



## Illinois Power Agency Announces the Phase I Launch of the Energy Workforce Equity Portal

January 31, 2023

The Illinois Power Agency is pleased to announce the launch of the Energy Workforce Equity Portal at [energyequity.illinois.gov](https://energyequity.illinois.gov)

The portal is designed to help connect clean energy companies with Equity Eligible Persons<sup>1</sup> looking to work in the clean energy sector in Illinois. Making these connections is a key aspect of ensuring that the clean energy industry in Illinois grows in an equitable manner.

Job seekers can use this portal to find out if they qualify as Equity Eligible Persons, register to be listed on the portal, and view clean energy jobs postings from entities seeking to hire Equity Eligible Persons. Developers of clean energy projects (such as Approved Vendors and Designees in the IPA's Adjustable Block Program, or developers of utility-scale wind and solar projects) can use this portal to advertise clean energy jobs and to search for Equity Eligible Persons seeking employment, as Equity Eligible Persons register on the portal.

The Climate and Equitable Jobs Act (Public Act 102-0662 or "CEJA") enacted in September 2021, directed the Illinois Power Agency and Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity ("DCEO") to help historically underserved communities participate in and benefit from the growing clean energy economy. One of the tools to reach that goal is to have the IPA and DCEO create a public-facing portal that helps develop a diverse pipeline of skilled and trained clean energy workforce.

### Some features of Phase I of the portal include:

- Information on qualifications and requirements for job seekers to become Equity Eligible Persons.
- A form for applying to be certified as Equity Eligible Person.

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<sup>1</sup> 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.

- A listing of Equity Eligible Persons who have volunteered to identify themselves to potential clean energy companies.<sup>2</sup>
- Information on job postings from clean energy companies for which they are recruiting Equity Eligible Persons.
- Information on workforce training programs administered by DCEO.
- Equity Investment Eligible (EIE) Community<sup>3</sup> Map that can be utilized by anyone to determine if they or someone else reside in an identified equity investment eligible community.
- Information on Equity Eligible Contractors<sup>4</sup> participating in the IPA's Adjustable Block Program.
- FAQs outlining commonly asked questions and answers on the portal.
- A user guide to help clean energy companies and Equity Eligible Persons navigate the portal easily.

“The Energy Workforce Equity Portal will be a great resource for job seekers and clean energy companies of Illinois to connect with each other,” said IPA Acting Director Brian Granahan. “The portal is a step forward in delivering on CEJA’s goal to promote an equitable transition to a clean energy future and ensure the clean energy economy benefits all communities.”

Phase II of the portal will be launched later in 2023 and will include additional information on workforce and job training programs, and resources and reports related to diversity and equity in the clean energy in Illinois.

For portal related questions, please email [IPA.EnergyEquity@illinois.gov](mailto:IPA.EnergyEquity@illinois.gov)

For Equity Eligible Contractor related question, please email Program Administrator of the Adjustable Block Program (also known as Illinois Shines) at [admin@illinoisabp.com](mailto:admin@illinoisabp.com)

For DCEO administered workforce training programs related questions, please email [CEO.CEJA@illinois.gov](mailto:CEO.CEJA@illinois.gov)

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<sup>2</sup> While the portal facilitates the identification of Equity Eligible Persons, it is not the only way for clean energy companies participating in the IPA’s programs and procurements to identify Equity Eligible Persons to meet the Minimum Equity Standard. The Minimum Equity Standard (“MES”) is the minimum portion of the workforce of an entity seeking to participate in Illinois Shines or a competitive procurement that must consist of EEPs. For the delivery year of 2023-2024, the MES is 10%.

<sup>3</sup> 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

<sup>4</sup> An Equity Eligible Contractor 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.