

Illinois Power Agency **POWER BRIEF**

May 2023

Volume II

A monthly roundup of news and top highlights from the Illinois Power Agency

TOP INSIGHTS & HIGHLIGHTS

Lower Energy Prices, MISO's Capacity Auction, and the IPA's Capacity Hedging Impacts

The Illinois Power Agency is pleased to report that electricity prices have declined in 2023. Starting in June, the default service electricity rate for Ameren Illinois residential customers will drop 33%, or nearly four cents per kilowatt-hour. The default service electricity rate for ComEd residential customers will drop 30%, or 2.85 cents per kilowatt-hour.

For Ameren Illinois customers, approximately half of the decrease stems from lower prices the IPA obtained in our April 2023 block energy procurement, reflecting a trend of lower wholesale energy prices generally. A second factor is declining capacity prices. Capacity is a component of the cost of electricity that compensates generators for availability during high demand times.

In 2022, the market saw a huge spike in the capacity price from the auction conducted by the Midcontinent Independent System Operator (MISO). By procuring a portion of capacity in



advance, the IPA's capacity hedging strategy helped to limit the impact of that spike on residential and small commercial customers on default electricity service over the past year. For the energy delivery year starting in June 2023, [capacity prices from MISO have returned to levels comparable to those seen prior to 2022](#), indicating that the potential shortfalls in capacity that led to the 2022 price spike are not anticipated for this delivery year. This result contributes to the other half of the decline in the price.

For ComEd customers, a shift in energy procurement levels adopted by the Illinois Commerce Commission in approving the IPA's 2023 annual Electricity Procurement Plan contributed the price change. The IPA is now procuring less electricity ahead of time for ComEd default service customers, with fluctuations in

power prices offset by month-to-month changes in the level of the cost of Carbon Mitigation Credits (the CEJA program used to support at-risk nuclear plants) for price stability.

Please note that the impacts on customers of alternative retail electric suppliers (ARES), for whom the IPA does not procure electricity or capacity, may vary significantly from the impacts outlined above. More information on the IPA’s energy procurements can be found on our new [electricity procurement landing page](#).

Bill Crediting to Commence for Large Customer RPS Self-Direct Program

Participant	Facility Supplying Renewable Energy Credits (RECs)
Goldframe LLC (Meta)	Lincoln Land Wind
Verizon	Blooming Grove Wind Energy Center

On June 1, 2023, customer bill crediting begins in the inaugural year of the Large Customer Self-Direct Renewable Portfolio Standard Compliance Program (Self-direct Program). The Self-direct Program encourages large Illinois electric customers served by ComEd or Ameren Illinois to retire Renewable Energy Credits (RECs) acquired through long-term contracts with new utility-scale wind and solar projects. In exchange, Self-direct Program participants receive an electric bill credit reducing Renewable Portfolio Standard-related bill charges. Two applications have been approved for the 2023-24 program year. Between the two applicants, the Agency expects an aggregate quantity of between 500,000 and 1 million RECs to be retired by large customers in this first program year.

Municipal Aggregation RPS Study to be Published June 1



On June 1, 2023, the Illinois Power Agency will release its final report on municipal aggregation and renewable resource development. Section 1-92 of the Illinois Power Agency Act allows for the aggregation of electric load by municipalities and counties, and hundreds of communities across Illinois have active municipal aggregation programs. The report assesses how aggregation of municipal electrical load can support the achievement of Illinois’ renewable energy goals. The report will be published in an [announcement on the IPA website](#).

DID YOU KNOW...

The New Illinois Shines Program Year Begins June 1?



The Illinois Shines program (also known as the Adjustable Block Program) launches a new program year on June 1, 2023.

[Click here](#) to access updated Renewable Energy Credit (REC) prices for the Illinois Shines and Solar for All programs for the 2023-2024 program year.

Minimum Equity Standard Takes Effect on June 1



The Climate and Equitable Jobs Act (CEJA) created a new Equity Accountability System, which includes minimum equity standards for certain IPA-administered programs and procurements. The Minimum Equity Standard (MES) helps ensure that the growing clean energy economy is accessible to everyone through requiring minimum levels of equity eligible person participation on IPA-supported projects.

Beginning June 1, 2023, an entity participating in the IPA's Illinois Shines Program, Self-direct Program, or competitive renewable energy procurements must meet MES requirements. For the 2023-2024 year, the MES requires 10% of each participating Approved Vendor's or Designee's project workforce to be Equity Eligible Persons (EEPs). In anticipation of the MES going into effect, the Illinois Power Agency has conducted several informational webinars and trainings for stakeholders. Rationale documents, webinar recordings and other relevant resources are available on the Program's [Equity Accountability System](#) page.

Additionally, earlier this month, the IPA announced

an enhancement to the [Energy Workforce Equity Portal](#) that launched in January.

Equity Eligible Persons registering on the Portal may now opt out of sharing their contact information with companies using the Portal. This feature—requested by stakeholders—means that companies and their staff can verify workers'/employees' eligibility as Equity Eligible Persons without including their contact information in the list of EEPs visible to other employers. The IPA is committed to making the Energy Workforce Equity Portal a valuable tool for participants in the clean energy economy and will continue to enhance and refine the Portal. Planned improvements include comprehensive listings of clean energy economy job trainings across Illinois, as well as other career development resources for job seekers. A shareable portal flyer is linked at the bottom of this newsletter, and we welcome comments or suggestions at IPA.EnergyEquity@illinois.gov.

Illinois Shines: Project Application Processing Update

The Illinois Shines Program continues to process a high volume of project applications and resolve backlogs following the transition to a new Program Administrator and portal closures. Projects are submitted into the program by Approved Vendors on behalf of homeowners or organizations, and follow a two-step application and verification process. Part I applications are often submitted before a solar project is built, whereas Part II applications cannot be submitted until the system is fully installed and connected. A Part II application must be approved before incentive funding is disbursed.

At the beginning of April, the backlog in applications to be processed consisted of 4,440 Part I project applications and 3,843 Part II project applications. As of May 30, there are 827 Part I project applications and 1,263 Part II project applications in the processing queue.

Progress on application review timelines can be tracked through reports on the [ABP website](#) (with data updated three times per week).

Stakeholder Feedback on Equity Eligible Contractor Qualifications Published



In response to the Illinois Power Agency's [request for stakeholder feedback](#) on strategies to strengthen the criteria to qualify as an Equity Eligible Contractor and participate in the EEC category in the Illinois Shines program, the Agency received 10 written stakeholder comments which have been posted on the [IPA website](#). The Agency thanks those who submitted feedback. These comments are under review and will be considered by the Agency in developing its 2024 Long-Term Renewable Resources Procurement Plan.



Illinois Solar for All Program Associate **Abigail Ramirez** (left) and IPA DEI Outreach Associate **Kina Askew** join the Near West American Job Center's Careers De Mayo Fair on May 24.

Solar For All Program Receives Special Recognition in the 2022 Sunny Awards

On January 19, 2023, the Illinois Solar for All program received Special Recognition for excellence by the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) Solar Energy Technologies Office. The [Sunny Awards](#) is an initiative of the DOE National Community Solar Partnership (NCSP). The Sunny Awards recognizes best practices in community solar to increase equitable access and meaningful benefits for subscribers and their communities.

IN THE COMMUNITY

Outreach Events

Throughout the month of May, DEI Outreach Associate **Kina Askew** attended the following community events to help connect interested workers to opportunities posted on IPA's [Energy Workforce Equity Portal](#).

- 5/2/2023 - Chicago Urban League's Equity in Clean Energy and Water Summit.
- 5/4/2023 - South Chicago Neighborhood Network Community Career and Trade Fair.
- 5/13/2023 - Bronzeville Monthly Community Resource Meeting hosted by Cook County Board President Toni Preckwinkle.
- 5/13/2023 - Community Baby Shower Resource Event hosted by State Rep Kam Buckner, Timothy Community Corp.
- 5/18/2023 - Lawndale Christian Legal Center Restorative Hub Meeting.
- 5/18/2023 - The Chicago Lighthouse Veteran Job Fair.
- 5/20/2023 - Veteran and Family Resource Fair.
- 5/24/2023 - Near West American Job Center's 5th Annual Careers De Mayo Fair.
- 5/25/2023 - Chicago Climate Connect Event, MHub Chicago.
- 5/26/2023 - FEJA Solar Jobs Training Program Hiring Event, CEDA Training Facility.

REGIONAL EVENTS

The IPA was invited to attend the following conferences during the month of May.

OMS Resource Academy Summit 2.0

On May 15-16, IPA Acting Director **Brian Granahan** and Legal Fellow **Rachael Bruketta** attended the Organization of MISO States (OMS) Resource Adequacy Summit 2.0 in St. Louis, Missouri. During the Summit, Brian joined other speakers from states and utilities within MISO territory on a State & Utility Planning Processes panel. On this panel, he provided a presentation about the IPA's electricity supply procurement planning used to procure block energy supply for "eligible retail customers" (residential and small commercial customers of Illinois electric utilities who have not chosen service from an alternate supplier).



IPA Acting Director **Brian Granahan** and Legal Fellow **Rachael Bruketta** attend the OMS Resource Adequacy Summit 2.0 in St. Louis, Missouri.

CESA and the State-Federal Summit



On May 15-18, IPA's Chief of Planning and Procurement **Anthony Star**, Deputy Legal Counsel **Sarah Duffy**, Program Associate **Emily Asbury**, and Associate Economist **Hannah McCorry** attended the Annual Meeting of the Clean Energy States Alliance (CESA) and the State-Federal Summit: Advancing Toward 100% Clean Energy in Washington, D.C. The IPA joined 17 other state governments for the CESA Annual Meeting where states shared best practices, discussed potential solutions to common challenges, and heard from technical experts and federal agencies. At the State-Federal Summit, an additional 9 states and representatives from the U.S. Department of Energy, Environmental Protection Agency, the White House Council on Environmental Quality, and several National Laboratories joined the states to learn how the Federal government can support state action on clean energy and how states can facilitate effective implementation of the Inflation Reduction Act.

Consumer Protection Advisory Group: Sign up to Join a Public Meeting

The IPA Consumer Protection Working Group is an opportunity for consumers, solar companies, community and nonprofit organizations, and other members of the public to provide input on consumer safeguards. The group meets on the first Friday of each month to discuss trends, best practices, consumer education and program updates for the Illinois Solar for All and Illinois Shines (Adjustable Block Program) solar incentive programs. The meetings are open to the public and provide diverse insights, increase engagement, and generate robust discussions on consumer protection issues.

[Sign up to participate](#) and receive information about future meetings of the group.

IPA STAFF TRANSITIONS

*We're delighted to announce that, on May 1, **Megha Hamal** was promoted from Senior Communications Manager to Chief Strategy and Communications Officer for the IPA. Megha joined the IPA in 2021 and has helmed numerous communications and strategic initiatives, including the IPA's popular Power Hour webinar series. Megha is a star performer and we're excited to see her continued growth in this new role!*



***Kelly Turner** has also been elevated from Interim Chief Legal Counsel to the Agency's permanent Chief Legal Counsel. Kelly joined the IPA as Deputy Legal Counsel at the outset of the pandemic (March 2020!) after serving as an attorney for Citizens Utility Board and the Illinois Commerce Commission. Kelly has been an integral part of all aspects of the IPA's CEJA implementation work and will play a central role in our Long-Term Renewable Resources Plan development across 2023-24.*



LOOKING AHEAD



Upcoming Power Hour Webinar

Power Hour webinars are educational webinars hosted by the Illinois Power Agency. The webinar series was launched in 2021 and hosts national and regional experts to shed light on key energy issues and topics. To date, the IPA has hosted 22 Power Hour webinars which can be viewed on the [IPA Events page](#).

Power Hour 5: The Impacts of Solar and Wind Projects on Local Economy

Date: June 30, 2023

Time: 12pm-1pm CT

[REGISTER NOW](#)

EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES

- [From Brownfield to Brightfield: The Impact of Brownfield Redevelopment on Communities](#)
- [Agrivoltaics: How Can Solar Energy and Agriculture Work with Each Other?](#)
- [Equitable Solar Workforce Development: Challenges and Opportunities](#)
- [Equity Factsheet](#)
- [Energy Workforce Equity Portal Flyer](#)

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