



ILLINOIS POWER AGENCY

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U.S. EPA Awards \$156 Million to Bring the Benefits of Solar Energy to Underserved Communities Across Illinois

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On April 22, the [U.S. Environmental Protection Agency awarded \\$156 million](#) (the maximum award available to Illinois) to Illinois from the U.S. EPA through the Illinois Finance Authority/Climate Bank (IFA), to expand existing solar incentive programs and bring the benefits of solar energy to low-income and disadvantaged communities across Illinois.

This award is part of the comprehensive \$7 billion Solar for All program grant competition developed under the Inflation Reduction Act to support states, territories, Tribal governments, municipalities, and nonprofits across the country that enable underserved and disadvantaged communities to benefit from solar energy, lower energy costs, create good-quality jobs in communities facing energy burdens, and tackle the climate crisis. The EPA selected 60 applicants to receive funding under the grant competition.

A portion of the funds, which will be distributed by the IFA, will help the Illinois Power Agency (IPA) to expand access to Illinois Shines and Illinois Solar for All (ILSFA) programs. Additionally, the funds from the IFA will provide financial assistance to support health and safety, enable upgrades, incorporate energy storage, support energy sovereignty and community-driven projects, and provide critical capital to diverse solar vendors to grow their businesses and capabilities to bring solar projects to low-income communities. This investment will also improve and extend direct community engagement efforts to expand residential solar adoption and leverage and build upon Illinois' soon-to-be-implemented clean energy workforce development programs to grow an equitable workforce. The funding is expected to roll out in the fall of 2024.

The IPA is thankful for the opportunity to work closely with the IFA in developing a comprehensive application for the U.S. EPA Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund's Solar for All grant competition in October. The IPA appreciates the work IFA is doing in implementing new standardized financial tools to reduce the cost of decarbonization for all Illinoisans and making sure that the benefits of a clean energy economy are shared equitably.