



**Illinois Solar for All**

# Finding Your Niche in Illinois Solar for All

Presented by Ky Ajayi

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# Agenda

- Introducing Ky Ajayi
  - Journey into the Solar Industry
- Potential Solar Roles
- Opportunities Within the Solar Industry
- Areas of Input
- Q&A



# Ky Ajayi's Background

- Master's Degree in Political Science
- Varied Employment History
  - Environmental Consultant
  - Real Estate Agent
  - Teleradiology Practice Manager
  - College Professor

If I can make a way in Renewable Energy, anyone can!



# Ky Ajayi's Solar Journey

- Started as a Residential Project Developer (PD) with an Engineering, Procurement and Construction (EPC) firm
  - Being a PD entails helping homeowners realize their solar dreams
  - Transitioned to assisting with ILSFA efforts
  - Now manage the Solar Access Program at the EPC firm
    - Here we make efforts to help underserved communities go solar
- While working on Illinois Solar for All (ILSFA) projects with the EPC firm, I saw an opportunity to purchase a firm working as an Approved Vendor Aggregator (AVA) in ILSFA
  - Now I manage over \$18,000,000 in Renewable Energy Credit (REC) contracts in addition to still working with the EPC firm



# Potential Solar Roles

- Project Developer
- Marketing
- Engineering and Design
- Energy Analysis
- Installation
- Electrical Design/Installation
- Approved Vendor/Designee
  - Single or Multi-project
  - Engineering, Procurement and Construction (EPC) and/or Business Development
- Approved Vendor Aggregator (AVA)



# Explanation of the Different Solar Roles, Part One

- **Project Developer**

- Sales of systems to residential and/or commercial clients

- **Marketing**

- Devising strategies for sales of solar and ancillary services

- **Engineering and Design**

- Creating solar array layouts and supporting documentation
  - Single Line Drawings
  - Site Plans

- **Energy Analysis**

- Review of electricity bills and determination of current energy costs

- **Installation**

- On the roof installing solar arrays

- **Electrical Design/Installation**

- Working on the “ac” side, i.e. connecting the solar array (“dc” side) to the building’s electrical system



# Explanation of the Different Solar Roles, Part Two

- **Approved Vendor (AV)/Designee (Single or Multi-project)**

- Single project AVs are typically:
  - Building owners who don't want to pay an AV fee
  - Only have the one project
  - Have in house capability
- Multi-project AVs may be:
  - General Contractors who will act as an EPC and build the array
  - Business developers who find the customer, sell them on the project, and then find a general contractor to build the project

- **Engineering, Procurement, and Construction (EPC) and/or Business Development**

- An EPC is basically a general contractor on a solar project. They can choose to develop the project themselves (i.e. find the customer and sell them on the project)
- **Approved Vendor Aggregator (AVA)**
  - Manage the REC contract.
  - AVAs help the client apply to the ILSFA program, guide them through required steps during the build, submit the Part II application required for payment, distribute the payment, and monitor production for 15 years



# Opportunities Within the Renewable Energy Industry

- As an Approved Vendor Aggregator, I work with Approved Vendors/Approved Vendor Designees and manage their contracts.
- Feedback I've received from AVs and AVDs is that there is a need for Eligible Trainees (ETs)
- Most Eligible Trainees are installers
  - There are currently very few ETs working in other spaces
  - The 3-year limit on eligibility makes it difficult for ETs to achieve upward mobility and find opportunities to participate in other spaces
    - For example, it may take 3 years for an installer to realize they want to work in design, by which time their work no longer counts for ET hours





# Other Areas of Input

- Once “plugged in”, one can offer insight to ILSFA through various Special Interest Groups
  - ILSFA Working Group
  - IL Clean Jobs Coalition
  - Blacks in Green



# Questions?

You can learn more about the Illinois Solar for All program by going to [IllinoisSFA.com](https://IllinoisSFA.com).

You can also reach out to [Info@IllinoisSFA.com](mailto:Info@IllinoisSFA.com) for more information about how to become an Approved Vendor with the ILSFA program.

They are here to **help you** and answer your questions about how our communities can **save money through affordable solar energy!**

Scan the QR code to learn how you can register to become an ILSFA Approved Vendor!

