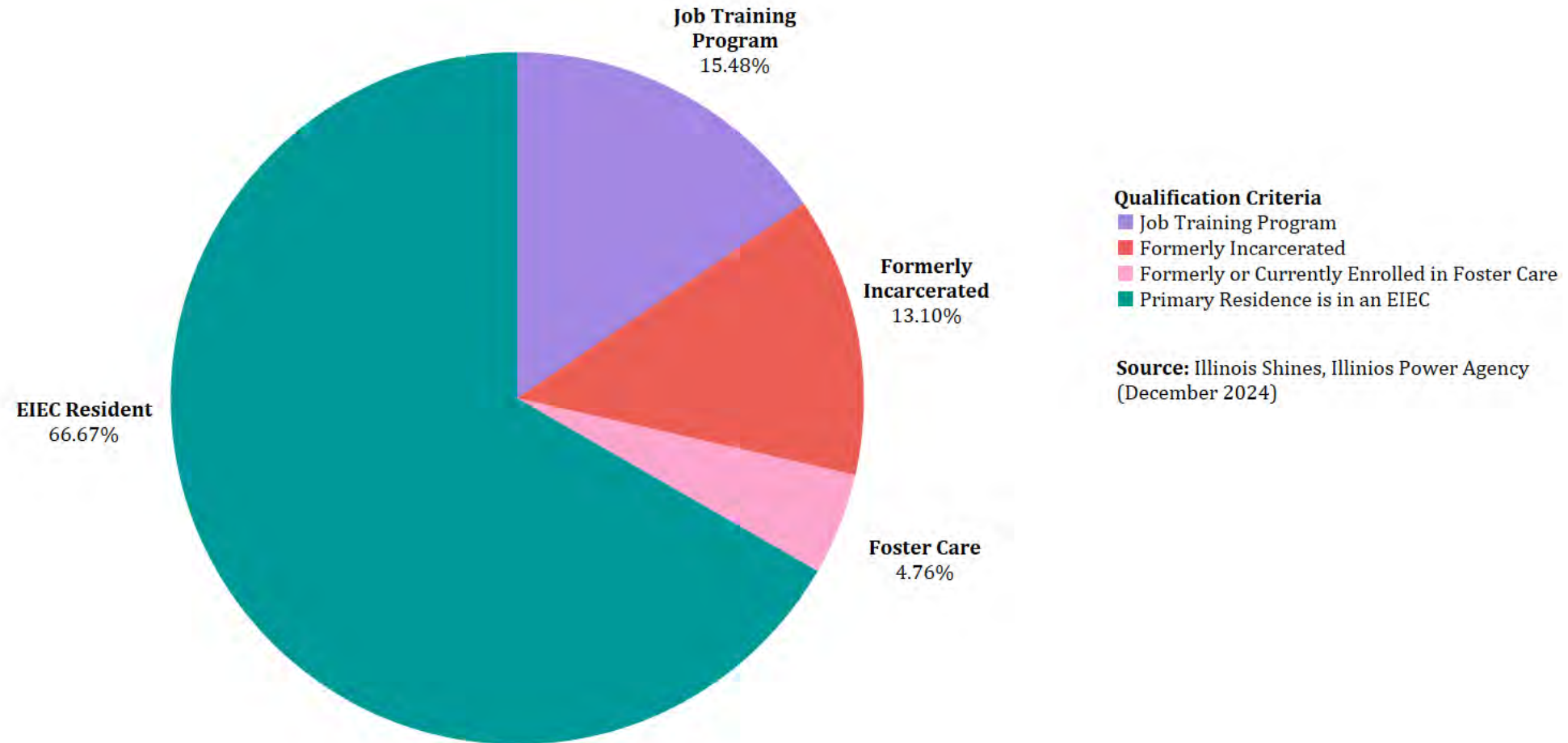


Equity Eligible Contractors

Equity Eligible Contractors (EECs) in the Illinois Shines Program From EEC Applications..

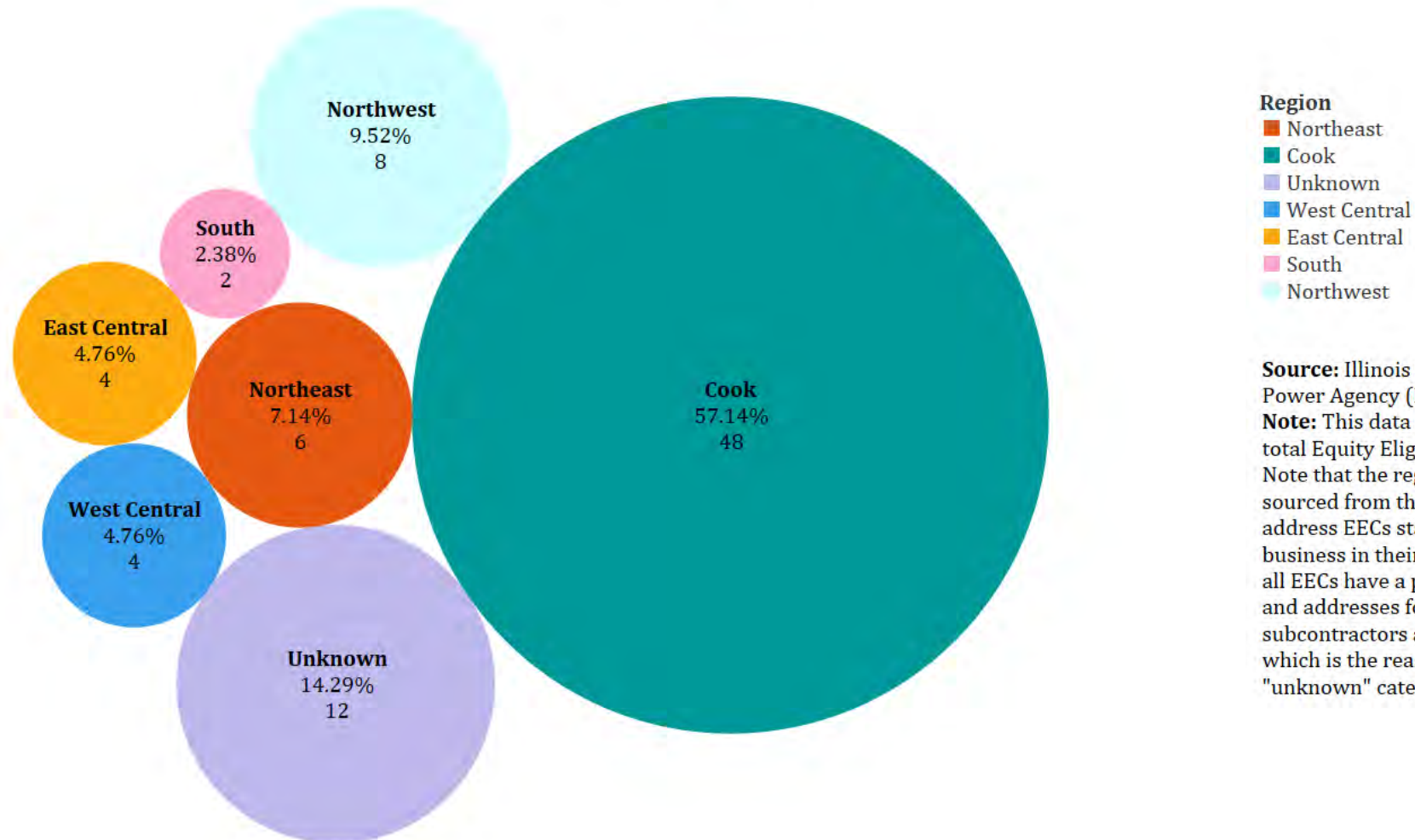
Category	Status/Type	
Application Status	Approved	84
	Abandoned	3
	Denied	10
	Pending	6
EEC Type	Accepted AVs	63
	Accepted Designees	18
	Accepted Subcontractors	11
EECs by Ownership Structure	EEC and Non-EEP Owners	21
	Fully Owned by EEPs	62
	Non-Profit	1
Geographic Breakdown	Cook	48
	East Central	4
	Northeast	6
	Northwest	8
	South	2
	Unknown	12
	West Central	4
Qualification Criteria	Primary Residence is in an EIEC	56
	Formerly Incarcerated	11
	Formerly or Currently Enrolled in Foster Care	4
	Job Training Program	13

Equity Eligible Contractors (EECs) in Illinois Shines
by Qualification Criteria



Equity Eligible Contractors

Equity Eligible Contractors (EECs) in the Illinois Shines Program
by Regional Location



Source: Illinois Shines, Illinois Power Agency (December 2024)
Note: This data represents 84 total Equity Eligible Contractors. Note that the regional location is sourced from the physical address EECs stated they conduct business in their applications. Not all EECs have a physical address, and addresses for EEC subcontractors are not collected, which is the reason for the "unknown" category.

- **EAS has made meaningful strides in elevating equity in the clean energy economy**
 - MES and accountability framework established, encouraging stakeholders to prioritize equity
 - Compliance in first year of MES implementation at 78%, with 18% workforce in Illinois Shines qualifying as EEPs
 - Energy Workforce Equity Portal serves as a resource hub, connecting clean energy companies and job seekers
 - EEC category and Advance of Capital mechanism support emerging EECs
- **Challenges**
 - Administrative burdens regarding compliance
 - Ambiguity of statutory language
 - Disparities in program participation across geographic locations

- **Lessons Learned**

- Importance of clarity and consistency in program design and communication
- Ambiguity surrounding MES, lack of precise definitions included in "project workforce"
- Critical role of stakeholder engagement and feedback plays in guiding the work
 - Insights from EEPs, EECs, CBOs, and program participants has been beneficial in identifying barriers and opportunities for improvement
- Need for robust data collection and analysis to evaluate progress and guide decision-making

The Energy Workforce Equity Portal

Energy Workforce Equity Portal

- Accessible, online tool that connects clean energy companies participating in Illinois Shines and utility-scale REC procurements with Equity Eligible Persons.

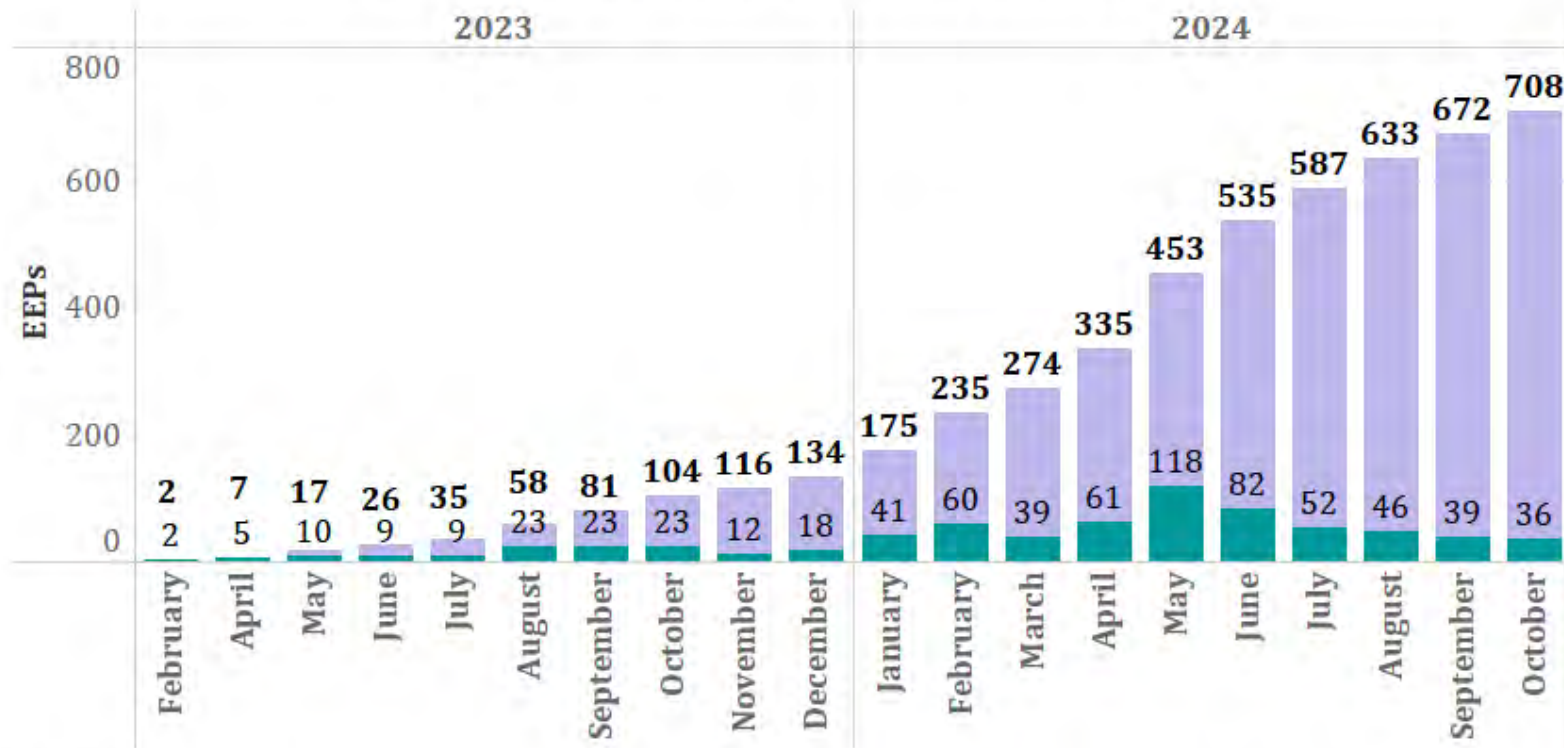
EnergyEquity.illinois.gov

- The portal is designed to:
 - Help individuals find out whether they qualify as Equity Eligible Persons and register.
 - Connect EEPs with prospective employers and find jobs.
 - Allow clean energy companies to register, post jobs, recruit EEPs and verify EEP status of current employees.
 - Help Equity Eligible Persons find information on workforce training programs and more.
 - Provide list of current EECs and qualified job training programs to help employers to meet the MES.



Equity Eligible Persons

Equity Eligible Persons (EEPs) in the Energy Workforce Equity Portal
EEPs Approved by Month and Total EEPs Approved



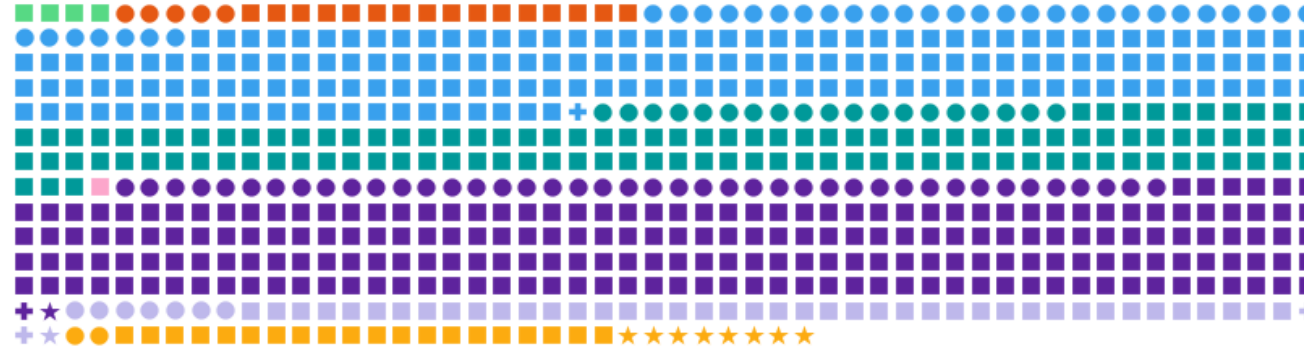
Legend

■ EEPs Approved ■ Total EEPs

Source: Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Bureau, Illinois Power Agency (October 2024)

Equity Eligible Persons

Equity Eligible Persons (EEPs) Registered in the Energy Workforce Equity Portal Gender, Race and/or Ethnicities Reported in Registration



Gender

- Female
- Male
- ✦ Non-Binary
- ★ Did not self-identify/Not disclosure

EEPs

109 person(s)	15.40%
585 person(s)	82.63%
4 person(s)	0.56%
10 person(s)	1.41%

Percentage of Total EEPs

Race and/or Ethnicities

- American Indian or Alaska Native
- Asian
- Black or African-American
- Hispanic or Latinx
- Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
- White or Caucasian
- Two or more races
- Did not self-identify/Not disclosed

EEPs

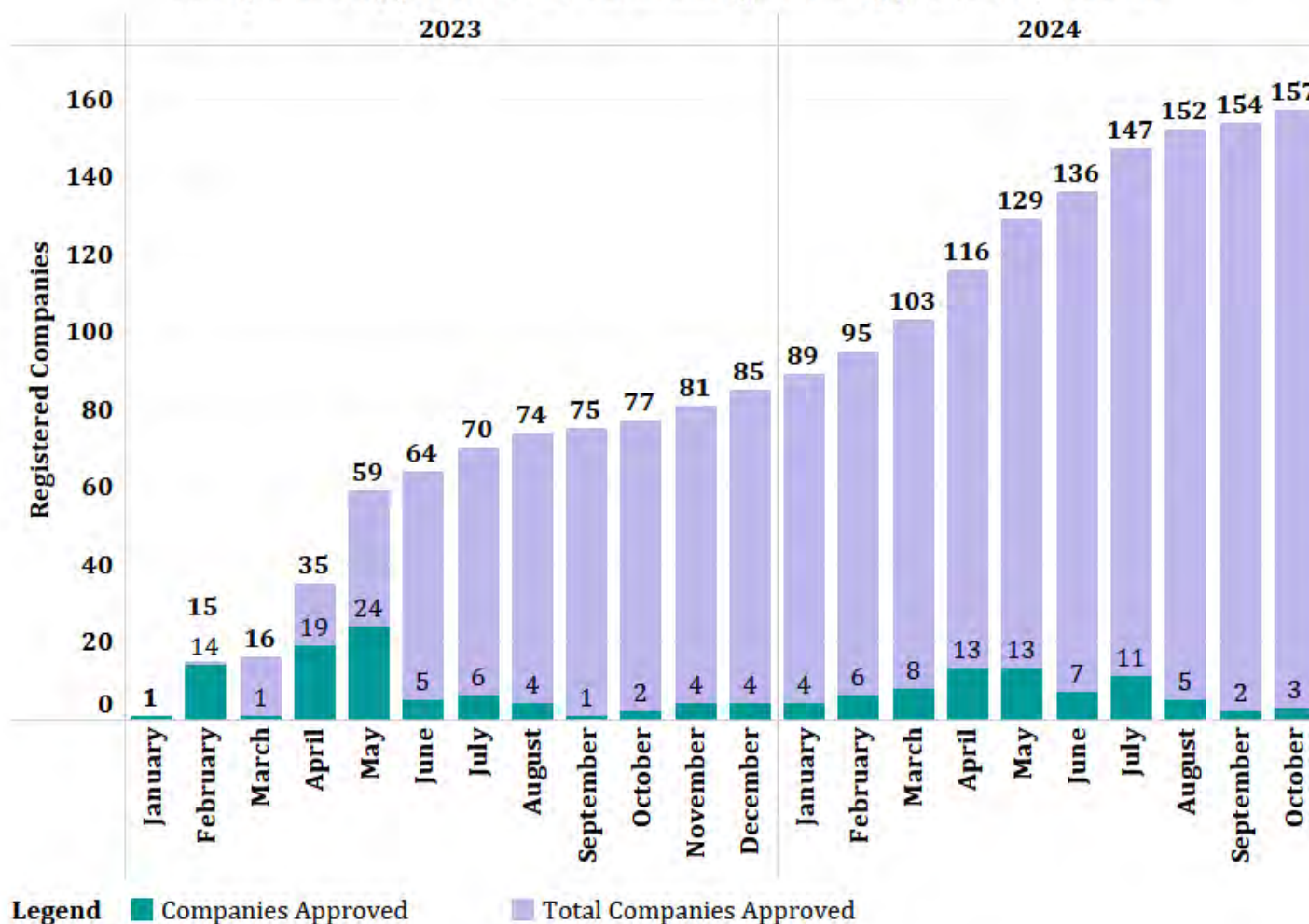
4 person(s)	0.56%
21 person(s)	2.97%
206 person(s)	29.10%
136 person(s)	19.21%
1 person(s)	0.14%
258 person(s)	36.44%
52 person(s)	7.34%
30 person(s)	4.24%

Percentage of Total EEPs

Source: Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Bureau, Illinois Power Agency (October 2024)

Clean Energy Companies

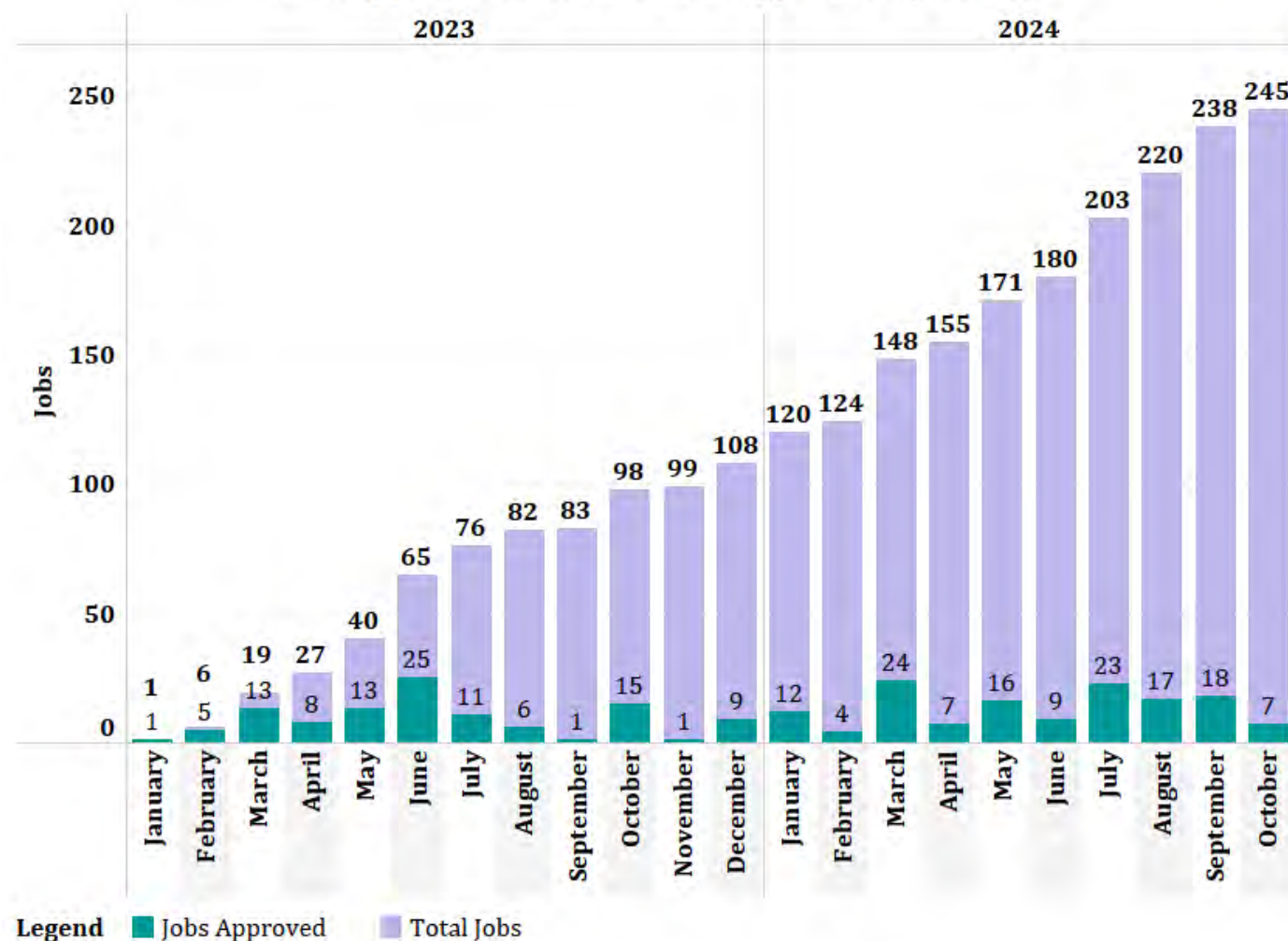
Clean Energy Companies Registered in the Energy Workforce Equity Portal
Companies Approved and Total Companies Approved by Month



Source: Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Bureau, Illinois Power Agency (October 2024)

Clean Energy Job Postings

Clean Energy Jobs Posted in the Energy Workforce Equity Portal
Jobs Approved and Total Jobs Approved by Month



Source: Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Bureau, Illinois Power Agency (October 2024)

Small & Emerging Business Hub

- Last fall, the IPA launched a dedicated Small and Emerging Business Hub (Hub).
- **Goals of the Hub:**
 - Centralize industry-specific information to help small and emerging businesses navigate the clean energy sector successfully.
 - Serve as a tool for Illinois's small and emerging business community to connect with targeted programs and resources that meet their needs in entering the clean energy economy.



EEC Resources



- **Mentorship Program**
- **Dedicated EEC Sector Strategist**
- **Open Office Hours and 1:1 Support Available**
- **EEC Approved Vendor Roundtable and Satisfaction Surveys**
- **EEC Hub on IL Shines Website**
- **Info on Equity-focus Trainings/Events**

What's Next?

- **EAS Data Tracking: DEI Data Dashboard**
- **Improvements to Equity Portal**
 - Increasing searchability of EEP Dashboard for employers (location, skills, adding resumes, etc.)
 - Targeted outreach to increase clean energy job postings
 - Expanding database to provide user-centered experience (with log-in/profile) to streamline recertification, certificates, tracking registration status
- **Racial Disparity and Availability Study**
 - **The Racial Disparity and Availability Study will aim to assess the presence and impact of racial discrimination or disparities on minority businesses and workers in Illinois' clean energy economy.**

Contact Us



Ella Johnson-McGowan

DEI Data Analytics Manager

Ella.JohnsonMcGowan@illinois.gov

Kelly Turner

Chief Legal Counsel

Kelly.A.Turner@illinois.gov



CERTIFICATION

BEP certifies businesses for FREE, completing the first step of becoming a BEP vendor.



CAPACITY BUILDING

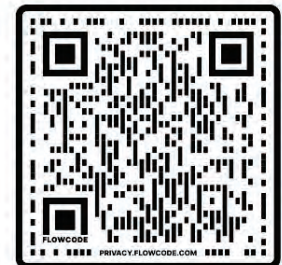
Our team works with partners to host various events and workshops that support BEP vendor growth.



COMPLIANCE

The BEP Compliance team works with State agencies and public institutions of higher education on BEP goal setting and BEP vendor usage.

[Learn More!](#)



ABOUT US

The Illinois Commission on Equity and Inclusion's Business Enterprise Program (BEP) is committed to fostering an inclusive, equitable and competitive business environment that will support underrepresented businesses owned by minorities, women, and persons with disabilities with the goal to help increase their capacity, grow revenue, and enhance credentials.



BEP Vendor Benefits

Access to State procurement opportunities

Municipal and organizational industry recognition

Increased promotional awareness



Our Commitment to Equity and Inclusion

We are dedicated to creating an equitable and inclusive space for everyone wanting to do business with the State of Illinois.

We believe that our businesses and workforce should reflect the vast diversity of communities this great State serves, and that diverse voices should be elevated and integrated throughout our daily work.



cei.illinois.gov



1-312-814-4190 or 1-800-356-9206



CERTIFICATION

VBP certifies businesses for FREE, completing the first step of becoming a VBP vendor.



CAPACITY BUILDING

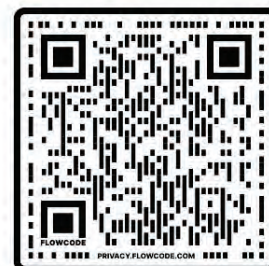
Our team works with partners to host various events and workshops that support VBP vendor growth.



COMPLIANCE

The VBP Compliance team works with State agencies and public institutions of higher education on VBP goal setting and VBP vendor usage.

[Learn More!](#)



ABOUT US

The Illinois Commission on Equity and Inclusion's Veteran Business Program (VBP) is committed to fostering an inclusive, equitable and competitive business environment that will support qualified service disabled and veteran-owned business gain access to State of Illinois procurement contracting opportunities with the goal to help increase their capacity, grow revenue, and enhance credentials.



VBP Vendor Benefits

Access to State procurement opportunities

Municipal and organizational industry recognition

Increased promotional awareness



Our Commitment to Equity and Inclusion

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cei.illinois.gov



1-312-814-4190 or 1-800-356-9206



Next Steps for Maximizing Your Business Enterprise Program and Veterans Business Program Certification

Congratulations on attaining your State Certification! This is a pivotal step towards positioning your business for success with the State of Illinois. To help you navigate the subsequent steps and fully leverage your certification, please consider the following:



1. Leverage Chief Procurement Officer (CPO) Resources: Four CPOs manage a distinct portfolio and provide unique opportunities. Familiarizing yourself with these portfolios can strategically position your firm to tap into contracts from various State purchasing entities.



2. Register on Procurement Platforms: We strongly recommend visiting and registering on the Illinois Procurement Gateway (IPG) at <https://ipg.illinois.gov/Home.aspx>. The IPG is an online vendor portal used for gathering business information from vendors who wish to conduct business with State agencies and universities. Instead of submitting required information in paper form with every solicitation response, vendors can submit the information in advance electronically.



3. Enroll in Notifications: Please be advised that BEP and/or VBP certification does not automatically subscribe you to notifications regarding solicitations. Each of the four CPOs publishes notices of the State's solicitations for their respective portfolios. We strongly recommend that all BEP-certified and VBP-certified vendors register with each of the four State of Illinois procurement bulletins to increase your visibility for potential contracting opportunities. Registration with the appropriate procurement bulletin corresponding to your NIGP codes is essential to stay informed about upcoming opportunities. Learn more about the chief procurement officers' bulletins and doing business with the State at <https://pathway2procurement.illinois.gov/>.



4. Utilize Available Resources: Optimize your opportunities by leveraging resources provided by the CPOs, including workshops, seminars, and guidance documents.

CPO Procurement Sites:

- Chief Procurement Officer of General Services: The CPO-GS oversees the goods and services purchases for roughly 65 State agencies, boards, and commissions. Learn more about CPO-GS at <https://cpo-general.illinois.gov/>.
- Chief Procurement Officer of Higher Education: The CPO-HE oversees purchasing by State universities. Learn more about CPO-HE at <https://cpo-highered.illinois.gov/>.
- Chief Procurement Officer of Capital Development Board: The CPO-CDB oversees vertical construction and construction-related services purchases. Learn more about CPO-CDB at <https://cpo-cdb.illinois.gov/>.
- Chief Procurement Officer of Illinois Department of Transportation: The CPO-IDOT oversees horizontal construction and construction-related services purchases. Learn more about CPO-IDOT at <https://cpo-dot.illinois.gov/>.

By actively engaging in these steps, your business will be well-prepared and strategically positioned to capitalize on forthcoming opportunities. Thank you for your participation in the BEP and/or VBP. We are here to support your endeavors and be an integral part of your continued growth and success.

Illinois Shines Program Overview

Presented by Illinois Shines
Program Administrator



Agenda

1 Illinois Shines Overview

2 Project Categories

3 Types of Program Participants

4 How to Register as an Approved Vendor, Designee, and/or EEC

5 Equity Eligible Contractor Overview

6 Energy Workforce Equity Portal

7 Program Support and Resources

8 Questions





Illinois Shines Overview

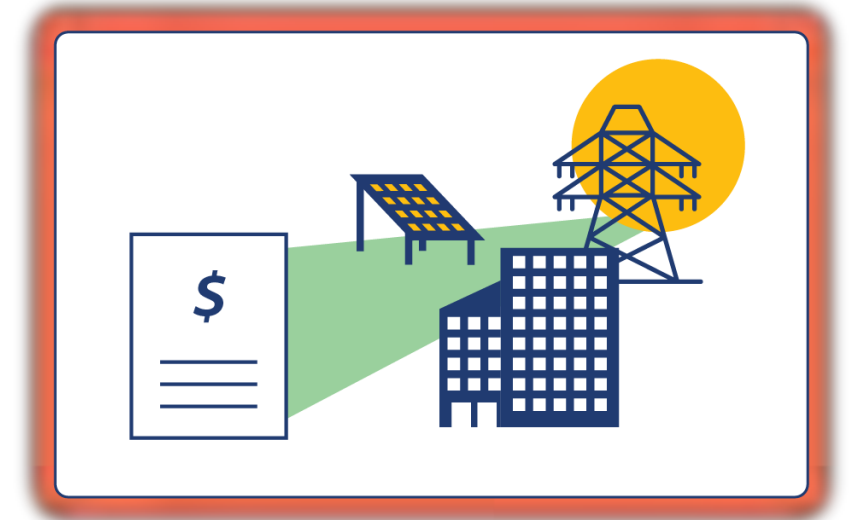
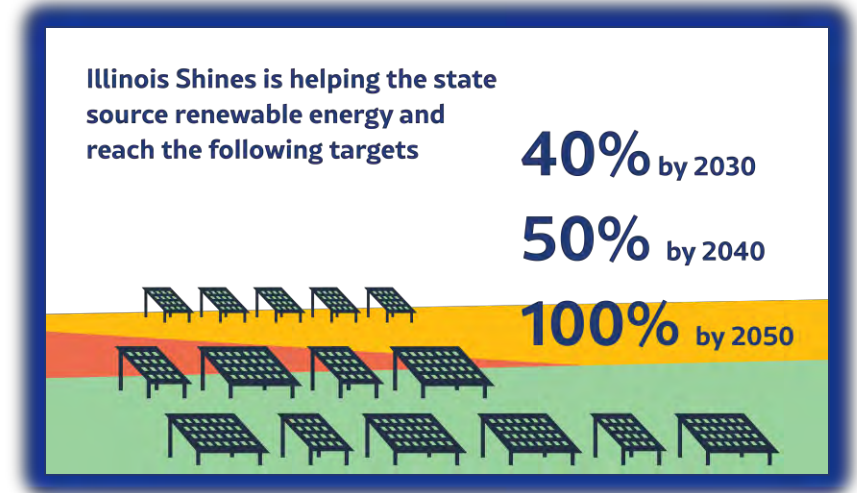
What is Illinois Shines?

Program Overview

- Illinois Shines is a state-administered incentive program supporting the development of new solar energy generation in Illinois.
 - The Program was created under the Future Energy Jobs Act ("FEJA") and continued under the Climate and Equitable Jobs Act ("CEJA").

How do Illinois Shines Incentives Work?

- The Illinois Shines program incentivizes Approved Vendors to develop solar projects by payment for RECs, or Renewable Energy Credits. A single REC is equal to 1 megawatt hour of renewable energy produced by a solar project.
 - Illinois Shines has set incentive amounts that are paid for RECs produced by solar projects participating in the Program. The incentives are paid to participating Approved Vendors and savings are passed on to customers.





Project Categories

Project Categories

The Program created separate project categories targeting the needs of developers and Illinois residents and businesses. Current project categories include:

Small Distributed Generation:	Projects up to and including 25 kilowatt ("kW") in size suited for homeowners and small businesses.
Large Distributed Generation:	Projects greater than 25 kW and up to and including 5 megawatt ("MW") in size, such as large installations targeting business and utility-scale power producers.
Traditional Community Solar:	Projects up to 5 MW in size targeting those who are unable to host a project on their property.
Community-Driven Community Solar:	Projects up to 5 MW for which development is driven by the members of the community the project will serve.
Equity Eligible Contractors ("EEC"):	Projects submitted by an EEC Approved Vendors certified by the Program. Can be either Small or Large Distributed Generation or Community solar.
Public Schools:	Any solar project, whether Small or Large Distributed Generation ("DG"), or Community Solar project that serves a public school in Illinois.





Types of Program Participants

Types of Program Participants



Approved Vendors

- Approved Vendors are entities approved by the Program Administrator (as an agent of the Illinois Power Agency) to submit project applications to the Illinois Shines program and act as a counterparty to the Illinois Shines contracts with utilities.



Designees

- Designees are third party (i.e., non-Approved Vendor) entities that have direct interaction with end-use customers; they include installers, marketing firms, community solar subscriber agents, lead generators, and sales organizations.



Equity Eligible Contractors

- Defined as "a business that is majority-owned by Equity Eligible Persons ("EEPs"), or a nonprofit or cooperative that is majority-governed by eligible persons, or is a natural person that is an eligible person offering personal services as an independent contractor."
- EEC Subcontractor Category:** Created for entities that qualify as an EEC but do not yet have a relationship with an Approved Vendor and/or do not have a customer-facing role that would qualify them as a Designee.





How to Register as an Approved Vendor, Designee, and/or EEC

Approved Vendor ("AV") Registration

Prospective AVs must first submit an Approved Vendor application form.

- A Microsoft Form that asks for contact information, company background, vendor classification and project types, legal, and regulatory information.

Required Supplemental Documents for AV Registration (submitted via email to admin@illinoisshines.com):

- Illinois Secretary of State Statement of Good Standing dated within the past 12 Months.
- Proof of PJM-GATS aggregator account or M-RETS account ownership.
- DG Installer Certification from the Illinois Commerce Commission ("ICC") (if applicable).
 - This is required only for AVs that are applying to become a Distributed Generation Installer.
- A representative sample of your company's marketing resources (if applicable).

Review process is approximately 4-6 weeks.

The Approved Vendor application form can be found on the "Become an AV or Designee" page of the Illinois Shines website: illinoisshines.com/become-an-av-or-designee

Supplemental Documents must be emailed to admin@illinoisshines.com



Designee Registration

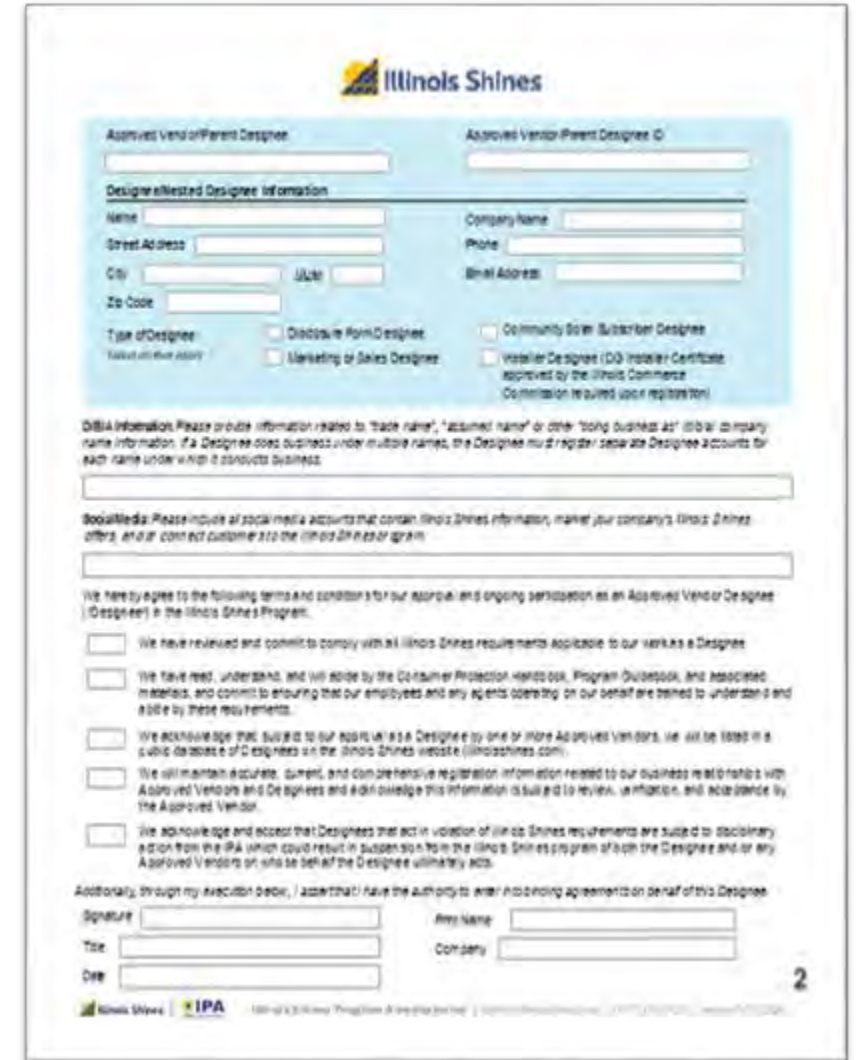
Prospective Designees must first find an Approved Vendor or Designee to work with and identify category of consumer-facing services provided.

- Designee types currently include Disclosure Form, Community Solar Subscriber, Marketing or Sales, and Installer Designees.

Work with the Approved Vendor or Designee to complete the Designee Registration Form and submit to admin@illinoisshines.com with the following items:

1. Illinois Secretary of State Statement of Good Standing dated within the past 12 months.
2. Minimum Equity Standard Compliance Plan (not required if registering as an EEC).
3. Distributed Generation Installer Certificate with the Illinois Commerce Commission (if applicable).

Review process is approximately 2-4 weeks.

The image shows a registration form for the Illinois Shines program. At the top is the Illinois Shines logo. The form is divided into several sections. The first section is for 'Approved Vendor/Parent Designee' with fields for name and ID. The second section is 'Designee/Selected Designee Information' with fields for Name, Company Name, Street Address, Phone, City, State, Zip Code, and Email Address. Below this is a section for 'Type of Designee' with checkboxes for Disclosure Form Designee, Community Solar Subscriber Designee, Marketing or Sales Designee, and Installer Designee (with a note that a Certificate is required). There is a section for 'Other Information' with a text area. Below that is a 'Social Media' section with a text area. The form then contains a series of checkboxes for terms and conditions, including a commitment to comply with requirements, a commitment to accurate registration information, and a commitment to maintain accurate information. At the bottom, there is a section for 'Signature' and 'Date' with fields for Name, Title, and Company. The form is numbered '2' in the bottom right corner.

The Designee Registration Form can be found on the "Become an AV or Designee" page of the Illinois Shines website:
illinoisshines.com/become-an-av-or-designee

How to Register as an EEC



Equity Eligible
Contractor

- Visit the [Become an Equity Eligible Contractor \(EEC\)](#) page located on the Illinois Shines website and download EEC Attestation form.
- Complete and sign the [EEC Attestation](#) and submit the [EEC Application](#) form.
- Submit a request for a secure folder at eec@illinoisshines.com.
- Upload your completed and signed EEC Attestation and supporting documentation to your secure folder.
 - Check your email frequently and respond to any follow up requests from the Program Administrator during your application review.

Review process is approximately 3-6 weeks.

The image shows a document titled "CERTIFICATION OF QUALIFICATION FOR EQUITY ELIGIBLE CONTRACTOR STATUS". It is a form from Illinois Shines and the Illinois Power Agency (IPA). The form includes fields for Name, Organization/Entity, Date, Title/Owner, and checkboxes for various qualifications. It also contains a paragraph of text regarding the use of the form and a signature line at the bottom.

EEC Attestation



Equity Eligible Contractors Category Overview

Equity Eligible Contractors ("EECs")



An Equity Eligible Contractor is "a business that is majority-owned by Equity Eligible Persons ("EEPs"), or a nonprofit or cooperative that is majority-governed by eligible persons or is a natural person that is an eligible person offering personal services as an independent contractor."
([Section 1 of the Program Guidebook](#))

Equity Eligible Person:

- a) people who graduated from or are current or former participants in the Clean Jobs Workforce Network Program, the Clean Energy Contractor Incubator Program, the Illinois Climate Works Preapprenticeship Program, Returning Residents Clean Jobs Training Program, or the Clean Energy Primes Contractor Accelerator Program, and the solar training pipeline and multi-cultural jobs program created in paragraphs (a)(1) and (a)(3) of Section 16-108.21 of the Public Utilities Act;
- b) people who are graduates of or currently enrolled in the foster care system;
- c) people who were formerly incarcerated
- d) people whose primary residence is in an equity investment eligible community (energyequity.illinois.gov/resources/equity-investment-eligible-community-map.html)

Benefits and Ways to Participate as an EEC



EEC Approved Vendors



- Access to EEC Category.
- May request an Advance of Capital.
- Priority Reallocation for Waitlisted Projects.
- Additional Program Support.
- In compliance with Minimum Equity Standards ("MES").

EEC Designees

(Has a customer facing role)



EEC Subcontractors

(Does not have a customer facing role)



- May utilize their EEC status to appeal to interested customers or Approved Vendors that wish to partner with EECs.
- Contribute additional points toward projects in the Traditional Community Solar and Community-Driven Community Solar categories.
- Additional Program Support.
- In compliance with Minimum Equity Standards ("MES").

What is an Advance of Capital?



Equity Eligible
Contractor

Advance of Capital:

An advance on the total Renewable Energy Credit ("REC") incentive value of a project of up to 50% of its total value that is received by the Equity Eligible Contractor Approved Vendor between Part I and Part II project application submission.

Eligible projects must be:



Submitted into the EEC category



Have a REC incentive value of \$1.5 million or less

There is a cap on the cumulative total of advances awarded to an EEC and its affiliates in a single Program Year at \$5 million in value.

Purpose:

[to] cover any increase in development costs resulting from prevailing wage requirements or project-labor agreements and designed to overcome barriers in access to capital faced by Equity Eligible Contractors

Section 1-75(c)(1)(K)(iv) of the IPA Act



Energy Workforce Equity Portal

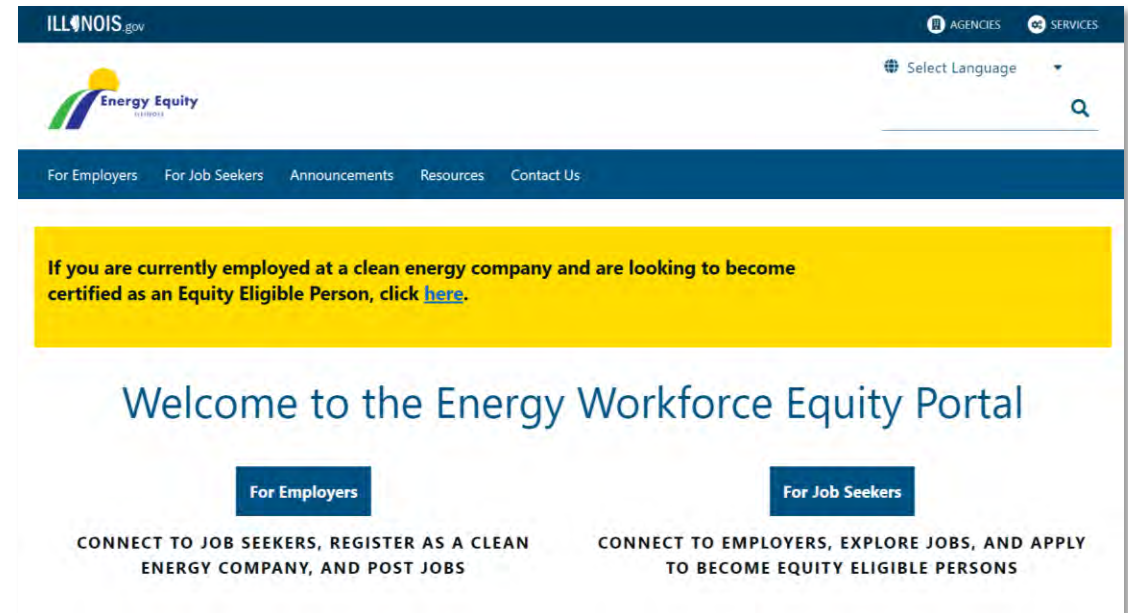
Minimum Equity Standard and the Energy Workforce Equity Portal

Minimum Equity Standard ("MES"): 10% of the AV or Designee's project workforce (the number of staff working on Illinois Shines projects) must be EEPs with this percentage incrementally escalating to 30% by 2030.

The Energy Workforce Equity Portal, managed by the IPA, was designed to help connect clean energy companies with Equity Eligible Persons looking to work in the clean energy sector in Illinois. Approved Vendors and Designees are encouraged to register their EEPs in the Energy Workforce Equity Portal for MES reporting and compliance.

The Energy Workforce Equity Portal can be used:

- For Employers:
 - Identify candidates to hire as EEPs to meet the MES.
 - Post job opportunities accessible to EEPs.
- For Job Seekers:
 - Become certified as an EEP.
 - Connect to employers, explore jobs, apply to positions for employers that are seeking EEPs.





Program Support and Resources

Program Support and Resources

- Approved Vendors can schedule 1-on-1 Check-Ins with Sector Strategists
- AV Roundtables
- Mentorship Program
- Program Resources
 - [Become an AV or Designee](#)
 - [Vendor FAQs](#)
 - [Program Guidebook \(PY 2024-2025\)](#)
 - [Consumer Protection Handbook \(PY 2024-2025\)](#)
 - [REC Prices Spreadsheet](#)
 - [REC Payments Calculator](#)
 - [Program announcements](#)
- Program General Contacts
 - admin@IllinoisShines.com
 - (877) 783-1820
 - Illinoisshines.com





Questions

**For Further Comments, Questions,
and Discussion – Please contact:**

Ola Tomaszewski

Illinois Shines Program Associate

admin@illinoisshines.com

**104 S. Michigan Ave., Suite 725
Chicago, IL 60603**





Illinois Solar for All

Illinois Solar for All Program

2/27/2025

Opportunities for Small and Emerging Businesses in Community Solar

- ILSFA overview
 - Sub-programs
- Community Solar (CS)
 - CS Model
 - Project Development Steps
 - Roles for Small and Emerging Businesses
 - Clean Energy Connector
- Small & Emerging Business Initiative
- Q&A



About Illinois Solar for All (ILSFA)

- Illinois Solar for All (ILSFA) is one of two flagship state solar programs
- ILSFA provides incentives to bring solar to income-eligible households and non-profit and public facilities
- Approved Vendors (solar companies) drive projects



ILSFA Project Types: Residential Solar

- **Single-family homes**

Must have an income of 80% or less of the Area Median Income (AMI). Landlords can apply for single-family homes they own if tenants are income-eligible.

- **Two to Four Units**

At least two units must be occupied by households with incomes of 80% or less of the AMI.

- **Five units or larger**

At least half of units must be occupied by households with incomes of 80% or less of the AMI.



ILSFA Project Types: Non-Profit/Public Facilities

Organizations must meet all of the below criteria to be eligible for Illinois Solar for All:

- Occupy a property within an ILSFA environmental justice or income-eligible community.
- Be a critical service provider—a non-profit or public entity that offers critical services (e.g., hospitals, houses of worship, senior centers, food pantries, and libraries).
- Be a public facility that hosts a department or agency that is a critical service provider.
- Demonstrate community engagement.



ILSFA Project Types: Community Solar

Participant Requirements

- Households must have an income of 80% or less of the Area Median Income (AMI).
- Subscribers can enroll in an ILSFA project located anywhere in their utility service territory.



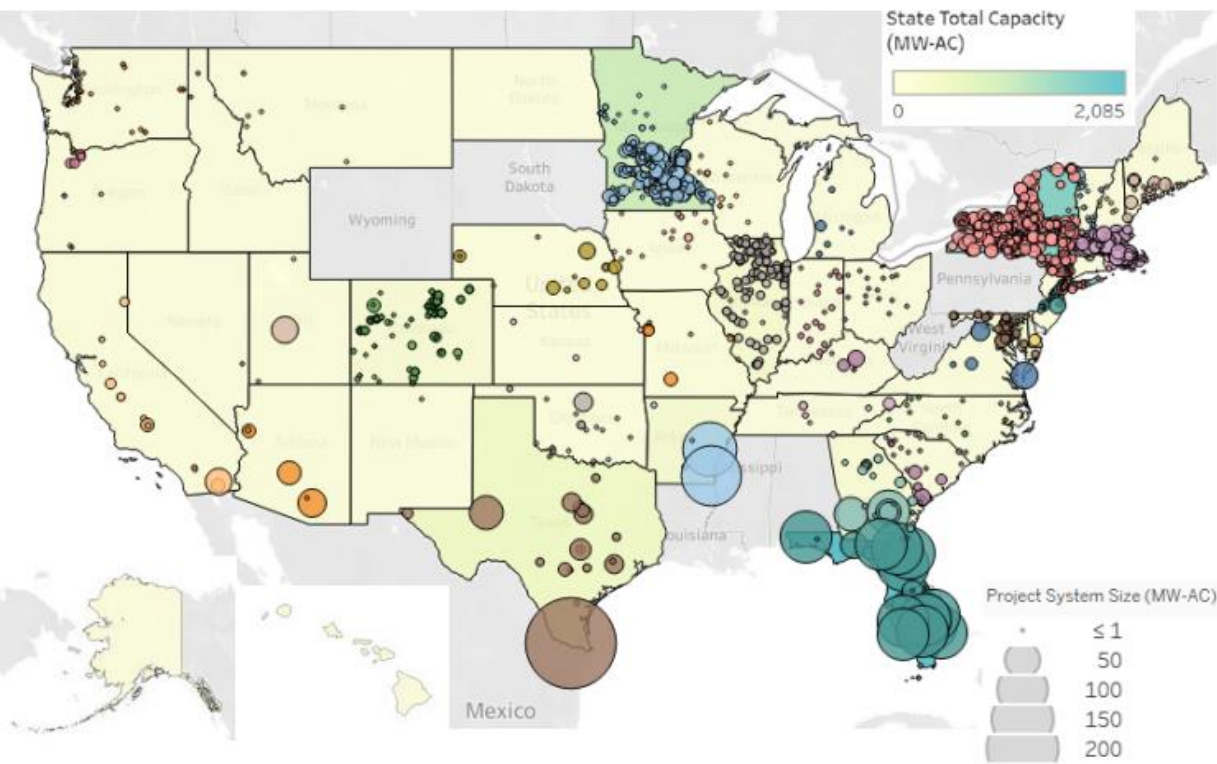
Community Solar Basics

What is Community Solar?

- A shared solar system that allows multiple participants (aka subscribers) to benefit from solar power without installing panels on their property.
- Ideal for renters, entities with limited rooftop space, and sites not suitable for onsite solar.



Community Solar Capacity by State



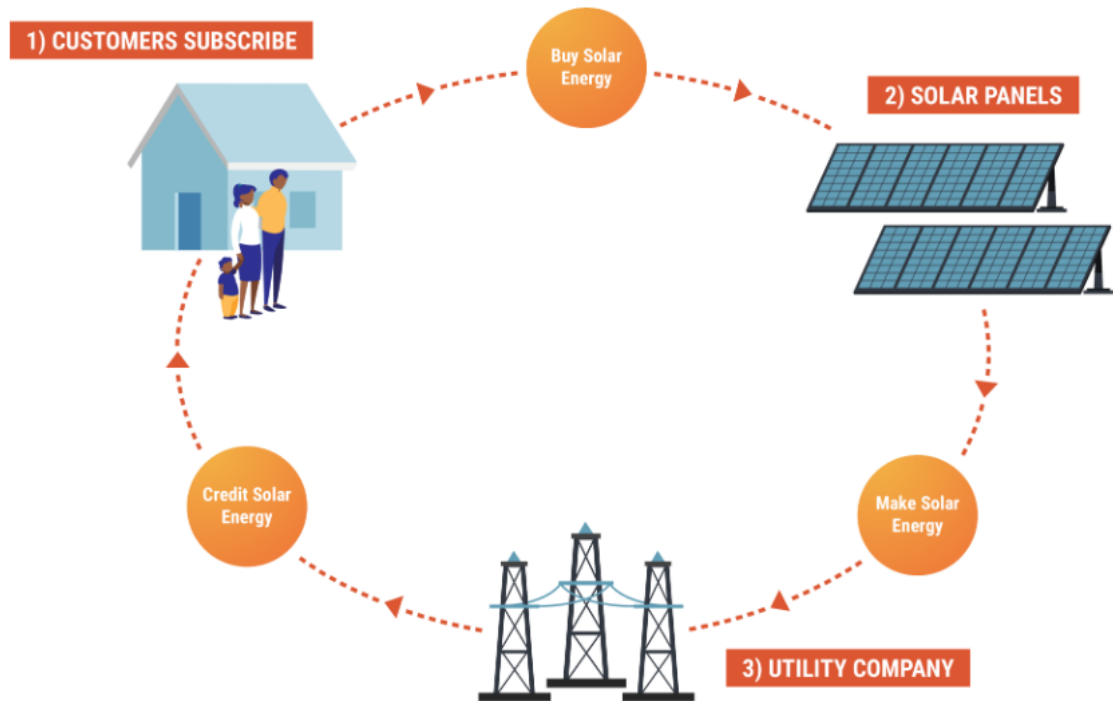
- **Total Community Solar Capacity:** As of June 2024, we estimate total community solar capacity of 7,870 megawatts-alternating current (MW_{ac}) across 3,404 projects in 44 states and localities, including the District of Columbia.
- **State Variability:** The distribution of community solar capacity among states ranges from 0 to 2,085 MW_{ac}. Notably, Florida claims the top position in terms of community solar deployment capacity.
- **Visual Representation:** The bubbles on the chart represent individual project sizes, ranging from less than 1 MW_{ac} up to 200 MW_{ac}. In Texas and Arkansas, projects over 100 MW_{ac} have partial capacity dedicated to community solar. The bubbles for each state are the same color, allowing for differentiation between states.

- Data Source: NREL, Sharing the Sun Project List 2024.



Community Solar Model

1. Customers subscribe to community solar
2. Solar panels produce energy
3. Utility company sends electricity to customers, receive bill credits



ILSFA Community Solar Energy Sovereignty

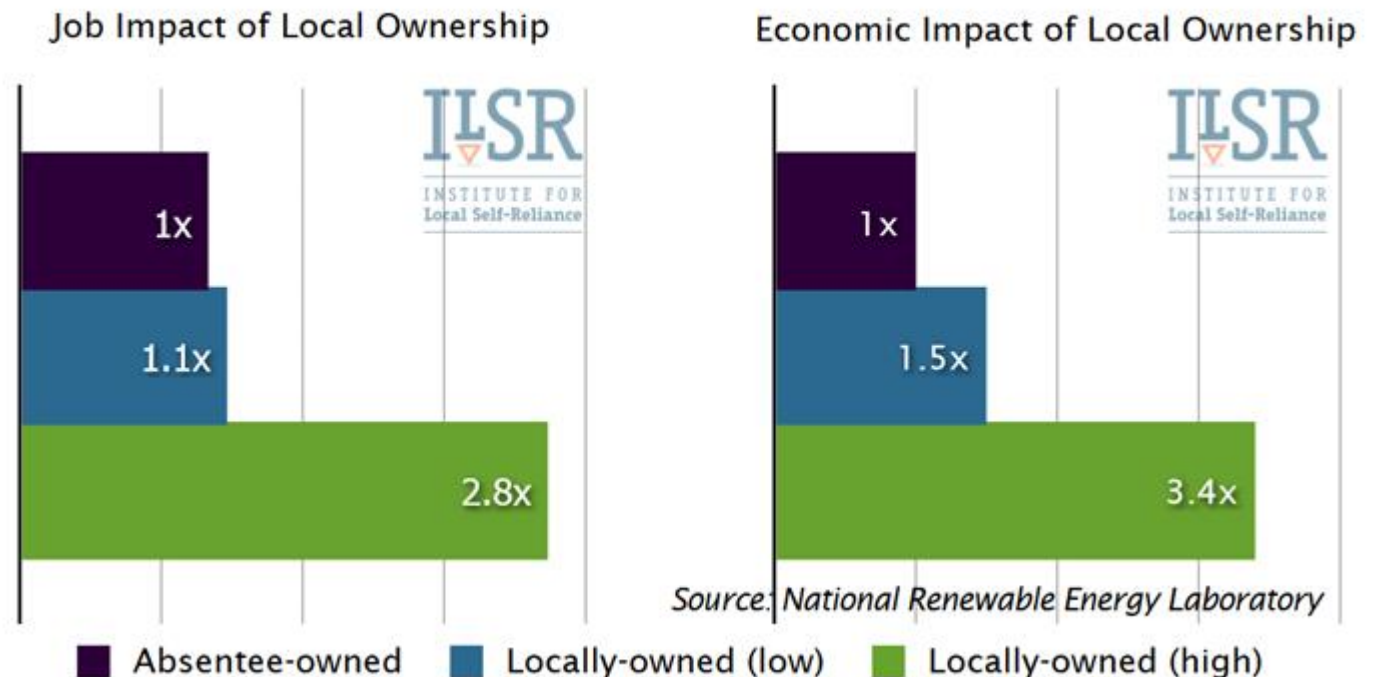
- ILSFA's CS subprogram has a 25% budget reservation for Energy Sovereignty projects
- CS projects can qualify for the Energy Sovereignty designation through an ownership (including ownership by income-eligible households, affordable housing owners, and non-profits) or cooperative model for at least 50% of the energy produced.



Locally-Owned Solar Provides Local Benefits

Local Ownership = higher jobs numbers and higher economic returns to communities.

Local Ownership Means More Jobs & More Local Economic Impact



Project Development Phases and Small and Emerging Business Opportunities

Small and Emerging Businesses can play key roles in CS project development:

- Site Selection
- Project Development and Financing
- Permitting and Interconnection
- Construction and Commissioning
- Subscriber Enrollment and Operations



Site Selection & Feasibility

- **Hosting a Project:** Businesses with suitable rooftops or land can lease space for community solar installations or play a role in identifying and securing a site.
- **Providing Services:** Contractors, electricians, engineers, surveyors, drone operators and other professionals can support development.
- **Site Feasibility Factors:**
 - Zoning & permitting for commercial and mixed-use buildings.
 - Roof condition & structural integrity.
 - Proximity to electrical infrastructure –ease and cost for interconnection.
 - Site control.



Project Development & Financing

Ways Small Businesses Can Engage:

As Solar Developers: Small firms lead development or can partner with larger developers.

As Service Providers: Opportunities for electricians, engineers, construction firms, site surveys and subscription managers.

Funding & Incentives:

- **Illinois Solar for All (ILSFA):** Offers 15-year Renewable Energy Contract (REC incentives) for selected projects.
- **Federal & State Incentives:** Investment Tax Credit (ITC), utility rebates, and DCEO grants.



Permitting & Interconnection

Navigating the Approval Process:

- Permitting requirements vary by location—early engagement with permitting/building officials is key.
- Understanding interconnection costs & processes helps determine feasibility and avoid delays.

Small Business Roles:

- Electrical contractors, engineers and project managers can assist with utility interconnection.
- Local engineering firms can support site assessments and designs.



Construction & Commissioning

Key Construction Phases:

1. Site preparation and infrastructure setup.
2. Solar panel installation and electrical work.
3. System testing, inspections, and final approvals.



Small Business Roles:

- Subcontracting work for installation, electrical services, or maintenance.
- Providing materials and logistics support.



Subscriber Enrollment & Operations

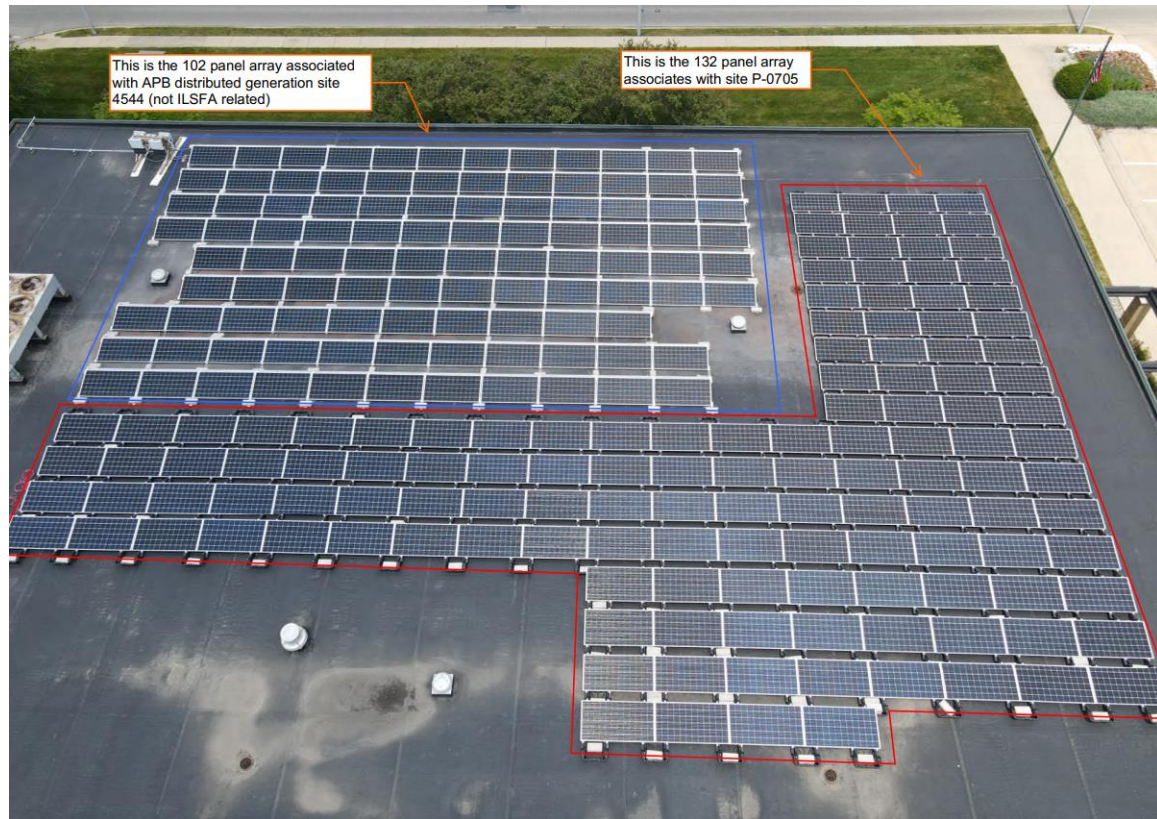
Roles for Small Businesses:

- Maintenance contracts for system upkeep and landscaping services.
- Outreach & education services for community engagement.
- Subscriber management services - enrollment and customer service.



Rooftop Community Solar Project Example

- Rooftop CS project
- 33kW
- Installed in 2021 in Champaign
- Provides subscriptions to four low-income households



Clean Energy Connector



The Clean Energy Connector is a digital platform that makes community solar projects with verified savings and strong consumer protections more accessible to households participating in the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP).

Subscription managers will grab basic household information from the Connector and complete enrollment outside of the platform.

All households uploaded into the Connector are LIHEAP-approved

- Subscription managers will not have to re-certify income
- Streamlined enrollment process to an ILSFA Community Solar project
- See: <https://connector.nrel.gov/>

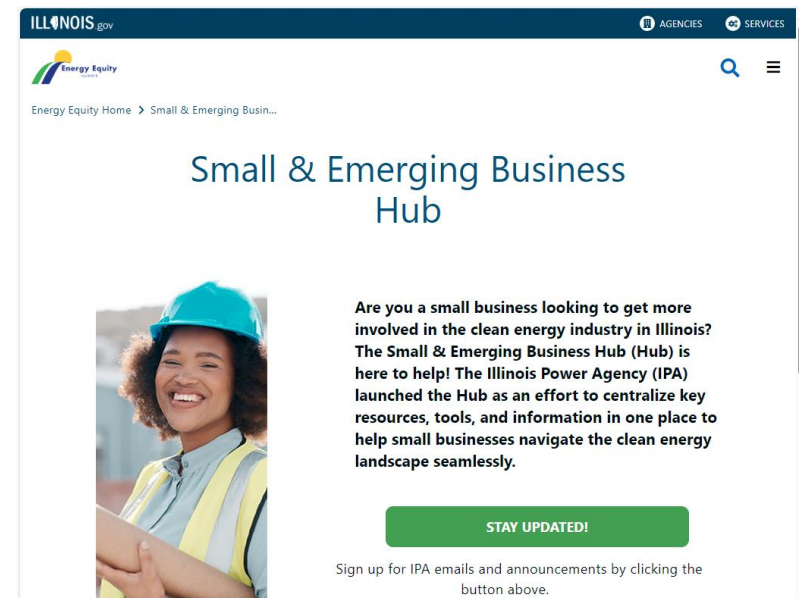


ILSFA Small and Emerging Business Initiative

- The Small & Emerging Business initiative supports Approved Vendors and prospective Approved Vendors through 1:1 meetings, workshops, webinars, partnerships, information and resources.

Small & Emerging Business Hub

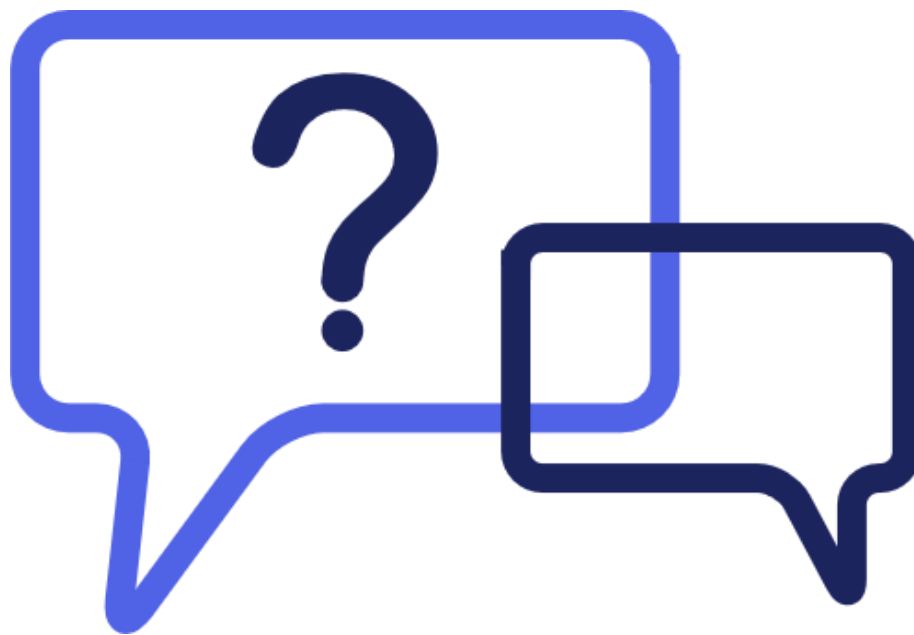
- **Solar incentive programs**
- **Growing a Small Business**
- **Grants and Funding**
- **Workforce & Training Programs**



- <https://energyequity.illinois.gov/small-emerging-business-hub.html>



Questions?



Contact Us

Jan Gudell

Jan.Gudell@elevatenp.org

Tonya Johnson

Tonya.Johnson@elevatenp.org

Illinois Solar for All Team

888-970-ISFA

Info@illinoisSFA.com



ILLINOIS SOLAR FOR ALL

An aerial photograph of a large solar farm at sunset. The solar panels are arranged in neat rows on a grassy field, reflecting the golden light of the setting sun. In the background, there is a dense forest and a small town with buildings and a road. The sky is filled with soft, orange and yellow clouds. The overall scene is peaceful and highlights the integration of renewable energy with nature.

nexamp

Clean Energy Equity Summit

February 26-27, 2025

| Welcome



Marion Jones

VP Workforce Development &
DEI Justice

About Us

Will Thompson and Dan Leary returned from active duty in the Middle East with a plan to alleviate America's dependency on foreign resources.

- Founded Nexamp in 2007
- We provide a range of residential and commercial energy solutions
- Our mission is to ensure equity, accessibility, and transparency through a vertically integrated model



Chicago HQ2



This expansion marks a significant milestone as we continue to solidify our commitment to the Midwest and pursuing our vision of an energy future powered by a **diverse, equitable, and skilled workforce.**

[← BACK TO NEWS](#)

Nexamp Launches Fellowship Program in Chicago to Make Renewable Energy Careers More Accessible



April 30, 2024

By City Colleges of Chicago

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CCC News

Press Releases

Olive-Harvey College



This expansion marks a significant milestone as we continue to solidify our commitment to the Midwest and pursuing our vision of an energy future powered by a **diverse, equitable, and skilled workforce.**

Nexamp and Starbucks Support Energy Equity with Six New Community Solar Projects in Illinois



NEWS PROVIDED BY
Nexamp →
Jul 24, 2024, 11:05 ET

SHARE THIS ARTICLE



Projects will provide electricity savings to more than 1,100 residents and support local workforce development programs

BOSTON, July 24, 2024 /PRNewswire/ -- Nexamp, the largest community solar provider in the country, announced today a partnership with Starbucks. By committing as a long-term renewable electricity purchaser, Starbucks will anchor the deployment of more than 40 Megawatts of solar energy in Illinois communities. The six new community solar projects being added to Nexamp's growing Illinois portfolio will provide significant electricity savings to more than 1,100 local residents who subscribe within the ComEd and Ameren utility territories.

In addition to the clean energy and savings benefits for communities, these solar farms also represent impactful

The long-term agreement between Starbucks and Nexamp

This expansion marks a significant milestone as we continue to solidify our commitment to the Midwest and pursuing our vision of an energy future powered by a **diverse, equitable, and skilled workforce.**

Walmart and Nexamp are rolling out 31 solar farms in 5 states



Michelle Lewis | Dec 18 2024 - 1:44 pm PT | 11 Comments



Photo: Nexamp

Walmart is working with community solar developer and operator Nexamp to build 31 community solar farms across the US.

The community solar farms are expected to generate over 120 megawatts (MW) of renewable

This expansion marks a significant milestone as we continue to solidify our commitment to the Midwest and pursuing our vision of an energy future powered by a **diverse, equitable, and skilled workforce.**



January 3, 2025



NEXAMP NAMED REGISTERED APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAM (RAP) EMPLOYER IN ILLINOIS BY THE U.S. DOL

[IN THE NEWS](#)

By [Mariah Moore](#)

Nexamp launched a new headquarters in Chicago earlier this year and committed to hiring 50 additional staff and investing over \$2 billion in the state as part of the announcement. This investment plan will be executed through existing projects and their robust development pipeline. Since the announcement, the U.S. Department of Labor has officially made Nexamp a Registered Apprenticeship Program (RAP) employer in the state of Illinois.

This expansion marks a significant milestone as we continue to solidify our commitment to the Midwest and pursuing our vision of an energy future powered by a **diverse, equitable, and skilled workforce.**

| The Nexamp Way



Nexamp By the Numbers



1.1 GW
under
management



800MW
under
construction



550,000
metric tons of CO2
averted



300+
completed
projects



\$275
average annual
savings per
community solar
customer



1.15+ mil
solar modules
deployed



1,350
gigawatt hours being
produced on all Nexamp
projects annually



10+ years
Consecutive top solar
contractor



Mid-west Projects



2025/2026 Projects

Herrin	IL	3/3/25
Burlington	IL	3/10/25
Sterling	IL	3/14/25
Boubonnais	IL	3/17/25
Robinson	IL	3/17/25
Galesburg	IL	3/17/25
Galesburg	IL	3/17/25
Robinson	IL	3/17/25
Keithsburg	IL	3/24/25
Morton	IL	3/25/25
Browning	IL	3/27/25
Bull Valley	IL	3/29/25
Lisbon	IL	4/1/25
Lisbon	IL	4/1/25
Lisbon	IL	4/1/25
Ashley	IL	4/4/25
Rockford	IL	4/4/25
Monee	IL	4/24/25
Monee	IL	4/24/25
Ridge Farm	IL	4/25/25

Antioch	IL	4/25/25
Antioch	IL	5/12/25
Louisville	IL	5/15/25
Viola	IL	5/22/25
Frederick	IL	5/30/25
Carthage	IL	5/30/25
Rutland	IL	6/2/25
Antioch	IL	6/3/25
Pontiac	IL	6/5/25
Macomb	IL	6/5/25
Kankakee	IL	6/12/25
Belle River	IL	6/19/25
Plano	IL	6/20/25
Bader	IL	6/24/25
Bloomington	IL	7/16/25
Monee	IL	7/22/25
Monee	IL	7/22/25
Monee	IL	7/22/25
Sterling	IL	7/30/25
Bristol	IL	8/4/25

2025/2026 Projects

Montgomery	IL	10/6/25
Robinson	IL	10/7/25
Kankakee	IL	10/31/25
Mattoon	IL	11/6/25
Mattoon	IL	12/16/25
Springfield	IL	6/6/26
Yorkville	IL	2026
Bushnell	IL	2026
Metamora	IL	2026
Metamora	IL	2026
Gilman	IL	2026
Johnson County	IL	2026
Williamson	IL	2026
Niota	IL	2026
Saline County	IL	2026
Macomb	IL	2026
	IL	2026
Grant Twn	IL	2026
West Frankfort	IL	2026
Joliet	IL	2026

Joliet	IL	2026
Joliet	IL	2026
Dundee	IL	2026
Nauvoo	IL	2026
Macomb	IL	2026
Macomb	IL	2026
Brown County	IL	2026
Lee County	IL	2026
	IL	2026
Huntley	IL	2026
TBD	IL	2026
Nauvoo	IL	2026
Utica	IL	2026
McClellan County	IL	2026
McClellan County	IL	2026
Macomb	IL	2026
Pleasant Hill	IL	2026
Royalton	IL	2026
Leland	IL	2026



EEC Onboarding Process



SAFETY



INSURANCE



BACKGROUND & EXPERIENCE





EEC Challenges



Experienced EECs in the 2MW+ size projects are limited- recommend EEC's partner with experienced installers to get experience.



New EECs tend to bid low in order to get their first large project- exercise caution in bidding and ensure that you are making a fair margin in order to grow and expand your business. Working at a loss will put you out of business.



As EECs move from smaller residential and C&I (commercial & industrial) projects to larger scale installations, be prepared with a strong, well documented safety plan and a process for implementing on site safety.





Reflection/ Questions

Thank You

For questions or assistance, please feel free to reach out.

WFD Partnerships/EEP Pipeline

Marion Jones, MPA – on LinkedIn

Email: mjones@nexamp.com

Projects/EEC Onboarding:

Todd Hansen, Director

Email: thansen@nexamp.com

