



Equity Accountability System Assessment

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August 21, 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:

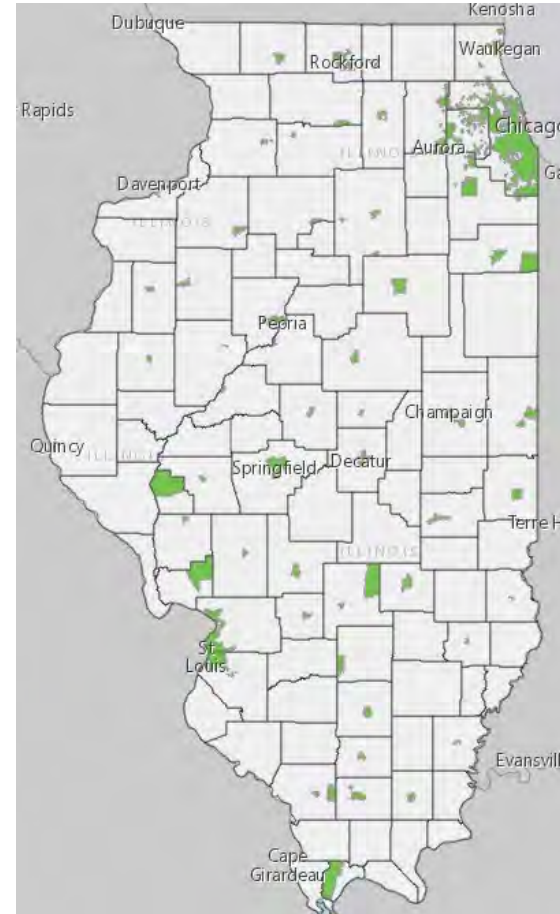
- A business that is majority-owned by equity eligible persons, or a nonprofit or cooperative that is majority-governed by equity eligible persons, or is a natural person that is an eligible person offering personal services as an independent contractor.
- The EEC Project Category is a designated capacity 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

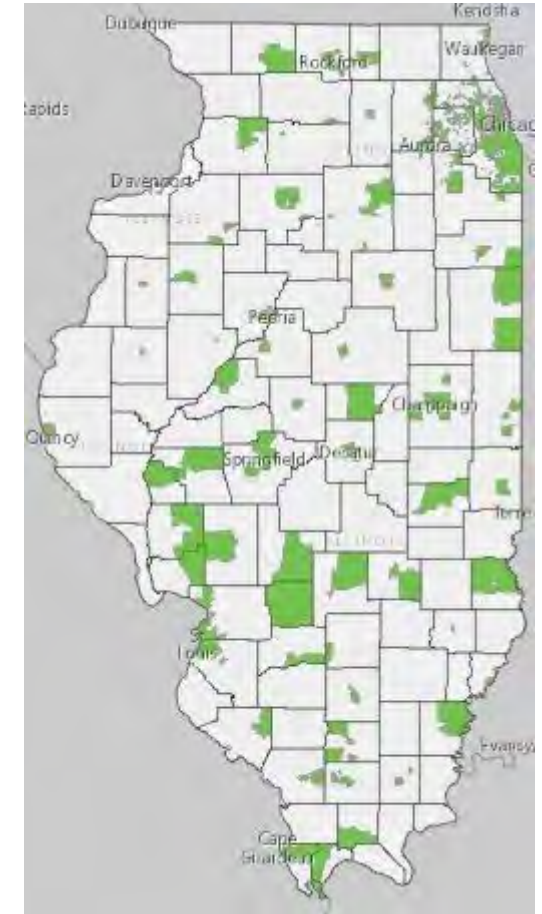
Equity investment eligible communities are geographic areas throughout Illinois which would most benefit from equitable investments by the State designed to combat discrimination.

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.
 - The 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.
- **For Program Year 2025-2026:**

At least 14% of project workforce for each entity must be comprised of Equity Eligible Persons or Equity Eligible Contractors.
- **By Program Year 2030-2031:**

At least 30% of the project workforce for each entity participating in a procurement program is comprised of EEPs.

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)

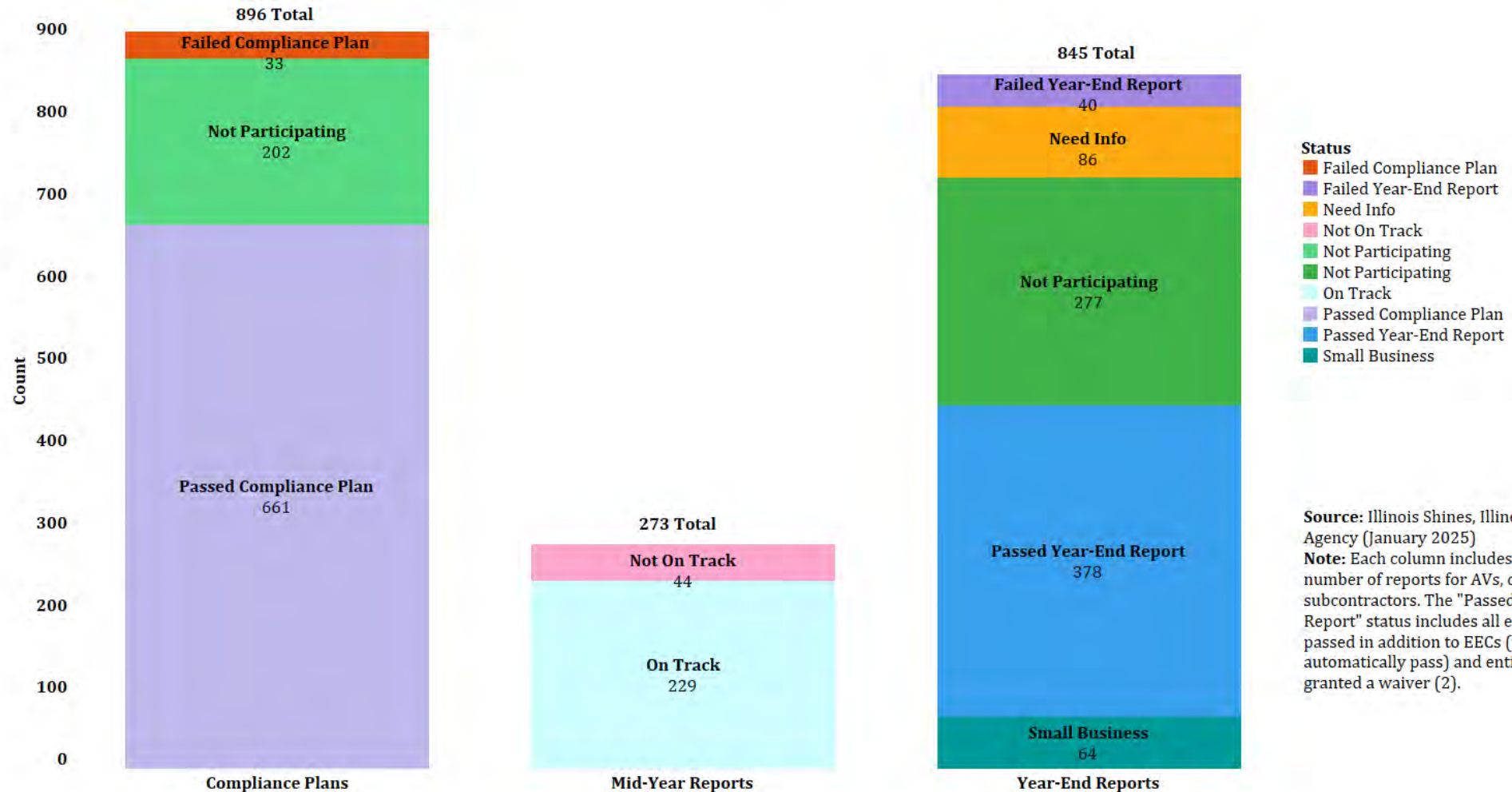
ipa.illinois.gov

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

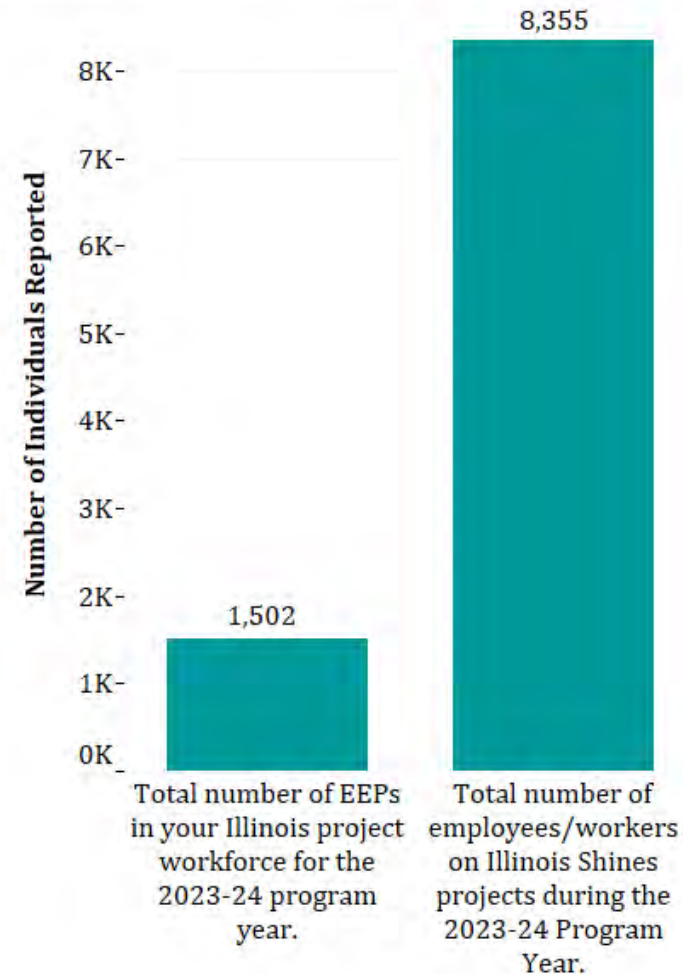
Reported Minimum Equity Standard (MES) Activity in Year-End Reports Submitted by AVs, Designees and Subcontractors in the Illinois Shines Program

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

No	360
Yes	170

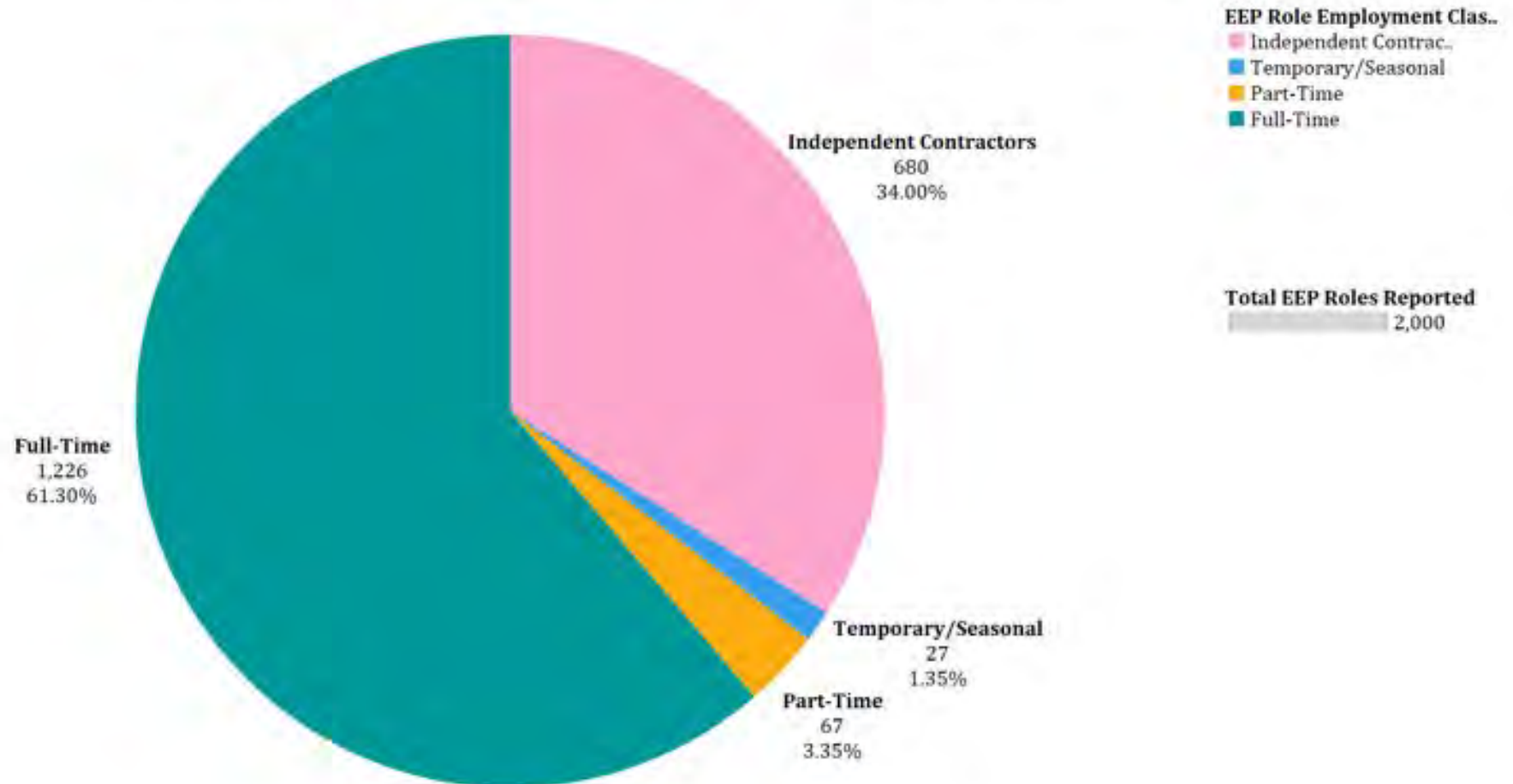
During the 2023-24
Program Year (June 1,
2023 – May 31, 2024), did
your organization hire any
new employees? This can
include full-time,
part-time, contractors, or
any other type of
employee.

No	230
Yes	300



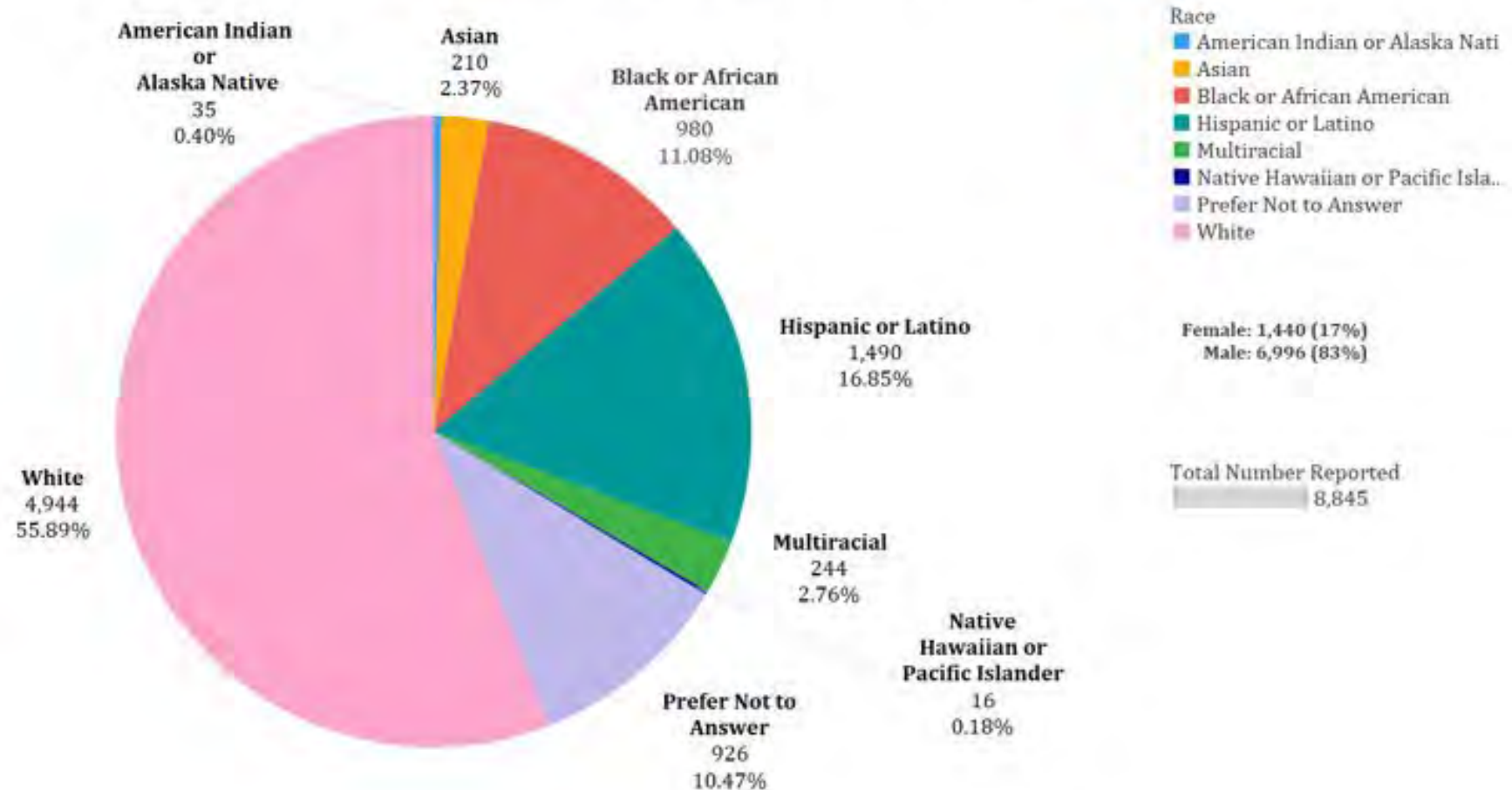
PY23-24 Workforce Overview

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



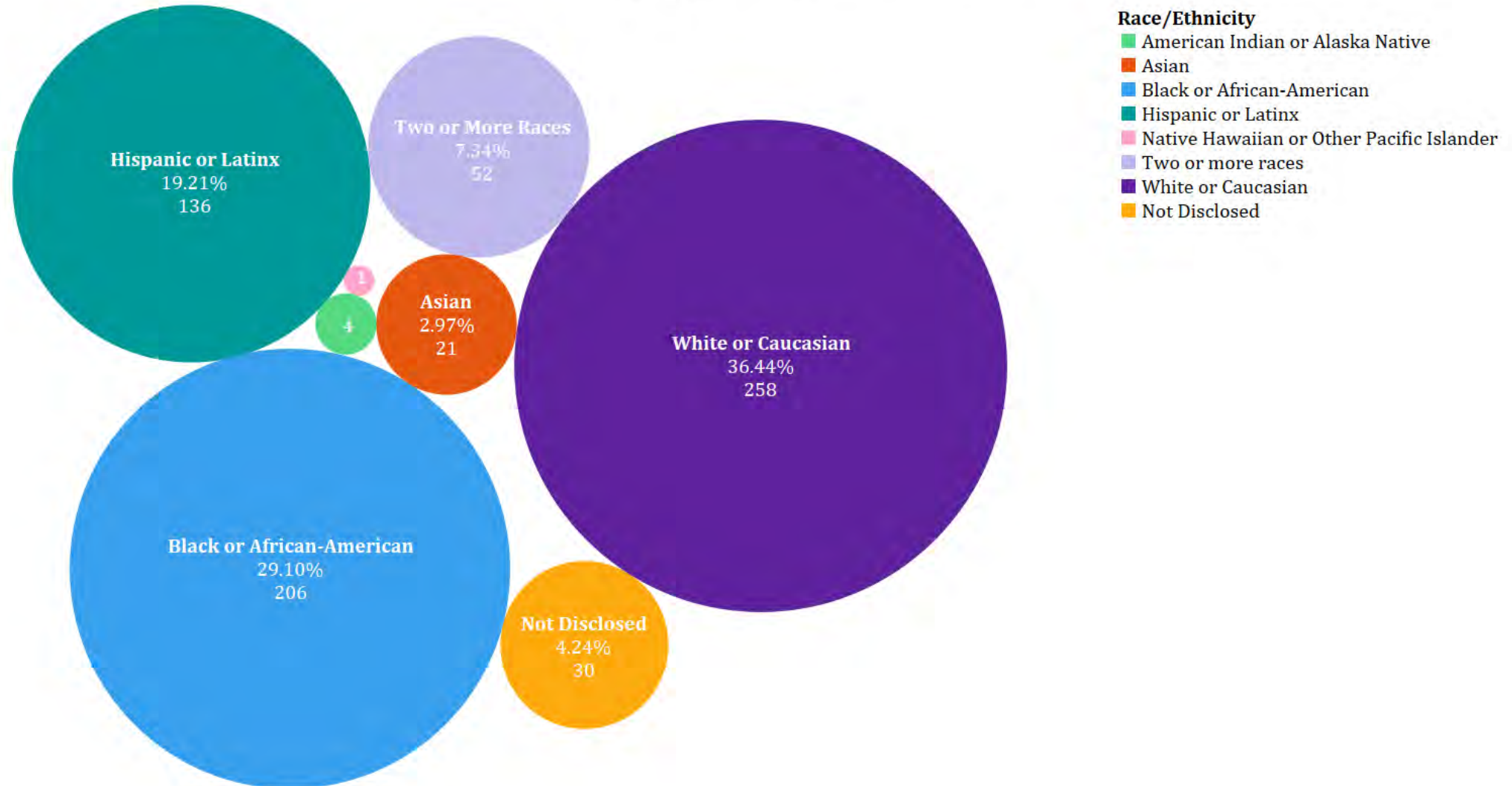
PY23-24 Workforce Overview

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



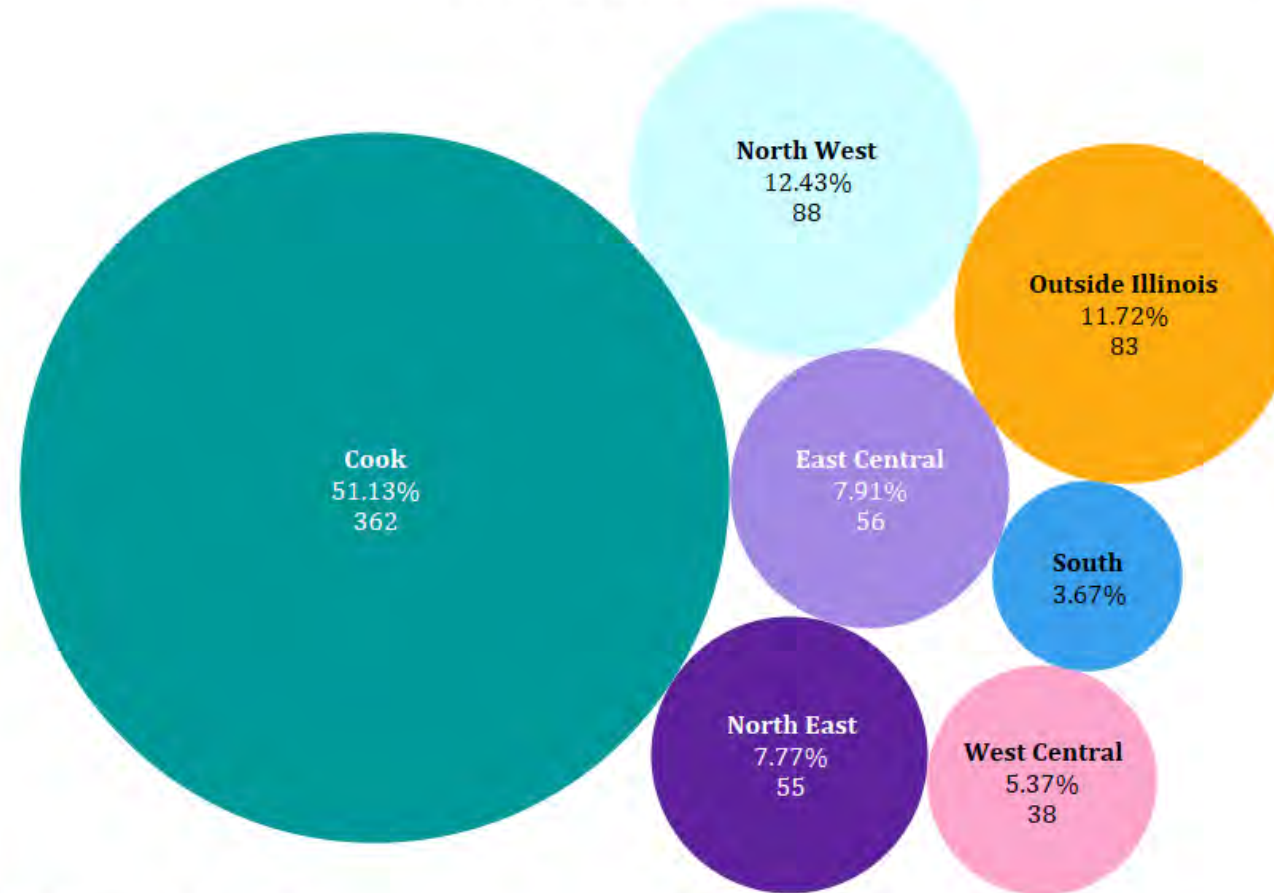
Equity Eligible Persons

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

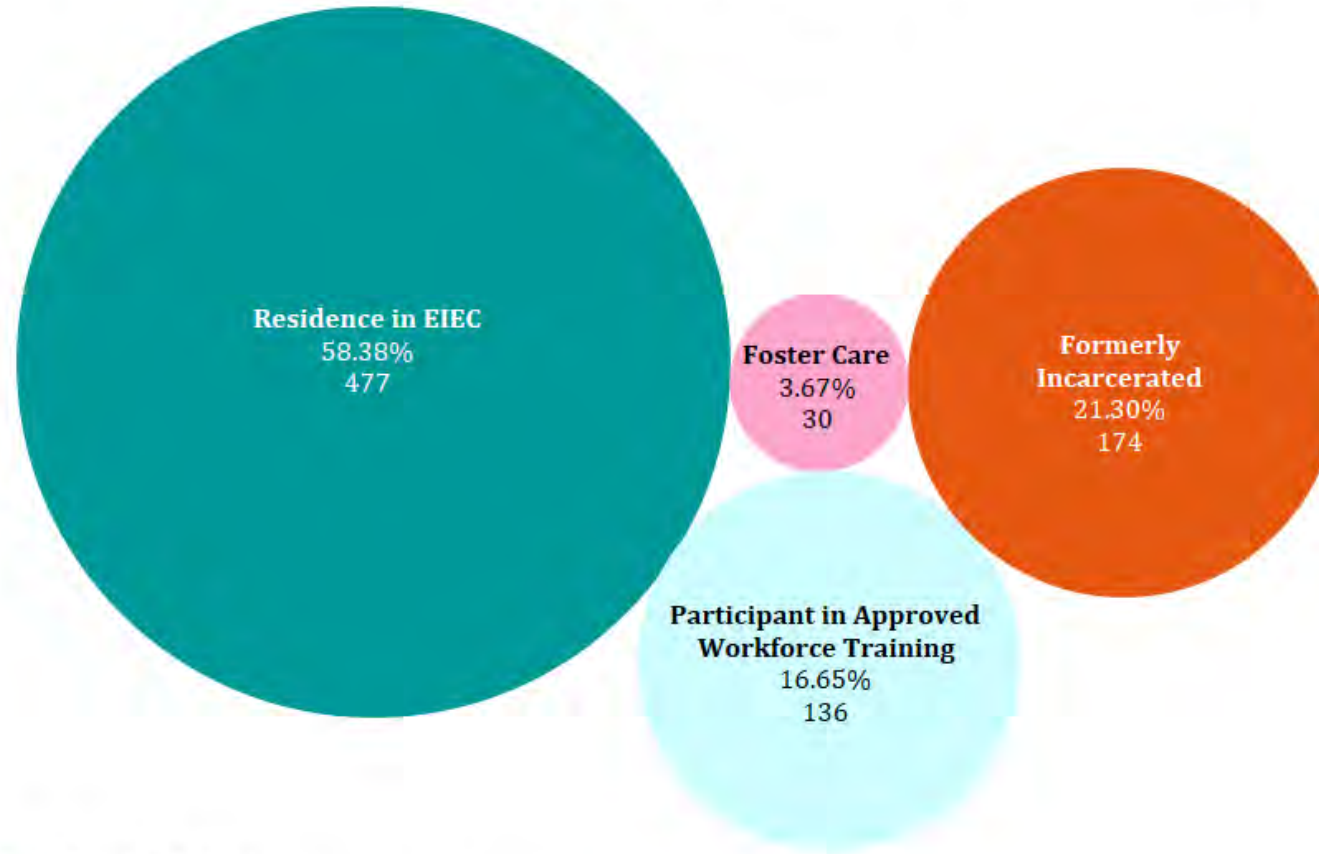


EEP Residence Zip Codes



Equity Eligible Persons

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

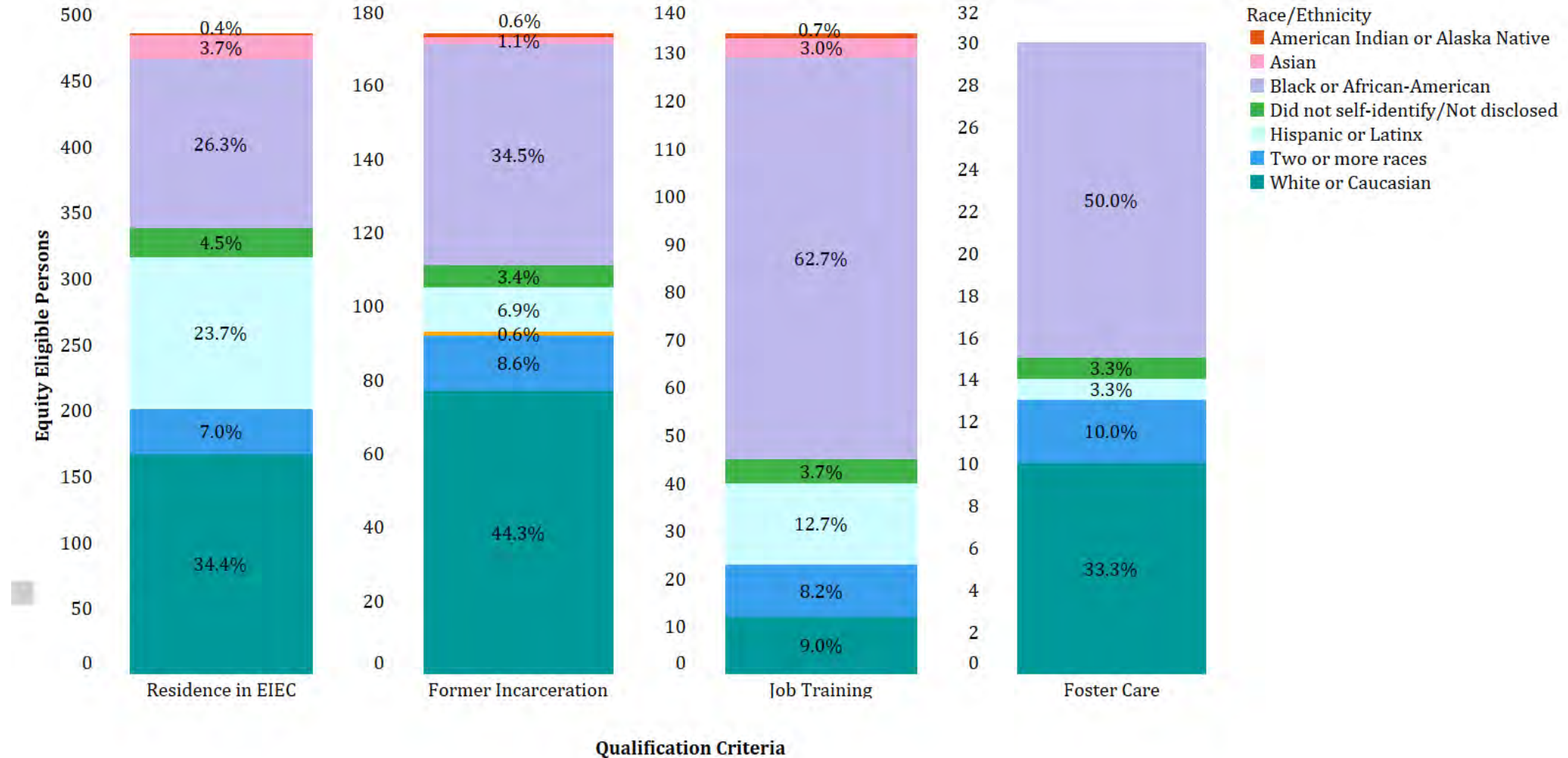


Qualification Criteria

- 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**



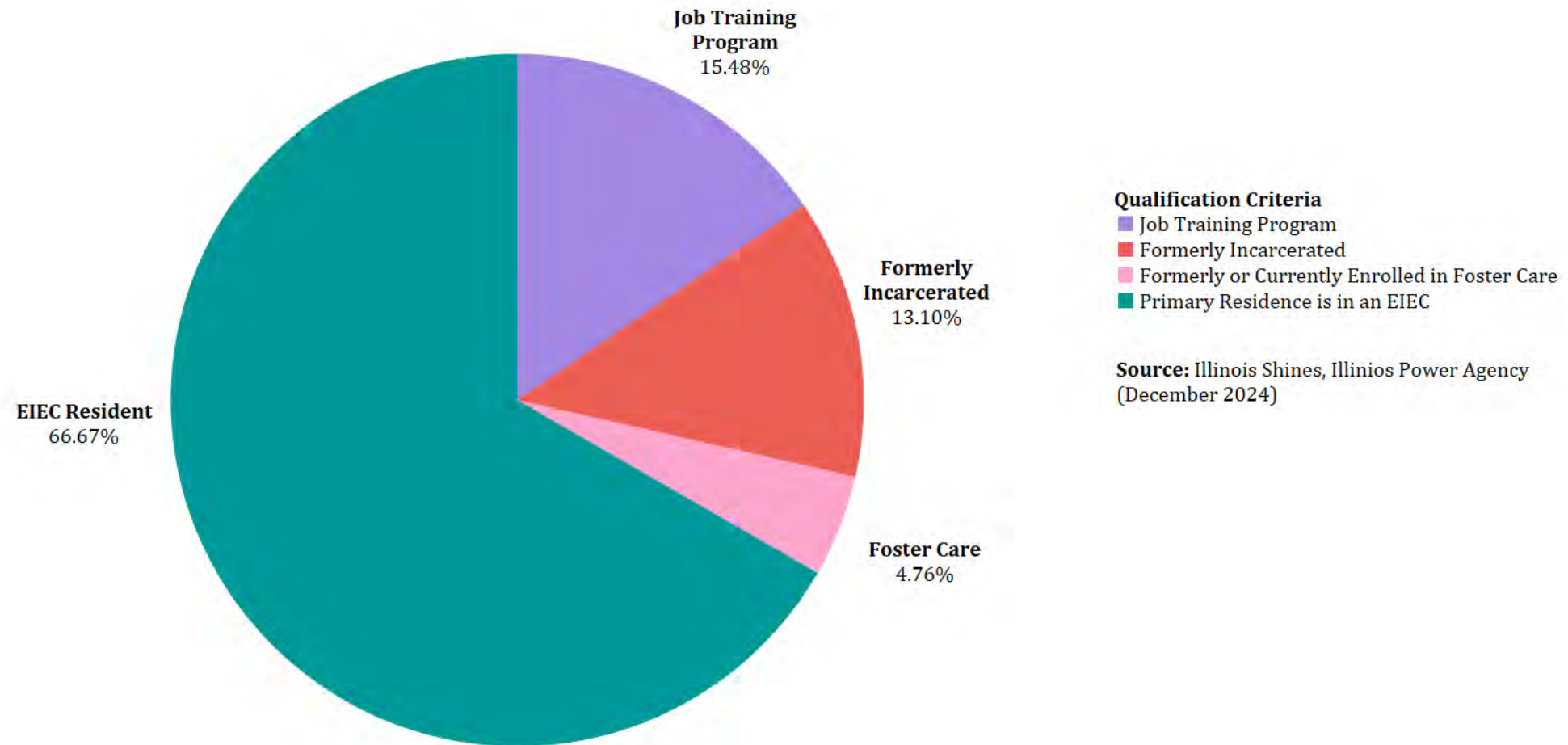
Equity Eligible Contractors

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

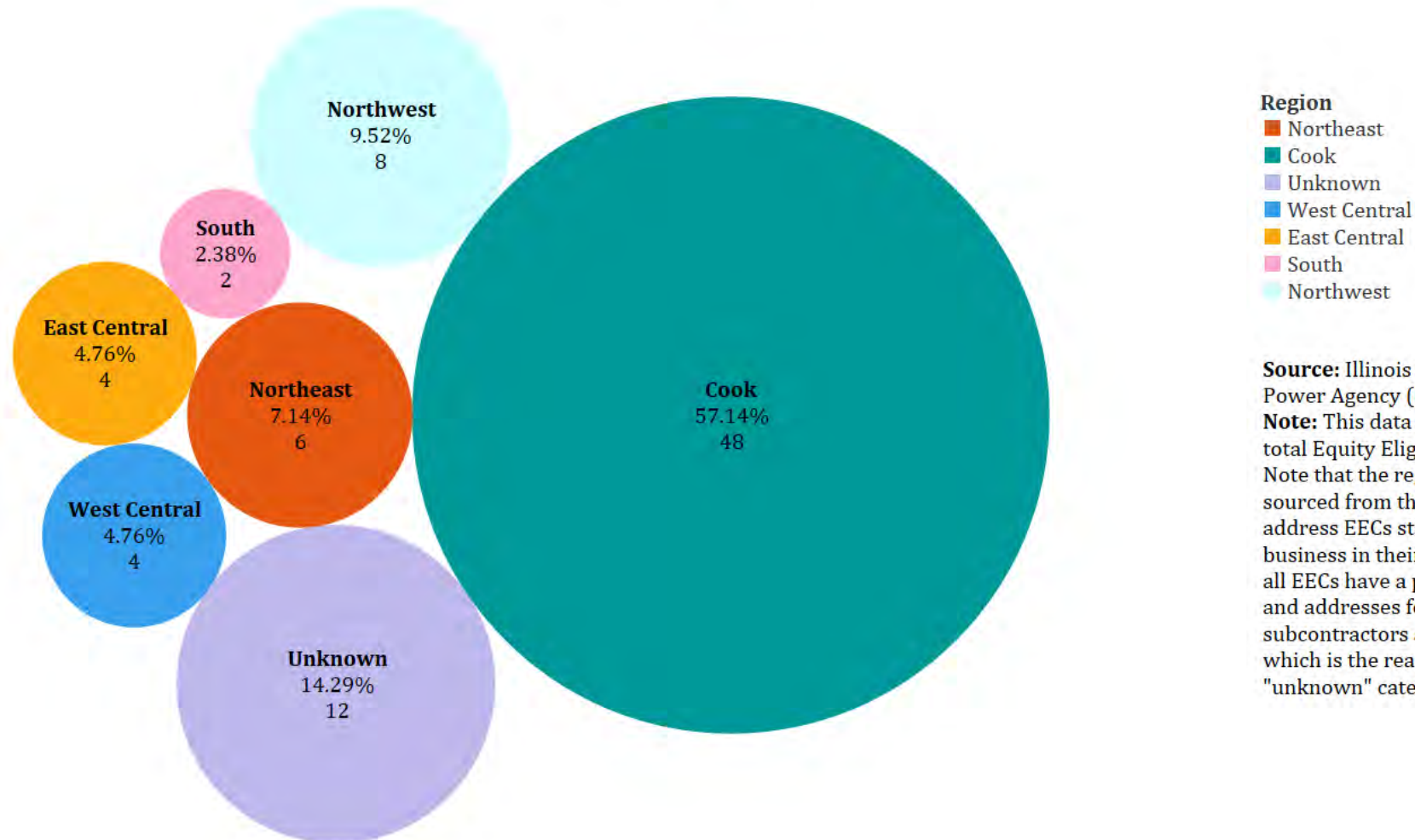
Equity Eligible Contractors

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

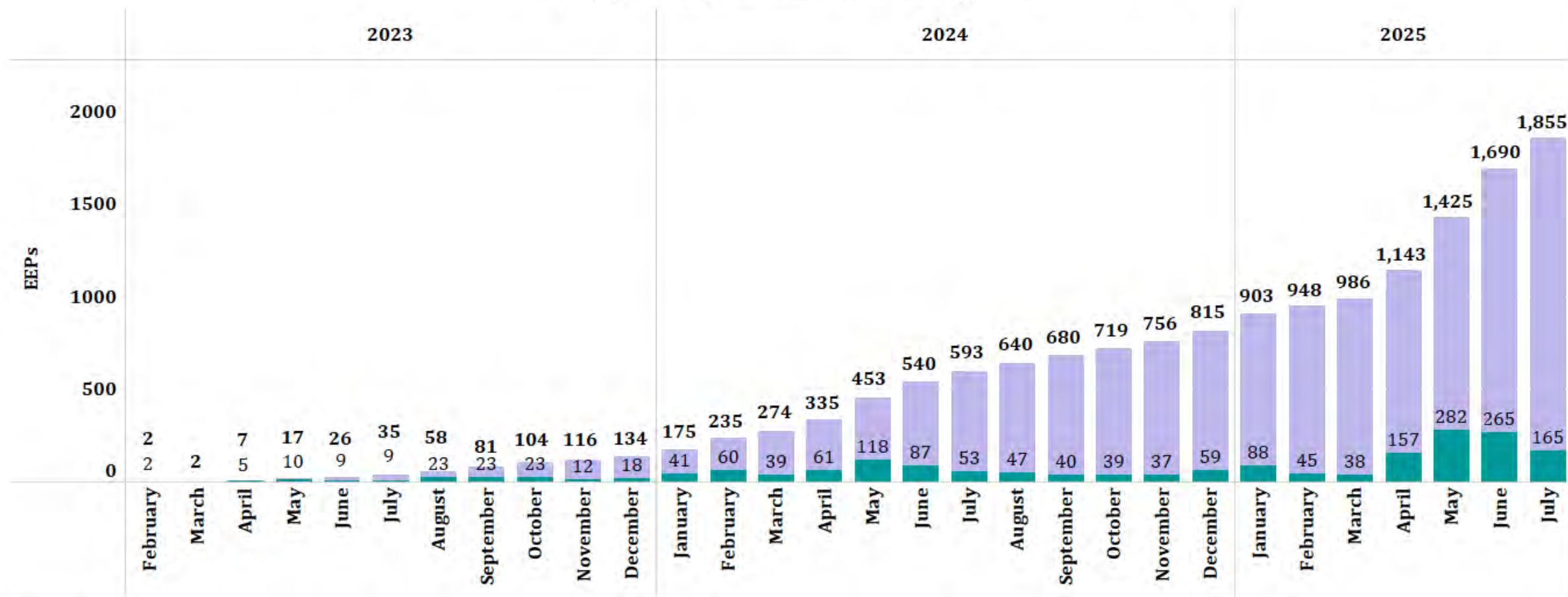
- The portal is designed to:
 - Help individuals find out whether they qualify as Equity Eligible Persons and register.
 - Connect EEPs with prospective employers and find jobs.
 - Allow clean energy companies to register, post jobs, recruit EEPs and verify EEP status of current employees.
 - Help Equity 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

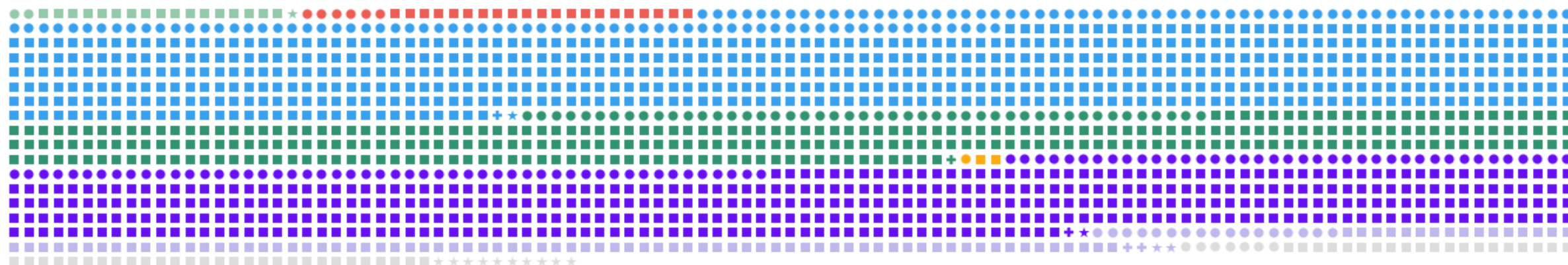
- EEPs Approved
- Total EEPs

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

Percentage of Total EEPs

299 person(s)	16.09%
1,539 person(s)	82.83%
5 person(s)	0.27%
15 person(s)	0.81%

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

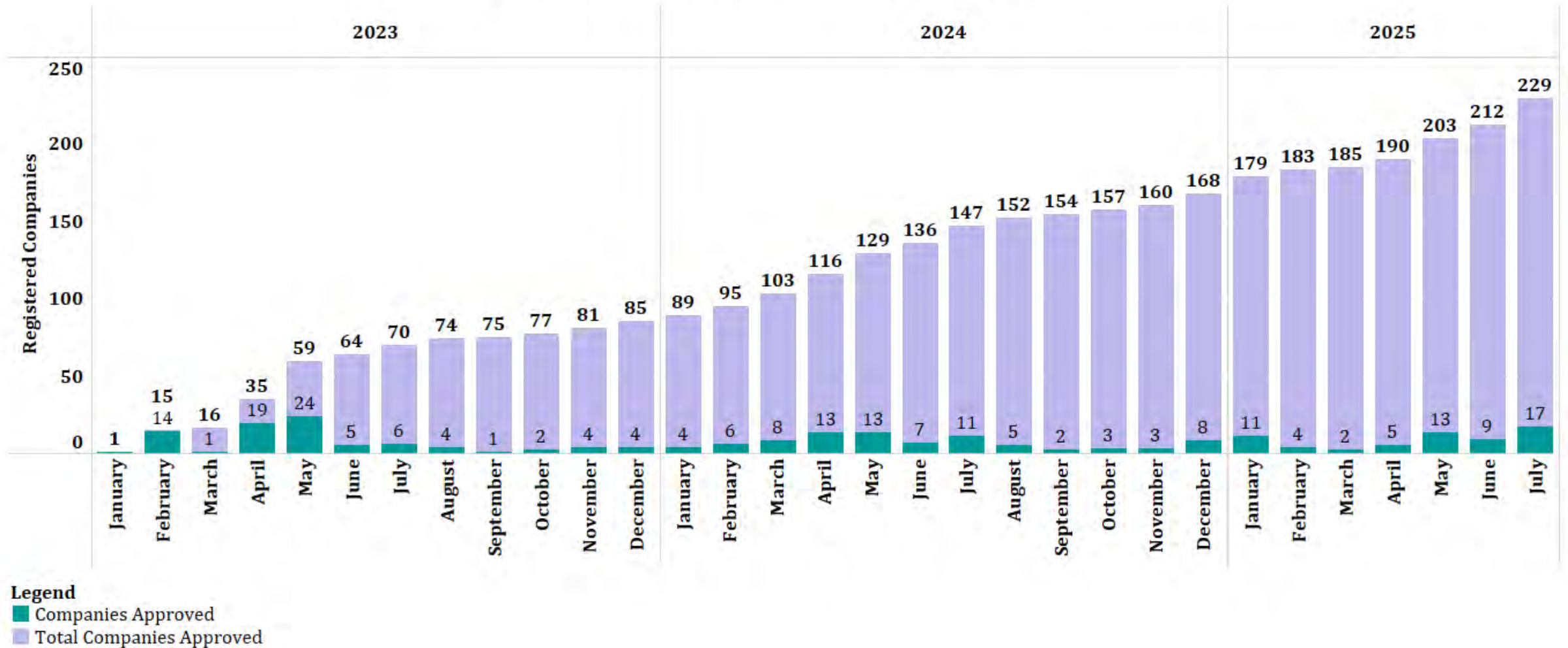
EEPs

Percentage of Total EEPs

20 person(s)	1.08%
27 person(s)	1.45%
737 person(s)	39.67%
351 person(s)	18.89%
3 person(s)	0.16%
541 person(s)	29.12%
113 person(s)	6.08%
66 person(s)	3.55%

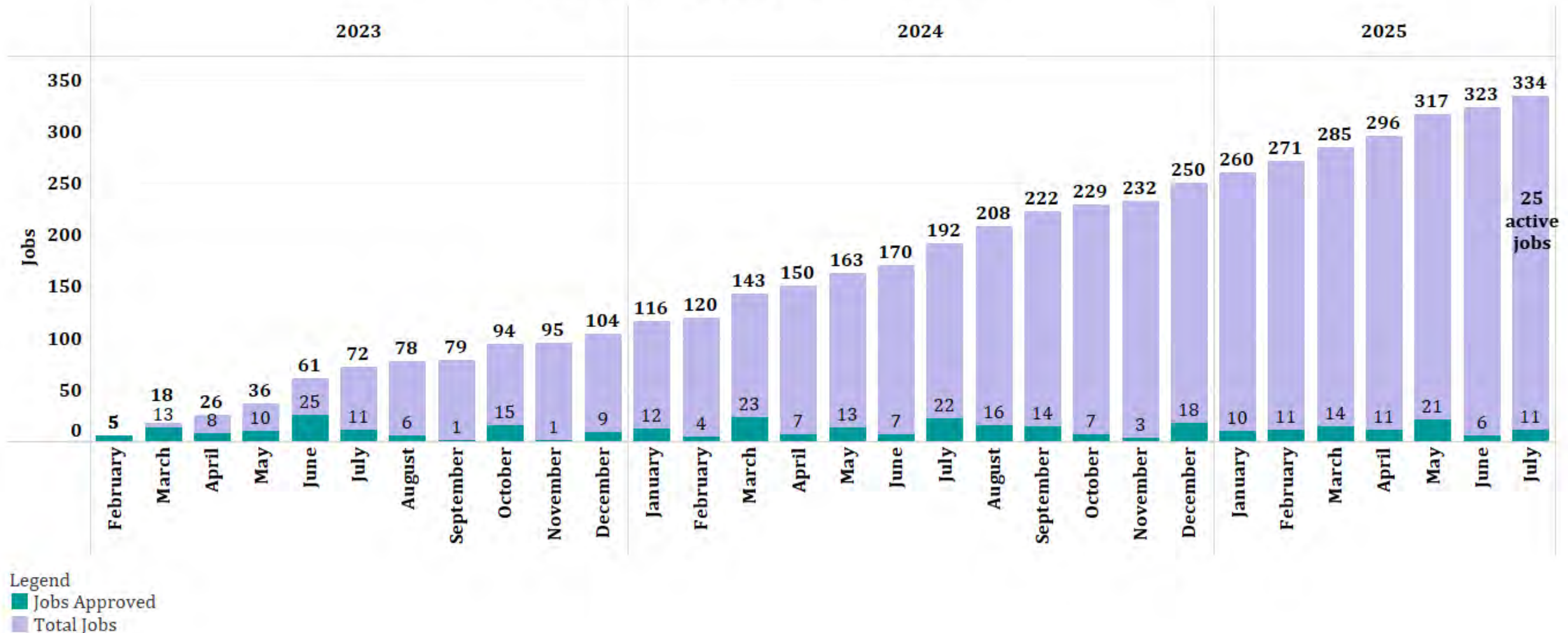
Clean Energy Companies

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



Clean Energy Job Postings

External Jobs Listed in the Energy Workforce Equity Portal
Jobs Approved by Month and Total Jobs Approved



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.



- **Mentorship Program**
- **Dedicated EEC Sector Strategist**
- **AoC Technical Support**
- **Open Office Hours and 1:1 Support Available**
- **EEC Approved Vendor Roundtable and Satisfaction Surveys**
- **EEC Hub on IL Shines Website**
- **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
- **LTP Update**
 - Draft Plan published on August 15.
 - Written comments are due on September 29.

What's Next?

- **Racial Disparity 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.
 - After a robust RFQ/RFP process, **Griffin & Strong, P.C.** was selected to conduct the study.
 - Initial Planning and Kick-off Meetings were conducted in July and August.
 - Data Assessment Meetings will begin soon.
 - Study website in development.

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