

Illinois Power Agency **POWER BRIEF**

April 21, 2023

Volume I

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

TOP INSIGHTS & HIGHLIGHTS

Illinois Power Agency Launches Phase I of the Energy Workforce Equity Portal

On January 26, 2023, the Illinois Power Agency (IPA) launched Phase I of its Energy Workforce Equity Portal. The portal connects clean energy companies with Equity Eligible Persons looking to work in clean energy. Making these connections is crucial to ensuring the clean energy industry in Illinois grows in an equitable manner.



Key features of Phase I of the portal include:

- Job postings from clean energy companies seeking to hire Equity Eligible Persons.
- Information on qualifications and requirements for job seekers to become Equity Eligible Persons.
- An application form to be certified as an Equity Eligible Person.
- A listing of Equity Eligible Persons who have voluntarily chosen to identify themselves to potential clean energy companies.
- An Equity Investment Eligible Community Map (EIEC) that can be utilized by anyone to determine if they, or someone they know, reside in an equity investment eligible community.

Since portal launch, IPA staff have attended community events to promote the portal and are actively seeking to partner with organizations willing to share jobs on the portal.

Phase II of the portal will include buildout of workforce development tools and resources. To learn more, visit the Energy Workforce Equity Portal at energyequity.illinois.gov.

The IPA is looking to collaborate with organizations to promote the visibility of the portal. If you know of an organization that the IPA should partner with, or would like more information about how to communicate this opportunity to your constituents, please reach out to IPA.EnergyEquity@illinois.gov

Illinois Commerce Commission Approves Results of Spring 2023 Block Energy Procurement

On April 20, 2023, the Illinois Commerce Commission (ICC) approved the results of the IPA's Spring 2023 Block Energy Procurement event. This procurement event brings block energy supply under contract to meet supply requirements of those residential and small commercial customers of ComEd, Ameren, and MidAmerican who have not elected to take supply service from a competitive supplier (these customers are known as "eligible retail customers").

The results of the IPA's block energy procurement event, in part, determine the supply charges that eligible retail customers pay through utility bills. Spring 2023 block energy procurement results can be found on the [IPA website](#).

After high and volatile electricity prices in 2022 due to the war in Ukraine and other factors, energy markets have stabilized in 2023 and electricity prices have fallen. The Agency's preliminary analysis is that these lower electricity prices could reduce the Ameren default service rates by between 2 and 2 ½ cents per kilowatt-hour compared to the current rate. However, the Ameren default service rate will also in part depend on the results of the capacity auction conducted by MISO (Midcontinent Independent System Operator), the results of which will not be known until May 19.

For questions, please contact IPA Legislative Counsel Zoe Lanier at Zoe.Lanier@illinois.gov

To learn more about the IPA's electricity procurement processes, please visit the [Electricity Procurement landing page](#) on the IPA website.



Illinois Power Agency Launches Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Landing Page

The IPA is committed to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI). To underscore its importance, the Agency recently launched a [DEI landing page](#) to share key information on how the Agency is meeting DEI targets for its programs and procurements. The DEI section of the IPA website also houses a new data center featuring accessible data on workforce diversity and job training graduate hiring.

Illinois Power Agency Seeks Feedback on Equity Eligible Contractor Qualification Criteria

The Climate and Equitable Jobs Act (CEJA) established the concept of Equity Eligible Contractors in IPA programs and procurements. Equity Eligible Contractors can receive financial resources and pre-development capital to develop renewable energy projects in Illinois, thus reducing barriers to entry that prevent underserved communities from accessing the clean energy economy. Equity Eligible Contractors also benefit from dedicated capacity within the Illinois Shines program.

To ensure that the spirit of CEJA's equity requirements are being met, the IPA issued a [Request for Stakeholder Feedback](#) on potential strategies to tighten the criteria for qualifying as an Equity Eligible Contractor and for receiving incentives under the Equity Eligible Contractor category of Illinois Shines. This feedback will help the IPA consider whether new qualifying requirements are appropriate and address any potential disconnects between statutory qualification criteria and equity objectives.

DID YOU KNOW?

The Illinois Solar for All (IPA's income-eligible program) Residential Solar Pilot will be implemented in three communities across Illinois for the upcoming program year (2023-2024)? The selected locations are West Garfield Park in Chicago, the city of Waukegan, and the Carbondale-Marion Micropolitan Statistical Area. The pilot will address barriers preventing income-eligible households from participating in Illinois Solar for All.

The IPA looks forward to working within these communities in the Residential Solar Pilot to expand access to household solar installations.

For more information visit the [ILSFA website](#).

Illinois Power Agency Launches Minimum Equity Standard Landing Page

The IPA recently launched its new [Minimum Equity Standard \(MES\) landing page](#). CEJA created a new equity accountability system mandating minimum equity workforce targets for the IPA's Illinois Shines solar incentive program and for utility-scale solar and wind procurements. The MES helps ensure that: (1) everyone has an opportunity to access the growing clean energy economy; and (2) the clean energy workforce is made up of at least a minimum level of equity-eligible persons. The MES landing page will provide key updates on the MES requirements applicable to the IPA's programs and procurements.

Illinois Power Agency Launches Electricity Procurement Landing Page

The IPA recently launched a new [Electricity Procurement landing page](#) on its website. The page is designed to be a resource to learn about the IPA's competitive electricity procurement processes, national and statewide electricity prices, electricity supply options for customers in Illinois, and municipal aggregation program for Illinois municipalities.

The IPA hopes that this page can be a useful resource that ILGA members will be able to share with their constituents. We are interested in getting feedback on how to make this more helpful for constituents. For feedback, contact IPA Legislative Counsel Zoe Lanier at Zoe.Lanier@illinois.gov

IN THE COMMUNITY

Illinois State-Workforce Webinar

On April 12, 2023, IPA Deputy Legal Counsel Sarah Duffy and DEI Outreach Associate Kina Askew presented at the [Illinois State-Workforce Webinar](#) in partnership with the Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity. Their presentation focused on the Energy Workforce Equity Portal and highlighted the clean energy jobs that are currently available on the portal.



IPA DEI Outreach Associate Kina Askew at the Public Construction Summit, organized by III FFC, in Lisle, Illinois.

Illinois Power Agency Staff Present at Public Construction Summit

On April 6, 2023, IPA Deputy Legal Counsel Sarah Duffy and DEI Outreach Associate Kina Askew presented at the Public Construction Summit hosted by the Indiana, Illinois, Iowa Foundation for Fair Contracting (III FFC) in Lisle, Illinois.

Their presentation focused on the IPA's renewable energy incentive programs and procurements, and key initiatives that prioritize equity and Prevailing Wage Act requirements in the clean energy industry in Illinois. In addition, the IPA hosted an outreach table at the event and handed out educational materials on its solar incentive programs to attendees.



IPA Deputy Legal Counsel Sarah Duffy presents at the Public Construction Summit, organized by III FFC, in Lisle, Illinois.

Illinois Power Agency Staff Present at Solar Bootcamps Throughout Illinois

During the month of March, the IPA staff presented at the following solar bootcamps across Illinois: in Belleville, Elgin, Pekin, Rockford, and Elk Grove Village.

- On March 23, 2023, IPA Chief Legal Counsel Kelly Turner presented at the Mid-America Carpenters Apprenticeship & Training Center in Elk Grove Village, Illinois.
- On March 16, 2023, Illinois Solar for All Manager Jennifer Schmidt presented at the Mid-America Carpenters Regional Council Southern Illinois Apprenticeship & Training Center in Belleville, Illinois.
- On February 23, 2023, IPA Chief of Planning and Procurement Anthony Star presented at the Mid-America Carpenters Regional Council Joint Apprenticeship & Training Program in Pekin, Illinois.
- On January 26, 2023, IPA Deputy Legal Counsel Sarah Duffy presented at the Mid-America Carpenters Regional Council Union Solar Bootcamp in Rockford, Illinois.



IPA Planning and Procurement Chief Anthony Star at the Mid-America Carpenters Regional Council Joint Apprenticeship & Training Program in Pekin, Illinois.



IPA Interim Chief Legal Counsel Kelly Turner (Right) with Mid-America Carpenters Regional Council Director of Business Development Anthony Janowski (Left) in Elk Grove Village, Illinois.

These solar bootcamps allowed union members to engage with Agency staff about the state's renewable energy programs and procurements and about employment of equity-eligible persons and contractors in renewable energy projects. At these solar bootcamps, IPA staff presented on the Illinois Renewable Portfolio Standard (RPS), solar programs, equity, and prevailing wage requirements—all targeted at increasing access to the benefits of the clean energy economy for all Illinoisans.

Illinois Power Agency Staff Attend Outreach Events

During the month of April, IPA DEI Outreach Associate Kina Askew attended the following community events to help bring potential jobs into the portal.

- 4/14/2023 - Portal & Workforce Coordination Resource Program with DuPage County
- 4/16/2023 - Safer Foundation - 2nd Chance Program event, geared towards Returning Residents/Justice Impacted individuals in workforce*
- 4/18/2023 - DHS SNAP E & T Resource Meeting (Roseland, Englewood, Woodlawn, Auburn Gresham, Gage Park, and South Eastside Chicago)*

*Outreach events located in Environmental Justice Community areas



IPA DEI Outreach Associate Kina Askew (left) with Jasmine Love (right), Safer Quest Program Supervisor at the Safer Foundation.



IPA DEI Outreach Associate Kina Askew works the IPA outreach table at the Safer Foundation Grand Opening.

LOOKING AHEAD

Outreach Events

IPA DEI Outreach Associate Kina Askew will be attending additional community events to promote the Energy Workforce Equity Portal to help spur increased participation of Equity Eligible Persons in the portal. By prioritizing outreach, the IPA hopes to help Equity Eligible Persons and Contractors overcome barriers to entry and increase participation in the clean energy sector.

- 4/21/2023 - DCEO-FEJA TA Meeting
- 4/28/2023 - NAACP & IPA Collaborative (West Garfield Park location)*
- 5/2/2023 - Chicago Urban League Clean Energy Summit
- 5/6/2023 - Westside Community Resource Fair*

*Outreach events located in Environmental Justice Community areas

IPA Power Hour Webinars

[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 20 Power Hour webinars.

Upcoming Webinars

[Agrivoltaics: How Can Solar Energy and Agriculture Work with Each Other?](#)

April 28, 2023, 12:00PM-1PM CT

[From Brownfield to Brightfield: The Impact of Brownfield Redevelopment on Communities](#)

Friday, May 26, 12:00PM-1PM CT

[The Impacts of Wind and Solar Projects to the Local Economy](#)

Friday, June 30, 12:00PM-1PM CT

EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES

- [Equitable Solar Workforce Development: Challenges and Opportunities](#)
- [On-Site Solar Project Development in Illinois - From Ideation to Implementation](#)
- [Equity Factsheet](#)
- [Energy Workforce Equity Portal Flyer](#)

IN THE NEWS

[Bringing community solar to low-income customers is a lot harder than you might think.](#)

This news story from Energy News Network highlights how the IPA's Illinois Solar for All Program is making solar energy accessible to income-eligible communities in Illinois.

CONTACT US

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