

Appendix Q – Minimum Equity Standard (MES) Combined Compliance and Year-End Report for the Illinois Shines Program

PLEASE NOTE – THIS TEMPLATE IS NOT TO BE USED TO SUBMIT A COMBINED COMPLIANCE PLAN AND YEAR-END REPORT. 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.

The Climate and Equitable Jobs Act (Public Act 102-0662 or “CEJA”) as amended by the Clean and Reliable Grid Affordability Act (Public Act 104-0458 or “CRGA”) which will take effect on June 1, 2026, 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 is the process by which the Agency implements this directive, and, going forward, the reporting mechanism to be used to assess understanding of compliance requirements and estimated project workforce demographics will be the MES Combined Compliance and Year-End Report.

This combined report brings together what were previously the MES Compliance Plan and the MES Year-End Report. Program participants are now required to submit one report, due July 15th, as opposed to two separate reports with disparate deadlines. As a reminder, the MES Year-End Report, that comes first in this submission, looks backward and shows how your organization achieved the MES requirement for the previous Program Year. The MES Compliance Plan, which comes later in the submission, is forward-looking and shows how your organization intends to achieve the upcoming Program Year’s MES requirement.

For Program Year 2025-26, which ends on May 31, 2026, at least 14% of the project workforce for each entity participating in the Illinois Shines program must be composed of Equity Eligible Persons (EEPs). For the upcoming 2026-27 Program Year, which starts on June 1, 2026, at least 14% of the project workforce for each entity participating in the Illinois Shines program must be composed of EEPs. All Approved Vendors (“AVs”) and Designees participating in the Program are required to submit a MES Combined Compliance and Year-End Report that shows how their organization complied with the current Program Year’s requirement, as well as their intent to comply with the upcoming year’s MES requirement.

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

Failure to submit an MES Combined Compliance and Year-End Report by the July 15, 2026 deadline will result in escalation to the Program Administrator’s Consumer Protection Team consistent with Sections

X.C-D of the Consumer Protection Handbook. Failure to comply may risk future good standing in the Program and may result in disciplinary action.

As you review the form below in preparation for submitting your MES Combined Compliance and Year-End Report, please note that asterisks indicate required sections. Once submitted, MES Combined Compliance and Year-End Reports 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 Combined Compliance and Year-End Report should be protected from disclosure, please indicate in response to questions 25 and 41 of this form what information, if any, is proprietary, privileged, or confidential, and the disclosure of that information would cause competitive harm. Any personally identifiable or private information contained in EEP attestations and supporting documents will be held confidential and exempt from disclosure under Sections 7(b) and 7(c) of the Illinois Freedom of Information Act.

Section 1: Company Information

1. Is your company an Approved Vendor, Designee or both?
 - a. Approved Vendor
 - b. Designee
 - c. Both
2. Submitting Company Name
3. AV and/or Designee ID #(s)
4. Name of Person Completing Form
5. Job Title of Person Completing Form
6. Email of Person Completing Form
7. Please select any of the following categories that apply to your business
 - a. Minority-owned Business Enterprise (MBE)
 - b. Woman-owned Business Enterprise (WBE)
 - c. Disability-owned Business Enterprise
 - d. Veteran-owned Business
 - e. None
 - f. Other

Section 2: Program Year 2025-26 MES Year-End Report

In this section, you will be reporting on the previous Program Year's workforce, showing how your organization worked to achieve the MES for the 2025-26 Program Year (June 1, 2025 through May 31, 2026).

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). The MES Year-End Report is intended for your organization to document compliance with this requirement.

Required data and information include:

- *Project workforce total*
- *Project workforce demographic information*

- *Equity Eligible Person total, including proof of EEP eligibility and any supporting documentation (e.g., for individuals that qualify based on residency in an EIEC, proof of residency)*
- *Outreach efforts employed to recruit EEPs*
- *Job training program graduate hiring data, Illinois-based workforce diversity data*

Any supplemental documents including Equity Eligible Person attestations and supporting documentation, should be uploaded to the form, or saved to your organization’s secure SharePoint folder. Please reach out to mes@illinoisshines.com if you have trouble accessing your folder.

- 8.** During the 2025-26 Program Year (June 1, 2025 – May 31, 2026), did your organization participate in the Illinois Shines program? Participation means:
- submitting projects to Illinois Shines, performing construction on a previously Part I approved project;
 - conducting any sales or marketing activity for projects that have been or will be submitted to the Program;
 - managing subscriptions for a community solar project that holds a REC contract (including projects approved prior to the passage of CEJA);
 - maintaining a project on a waitlist; or
 - otherwise conducting business on a project seeking or that holds a REC contract

If you answer ‘no’, you do not need to complete the rest of this section. Choosing ‘no’ to this question will complete your MES Year-End Report submission. The Program Administrator will verify your entity’s non-participation and, if confirmed, no further action in regard to the MES will be required from your organization for Program Year 2025-26.

- 9.** During the 2025-26 Program Year (June 1, 2025 – May 31, 2026), did your organization hire any new employees that work on Illinois Shines projects? This can include full-time, part-time, contractors, or any other type of employee. If you answer no, the Program Administrator may request documentation verifying that your organization did not do any hiring or contracting activity during the Program Year.
- Yes
 - No

9.a. *If ‘no’, please provide an explanation of the circumstances that led your organization to not hiring during the Program Year. Be sure to indicate any efforts you made in contacting EEPs, even if it did not result in hiring.*

Illinois-based, Illinois Shines Project Workforce Data

For the purposes of the MES, “project workforce” includes: Employees, contractors and their employees, and subcontractors and their employees, whose job duties are directly required by or substantially related to the development, construction, and operation of a project that is participating in or intended to participate in the IPA-administered programs and procurements under Section 1-75(c) of the IPA Act. This shall include both project installation workforce and workforce in administrative, sales, marketing, and technical roles where those workers’ duties are performed in Illinois. For purposes of this definition, ‘directly required by or substantially related to’ shall be construed to be any direct employee of the Approved Vendor, Designee, or any contractor and its employees whose contract exceeds 5% of the REC

*Contract value. Employees of contractors below that threshold may be counted on a voluntary basis, but if the Approved Vendor or Designee includes at least one such contractor whose contract is less than 5% of the REC Contract value, then all contractors below the threshold must be included. **Note: if your company works with an Illinois Shines Designee or Nested Designee, its employees/workers should not be included in your company's project workforce total, however employees/workers of non-registered subcontractors should be included.***

Workforce Diversity

Please enter all applicable answers numerically e.g. "0" instead of "none."

10. Total number of employees/workers on Illinois Shines projects during the 2025-26 Program Year.

10.a. Race (please enter the number of employees per category; each employee may be counted in only one category)

- White – Total
- Black or African American – Total
- Hispanic or Latino - Total
- Asian - Total
- American Indian or Alaska Native – Total
- Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander – Total
- Two or more races – Total
- Did not self-identify/not disclosed - Total

10.b. Gender Identity (please enter the number of employees per category; each employee may be counted in only one category)

- Male – Total
- Female – Total
- Other/Non-binary – Total
- Did not self-identify/not disclosed – Total

10.c. Disability (please enter the number of employees per category; each employee may be counted in only one category)

- Employees who have a history of a disability – Total
- Employees who do not have a disability/disability not disclosed – Total

10.d. Employment Status (please enter the number of employees per category; each employee may be counted in only one category)

- Full-Time – Total
- Part-Time – Total
- Temporary/Seasonal - Total
- Independent Contractors – Total

10.e. Residential zip codes of all employees in the company's Illinois-based Illinois Shines project workforce.

If preferred, please upload a list or document containing zip codes of all employees' residences to the field below.

Equity Eligible Persons (EEPs)

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 Pre-apprenticeship 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.

11. Total number of EEPs in your Illinois-based Illinois Shines project workforce for the 2025-26 Program Year.

12. Does your company work with any EEC Subcontractors? A list of EEC Subcontractors can be found here for reference: <https://illinoisshines.com/find-an-av-designee-or-subcontractor/#find-eec>

- Yes
- No

12.a. If yes, please list the names of the EEC Subcontractors.

12.b. If yes, how many of the EEPs in your Illinois-based Illinois Shines project workforce are employed by an EEC Subcontractor?

The Agency will count Equity Eligible Persons employed by an EEC-certified subcontractor, including the Equity Eligible Person majority-owner, 1.5 times in calculating compliance with the MES.

13. Please provide the total number of EEPs in your Illinois-based Illinois Shines project workforce that qualify as EEPs based on each of the following eligibility criteria. For individuals that are self-registered as EEPs in the Energy Workforce Equity Portal, and for whom eligibility criteria is unknown to the employer, please include them in the final number. Make sure that the numbers provided in this section add up to the total number of EEPs in your Illinois project workforce provided in question #X. Please enter all answers numerically e.g., "0" instead of "none".

- Graduates or current or former participants of qualifying workforce training program(s)
- Persons who are graduates of or currently enrolled in the foster care system
- Persons whose primary residence is in an equity eligible investment community
- Individuals self-registered in Energy Workforce Equity Portal, or eligibility criteria unknown

14. Please provide the total number of EEPs in your Illinois-based Illinois Shines project workforce that belong to each of the following demographic and employment classifications. Make sure that the

totals provided in this section add up to the total number of EEPs in your Illinois project workforce provided in question #X. Please enter all answers numerically e.g., “0” instead of “none”.

14.a. Race (please enter the number of EEPs per category; each EEP may be counted in only one category)

- White – Total
- Black or African American – Total
- Hispanic or Latino – Total
- Asian - Total
- American Indian or Alaska Native – Total
- Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander – Total
- Two or more races – Total
- Did not self-identify/not disclosed - Total

14.b. Gender Identity (please enter the number of EEPs per category; each EEP may be counted in only one category)

- Male – Total
- Female – Total
- Other/Non-binary - Total
- Did not self-identify/not disclosed – Total

14.c. Disability (please enter the number of EEPs per category; each EEP may be counted in only one category)

- Employees who have a history of a disability – Total crb50_totaldisabledeep Integers only
- Employees who do not have a disability/disability not disclosed – Total

14.d. Employment Status (please enter the number of EEPs per category; each EEP may be counted in only one category)

- Full-Time – Total
- Part-Time – Total
- Temporary/Seasonal - Total
- Independent Contractors – Total

EEP Verification

Please complete the table below with names of all EEPs in your total project workforce, and indicate the method used to verify their eligibility. Line items have been populated below based on the amount of EEPs stated in question 13. Please complete all items. <https://energyequity.illinois.gov/>

For any EEPs in your organization’s total Illinois-based Illinois Shines project workforce who are not registered in the [Energy Workforce Equity Portal](#) as EEPs, forward the attestation link below for signature by the EEP. Completed attestations should be uploaded by the Approved Vendor/Designee within their form submission, or to their secure MES SharePoint folder by the Year-End Report deadline. Please note: supplemental documentation is required 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 is described below. All personally identifying information and private information will be held confidential.

The EEP attestation can be downloaded here: <https://illinoisshines.com/wp-content/uploads/2025/04/EEP-Attestation-Form-v250411.pdf>

- 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 or a certificate of completion, where available, from the training provider.
- For EEPs who qualify based on primary residence, please provide one of the following: the individual’s driver’s license, state ID, pay stub, utility bill, lease, mortgage agreement, or other similar documentation for the Program Administrator to verify the individual’s address
- **FOR EACH LINE ITEM, IT MUST BE POSSIBLE TO HAVE 5 DOCUMENTS.**

EEP Name	EEP Registered in Equity Portal	If the EEP is not registered in the Equity Portal, please upload the documents(s) described below.	Qualification Criteria

15. I have uploaded all required EEP attestations and supplemental documentation above and/or have verified EEP registration in the Energy Workforce Equity Portal for all EEPs listed.

- Yes
- No

16. Job Training Graduate Hiring for Development of Illinois Shines Projects

Please enter all applicable answers numerically e.g. “0” instead of “none”.

This data is being collected for use by the Illinois Power Agency. Participation in these programs does not necessarily qualify an individual as an EEP. Note that participation in the Craft Apprenticeship Program does not qualify an individual as an EEP.

Job Training Graduate Data

- Solar Training Pipeline Program – Total
- Craft Apprenticeship Program – Total
- Multi-Cultural Jobs Program – Total
- Clean Jobs Workforce Network Program – Total
- Illinois Climate Works Pre-apprenticeship Program – Total
- Returning Residents Clean Jobs Training Program – Total
- Other – Total

Employment Status

- Full-Time – Total
- Part-Time – Total
- Temporary/Seasonal - Total
- Independent Contractors – Total
- Average Wage (\$/hour in format 00.00) - Total

Partnership and Outreach

17. If your company is an Approved Vendor, please list any Designees your company works with.

18. If your company is a Designee, please list any Approved Vendors or Nested Designees your company works with.

19. Please list any non-EEC subcontractors your company works with.

20. Did you partner with Equity Eligible Contractor Approved Vendors and/or Designees or for project applications associated with your organization?

Equity Eligible Contractors are designated as such on the AV/Designee directories found on our Program website: <https://illinoisshines.com/find-an-av-or-designee/>

- Yes
- No

20.a. If yes, please list the name(s) of the EEC AVs and/or Designees

20.b. Please report steps taken to implement the plan for local outreach to increase the utilization of EEPs and EECs as outlined in the organization’s MES Compliance Plan submitted in June, 2025. Please also report any ways in which the approach outlined in the Compliance Plan changed over the course of the Program Year.

Narrative Feedback

Please use this opportunity to share your feedback with the Program Administrator and Illinois Power Agency.

21. What efforts has your organization undertaken to recruit/hire trainees from FEJA and CEJA training programs? Please include any particular challenges or successes you had.

22. Did you hire graduates from any training programs other than those listed above (Solar Training Pipeline Program, Craft Apprenticeship Program, and Multicultural Jobs Programs)? If so, please list which programs the graduates came from.

23. What efforts has your organization undertaken to hire EEPs or engage EECs? Please include any particular challenges or successes you had.

24. How has your company approached meeting the MES? Have there been any obstacles?

25. Please identify which responses in this form (#1-20.b.) contain proprietary, privileged or confidential information, the disclosure of which would cause competitive harm.

26. Please upload any additional supplemental documentation you would like to attach to your MES Year-End Report. This may include documentation showing good faith effort to comply with the MES, as described in the Safe Harbor guidance (for small businesses with less than 8 employees that hired new staff during the Program Year).

Section 3: Program Year 2026-27 MES Compliance Plan

In this section, you will be reporting on the **upcoming** Program Year's workforce, describing how your organization aims to achieve the MES for the 2026-27 Program Year.

For Program Year 2026-27, at least 14% of the project workforce for each entity participating in the Illinois Shines program must be composed of Equity Eligible Persons (EEPs). All Approved Vendors and Designees participating in the Program are required to submit an MES Compliance Plan.

27. During the 2026-27 Program Year (June 1, 2026 - May 31, 2027), do you intend to participate in the Illinois Shines program? Participation means:

- submitting projects to Illinois Shines, performing construction on a previously Part I approved project
- conducting any sales or marketing activity for projects that have been or will be submitted to the program
- managing subscriptions for a community solar project that holds a REC contract (including projects approved prior to the passage of CEJA)
- maintaining a project on a waitlist, or otherwise conducting 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

28. "[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

29. Full name of individual agreeing to attestation:

30. Signature of individual agreeing to attestation:

31. Today's Date:

32. Did your organization enter into a Corrective Action Plan for non-compliance with the Minimum Equity Standard in the 2025-26 Program Year?

- Yes
- No

If yes, please provide the status of the Corrective Action Plan.

33. Please provide a narrative description of how your organization will ensure that at least 14% of its project workforce are Equity Eligible Persons (EEPs).

Please see <https://illinoisshines.com/equity-accountability-system-hub/> for more information on EEP qualification criteria

34. Will your company be working on Illinois Shines projects 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.

- Yes
- No

- 35.** Projected total number of employees/workers on Illinois Shines projects during the 2026-27 Program Year (exclude any employees/workers of registered Designees your company is subcontracted with from your total).

*For the purposes of the MES, “project workforce” includes: Employees, contractors and their employees, and subcontractors and their employees, whose job duties are directly required by or substantially related to the development, construction, and operation of a project that is participating in or intended to participate in the IPA-administered programs and procurements under Section 1-75(c) of the IPA Act. This shall include both project installation workforce and workforce in administrative, sales, marketing, and technical roles where those workers’ duties are performed in Illinois. For purposes of this definition, ‘directly required by or substantially related to’ shall be construed to be any direct employee of the Approved Vendor, Designee, or any contractor and its employees whose contract exceeds 5% of the REC Contract value. Employees of contractors below that threshold may be counted on a voluntary basis, but if the Approved Vendor or Designee includes at least one such contractor whose contract is less than 5% of the REC Contract value, then all contractors below the threshold must be included. **Note: if your company works with an Illinois Shines Designee or Nested Designee, its employees/workers should be excluded from your company’s project workforce total.***

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

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*

- 37.** Number of Equity Eligible Persons your organization **seeks to hire** to meet MES Compliance over the Program Year:

Equity Eligible Contractor Partnerships

- 38.** Do you plan to partner with Equity Eligible Contractor Approved Vendors, Designees, or Subcontractors in the 2026-27 Program Year? A list of EECs can be found here for reference: <https://illinoisshines.com/find-an-av-designee-or-subcontractor/#find-eec>

- Yes

- No

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

39. Please list any non-EEC Designees you intend to partner with in the 2026-27 Program Year:

Communication Plan for Local Outreach

40. Please indicate the actions from the list below that you plan to take during the 2026-27 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) ([view map](#))
- 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](#) or [Illinois Job Link](#)
- 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

41. Please identify which responses in this form (#27 - 40) contain proprietary, privileged or confidential information, the disclosure of which would cause competitive harm.

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