

Illinois Power Agency
 DEI Advisory Committee Meeting
 03/05/25

Attendance

- Tanvi Shah - Attended
- Kina Askew - Attended
- Ella Johnson-McGowan - Attended
- Kate Clifford - Attended
- Ebony Scott-Anderson - Attended
- Chynna Hampton - Absent
- Marcus Jordan - Attended
- Robert Pletcher - Absent
- Jessica Wagner - Absent
- David Husemoller - Absent
- Shon Harris - Attended
- Denise Moore - Attended
- Esther Kim - Attended
- Ky Ajayi - Attended
- Lesley McCain - Attended
- Laurel Passera - Absent
- Chris Edwards - Attended
- Andrew Wells - Attended
- Christina Castillo - Absent
- Celeste Flores - Absent

<p>Welcome In (5 min-KC) A Moment to Arrive Housekeeping Mind the mic Chat and tech support Review Agenda</p>	<p>Discussion</p>
<p>Introductions (15 min-KC) IPA Staff Introductions Name Pronouns Top of Mind Introducing yourself and passing it along to others Name Pronouns Organization Top of Mind Review of Norms</p>	<p>Moment to settle in and review agenda. Housekeeping: microphone etiquette, chat usage, technical support. Introductions: Name, pronouns, affiliations. Reflections on key priorities and barriers in program administration, contractor participation, and funding access.</p>

<p>2025 Starting Strong (25 min-TS) Welcoming in Ebony Scott-Anderson Racial Disparity Study Update EAS Part II Published Reflections from EAS Assessment Springfield Clean Energy Equity Summit Questions?</p>	<p>2025 recap</p> <p>Added staff capacity in partnerships.</p> <p>Racial Disparity Study – RFP went out, selection process completed and awaiting supplemental materials from bidders. Decision to be made and announced by month’s end. Study will take 12-18 months</p> <p>EAS Part II was published 2/14/25. CEJA mandated process and assessment of first year of EAS implementation.</p> <p>High-Level Reflection from the EAS: Meaningful strides in elevating equity. MES has introduced a framework for systematically increasing equity representation 78% of entities met MES 18% of the total workforce reported were EEP's (Illinois Shines) Challenges still exist: Feedback indicated that the administrative burden in MES Reporting is still a concern Ambiguity in statutory language, there’s an opportunity to provide clarity Disparities in program participation across geographic lines Lessons learned from the EAS: Prioritizing improving communication and program Legislative and administrative refinements to better operationalize MES There is a need for enhanced data collection methodology Year one of implementation helped to define baselines of the MES Refining processes and make them more user friendly Rolled out Equity Portal and continue to seek feedback on user experience Equity Accountability System has laid a foundation for the IPA build upon</p>
<p>EEC Stakeholder Feedback Process (30 min-TS) Discuss plan to create a comprehensive feedback process for stakeholders.</p>	<p>Overview of ICC Final Order in LTP 2024 regarding the need for stakeholder feedback process to determine enhancements to the EEC certification process.</p> <p>IPA aims to engage diverse stakeholders within the clean energy ecosystem because everyone plays a role</p>

<p>EEC & Small Business Interviews – Who should we be speaking with? What is missing in this process? How can we ensure the request for stakeholder feedback reaches those most impacted? EEC Ownership Process Discussion Questions</p> <p>Ensuring Meaningful EEP Involvement How can the Agency ensure that majority-owner EEPs are genuinely engaged in managing their businesses while keeping the certification process fair and accessible?</p> <p>If the Agency were to introduce additional verification requirements (e.g., governance documents, socio-economic status), what should be considered to balance equity goals with administrative feasibility?</p> <p>Preventing Manipulation & Strengthening EEC Participation</p> <p>What steps should the Agency take to prevent misuse of the EEC category (e.g., "sleeving" or pass-through arrangements) while maintaining a fair and accessible EEC certification process? How can we better support EECs in taking on substantive roles in project development and operations rather than</p>	<p>and has a different perspective, which can help to shape the work.</p> <p>Meaningful involvement should include capacity support. It is common for EEP's/EEC's to not pass interviews because of insufficient preparation and lack of prep and back-office services. Meet participants where they are at an create opportunities for these types of resources as well.</p> <p>Recertification can feel burdensome when asked to confirm eligibility in which the eligibility is fixed or unlikely to change.</p> <p>The IPA offered specific clarification that race is not a factor used to obtain an EEP designation. The ask for recertification was likely a request for address verification to demonstrate continued residency in an EIEC (Equity Investment Eligible Community)</p> <p>Committee also shared feedback that selection process should match scale of project or funding. The higher the value the more rigorous the process and added layers of due diligence. This could help reduce gaming at other attempts to circumvent rules.</p> <p>Rules need to be magnified with known bad actors with an acknowledgement of receipt of rules and guidelines put in place. This may remove pressure on EEC when negotiating with larger entities.</p> <p>An expanded mentor model could help EEC's grow more quickly and create opportunities for new and emerging businesses to subcontract from more established counterparts. Additionally, the idea of support was offered in exploring co-op models to expand access to bulk purchasing.</p> <p>In order to grow EEC participation, processes will need to be streamlined. Currently it can take up to 10 months to receive funding. Most EEC's don't have several quarters of reserve funding which means that miss out on opportunities for growth due to not having access to quickly accessible capital.</p>
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<p>being limited to procurement or administrative roles?</p> <p>Additional Enhancements to EEC Certification</p> <p>What other improvements to the EEC certification process would help advance equity in the clean energy economy?</p> <p>Are there any best practices from other industries or programs that could serve as a model for strengthening the EEC certification process?</p>	<p>Quite a few utility-scale projects are coming up and they are ideal for small to large EEC's seeking growth opportunities. These contracts allow them to gain the experience needed to contract independently but they will potentially need capital to engage.</p>
<p>Topic Generation (10 min-KC)</p> <p>Collect agenda items from Committee</p>	<p>Future meeting topics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> CEJA grant accessibility Storytelling initiatives Capacity-building for EECs Improved coordination across grant programs <p>Next quarterly meeting scheduled for Q2 2025, agenda to be shared in advance.</p>
<p>Closing (5 min-KC)</p>	<p>Expressions of gratitude for participation.</p> <p>Follow-up email with materials, meeting minutes posted online.</p> <p>Feedback form distribution to improve future meetings.</p>