



ILLINOIS POWER AGENCY

Illinois Power Agency
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Illinois Shines Opens for 2024-25 Program Year

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Illinois Shines (statutorily known as the Adjustable Block Program) opened today for the 2024-25 Program Year, offering new and expanded capacity across project categories to continue the swift development of solar projects across Illinois. The state-administered solar incentive program implemented by the Illinois Power Agency (IPA) supports development of new distributed generation and community solar projects across Illinois, with significant equity provisions and consumer protections.

Key highlights of the 2024-2025 Program Year include:

- Increasing the program's overall size from 667 MW to 800 MW annually.
- Dropping the Group A and Group B distinctions for the capacity of the Small and Large Distributed Generation (DG) categories.
- Prioritizing waitlisted distributed generation projects from the prior program year to help ensure sufficient program capacity for Illinois homeowners and businesses seeking to host solar projects.
- Several new consumer protection initiatives are also being developed during PY2024-25. Each was approved and outlined in the 2024 Long-Term Plan, including:
 - **An Escrow Process.** The IPA plans to develop an escrow process to be used only when an AV exhibits a high likelihood of not passing through promised incentive payments to customers.
 - **Restitution Program.** The IPA plans to develop a solar restitution program, informed by other states' programs. This restitution program will compensate qualifying customers financially harmed by a solar contractor participating in Illinois Shines. While the vast majority of solar purchases statewide result in satisfied customers, some transactions may result in negative experiences and consumer harm. The proposed restitution program will offer economic assistance to customers that may have been harmed due to a solar companies' unfair or misleading practices.

- **Stranded Customer “REC Adder”.** “Stranded customers” are Distributed Generation customers whose AV and/or Designee is unable or unwilling to: (a) complete the solar project installation and/or (b) submit or advance a project application in the Illinois Shines program. Supplementing the Program’s current stranded customers process, the Agency will implement an economic incentive for AVs that assist stranded customers in the form of a “REC adder,” an increased price in the REC Contract for RECs generated by the project.
- Equity initiatives include:
 - **Development of a Mentorship program.** Following a successful Mentorship Pilot Program in the 2023-24 Program Year, Illinois Shines will launch an annual mentorship program starting this Program year for new AVs and Designees that are considered a small business or are minority-owned, woman-owned, veteran-owned, or disability-owned, to help new Program participants learn about Program requirements and application procedures.
 - **Equity Eligible Contractor (EEC) Subcontractor Registration.** To help small and emerging businesses and EECs overcome barriers in the new Program Year, the Program Administrator will establish a process to certify EEC Subcontractors, held to the same ownership requirements and limitations of EECs detailed in the 2024 Long-Term Plan.
 - **The Minimum Equity Standard (MES)** – Launched in Program Year 2023-24, the Climate and Equitable Jobs Act-mandated MES requires each participating AV and Designee to meet a minimum percentage of its project workforce with Equity Eligible Persons (EEP). The MES requirement for the 2024-25 Program Year is 10%, and ultimately will increase to at least 30% by 2030. In 2023, 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. This new resource should prove helpful for MES compliance across the 2024-25 Program Year.

Learn more at IllinoisShines.com