



Illinois Power Agency
180 N Wabash Ave, Suite 500
Chicago, Illinois 60601

ILLINOIS POWER AGENCY

MEDIA CONTACT:

Jenny Whidden
Media Relations Specialist, Illinois Power Agency
Email: jenny.whidden@illinois.gov
Phone: 312-814-3299

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Illinois Shines Opens for 2025-2026 Program Year

The new Program Year reflects an ongoing commitment to equity, public schools in Illinois' expanding clean energy economy, and supports renewable energy growth in the state

CHICAGO, IL, June 2, 2025 – Illinois Shines (statutorily known as the Adjustable Block Program) opened today for the 2025-26 Program Year, offering 800 MW of capacity across its six project categories. 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 a focus on equity provisions and consumer protections.

Key highlights of the 2025-26 Program Year include the continued rollout of [Consumer Protection Initiatives](#) detailed in the 2024 Long-Term Plan, expansion of the [Mentorship Program](#), resources supporting the growth of the Public Schools category, and streamlined forms and a Safe Harbor Approach for the [Minimum Equity Standard \(MES\)](#), which requires that the project workforce of each participating entity meet a required minimum percentage of Equity Eligible Persons (EEPs).

“The IPA is incredibly excited to announce the start of the seventh year of Illinois Shines, one of our flagship solar incentive programs. Solar energy in Illinois has meaningfully grown year-over-year since the Program’s inception in 2019, and this year is no exception,” said Planning and Procurement Bureau Chief Jim Rouland. “With the Program’s equity initiatives continuing to blossom, the Agency is proud to celebrate another year of supporting new renewable energy that benefits all Illinoisians.”

In response to a Climate and Equitable Jobs Act directive, the IPA established an Equity Accountability System (EAS) which introduced the Minimum Equity Standard, the Equity Eligible Contractor Category, the Mentorship Program and more. Details and growth include:

- In Program Year 2025-26, the MES requires at least 14% of the project workforce for each entity participating in Illinois Shines be composed of Equity Eligible Persons (EEPs). The Agency’s [Equity Accountability System Assessment – Part II](#) found a high compliance rate of 78%, indicating strong engagement and commitment to equity standards among participating AVs, Designees, and Subcontractors in Illinois Shines.
- The Agency celebrates the continued growth of the Equity Eligible Contractor (EEC) category, which rose to 114 participating vendors in 2024-25. The category now represents 11% of the total network since its 2022 launch, and continues support for EEC AVs, Designees and Subcontractors.
- The Mentorship Program is offered to companies that are considered a small business or are minority-owned, woman-owned, veteran-owned, or disability-owned. The Program piloted in 2023,



fully launched in 2024, and in Program Year 2025-26 will expand to multiple sessions to support additional mentee cohorts.

"Entering our fourth year of partnership with the IPA, it's inspiring to see the Agency's vision for Illinois Shines continually expand to meet stakeholder needs," said Patrice Flynn, Senior Director Distributed Energy Resources for Energy Solutions. "As the Program Administrator, we are proud to continue strengthening consumer protections through new initiatives and to support current and new solar vendors through the mentorship program, as we help further the IPA's mission to make the benefits of renewable energy accessible for all Illinois residents and businesses."

In Program Year 2025-26 the Program's Public Schools category will introduce new resources to increase awareness, education, and support for school decision makers considering going solar with Illinois Shines. The Program will promote a recorded webinar presented to schools that completed the Public Schools Carbon-Free Assessment, offer tailored 1:1 workshops for schools and districts seeking individualized discussions and support, and share its recently-published [Public School Case Study](#) and other schools success stories.

Since 2019, the Illinois Shines program has supported the development of 1,393 MW of solar projects in Illinois representing more than 80,000 projects. These projects have provided benefits to 73 schools and over 300,000 homes and businesses. The Program continues to grow and take shape as a trailblazer in the energy and equity space under the Climate and Equitable Jobs Act.

More information, including the new [Program Guidebook](#) and [Consumer Protection Handbook](#), can be found at illinoisshines.com.

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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.

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