



Proposed Elements of the Initial Energy Workforce Equity Database Request for Stakeholder Feedback

October 12, 2022

Background

The Illinois Power Agency (“Agency” or “IPA”) published the final [2022 Long-Term Renewable Resources Procurement Plan](#) (“Plan”) on August 23, 2022. Chapter 10 of the Plan describes a suite of equity-related requirements, including the Minimum Equity Standard that takes effect June 1, 2023, which requires that 10% of the workforce for projects in the Adjustable Block Program, or projects submitted to the competitive procurements for utility-scale projects, be Equity Eligible Persons (“EEPs”).¹ To facilitate hiring of EEPs to meet this standard, the Plan proposed a phased rollout of the Energy Workforce Equity Database described in Section 1-75(c-25) of the Illinois Power Agency Act (“IPA Act” or “Act”).

Per Section 1-75(c-25) of the IPA Act, the Energy Workforce Equity Database should be a publicly-available, “searchable database of suppliers, vendors, and subcontractors for clean energy industries” that may be organized by company specialty or by region, and should include “contacts for suppliers, vendors, or subcontractors who are minority and women-owned business enterprise certified or who participate or have participated in any of the programs” created by the Climate and Equitable Jobs Act (“CEJA”). Additionally, the Agency is tasked with creating a public-facing online tool that, among other features, includes job postings and recruiting opportunities [and] a means by which recruiting clean energy companies can find and interact with current or former participants of clean energy workforce training programs.

The Agency is coordinating with the Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (“DCEO”) as DCEO builds out the workforce training programs created by CEJA, which are expected to launch in 2023. Information and resources related to those programs will be a key component of the database. However, the Agency recognizes that there is a more immediate need for certain functions of the Energy Workforce Equity Database to be available prior to the workforce training programs’ launch. While the Agency works on the comprehensive database to be rolled out in phases across 2023, **the Agency proposes an interim database solution focused on two key functionalities: (1) allowing Equity**

¹ Equity Eligible Persons mean “persons who would most benefit from equitable investments by the State designed to combat discrimination, specifically: (1) persons who graduate from or are current or former participants in the Clean Jobs Workforce Network Program, the Clean Energy Contractor Incubator Program, the Illinois Climate Works Pre-apprenticeship Program, Returning Residents Clean Jobs Training Program, or the Clean Energy Primes Contractor Accelerator Program, and the solar training pipeline and multi-cultural jobs program created [by the Future Energy Jobs Act]; (2) persons who are graduates of or currently enrolled in the foster care system; (3) persons who were formerly incarcerated; (4) persons whose primary residence is in an equity investment eligible community.” 20 ILCS 3855/1-10.



Eligible Persons to identify themselves to potential employers, and (2) for employers to post jobs for which they are seeking Equity Eligible Persons.

The Agency seeks feedback on the contents of this initial database of job opportunities offered by ABP Approved Vendors and Designees, or entities developing utility-scale projects, and of listings of Equity Eligible Persons available for such positions. As proposed by the IPA, the job opportunities and list of equity eligible contractors will be public; the database of self-identified EEPs will be accessible only through to registered entities to maintain individual privacy for EEPs. The database will also provide links to listings of Equity Eligible Contractors² and related resources.

The Agency notes that this database is not the only way for entities subject to the Minimum Equity Standard to identify Equity Eligible Persons. For example, an entity could survey its existing workforce to see if they live in an equity investment eligible community,³ or otherwise meet the definition of being an Equity Eligible Person. The database is merely one tool available to facilitate the identification of Equity Eligible Persons.

The Agency seeks stakeholder feedback on its proposed approach to establishing an initial Energy Workforce Equity Database. Responses to this Request for Stakeholder Feedback should be submitted to the IPA by October 26, 2022, by emailing written responses to IPA.Solar@illinois.gov with the subject "Responder's Name - Response to Energy Workforce Equity Database Feedback Request."

In general, responses will be made public and published on the IPA's [website](#). Should a commenter seek to designate any portion of its response as confidential and proprietary, that commenter should provide both public and redacted versions of its comments. Independent of that designation, if the Agency determines that a response contains confidential information that should not be disclosed, the IPA reserves the right to provide its own redactions.

The proposed approach outlined below includes specific questions that stakeholders should consider. Stakeholders are also encouraged to provide additional thoughts on the proposal that are not directly addressed in the questions below.

² An Equity Eligible Contractors is "a business that is majority-owned by eligible persons, or a nonprofit or cooperative that is majority-governed by [equity] eligible persons or is a natural person that is an [equity] eligible person offering personal services as an independent contractor." 20 ILCS 3855/1-10.

³ Equity investment eligible communities are geographic areas throughout Illinois which would most benefit from equitable investments by the State designed to combat discrimination. The eligible communities are: (1) R3 Areas as established pursuant to Section 10-40 of the Cannabis Regulation Tax Act, where residents have historically been excluded from economic opportunities, including opportunities in the energy sector; and (2) Environmental justice communities, as defined by the Illinois Power Agency pursuant to the Illinois Power Agency Act, where residents have historically been subject to disproportionate burdens of pollution, including pollution from the energy sector. 20 ILCS 3855/1-10. For maps and address lookup tools for these two types of areas see <https://r3.illinois.gov/eligibility> and <https://www.illinoissfa.com/environmental-justice-communities/> respectively.



Proposed Initial Database

Job Postings

For job postings, the Agency proposes to collect the following information:

- Approved Vendor or Designee ID (if applicable)
- Company Name *
- Contact Person's Name *
- Contact Person's Telephone (optional) and Email Address *
- How to apply (e.g., website or email address for applications) *
- Job Title *
- Scope of Work (the position description to include qualifications, skill set and training– not to exceed 500 words) *
- Pay Range *
- Shift Details
- Region (The Agency proposes using the regions defined in the Illinois Solar for All Program. See: <https://www.illinoissfa.com/app/uploads/2021/06/AV-Illinois-Regions.pdf>) *
- Location *
- Type of Job (i.e., full time or part time)
- Duration *
- Benefits
- Duration of listing (if not 30 days)

***Denotes required information**

The Agency will provide an online form for entities seeking EEPs to submit job postings. All postings will then be reviewed by the Agency prior to being added to the public listing. Job postings will be listed for 30 days unless the poster requests a shorter posting period.

Equity Eligible Persons

The Agency proposes a database with restricted access that lists Equity Eligible Persons that have volunteered to be listed and have provided the following information.

Information in italics below will be collected by the Agency but will not be included in the database view available to entities seeking EEPs.

- Name*
- Telephone and Email Address * **(one contact option will be required to be displayed)**
- Address*
- Regions available to work in
- Resume Upload*
- Desired Shifts to Work
- Key Skills (The Agency is interested in feedback on what categories to include for this option) *
- *EEP Status classification (i.e., workforce training graduate, returning citizen, foster care,)**
 - o *Will require upload of documentation or certification*



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- NABCEP Certified
- Qualified Person
- Union Member (with listing of Local)
- Workforce training programs completed
 - o Date of completion for the workforce training program
 - o Location of training program

***Denotes required information**

Potential EEPs will submit this information through an online form. The Agency will verify if the person is an Equity Eligible Person but will not independently verify other information submitted. Information used to determine whether a person is an Equity Eligible Person will not be made publicly available to protect EEPs' sensitive information.

Access to this listing of EEPs will be limited to Approved Vendors and Designees in the Adjustable Block Program, and entities that demonstrate their participation in the development of projects under the Agency's procurement of Indexed RECs from utility-scale wind, solar, or brownfield site solar projects.

The Agency expects that the Comprehensive Database will feature integration with the DCEO-administered job training programs to facilitate lists of EEPs in addition to the ability for an EEP to manually request to be listed.

Comprehensive Database

The Agency requests feedback on what functionality and data collection regarding Equity Eligible Persons and entities are seeking to hire Equity Eligible Persons should be included in the Comprehensive Database. This is meant to help ensure that the Comprehensive Database can facilitate entities' efforts related to meeting the Minimum Equity Standards. This is a preliminary request for feedback and the Agency anticipates seeking additional feedback based on the initial responses received.

Next Steps

Stakeholder feedback received on the proposal discussed herein will be considered for the development of the initial Energy Workforce Equity Database with the target of having that initial database available by the end of 2022 to provide core functionality to the clean energy market.