



# Marketing Strategies for Illinois Contractors

# Business Growth

Empowering Solar  
Contractors with  
effective Marketing  
Strategies

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**GOLDEN ANGEL**  
MANAGEMENT



# The Value of Marketing

Agenda:  
Marketing Principles  
Brand Visibility  
Lead Generation  
Messaging



# Expectations

- Engagement
- Note Taking
- Homework



# Marketing Principles

- What are marketing principles?
- Who is your target audience?



# Target Audience

- Research demographics, preferences and behaviors
- Create customer profiles
- Gather feedback



# Brand Visibility & Lead Gen

- People can't pay you when they don't know you exist
- 3 Strategic Tips!



# Get Online!

- Search Engine Optimization
- Website Optimization
- Online Reviews



# Social Media Marketing

- Creating a profile is not enough
- Share the stage online
- Engage with your audiences



# Go Outside & Network!

- Practice your entrepreneur introduction
- Establish partnerships & collaborate



# Craft Your Messaging

- Facts tell, stories sell!
- Different messaging for different marketing channels



# Questions?



When we are no longer able to change a situation, we are challenged to change ourselves!  
-Viktor Frankl





**Illinois Solar for All**

# Illinois Solar for All Marketing Overview

Learn about how you can market your business in the Illinois Solar for All program.

Hosted by Emily Chan

Marketing Communications Associate, Illinois Solar for All

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# What We'll Cover Today



- Illinois Solar for All (ILSFA) Program Overview
- ILSFA Program Marketing Overview
  - How Does Program Marketing Work?
- Marketing Materials
- Marketing Messaging
  - Best Practices
- Discussion / Q&A



# Illinois Solar for All Program Overview

- Illinois Solar for All (ILSFA) is a state program that brings the benefits of solar energy to income-eligible households, non-profit organizations, and public facilities.
- Illinois offers this program to meet its renewable energy goals and to expand solar energy across the state while reducing the impact of climate change.



# Illinois Solar for All Program Overview

- ILSFA focuses on the people and communities who can benefit the most from the solar energy economy.
- ILSFA ensures that all qualified participants are guaranteed to see savings on their energy bills.
- ILSFA provides incentives to approved solar companies called Renewable Energy Credits (RECs). These incentives create guaranteed savings for participants.



# Illinois Solar for All Overview

Illinois Solar for All has various options for Illinois residents to participate in the program. Those options are:

- **Illinois Solar for All: Residential Solar:** Roof-mounted or ground-mounted panels for single-family homeowners and owners of multi-family residential buildings.
- **Illinois Solar for All: Community Solar:** Rather than installing on-site, single-family homeowners, renters, non-profit organizations, or public facilities can subscribe to a solar array within their utility area and earn solar credits on their energy bills.
- **Illinois Solar for All: Non-Profit and Public Facilities:** Properties occupied by a non-profit or owned and occupied by a public entity can install an on-site solar project to save on energy bills.



# How Does Illinois Solar for All Marketing Work?

- Illinois Solar for All provides approved solar companies with the ability to market directly to participants following guidelines from the Approved Vendor Manual and Consumer Protections Handbook.
  - Approved solar companies can control how often they market to potential participants.
    - Example tactics can include:
      - Event Flyers or factsheets
      - Presentations/Slide decks
      - Direct mailers or brochures
  - The Program Administrator oversees marketing materials distributed to participants by approved solar companies and is a resource for marketing-related questions.



# Does the Program Provide Marketing Materials?

- The Program Administrator provides pre-approved marketing materials to help solar companies promote ILSFA to potential participants.
- While pre-approved materials *cannot be altered* in any way, approved solar companies are encouraged to print and distribute pre-approved materials to support their marketing efforts.

## How did Illinois Solar for All (ILSFA) come to be?

- Key outcome of the Future Energy Jobs Act (FEJA)
- Passed by Illinois state legislature in 2016
- Aims to strengthen the Illinois economy by taking important steps toward our state's clean energy future



## PowerPoint Slides



### Illinois Solar for All

Affordable solar energy. More savings.  
A brighter tomorrow.

## Residential Solar for Income-Eligible Homes



### What is Illinois Solar for All?

Illinois Solar for All (ILSFA) is a state program that brings the benefits of solar energy to income-eligible households, non-profit organizations, and public facilities. Eligible participants can receive affordable solar installations and save money on electric bills.

The State of Illinois offers this program to meet its renewable energy goals and to bring the expansion of solar energy to income-eligible and environmental justice communities. The program reduces the impact of climate change in communities across the state.

ILSFA ensures participants work with solar companies that use safe and fair business practices. The approved solar companies work with participants to plan and install solar panels and ensure cost savings.

### Who can participate?

The Illinois Solar for All: Residential Solar sub-program is open to:

**Owners of single-family homes:** Occupied by households with an income of 80% or less of Area Median Income (AMI). Landlords can apply for single-family homes they own if tenants are income eligible.

**Owners or managers of multi-family residential buildings:**

- Two- to four-unit properties: At least two units must be occupied by households with incomes of 80% or less of AMI.
- Five-unit or larger properties: At least half of units must be occupied by households with incomes of 80% or less of AMI.

If a household is not eligible for ILSFA, the Illinois Shines program may be an option. Learn more at [illinoisshines.com](https://illinoisshines.com).

### How much can I save with ILSFA?

ILSFA helps homeowners save money by providing affordable solar installations that reduce their electricity bills.

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The program pays incentives to solar companies to install solar projects. Most participants, including owners of single-family homes and small multi-family buildings, will have no upfront costs. For large multi-family properties, there may be a small upfront cost.

### Guaranteed savings

ILSFA ensures that all qualified participants see savings on their energy bills. Because you will be using electricity generated from the solar project, you will pay less in electric bills. If you generate more electricity than you use, that electricity is sent back to the electric grid. When this happens, you receive a bill credits for that energy, also known as net metering credits.

### How does this work?

Here's an example of how ILSFA can help eligible participants lower their monthly electricity bill.

Before Solar	After Solar
Supply 600kWh x \$0.12/kWh = \$72	Supply 600kWh x \$0.12/kWh = \$72
Total Supply Costs = \$72	Solar Energy Generated 600kWh x \$0.12/kWh = \$60
	Total Supply Costs = \$12

The savings example is based on average retail electricity rates. This example does not include taxes, delivery costs, or other charges on your electricity bill unrelated to energy supply. Individual savings will vary.

Solar contracts with no or low costs. While most participants will not have monthly payments to

## Residential Solar Brochure



ILLINOIS SOLAR FOR ALL

# Can Approved Solar Companies Use Their Own Materials?

- Approved solar companies can create their own marketing materials using the ILSFA logo and approved program language.
- The Program Administrator encourages solar companies to create their own marketing materials that are aligned with their services and business region.
- These new materials need to be reviewed by the Program Administrator to ensure that the content is up-to-date and accurate prior to being sent to potential participants. The Program Administrator is here to support you in your work!



# Does The Program Have Messaging Guidelines?

- The Program Administrator provides messaging guidelines to support approved solar companies as they market the program.
- These guidelines help support approved solar companies provide more technical details about the program in sales conversations.
- All language must abide by the statements in the Approved Vendor Manual and Consumer Protections Handbook to ensure the participant receives accurate information.



## MARKETING MESSAGES

### Program Description

Illinois Solar for All is a state program that brings the benefits of solar energy to income-eligible households, non-profit organizations, and public facilities. Eligible participants can receive affordable solar installations and save money on electric bills.

The State of Illinois offers this program to meet its renewable energy goals and to bring the expansion of solar energy to income-eligible communities. Illinois Solar for All ensures participants work with solar companies that use safe and fair business practices.

### Program Talking Points

- Illinois Solar for All is a state program that brings the benefits of solar energy to income-eligible households, non-profit organizations, and public facilities.
- Eligible participants can receive affordable solar installations and save money on electric bills.
  - Participants have no, or low, upfront costs because Illinois Solar for All pays incentives to solar companies to put in solar installations.
  - Ongoing costs and fees will not exceed 50% of the value of the energy generated from the solar installations.
- Illinois Solar for All ensures participants work with solar companies that use safe and fair business practices.
  - Illinois Solar for All vets and approves every solar company in the program. This ensures fair business practices and quality workmanship every step of the way.
  - The approved solar companies work with participants to plan and install solar panels and ensure cost savings. These companies have the necessary technical skills and follow stringent guidelines to ensure a transparent, safe, and positive experience for every participant.
- The State of Illinois offers this program to meet its expansion of solar energy to income-eligible communities.
  - With state and utility funding, Illinois Solar for All passes the cost savings on to participants.

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## Marketing Messaging Provided in the Approved Vendor Manual

Below are examples of acceptable and unacceptable statements Approved Vendors may make related to the program.

### WHAT IS THE ILLINOIS SOLAR FOR ALL PROGRAM?

Illinois Solar for All (ILSFA) is a state solar program that benefits income-eligible and environmental justice communities in Illinois. With state and utility funding, Illinois Solar for All pays incentives to solar companies and passes the cost savings on to participants.

The program provides payments in exchange for 15 years of Renewable Energy Credits (RECs) generated by the solar systems. ILSFA enables the sale of RECs produced by qualified systems to Illinois utilities or to the Illinois Power Agency (IPA). Payments vary depending on the project type, size of the system, and where it is located.

Examples of statements companies **MAY** make related to ILSFA:

- "ILSFA is a state program that brings the benefits of solar energy to income-eligible and environmental justice communities."
- "If you sign a contract with us and our application to ILSFA is approved, the solar panels we install on your roof will be part of the ILSFA program."
- "As a subscriber to a Community Solar project that participates in ILSFA, you will earn credits on your electric bill that will save you money, based on your current supply rates."
- "As a participant in ILSFA, you will see savings on your electric bill, based on your current supply rates."

Examples of statements companies **MAY NOT** make related to ILSFA:

- "The ILSFA program gives out free solar panels."
- "We represent the ILSFA program."
- "We are in a partnership with ILSFA."
- "The ILSFA program pays incentives to income-eligible households."
- "The ILSFA program gives RECs to participants."

## Sales Messaging Provided in the Approved Vendor Manual

# What Are The Best Practices for Creating Marketing Materials?

Here are some key things to remember when you are developing materials:

- **Use Effective Headlines**

- Effective marketing materials begin with a creative headline to catch the eye of your audience. A headline can make or break whether the participant is interested.

- **Be Quick to Tell Potential Participants What They Want to Know**

- ILSFA can be a complex program to understand. That's why it's imperative to highlight how the program benefits potential participants early in your marketing.

- **Education is Key to Enrollment**

- Clear and concise messaging about how ILSFA benefits and impacts the prospective participant makes it easier to stay on the same page and streamline the enrollment process.



# What Are The Best Practices for Creating Marketing Materials?

- **Marketing Messages Are About The Participant, Not The Program**

- Prospective participants may be referred to your business through Grassroots Educators, or they may find you through your own marketing efforts. At the end of the day, your marketing should focus on the participant's needs and how they can benefit from solar.
- The most compelling marketing lets your audience know you understand them. You understand their unique problem and can convey how the program solves it.

- **Offer Multiple Ways to Follow-Up**

- Prospective participants often will have questions or will want to think about their options before moving forward with solar. Sharing your business's telephone number, email address, and social media handles gives participants more options to ask questions and follow up with you.



# How Does the Program Use Success Stories for Marketing?

- Participant success stories are often the best marketing tool. There is no better way to create trust with new participants than hearing from someone just like them.
- Video testimonials, in coordination with the Program Administrator, can be used to show your company's experience and process.



**Delia Perez, an Illinois Solar for All: Community Solar participant from the Lawndale neighborhood in Chicago**

Video produced in partnership with A Just Harvest.



# Discussion / Q & A



# Contact Us!

For ILSFA Marketing questions, please contact the Program Administrator:

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