

Illinois Solar for All Advisory Committee Informational Meeting Transcript

September 16, 2025

□ **Jennifer Brown** 0:03

Good afternoon, everyone. Good afternoon. My name is Jennifer Brown and I am with Illinois Sol of the Illinois Solar for All team here at um here at Elevate. elevate and just wanting to introduce a few people before we get started. As we have ground rules, we will ask that you would mute your mic if you would please while the presentation is taking place.

Of course, if you have any questions, you can go ahead and drop your questions in the comments or you can raise your hand and we will acknowledge you. Before we get started with our presentation, we do want to do a couple quick introductions and we do have a quick icebreaker that we'd like for you to.

Just drop in the comments. So by way of introduction, again, I'm Jennifer Brown with Illinois Solar for all and our icebreaker, if you would please put in the comments is what is something that is inspiring you to do the work that you're doing right?

Right now or what inspires you about the solar industry? So if you will put that in the comments along with your name and your organization, we would love to see some of your comments. What are what is something that's inspiring you to do the work that you're doing right now or what inspires you?

About the solar industry that as well as your name and the organization that you are with, we'd also love to have you share just one word, one word that. Would give us what you're feeling as you're stepping into today's Illinois solar for all advisory informational meeting. Just one word, whatever that one word may be. Excited, curious, just whatever that might be. So again, your icebreaker is.

Your name, your organization, and what is something that's inspiring you to do the work that you're doing right now, or what inspires you about the solar industry? And also, if you would share one word that would give us a sense of

what you're feeling as you're stepping into today's informational.

Session. All right. And so as I have already introduced myself, I'll share with you that one word that I'd like to share is I am excited. I am very excited as we're stepping into today's meeting.

And one thing that inspires me about the solar industry is the fact that we are able to help people across the state of Illinois that would normally not have access to solar energy. And that's what's in Illinois solar for all does is it gives us the opportunity to help.

Help those folks. So that's what inspires me. What is inspiring you? All right.

And I'm going to pass the mic over to my colleague Patrice as she introduces herself and shares some of her icebreaker thoughts.



Patrice McFarlin 3:47

Some new fresh perspectives to help spur some additional discussions about how we can improve the ILSA program. And something that inspires me is the resiliency of solar and the connections and community.

That we're building along the way of ensuring that all of our communities have access to renewable energy. So I will pass to Mari.

Mari.



Mari Johnson 4:20

Hi everyone. I am Mari Johnson. I'm the Senior Director of Elsa at Elevate. I am inspired by the solar industry's ability to drive both global innovation and local impact, bringing clean energy solutions to change communities. My word today is evolving.

I will pass it to Jen Schmidt.



Jennifer M. Schmidt, 4:49

Hi, I'm Jen Schmidt. I'm the senior program manager of the Illinois Solar for All program and I'm with the Illinois Power Agency. I am inspired by the, I think the innovation. I think I've been really inspired by all the different.

Ways that folks in Illinois, in developers in Illinois and around the nation have used solar to improve communities and I think that the and that is my word

community. That's what I really believe in as the.

What I want to build with this program and I will. I don't have my list of who's here up. I will pass it to. Are we doing everybody?



Jennifer Brown 5:41

No, just anyone from your team, Jen.



Jennifer M. Schmidt, 5:42

OK. OK. Then I'll bounce it to Adrian.



Jennifer Brown 5:46

Thank you.



Clewis, Adrienne O. 5:51

Hi everyone. My name is Adrienne Clewis. I am the outreach specialist on the Illinois Solar for Raw team at the IPA. I am inspired by our communities. I'm inspired by the households. I'm inspired by the grassroots educators.

in all of the organizations that work in the community. I personally think that it's so important for everyone to access energy and decrease their energy burden. And I've seen households in positions where they cannot afford their energy costs or they've had to use

Use, you know, electric courts to from a neighbor's house to to have electricity in their home. And so my word for today is going to be quality because everyone deserves a the best quality of life regardless of where you live or you know who you are or your income or your.

Household status. I am going to pass this along to let's see who else on our team is here.

And.

Anyone else on the the Elsa team?



Jennifer Brown 7:11

No, I think that's um.



Mari Johnson 7:12

I see Katherine.



Clewis, Adrienne O. 7:14

Katherine. Come on down, Katherine.



Mari Johnson 7:24

Unless she dropped and looking now.

Oh, I don't see her anymore. Sorry.



Jennifer Brown 7:36

OK, no problem. That's great. I love some of the things that we're seeing in the comments. Someone said, I think it was Brent that said I am most inspired from the ability to impact the lives of communities and individuals as they seek control to control their future related to.

Energy independence. Oh, it looks like Catherine is coming back in.

Someone said that their word was determined.

And just some really great comments, like definitely check out the comments as we are moving forward. But this was so awesome. Thank you so much everyone for sharing your thoughts and your inspiration as well as your work for the day.

So I think that's A. great way for us to segue right into our agenda for today.

So we're going to start off talking about Illinois Solar for All, Illinois Solar for All's program objectives. Illinois Solar for All, or better known as ILSFA, is A. state program that provides incentives for income eligible.

Residents to make solar adoption more affordable. Many of you all talked about that in your comments and what inspires you. There are 4 sub programs to Illinois Solar for All. The first one is called the Residential Solar Small and that is for single family homes.

Homes and units up to four buildings up to 4 units. And then of course there is residential large and that is units that buildings that have more than five units and then there is community solar and then there finally there is.

Nonprofit and public facilities.

Next slide.

So as we take A. look back, we started off talking about Illinois Solar for All's programs, but let's just take A. quick look back at the history of Illinois Solar

for All. So of course, Illinois Solar for All was started well, the future jobs.

The Future Energy Jobs Act was started in 2016, and that was A. result of meaningful collaborations between energy companies, environmental groups, as well as consumer advocate groups.

And then Illinois Solar for All was created by the Future Energy Jobs Act, or FEJA, and and it was then further expanded by CEJA, which is the Climate and Equitable Jobs Act, and that was further expanded in 2021.

And of course, Illinois Solar for All's goals or major goal, if you would, just to break it down into A. very simplistic terms, is just to make solar energy more affordable for income eligible residents and organizations that serve them.

So.

When we talk about the current state of Illinois Solar for All.

We're looking at more specifically sharing with you today the current state of the small sub program. So the small sub program as we mentioned is residential, residential sub program for for.

Single family units as well as up to 4 units in A. in A. building and the the program is.

You know what? I think that we're going to, I think we may need to before we continue. Patrice, I'm going to share A. screen if you would, if you wouldn't mind.

 **John L Alexander** 11:50
Yes.

 **Patrice McFarlin** 11:51
Sure thing.

 **Jennifer Brown** 11:59

OK, we apologize. Give me just one second. We're gonna shift the PowerPoint here so that we can continue on.

 **Patrice McFarlin** 12:19

And you know, Gina, I am.

 **Jennifer Brown** 13:06

OK, can everyone see my screen?

 **Patrice McFarlin** 13:11

Yes.

 **Jennifer Brown** 13:12

OK, great. All right. So the residential sub program had has fully allocated the available funding for this program year and is not accepting applications for new solar projects for single family to for two to four unit homes.

At this current time, but we wanted to kind of breakdown exactly what that means. This is the first time in Illinois Solar for All programs history that this has ever happened that we've gotten to A. place where we're fully allocated with the budget for solar projects for single family homes.

In this program year, Illinois Solar for All received 735 projects and put 65 projects on the waiting list. This is unprecedented for this. This is a milestone that's fully unprecedented for the program.

And so we just kind of wanted to share with you where we are currently with the the state of the sub program.

So with regard to that, those programs, those projects that are on the wait list will be added to the pipeline on a first come, first serve basis when and if any of those projects 735.

Projects fall out of the pipeline and in March of 2026 the residential, the residential large sub program which is 5 plus will then merge with the residential small in a one. Of course that's.

The residential small for one to four, all of the projects will then be that are on the wait list will then be added to the pipeline once that merge happens in

2026. And then of course if any participants are currently working with approved vendors, they should work with their compute approved vendor to make sure they understand.

The status of their project and of course, despite all of the wonderful popularity that we've been having with the program, any residents that are still or currently seeking installations are being still directed to an approved vendor. But we want to make sure that we're setting clear expectations on these new time frames.

and these new exectations with the program.

So I'm going to pass the mic over to my colleague Patrice as we start to talk about the Advisory Committee in particular. We just wanted to kind of give you an update as to where we are with Illinois Solar for All, the program and the subprograms. But now we're going to talk about the Advisory Committee.

PM **Patrice McFarlin** 15:56

All right, awesome. Thanks so much, Jen. So the Advisory Committee came about through the IPA's 2022 long-term Renewable Resources Plan, which included a proposal to convene the Gosfa Advisory Committee with the idea of exploring.

ideas that would be able to provide advisement on the program. And within that plan, there was an establishment that the Advisory Committee would be intended to foster meaningful connections and conversations among program stakeholders. So we'll talk a little bit about what the

Those different stakeholders and roles are and agencies ultimately to provide feedback or information regarding participating in the program, to encourage stakeholder feedback, public feedback, and then ultimately to propose incremental improvements to the program.

So this is essentially our guiding star as we really define what we're going to be doing with the Advisory Committee. So as we move along now, this is a great way for us to walk into how we're doing that and talk a little bit about the roles that are used in order to achieve those goals.

So as you see listed here, we have about 8 different types of membership categories and a specified number of seats on that roster in order to make sure that we're really providing a diverse view of the stakeholder interest and not

one specific stakeholder group would.

Sway or dominate the actual group. And so within this group, when you're going to be actually completing the application, you will see that there is an opportunity for you to actually indicate which of those stakeholder groups or categories you actually fall under.

And so this is the roles or the different types of roles that we have for the participating committee members. But what we'll talk about next is we did introductions and you were introduced to the IPA, the program administrator, administrator as well as in color and so wanted to find.

What that working relationship looks like between those 3 roles and the committee. So the IPA engages with the committee around program design and the different functional areas within ILSFA and ultimately the IPA has the final authority for approval.

Any of the recommendations or program changes. And then we have the program Administrator Elevate, who's responsible for leading the Advisory Committee and providing those technical insights across the functional areas that we'll discuss over the course of the term of the Advisory Committee. And then you have in color where we are working to support the Advisory Committee and all of our work is directed by Elevate as the program administrator.

So now we want to talk a little bit more about our expectations and our commitments. So the Advisory Committee has a really important role as it relates to advising on the specified topics. So firstly, we expect to have active engagement. We want to.

Hear your thoughts. We want you to share your experience. We want to share, want to hear what your lived and professional expertise is around the topics that we're going to discuss while remaining flexible. The program is going to evolve. The market is going to evolve. Program needs are going to evolve over the course of our time to get there. So wanting to.

To make sure that committee members, when they sign up and agree to serve on this committee, that you are prepared to be actively engaged in the meetings as well as doing any of the pre-work, which we'll talk about a little bit here shortly.

The number one way to remain engaged with the committee is through the participation of meetings. The committee's members should expect to attend

the quarterly meetings, which is going to be our full committees, and then if there are needs for subcommittees for the committee members.

To participate in those subcommittees. So that looks like about four to 10 meetings per year. With the way that the committee has been operating, we have not really delved into our subcommittee work, but that is an Ave. that we would be looking to use to go deeper into specific topics.

As we move along the program year and you can expect that those meetings are going to come in combination of virtual in a Teams environment similar to the one that we're operating in today or in person, so that we can allow for opportunities for some in-person gathering, community building, networking and working.

Through topics that we need perhaps a little bit more time. We're asking for our committee members to be prepared coming into meetings. So preparing is completing any pre-work. This is going to often come in time in terms of an agenda or a couple of pages of.

Background around the topic that we're going to be discussed in the upcoming meeting. This is not a day long activity, but will typically take members a couple of hours to to really read and then understand and prepare any questions that you may have.

In order to bring you up to speed so that you can be informed coming into the meeting and constructive input, offering your ideas, offering feedback on strategies or activities that you have seen that have worked or seen that have not worked, but we really want to.

Understand.

And which is the the purpose of building this committee and structuring it in a way that we have those different roles because we believe that that diversity in thought is really what provides that constructive input, but also recognizing that this is a potentially complex and some some big hearing.

Problems and challenges that we get to tackle together. So understanding that while we are looking for that input, that not all of the suggestions are going to be feasible or viable to be implemented.

More on expectations is collaboration. So that is looking for you to provide some of the ideas that you may have around topic areas. There are certain components in functional areas that the IPA team and the Elevate team have prepared that.

That they would want to bring forth to the Advisory Committee, but we also recognize that in your roles and in your capacity that you have a different perspective. So you could expect to receive some survey or some polling in order to derive some additional topical areas or agenda items that.

Would be discussed over the course of our time with the Advisory Committee, respecting each other and understanding that we're all on a journey and engaging with fairness, being open, respecting diverse perspectives. So there may be someone on the committee who has a different lived.

Experience a different professional experience that may ultimately present itself in having a difference of opinion, but asking that all of the committee members remain respectful in that dialogue and honoring each other's journey and allowing each other to grow.

Understanding that this is a volunteer role and understanding that the committee's role is to advise and so there is going to be a collective strength that comes together in.

Being able to bring together these perspectives and advise, but also understanding that ultimately that advisory role does not require for all of the recommendations to be adopted.

Inclusive participation, really sharing the room and sharing the space, not looking to be dominant. That includes, you know, any of the members of the Advisory Committee as well as us on the side that's helping to support and facilitate this group, but really looking to acknowledge those different point of views.

While also looking to achieve consensus. And so in order to ensure that we have all of the different stakeholders that are impacted, it is really critical that we have residents that are at the table and as a part of this committee.

And so all of the other roles as you would see as listed there, those are professional roles, which those committee members are really already compensated for attending through their professional organizations or through their work. And with that, we wanted to make sure that we provided that equitable participation.

So that the residents who are participating, they can also be compensated and they're eligible to receive a stipend for their activities. This is only going to be eligible for the residents who are participating in the Advisory Committee.

Me.

And so now we want to move along to our timeline. We've got 10 days to get the applications in. So if you are interested after the meeting today, you've got again A. couple of weeks to submit those applications via the online form. Once those applications are received, we will go through them and you should expect to receive A. notification around October 14th. Those members who are selected and are agreeing to participate in the Advisory Committee.

We'll have A. couple of weeks to do A. bit of onboarding. So this is going to make sure that we're all walking into our initial meeting on similar footing and have A. similar understanding of what we should expect.

And then we will be convening for our first meeting as the new Advisory Committee and that's going to be in person in the Chicagoland area on November 4th. And you should expect A. four to six hour day in person again in the Chicagoland area.

And so selections, we talked about what the expectations are and the commitments, but we understand that each of you has A. very, very unique perspective and that you would be able to contribute meaningfully to the Advisory committee. But as you can see, there are A. set.

Number of slots and positions that are available for the committee. So we're really looking to build A. committee that reflects the diversity of the stakeholders so that we can receive A. range of feedback from A. range of different perspectives. And on the application you'll see some membership expectations, but.

We're not expecting that any one person has to meet all of the criteria in order to be selected and ultimately we're looking to build A. committee that meets the the following that are listed here balancing across the geographies. So you will see on the application that you can select.

Between Group A or Group B, indicating if you are either in the Ameren service territory or in the comment service territory, understanding balancing our lived experience and then those different role categories. I'm looking for A. committee that is both flexible of different perspectives.

Identities, different voices, understanding again that each of us is going to bring unique strengths and perspectives to the Advisory committee. We want A. committee that is going to be collaborative, that has the ability to share power and share responsibility again as we talk through how we can create. A program that's ultimately going to have the most impact, highest level of

quality for our participants and we want to make sure that we have our equity focus at the top of mind, making sure that we are fair, that we're honest of course ethical while we journey on our way to.

Expand our participation between our vendors and the participants across the ILSFA program.

And So what, what are we going to to prioritize and how are we going to to balance these things? So when reviewing the applications, we're going to balance between, you know, your knowledge and the experience. Subject matter expertise does not mean that you are necessarily the most.

Season.

Or experienced person specific to solar, but there are A. number of different subject matters. Maybe it's equity, solar specifically, maybe it's policy, maybe it's A. bit of finance, maybe it's A. bit of evaluation. But what is A. A. mix of the different subject matter experts that we could have at the table?

Bring in lived experience to how does your lived experience also reflect the goals of the program and then really the ability to analyze the complex issues and offer thoughtful input?

So that is thinking not just about where we are today, but having the ability to vision A. bit into the future of what could be and where we want to go. We are definitely going to balance the representation and perspective the the roles and the set number.

Of roles or set number of slots against those roles is A. really good guidepost to make sure that we're having those different viewpoints that represent those different stakeholder interests. We're going to look for A. diversity in the types of professionals that we have and then ultimately making.

Make sure that we all have A. inclusive and equity focused mindset. Because again, where you start in your understanding at the beginning of your participation in the Advisory Committee may not be necessarily where you end and want to make sure that we all have that open equity focused mindset.

And then being committed to collaboration and being committed to the success of the Advisory Committee and ultimately OSFA willing to work constructively and building consensus. So taking time to be thoughtful, asking questions to help you to understand.

interest in ultimately improving the services for OTA and then of course the ability to attend and prepare for the Advisory Committee meetings.

So with that, that concludes our overview of the Advisory Committee and we'll turn the floor back over to Jennifer for us to have a bit of Q&A.



Jennifer Brown 31:55

All right, guys. So we just gave you a lot. Thank you so much for joining, Carly. We just gave you a lot. We certainly want to give some space for any questions that you may have, of course, today's.

Opportunity was just for you to get a sense of who Illinois Solar for All is, what the Advisory Committee is, and in order to help you make a decision as to whether or not you would like to apply to be a part of the Advisory Committee. And so we would love to give any space for any questions that you may have. We're available at this time, but of course, if there are any additional questions that you think of later, feel free to shoot that over to me via e-mail. You would have received an e-mail from me with today's calendar invite, and so I'll be happy to answer those questions.

Via e-mail if they come up at a later time. But were there any particular questions? Go ahead and just use the raise hand button or you can ask it in the comments. I think I see a question. How often would we be needed in person? We generally.

We only have one. Well, I shouldn't say only. We have had one meeting in person per calendar year in the past. We meet quarterly and those meetings are virtual, but we'd like to have at least one meeting in person.

Cal. Year and the program year in which we meet in person one for camaraderie two, it just brings so much more life to those meetings. As you know, virtual meetings does have its limitations and so in those in person meetings we make the program.

A little bit longer. So rather than meeting for 90 minutes, we usually meet for about 3 to 4 hours. So we really can get a lot of a lot of work done and have a really full agenda. And of course in hospitality fashion, we make sure that you're fed and and take well taken care of during that time. time. Thank you for your question, Molly.

Um, I see Kevin has a question and then I also see that somebody has raised their hand.

But I can't see who it is. Oh, Susan, go ahead.

Susan, if you're talking, you are still on mute.

Susan, we can't hear you if you're talking.

So sorry.

I think Kevin said that I have applied and I'll wait to hear back from the Advisory Committee. Thank you so much for letting us know that you've already applied, Kevin.

Molly said. Um, thank you for the information.

Susan, if you're still having difficulty with your mic, feel free to go ahead and put your comment in. Put your question in the comment. We apologize you're having some technical difficulties.

I think I see that Yvonne has her hand raised. Hi, Yvonne.

 **Yvonne Spurlock** 35:42

Hi, Jennifer. Thank you. Question. How large is the overall committee? How many number of committee members do you have?

 **Jennifer Brown** 35:52

Yes, we have allotted 22 slots for the committee.

And as you saw in the presentation, there is a breakdown of the types of stakeholders that we're looking to have across the committee so that we have a varied perspective within the industry.

 **Yvonne Spurlock** 36:20

And just one more quickly, will we, will we also receive a copy of the slides that were presented to us today or no? OK, OK.

 **Jennifer Brown** 36:20

Great. Yeah.

Yes, yeah, these these slides will be available on the Illinois Solar for All Advisory Committee webpage, the same webpage that you utilize to fill out your application. It will we'll get our team to get it uploaded by tomorrow. But then the next smart to the next day within the next 48 hours.

Absolutely. OK, Susan, we see your question. Um.

Susan said if I don't fit, if you don't fit any of the membership categories for the Advisory Committee but are still interested in participating, can you still be considered? Absolutely, absolutely. That if you don't fit any of those, I'm saying absolutely, but I believe that is the case if you don't fit any of.

The particular categories, then yes, we just let us know in your application kind of like what category you do fit into and yes, you can still be considered. We will definitely review the application.

OK, Molly, I see your question.



Molly McCready 37:45

Hey, Jennifer. Yeah, I just wanted to confirm and again, sorry if I missed this, is it a full year term commitment starting in November to November?



Jennifer Brown 37:58

No, I apologize. It's actually not a calendar year. Illinois Solar for All operates on a program year or a fiscal year, which is our the program's fiscal year is July 1 to June 30th.

So even though we're getting started a little late in our program year, we still go to the end of the program year for Illinois Solar for All. So we will go until June 30th as a program year for this committee.

And then we generally take a break in the summertime and then pick back up in the fall.



Molly McCready 38:40

Great. Thank you.



Jennifer Brown 38:42

Yes.

Great, Susan, thank you for letting us know that you already applied.

Go ahead, Patrick.

Patrick, I think you're still on mute if you're talking.



Patrice McFarlin 39:04

And Jen, we also have Jamie Bond.



Patricks Johnson 39:07

Yes, sounds good. Can you hear me now?



Jennifer Brown 39:09

Oh, I'm sorry. I didn't see Jamie. OK, Jamie, you're right up next. I apologize. I jumped over you. Go ahead, Patrick.



Patricks Johnson 39:10

Of day.

Of course, already having solar through the S4 program, that wouldn't necessarily disqualify you in any way for being on the committee, would it?



Jennifer Brown 39:28

I'm sorry, you said if you as a participant, as a resident, you have.



Patricks Johnson 39:35

I have received solar panels through the program already.



Jennifer Brown 39:36

Yeah, yeah. No, that doesn't unqualify you. That actually makes you a great fit. So yeah, we definitely want residents on the committee who have experienced Illinois Solar for All already because it helps to inform.



Patricks Johnson 39:45

OK.



Jennifer Brown 39:53

Um, what that experience was like. So yes, that's that's the absolute good fit.



Patrick Johnson 39:57

Thank you.



Jennifer Brown 40:01

Thank you for asking, Patrick.



Patrick Johnson 40:04

Thank you.



Jennifer Brown 40:06

All right, Jamie, sorry for jumping over you.



Jamie Bond 40:07

And I apologize, I joined late cause I had a call that went over. So if you covered this, sorry for the repeat the you'd mentioned the 20 currently 22 slots and are there, it looks like there's already a committee that exists and so are there.



Jennifer Brown 40:21

Mhm.



Jamie Bond 40:27

Just a few slots that exist on the existing committee or are you pulling 22 new participants in and are they refreshed every year?



Jennifer Brown 40:35

That's a really great question. We do. We have currently in this in the last

program year been operating with a committee and we have extended the opportunity for current committee members to continue some.

May or may not continue as it may not be a fit to continue to work with their schedule. And some of those folks have already served more than one term, so some of them are ready.

To to be refreshed, so we will have some to return, but we do have a fair amount of slots that are available for this current program year.

 **Jamie Bond** 41:19

Understood. Thank you.

 **Jennifer Brown** 41:20

Yes, thank you for that question.

All right, Brent said that he already applied. Thank you so much, Brent. Any other questions?

OK, wonderful. Wonderful, wonderful. Well, I will follow up with everyone that registered just as a thank you for your time and also so that my e-mail is at the top of your inbox. And of course if you have any additional questions, you can just send a quick.

Reply back to me with your questions. Wait, I think I saw a question. Did I see a question in the comment that I didn't answer?

Oh, no, I think I got all of them.

OK, if I missed your question, count it to my head and not my heart. Make sure that you send it to me via e-mail and we'll make sure and get those questions answered. Patrice, do we have anything else that we want to cover before we? Allow these folks to go back to their day.

 **Patrice McFarlin** 42:42

No, nothing for me. I'm excited to participate in this process. Look forward to reviewing applications and you know, as Jen said, if there are any additional questions, feel free to reach out, but nothing else.



Jennifer Brown 42:58

Okay, wonderful. I'm gonna go ahead and turn off our recording.