



ILLINOIS POWER AGENCY

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Illinois Shines Opens for 2023-24 Program Year**

*The new Program Year sparks development of solar in the state and continues progress on Climate and Equitable Jobs Act priorities*

Chicago, IL, June 1, 2023 – Illinois Shines (statutorily known as the Adjustable Block Program) opened today for the 2023-24 Program Year, offering new capacity across all project categories to continue the expansion of solar development across Illinois. The Program, a state-administered incentive program implemented by the Illinois Power Agency (IPA), supports the development of new solar projects across Illinois, with a focus on equity provisions and consumer protections.

The commencement of the new Program Year includes the addition of new block capacity across all the Program's six project categories and features the official launch of the Minimum Equity Standard (MES). The new Program Year brings new requirements, updated Program documents, new REC prices, and more. The Climate and Equitable Jobs Act, enacted in 2021, provided for continued expansion of the Program, including reinforcement of the Program's consumer protection requirements, the addition of prevailing wage requirements, and a Minimum Equity Standard, the key feature of the Equity Accountability System, that applies to all participants in the Illinois Shines program.

Key highlights of the new Program Year include:

- **Official launch of the Minimum Equity Standard.** Beginning in Program Year 2023-24, each participating Approved Vendor and Designee must meet a required minimum percentage of its project workforce with Equity Eligible Persons (EEP). The MES requirement for the 2023-24 Program Year is 10%, ultimately increasing to at least 30% by 2030. In January, the IPA launched the [Energy Workforce Equity Portal](#), designed to help

connect clean energy companies with EEPs looking to work in the clean energy sector in Illinois.

- **Introduction of a Mentorship program** for prospective Equity Eligible Contractors and Designees, with goals of decreasing disparities in Approved Vendor benefits, mitigating barriers to Program entry, and empowering diverse businesses with the tools needed to participate in Illinois Shines.
- **Updated Program documents**, including updates to the [Program Guidebook](#), [Consumer Protection Handbook](#), [contract requirements](#), and [REC prices](#).
- **Streamlined and enhanced customer Disclosure Forms**, and additional consumer resources designed to strengthen consumers' understanding of commitments and benefits of solar.
- **A consolidation of the Program's two current public-facing websites** into a single, all-inclusive website to better share Program information. The new website (launching in early July) will be hosted at [www.IllinoisShines.com](http://www.IllinoisShines.com), and will provide resources for both consumers and Program participants.
- **Updated block capacity dashboard** to provide a clearer resource for stakeholders to view the status of Program capacity.
- **Equity Eligible Contractor category** changes including a developer cap and subcategories in order to ensure that a diverse array of vendors and projects are able to participate in this Program category.

Energy Solutions, a climate change mitigation consultancy and program implementer, became the Illinois Shines Program Administrator on July 1, 2022. Program Year 2022-23 incorporated Program-wide transition and expansion, including the development of a new Program portal, supporting enhancements to speed overall application review and processing, and continuous stakeholder support.

"The 2023-24 Program Year is a pivotal one for the future of clean energy for all in Illinois," said Senior Program Manager Audrey Steinbach of the IPA. "The launch of the Minimum Equity Standard for the Illinois Shines program will ensure that the equity provisions in the Climate and Equitable Jobs Act start to take hold in the Illinois solar market. With our new Program website, a mentorship program for Equity Eligible Contractors, and much more, we're very excited about this Program Year."

"We're proud to help support Illinois' bold and forward-thinking renewable energy vision and its commitment to equity and ensuring all people of Illinois benefit," said Tamara Perry, Director of Distributed Energy Resources at Energy Solutions. "Our commitment lies in supporting both vendors and consumers to help ensure a prosperous and equitable solar market across the state."

Since inception in 2019, the Illinois Shines program has supported the development of over 1,161 MW of solar projects in Illinois, including nearly 43,000 residential projects and nearly 2,800 non-residential projects. This also includes the development of 223 community solar projects, providing benefits to over 90,000 homes. The Program continues to grow and take shape as a trailblazer in the energy and equity space under the Climate and Equitable Jobs Act.



- Learn more at [www.IllinoisShines.com](http://www.IllinoisShines.com) (For consumers interested in learning about going solar)
- Learn more at [www.illinoisabp.com](http://www.illinoisabp.com) (For new solar developers and contractors interested in or already participating in the Program).

### **About the Illinois Power Agency**

The Illinois Power Agency (IPA) is an independent state agency established under Illinois law in 2007. It is charged with the development and implementation of energy procurement plans for residential and small commercial customers of Illinois electric utilities. The IPA is also responsible for the development and implementation of other procurement plans, including those to support new renewable energy development and the continued operation of nuclear plants. The IPA administers incentive programs and conducts procurements to promote renewable and zero-carbon energy generation to benefit all Illinoisans. Learn more at [ipa.illinois.gov](http://ipa.illinois.gov).

### **About Energy Solutions**

Energy Solutions is a mission-driven climate change mitigation services firm that focuses on market transformation. For over 25 years, the company has been pioneering end-to-end, market-based solutions that deliver reliable, large-scale, and cost-effective resource impacts to our utility, government, and private sector clients across North America. The Energy Solutions team includes highly regarded partners providing technical, operational, and strategic support of stakeholders and projects. Learn more at [energy-solution.com](http://energy-solution.com).

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