

Illinois Shines Program Overview for Southern Illinois Clean Energy Summit

**Presented by Illinois Shines
Program Administrator**

August 21, 2025



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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").

Illinois targets include:

- 40% of energy from renewable sources by 2030
- 50% of energy from renewable sources by 2040
- 100% of energy from clean sources by 2050



What is Illinois Shines?

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 may be passed on to customers.

Each Program Year, the IPA sets the price for RECs for various types of projects that apply to Illinois Shines in that Program Year.

Solar providers calculate the estimated RECs that an individual project will produce over a period of time.

Distributed Generation (DG)

DG customers agree to transfer REC ownership to their solar vendor, who receives payment for them from utilities and often pass them on to customers through reduced purchase prices, installation costs, lease payments, or other agreed terms.

Community Solar (CS)

Customers who don't wish to or can't install solar directly on their property can subscribe to a Community Solar project. Solar developers get paid for the large amount of RECs the projects produce, then pass on value to customers who subscribe.

The Program requires Disclosure Forms that detail a project's REC values and allow customers to compare multiple project offers and financing types.

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 REC contracts with utilities.



Designees

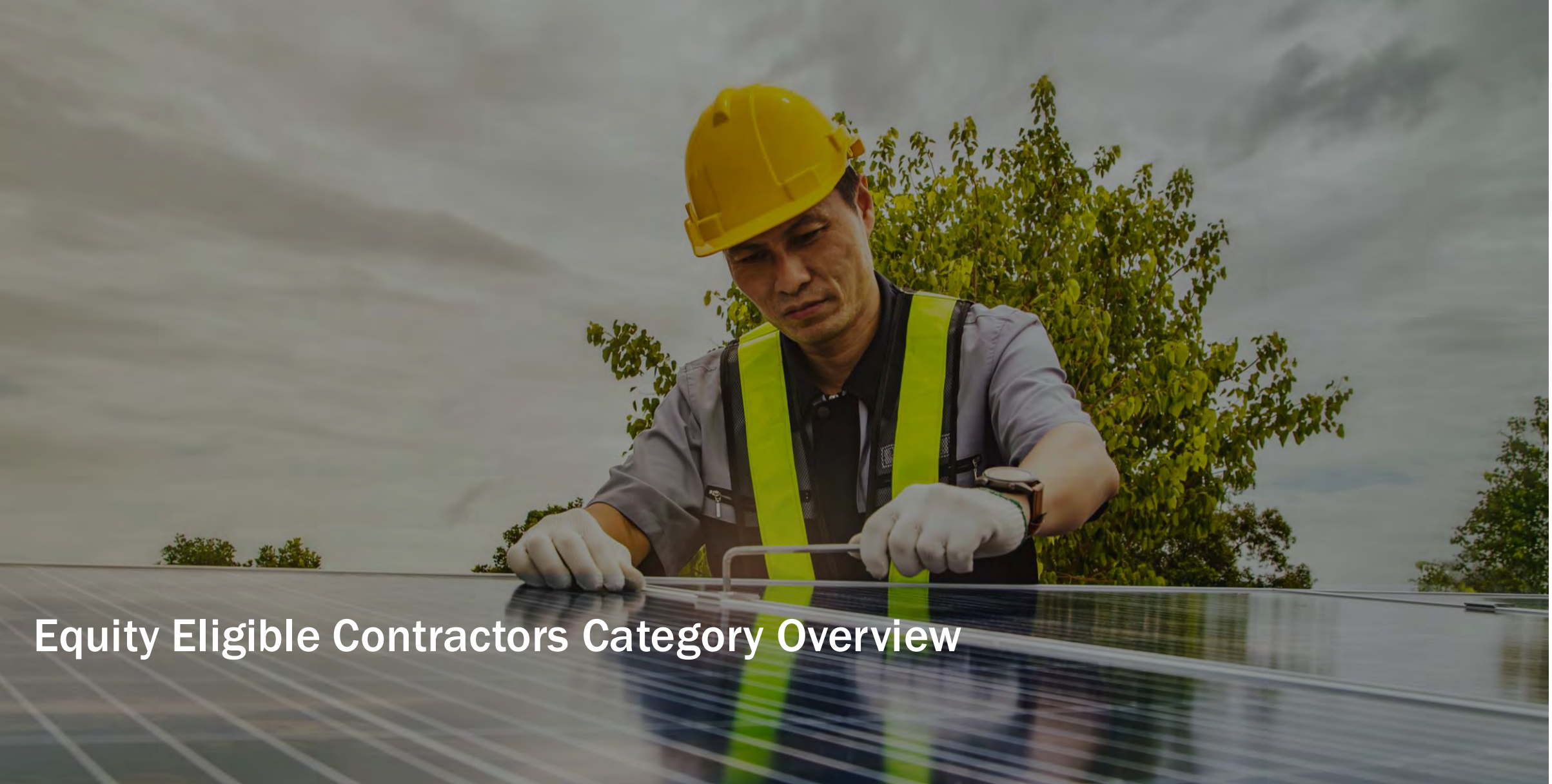
- Designees are third party (i.e., non-Approved Vendor) entities that have direct interaction with end-use customers; they include installers, marketing firms, community solar subscriber agents, lead generators, and sales organizations.



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.





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").



Minimum Equity Standards

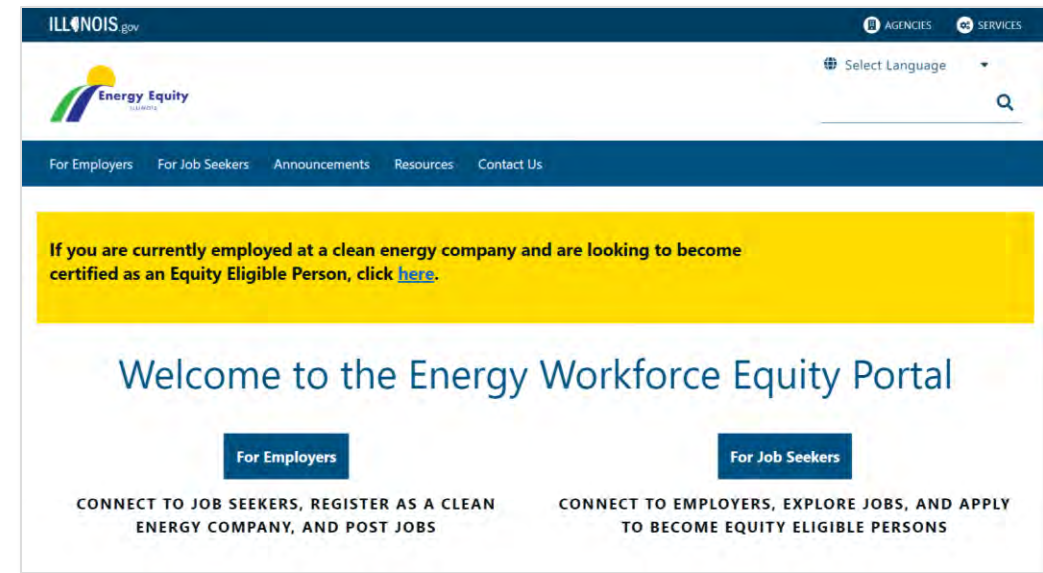
Minimum Equity Standard and the Energy Workforce Equity Portal

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.



energyequity.illinois.gov



Advance of Capital

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



Program Support and Resources

Mentorship Program

The Program Administrator facilitates the Mentorship Program, providing Program participants with training, guidance, and support to find success with the Program.

- 8-week virtual training series, weekly virtual calls, and one-on-one meetings with the EEC Sector Strategist
- Can participate as a mentee or mentor and attend Mentorship Program Graduation and Networking event at the end of the training series
- Program Year 2024-25 Mentorship Program presentation recordings and slide decks can be found on the [Mentorship Program page](#)



Additional Program Support and Resources

- Approved Vendors can schedule 1-on-1 Check-Ins with Sector Strategists
- AV Roundtables
- Program Resources
 - [Become an AV or Designee](#)
 - [Vendor FAQs](#)
 - [Program Guidebook \(PY 2025-26\)](#)
 - [Consumer Protection Handbook \(PY 2025-26\)](#)
 - [REC Prices Spreadsheet \(PY 2025-26\)](#)
 - [REC Payments Calculator \(PY 2025-26\)](#)
 - [Program announcements](#)
- Program General Contacts
 - admin@IllinoisShines.com
 - (877) 783-1820
 - Illinoisshines.com





Questions

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

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