



COFI

Community Organizing
and Family Issues

Public Comment on Illinois Power Agency Long Term Plan

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the IPA's Long Term Plan. In our third year as Grassroots Educators for Illinois Solar for All, we make the following comments:

What types of "other activities" could be funded through community-based groups and other qualifying organizations that could further "community-driven education efforts"?

Through our experience as grassroots educators we recognize how time and labor intensive it is to develop leads for community solar projects. There is a need for community organizations with a high level of understanding of the program to work with community members and stakeholders to identify potential sites for community solar in their local communities, connect them with available AVs and engage the community in the process. It is our vision that residents of environmental justice communities will have community solar in their communities, and our experience partnering with residents and anchor sites has shown the possibilities of this "other activity" as grassroots educators. For this reason, we believe that public schools, multifamily housing, and community driven community solar should still be included in their respective ILSFA subcategories to give grassroots educators the opportunity to work on access to solar energy by working with these stakeholders.

Additionally, due to the hands-on nature of the process to connect an interested resident with AVs, we believe that other activities should include working with interested residents and community stakeholders through the process from education to electrification.

What are other ways that ILSFA Approved Vendors can be supported to increase interest in developing ILSFA residential solar projects?

In order to support the interest of many Spanish-speaking residents, we believe it is crucial to encourage all AVs to hire Spanish-speaking customer service representatives. From our understanding, only one of the four AVs with a current standardized offer has any Spanish-speaking staff available to meet with interested residents, and none of the four with a Spanish-speaking customer service representative. In order to realize this program's equity goals, we believe that a dedicated bilingual customer service representative should be made available by phone to answer any questions of interested residents.