

Appendix Q – Program Year 2025-26 Minimum Equity Standards (MES) Compliance Plan for the Illinois Shines Program

PLEASE NOTE – THIS TEMPLATE IS NOT TO BE USED TO SUBMIT A COMPLIANCE PLAN. THE PROGRAM ADMINISTRATOR WILL RELEASE A DIGITAL FORM FOR SUBMISSIONS. THIS TEMPLATE IS SIMPLY TO PROVIDE TRANSPARENCY ON THE INFORMATION THAT WILL BE COLLECTED THROUGH THE FUTURE-RELEASED FORM.

Program Year 2025-26 Minimum Equity Standards (MES) Compliance Plan for the Illinois Shines Program

Background

The Climate and Equitable Jobs Act (Public Act 102-0662 or “CEJA”) amended the Illinois Power Agency Act to expand the “priority access to the clean energy economy for businesses and workers from communities that have been excluded from economic opportunities in the energy sector, have been subject to disproportionate levels of pollution, and have disproportionately experienced negative public health outcomes.”

CEJA directed the Illinois Power Agency (“IPA” or “Agency”) to help historically underserved communities participate in and benefit from the growing clean energy economy in Illinois. The Minimum Equity Standard Compliance Plan is the reporting mechanism the Program Administrator uses to assess understanding of compliance requirements and estimated project workforce demographics.

For Program Year 2025-26, at least 14% of the project workforce for each entity participating in the Illinois Shines Program must be composed of Equity Eligible Persons (EEPs). With the exception of Equity Eligible Contractors (EECs), all Approved Vendors (AVs) and Designees participating in the 2025-26 Program Year are required to submit an MES Compliance Plan, describing how the requirement will be met over the course of the year.

The Equity Accountability System Hub provides helpful resources and tips for MES Compliance Plan submissions: <https://illinoisshines.com/equity-accountability-system>.

As you review the form below in preparation for submitting your MES Compliance Plan, please note that asterisks indicate required sections. Once submitted, MES Compliance Plans will become public records that may be subject to disclosure under the Illinois Freedom of Information Act (5 ILCS 140); as such, if any information within this MES Compliance Plan should be protected from disclosure, please indicate in question #XX of this form what information, if any, in this form is proprietary, privileged, or confidential, and the disclosure of that information would cause competitive harm.

Is your company an Approved Vendor, Designee or both?

- Approved Vendor
- Designee
- Both

Submitting Company Name:

AV and/or Designee ID #(s):

If you are submitting a new Approved Vendor application or Designee registration that has not been approved yet, please type “N/A”

Name of Person Completing Form:

Title of Person Completing Form:

Email of Person Completing Form:

During the 2025-26 Program Year (June 2, 2025 - May 29, 2026), do you intend to submit projects to Illinois Shines, perform construction on a previously Part I approved project, conduct any sales or marketing activity for projects that have been or will be submitted to the program, manage subscriptions for a community solar project that holds a REC contract (including projects approved prior to the passage of CEJA), maintain a project on a waitlist, or otherwise conduct activities or business on a project seeking or that holds a REC contract?

If you answer ‘no’, you do not need to complete the rest of the form. Choosing ‘no’ to this question will complete your submission.

- Yes
- No

“[AV or Designee Company] affirms its intent to comply with all necessary requirements set forth in Public Act 102-0662 (Climate Equitable Jobs Act) relating to the Minimum Equity Standard and agrees to comply with certain obligations, including hiring a diverse project workforce and working with Equity Eligible Contractors, where applicable.”

- Yes
- No

Please type the name of the individual agreeing to the above attestation.

Today's Date:

Did your organization enter into a Corrective Action Plan for non-compliance with the Minimum Equity Standard in the 2023-24 Program Year?

- Yes
- No

Please provide the status of the Corrective Action Plan.

Is this an **original** Compliance Plan submission or a **revised** Compliance Plan submission?

If you failed your first submission, or received an 'Info Needed' request, please choose 'Revised Compliance Plan'.

- Original submission
- Revised Compliance Plan

Please select any of the following categories that apply to your business

- Minority-owned Business Enterprise (MBE)
- Woman-owned Business Enterprise (WBE)
- Disabled-owned Business Enterprise
- Veteran-owned Business
- Small Business
- None
- Other (fill in text box)

Please provide a narrative description of how the AV will ensure that at least 14% of its project workforce are Equity Eligible Persons (EEPs). Please see <https://illinoisshines.com/equity-accountability-system/> for more information on EEP qualification criteria.

Do you work with subcontractors that are not registered as Designees?

Non-registered subcontractors are those who do not have direct interaction with the client but are part of the project workforce. Please include employees of any non-registered subcontractors in your projected workforce total below.

Projected total number of employees/workers on Illinois Shines projects during the 2025-26 Program Year (exclude any employees/workers of registered Designees your company is subcontracted with from your total).⁹⁸

Please refer to the MES FAQs for details on who is within the scope of the project workforce for MES: <https://illinoisshines.com/vendor-faqs/#mes>

Estimated Number of Equity Eligible Persons **currently** in your Illinois-based Illinois Shines project workforce:

⁹⁸ If your organization works with registered Designees on projects, please exclude those individuals from your total project workforce. All registered Designees, as registered participating Program entities, are required to submit their own MES Compliance Plans.

An Equity Eligible Person (“EEP”) is a person that “would benefit most from equitable investments by the State designed to combat discrimination,” and CEJA provided four specific characteristics that would qualify a person as an EEP:

- Graduates or current or former participants in the Clean Jobs Workforce Network Program, Clean Energy Contractor Incubator Program, Illinois Climate Works Preapprenticeship Program, Returning Residents Clean Jobs Training Program, or the Clean Energy Primes Contractor Accelerator Program, and the solar training pipeline and multicultural jobs program created by FEJA*
- Persons who are graduates of or currently enrolled in the foster care system*
- Persons who were formerly incarcerated*
- Persons whose primary residence is in an equity eligible investment community*

Only individuals who fit within these criteria will count as Equity Eligible Persons.

Number of Equity Eligible Persons your organization **seeks to hire** to meet MES Compliance over the Program year:

Equity Eligible Contractor Partnerships

Do you plan to partner with Equity Eligible Contractor Approved Vendors, Designees, or Subcontractors in the 2025-26 Program Year?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

If yes, please list the name(s) of the EEC AVs, Designees, or Subcontractors you plan to partner with:

Please list any non-EEC Designees you intend to partner with in the 2025-26 Program year:

Communication Plan for Local Outreach

Please indicate the actions from the list below that you plan to take during the 2025-26 Program Year to increase the utilization of EEPs and Equity Eligible Contractors (EECs).

- ☐ Identify percentage of existing workforce that qualify as EEPs due to their primary residence within an Equity Investment Eligible Community (EIEC) <https://energyequity.illinois.gov/resources/equity-investment-eligible-community-map.html#map-target>
- ☐ Conduct outreach and recruitment with EEP-qualifying workforce development programs
- ☐ Conduct outreach to workforce training programs and community-based organizations that work with individuals who are graduates of or currently enrolled in the foster care system and/or who were formerly incarcerated
- ☐ Conduct outreach with workforce training programs and community-based organizations that work with individuals residing in EIEC communities

- ☐ Review of previous applicant records to identify individuals who may be contacted for future project employment opportunities
- ☐ Participate in job fairs (virtual or in-person) and related community events to expand recruitment efforts
- ☐ Register on the Energy Workforce Equity Portal as a Clean Energy Company
- ☐ Post jobs on the Energy Workforce Equity Portal
- ☐ Conduct outreach to Equity Eligible Persons listed on the Energy Workforce Equity Portal looking for employment opportunities
- ☐ Engage in direct and extensive outreach to trade associations or other relevant industry organizations to notify them of employment opportunities
- ☐ Increase marketing efforts on platforms used to announce or publicize available employment opportunities, such as employment websites, alumni listservs, union halls, social media, etc.
- ☐ Publicize employment opportunities on state-sponsored platforms, such as Illinois WorkNet (www.illinoisworknet.com) or Illinois Job Link (illinoisjoblink.illinois.gov)
- ☐ Conduct direct outreach to EECs listed on the Illinois Shines program website to explore subcontracting opportunities
- ☐ Engage with organized labor unions, community colleges, and community-based organizations to notify them of employment opportunities
- ☐ Meet with Program Administrator to review recruitment and hiring plans for current and upcoming opportunities.
- ☐ Other actions (please describe)

Please identify which responses in this form (#X – XX) contain proprietary, privileged or confidential information, the disclosure of which would cause competitive harm.

Please upload any supplemental documentation you would like to attach to your MES Compliance Plan.

(Upload field)

Equity Eligible Person (EEP) Data Needed

As your organization hires and/or works with Equity Eligible Persons (EEPs) during the Program year, please keep in mind that the Program will require data for these individuals at the time of the MES Year-End Report. The Program Administrator verifies EEP eligibility as part of the review process for the Year-End Report. Approved Vendors and Designees have two options for providing this data.

1. The Approved Vendor / Designee can encourage all EEPs in their project workforce to register in IPA's Energy Workforce Equity Portal: <https://energyequity.illinois.gov/>
 - a. This option allows the AV/Designee to simply provide the names of the registered EEPs in its MES Year-End Report.
2. The AV/Designee can collect signed EEP attestations and provide documentation for their EEPs to the Program Administrator.. The EEP attestation can be downloaded here: <https://illinoisshines.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/EEP-Attestation-Form-vFeb2024.pdf>
 - a. This option requires that the AV/Designee collect required supplemental documentation for EEPs who qualify based on graduation from a participating workforce training program,

or whose primary residence is located in an Equity Investment Eligible Community. Acceptable documentation includes:

- i. For EEPs who qualify based on graduation or current participation in a qualifying workforce training program, please provide either an acceptance letter from the training provider (for current participants), or a certificate of completion from the training provider (for graduates).
 - ii. For EEPs who qualify based on primary residence, please provide the individual's driver's license, utility bill, lease, mortgage agreement, or other similar documentation for the Program Administrator to verify the individual's eligibility.
 - b. The AV/Designee then lists the EEPs in its project workforce in the Year-End Report, and submits the EEPs' attestations and required supplemental documentation to the Program Administrator.
3. The Approved Vendor/Designee will be asked about EEPs' employment classification information (full-time, part-time, etc.) at the Year-End Report.