



# Illinois Shines 2025-26 Mentorship Program Final Report

July 2026



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# Executive Summary

With the enactment of Public Act 102-0662 (“P.A. 102-0662”) (known as the “Climate and Equitable Jobs Act” or “CEJA”) on September 15, 2021, the Illinois Shines program is tasked with providing 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. The diversity, equity and inclusion requirements of the Illinois Shines program include the administration of an Equity Accountability System, which includes the Minimum Equity Standard, publication of a racial disparity study to measure the presence of and impact of discrimination on minority businesses and workers in Illinois’ clean energy economy, collection and analysis of demographic data from program applicants regarding their employees, contractors, and subcontractors, and administration of the Energy Workforce Equity Database to facilitate engagement of Equity Eligible Contractors (EECs) and Equity Eligible Persons (EEPs) by serving as an easily accessible, public facing tool using the database information.

To support these objectives, the Mentorship Program was established for EECs and new Approved Vendors (AVs) and Designees in the Illinois Shines program that are minority-owned, women-owned, veteran-owned, disability-owned or considered a small business. The goal of the Mentorship Program is to help EECs and those new Program participants successfully participate in the Illinois Shines program, and to facilitate networking with other market stakeholders. After a successful and well received Mentorship Pilot in Program Year (PY) 2023-24, the Program Administrator began implementing an annual Mentorship Program with mentor participation beginning in PY 2024-25.

To meet growing market demand, the Program Administrator expanded the Mentorship Program in PY 2025-26 to two eight-week cohorts annually. 20 mentees were trained during the Fall 2025-26 Cohort, held between October 1 and November 19, and 17 mentees were trained during the Winter 2025-26 Cohort, held between January 14 and March 4. The mentees included 30 AVs, nine Designees, and two EEC Subcontractors. Of the 30 AV-mentees, 19 identified as EECs, 18 as small businesses, nine as minority-owned businesses, six as women-owned businesses, two as Disability-owned business, and two as veteran-owned businesses. Throughout both 2025-26 cohorts, 11 mentors participated in virtual trainings to share industry insights with attending mentees. More information on mentee and mentor participation can be found in [Appendix A](#).



Winter Mentees at the Graduation Ceremony

*All Mentorship Graduation Ceremony photos © 2026. Illinois Power Agency. All rights reserved.*

In addition to this expansion, the following enhancements for the Mentorship Program were implemented for the PY 2025-26 cohorts:



Six virtual courses were adapted from recorded presentations to an interactive eLearning format to enhance learning and retention. The courses contained 31 lessons on Program overview and requirements, application submission processes and procedures, marketing best practices, and consumer protection.



To conclude the eight-week training series and meet market demand for more information about project financing, a Funding Opportunities training was held with presentations from the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO) and the Illinois Finance Authority (IFA). During this training, the DCEO and IFA shared information about grant and loan opportunities, including the Equitable Energy Future grant, Community Solar Energy Sovereignty grant, and State Small Business Credit Initiative.



Following the final virtual training, an in-person Mentorship Program Graduation and Celebration was held to facilitate networking between mentees, mentors, and other market stakeholders. This event was hosted at the workforce development non-profit HIRE360 in Chicago.



To expand market-wide learning opportunities, the Mentorship Program hosted a Financing Opportunities Webinar for all Illinois Shines AVs, which included presentations from the National Laboratory of the Rockies (NLR), Ameren, the Hispanic American Construction Industry Association (HACIA), and the Clean Energy Jobs and Justice Fund (CEJFF). This event included 100 attendees representing Illinois Shines AVs and Designees. Results from the post-event survey can be found in Appendix D.

Throughout the Mentorship Program, mentees shared positive feedback about eLearning course content, the Learning Management System (LMS) platform where the courses were hosted, and the live classroom format for the virtual trainings which supported valuable connections and insights. Additionally, participants shared gratitude to the Illinois Power Agency and Program Administrator for facilitating this educational program, for the virtual and in-person networking opportunities, and for the mentors' participation and willingness to share industry insights.

With the successful implementation of the 2025-26 Mentorship Program, the Program Administrator recommends continuing to offer two Mentorship Program cohorts for PY 2026-27. The Program Administrator also recommends incorporating the following enhancements, as further described in the Recommendations section of the report:



Developing and implementing application worksheets



Hosting an application submission tutorial as a virtual training



Incorporating syllabi into virtual courses



Enhancing virtual trainings with new mentor panel and breakout session topics



Expanding attendance capacity for in-person networking events



And, in response to the high interest from the market in accessing financing opportunities, developing and offering a separate financing opportunities webinar series to all Illinois Shines AVs

The following sections provide an overview of the Mentorship Program, implementation analysis, mentee feedback, and recommendation details. In addition, this report includes lifetime key performance indicators including participation and project submission trends.

## Mentorship Program Overview

### Establishing the 2025-26 Mentorship Program

The Mentorship Program was developed and enhanced in accordance with the 2022 Long-Term Renewable Resources Procurement Plan which states:



IPA and Mentee at the Graduation Ceremony

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The Agency is proposing to expand the Program Administrator’s role by establishing a mentorship/training program for new Approved Vendors and Designees that are minority-owned, woman-owned, veteran-owned, disability-owned or considered a small business with the goal to help those new program participants learn about program requirements and application procedures. This mentorship and training program will also be available to all Equity Eligible Contractors participating in the Program. The Program Administrator will assign a dedicated staff person to each new Approved Vendor or Designee who qualifies for this mentorship/training program to provide them technical assistance and provide introductions and connections to established entities (p.156)

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Development and implementation of the 2025-26 Mentorship Program was executed in phases for each cohort:

#### Fall Cohort:

- Phase I – June and July 2025: development of the program plan
- Phase II – July through September 2025: program development, including the updating of virtual courses and virtual training curriculum
- Phase III – September through November 2025: registration, program implementation, facilitation of the virtual training series, and hosting the networking event.

#### Winter Cohort:

- Phase I – November 2025 through March 2026: registration, program implementation, facilitation of the virtual training series and hosting the networking event
- Phase II – March through April 2026: facilitation of Financing Opportunities Webinar; program reporting and recommendations for PY 2026-27

## Implementation

Implementation of the Mentorship Program included the following key elements:

### *Registration*

Registration for the Fall Cohort mentees, and for mentors for both cohorts, was open from September 2 through 12, 2025. Registration for the Winter Cohort mentees was open from December 1 through 12, 2025.

The mentee registration form solicited AV, Designee, or EEC Subcontractor ID number and a statement of interest in learning more about the Illinois Shines program and related solar industry topics. The mentee vetting process for each cohort was conducted in September and December, respectively, to confirm registrants were current AVs, Designees, or EEC Subcontractors in good standing with the Program. A waitlist system was developed in PY 2024-25 to manage instances in which the Program Administrator receives more eligible registrants than the 20 mentees allowed per cohort. Waitlisted registrants are encouraged to re-apply for subsequent cohorts and are alerted when a new application window opens.

For the Fall Cohort, the Program Administrator received 23 mentee applications and selected 20 to participate as mentees. Of the three registrants not selected, one was not registered in the Program, one was ineligible due to an unresolved Consumer Protection violation, and the third had participated in the Mentorship Program in the past and was waitlisted.



Fall Mentees at the Graduation Ceremony

For the Winter Cohort, the Program Administrator received 20 mentee registration applications and selected 17 to participate as mentees. The three registrants who were not selected were not registered in the Program and therefore were not eligible to participate. These registrants and those who were waitlisted were made aware of the resources available on the Illinois Shines website and encouraged to consider registering to participate in Illinois Shines and, once completed, any future Mentorship Program cohorts.

Like mentees, mentors were subject to an application and vetting process. The mentor application solicited information about the applicant’s experience in other solar incentive programs, community outreach, customer relations, business-to-business transactions, and their preference for participating in different mentor panels. A thorough vetting process was conducted to consider the applicant’s project submission history, consumer protection compliance, and application answers.

The Program Administrator received 13 mentor applications and selected 12 to participate. The applicant not selected was not registered in the Program. The selected mentors participated in one to two virtual trainings each, which included assignment to breakout sessions and mentor panels according to their industry backgrounds.

More information on mentee and mentor participation can be found in [Appendix A](#).

## *Program Features*

The training series featured six interactive eLearning, asynchronous virtual courses hosted on a Learning Management System (LMS) platform, weekly virtual calls, and one-on-one Mid-Program check-ins between the mentees and mentee coordinator. Additionally, the following items were provided to the mentees:

- Mentee roster with mentee contact information
- Mentor roster with mentor contact information, availability to meet in-person or virtually and areas of expertise
- Syllabi with references to Program resources and chapters of the Program Guidebook and Long-Term Renewable Resources Procurement Plan relevant to the virtual courses assigned for each virtual training
- A Certificate of Completion presented at the end of each cohort to mentees who completed the minimum required coursework and participation activities

## *LMS Courses*

The LMS courses assigned to mentees were piloted in the PY 2024-25 Mentorship cycle and were updated for PY 2026-27 from video to eLearning format. The original 28 lessons were increased to 31 lessons organized within six courses, covering key Illinois Shines program processes and requirements. The LMS courses were assigned to mentees prior to each weekly virtual training, allowing the trainings to build on the assigned course. This framework provided mentees with the opportunity to submit questions about the assigned course content in advance for Program Administrator subject-matter experts to answer during the training, with enhanced mentor-mentee engagement through relevant discussions. For a full list of the LMS courses see [Appendix B](#).



Winter Mentors at the Graduation Ceremony

## Virtual Trainings

The core of the Mentorship Program is the eight-week virtual training series, which features opportunities to discuss course content and industry topics, ask questions, and consult with mentors in breakout sessions. For PY 2025-26, these trainings built upon the assigned LMS courses, allowing for dedicated time for questions and discussion. Features of the weekly virtual trainings included:

- Icebreakers: Opportunities for mentees and mentors to respond to topical questions related to their experience in the solar industry using the Zoom chat feature;
- Mentor Panels: Panel discussions between mentors on various solar industry and Program topics facilitated by the Program Administrator with mentees able to submit questions using the Zoom chat feature;
- Breakout Sessions: Two to three small group discussions between mentees and mentors facilitated by subject-matter experts using the Zoom breakout room feature; and,
- Q&A Sessions: Opportunities for mentees to ask any remaining questions of the mentors and subject-matter experts not already addressed.

The 2025-26 Mentorship Program virtual training series were held in the following order:

### Fall Cohort:

1. Introduction to the Mentorship Program – October 1, 2025
2. Illinois Shines Program Overview – October 8, 2025
3. Application Processing and Portal Deep Dive Part 1 – October 15, 2025
4. Application Processing and Portal Deep Dive Part 2 – October 22, 2025
5. Ongoing Program Requirements Part 1 – October 29, 2025
6. Ongoing Program Requirements Part 2 – November 5, 2025
7. Marketing Best Practices, Consumer Protection, and Ongoing Support – November 12, 2025
8. Funding Opportunities – November 19, 2025

### Winter Cohort:

1. Introduction to the Mentorship Program – January 14, 2026
2. Illinois Shines Program Overview – January 21, 2026
3. Application Processing and Portal Deep Dive Part 1 – January 28, 2026
4. Application Processing and Portal Deep Dive Part 2 – February 4, 2026
5. Ongoing Program Requirements Part 1 – February 11, 2026
6. Ongoing Program Requirements Part 2 – February 18, 2026
7. Marketing Best Practices, Consumer Protection, and Ongoing Support – February 25, 2026
8. Funding Opportunities – March 4, 2026

For a full breakdown of the virtual trainings and their mentor panel and breakout session topics, see [Appendix A](#).

## 1-on-1 Check-In Meetings

As part of the Mentorship Program, each mentee is required to attend one 30-minute check-in meeting with the mentee coordinator midway through the Program. This is an opportunity for mentees to ask granular questions about Program processes and requirements, discuss their project pipeline and participation in Illinois Shines, and share feedback on the Mentorship Program. The mentee coordinator provided 18 check-ins to mentees during the Fall Cohort and 14 check-ins during the Winter Cohort. The Program Administrator could not reach two mentees in the Fall Cohort and three mentees in the Winter Cohort to schedule their check-ins. These mentees were unresponsive and had repeat virtual training absences that resulted in them not receiving their certificate of completion.

## Mentorship Graduation & Celebration Events

An in-person networking event was held following the end of each Mentorship Program cohort to celebrate graduating mentees and provide them with an opportunity to build relationships to support their continued growth in the solar sector. The events, both held at the HIRE360 headquarters in Chicago, provided mentees with certificates of completion and provided opportunities for attendees to connect with IPA staff members, Program Administrator staff, and industry peers.

The Fall Cohort Mentorship Graduation & Celebration was held on November 2, 2025, and included remarks from Illinois Power Agency Director Brian Granahan celebrating the mentees' achievements, thanking mentors, and underscoring the significant role of the Mentorship Program and Equity Accountability System in fulfilling CEJA's directives. The IPA then awarded Certificates of Completion to the 10 graduating mentees who were able to attend the event. In addition to the 10 mentee graduates, six mentors, two ILSFA Program Administrator staff, nine IPA staff, four Program Administrator staff, and five other market stakeholders were in attendance, for a total of 36 attendees.

The Winter Cohort Mentorship Graduation & Celebration was held on March 5, 2026, and included remarks from Illinois Shines Program Manager Andrea O'Shea. The IPA awarded Certificates of Completion to the nine graduating mentees who were able to attend the event. To expand the networking capacity of the event, mentee alumni from prior cohorts were also invited to attend the winter networking event. There were 42 total attendees, which included nine mentee graduates, seven mentee alumni, six mentors, one ILSFA Program Administrator staff, nine IPA staff, seven Program Administrator staff, and four other market stakeholders.



Mentees receiving their Graduation Certificates from the IPA and Program Administrator

# Implementation Analysis and Mentee Feedback

## Implementation Analysis

Mentees were sent a feedback survey following each cohort's final virtual training, held on November 19, 2025, and March 4, 2026, respectively. Results from this survey can be found in [Appendix D](#).

In addition, a post-event survey was emailed to attendees of the Mentorship Graduation & Celebration events. The results from this survey can be found in [Appendix E](#).

Feedback received from the post-program survey, post-event survey, and mid-program check-ins highlighted several successes and lessons learned.

### *Successes:*

- Mentees and mentors alike expressed appreciation for the opportunity to participate in the program and reported positive outcomes resulting from their participation. The Program Administrator developed working relationships with 37 AV and Designees mentees, enabling them to confidently participate in Illinois Shines.
- The Program Administrator team facilitated relationships between 12 AV and Designee mentors, connecting them with participating mentees. The Mentorship Graduate & Celebration was well attended, and mentees specifically expressed appreciation for the opportunity to connect in-person with market stakeholders.
- The LMS platform and eLearning format of the virtual courses effectively enhanced the learning and retention of course curriculum for mentees.
- The Mentorship Graduation & Celebration was well attended, and attendees expressed appreciation for the opportunity to connect in-person with market stakeholders.

### *Lessons Learned:*

- Mentees expressed a desire for more detailed review of Community Solar or Distributed Generation applications and a tutorial of Part I and II submissions.
- Mentees shared that there is a limit in value to networking with fellow Mentorship Program participants and expressed a desire to network with established Illinois Shines AVs and developers outside of the Mentorship Program to collaborate on projects together.
- Mentees expressed interest in hearing from mentors who have successfully won grant funding and learning best practices for grant writing.
- Mentees expressed interest in learning about approaches to integrating solar and storage within their projects.
- There is consistent market demand for information about financing opportunities and resources.
- Mentees shared that they would like to be able to re-take and reference the eLearning virtual courses following their participation.

## Mentee Testimonials

Mentees shared the following regarding their experience in the 2025-26 Mentorship Program:

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“I really enjoyed the program and found it extremely valuable. It provided clear guidance on how Illinois Shines works and helped us better understand the requirements, processes, and expectations for participating in the program. The mentorship and resources shared throughout the program made it much easier to navigate areas that initially seemed complex. Through the program, our company gained a better understanding of the administrative and compliance aspects involved in Illinois Shines, as well as the practical steps needed to successfully participate. It also gave us the opportunity to ask questions, learn from experienced participants, and feel more confident about moving forward with our projects. Overall, the program has helped prepare our company to participate more effectively in Illinois Shines and align our processes with the program’s requirements. I truly appreciated the support and insight provided, and in hindsight, I wish we had participated in the mentorship program earlier because it would have helped us accelerate our learning and preparation.”

**- Soltage, Winter Cohort Mentee**

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“The Mentorship Program Graduation and Celebration provides the best networking atmospheres for participating business to network organically to build strong partnerships in the solar industry.”

**- Landmark Management Solutions, Winter Cohort Mentee**

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“The Illinois Shines Mentorship Program has prepared me to begin the process of becoming an EPC and a Developer. I had very little knowledge of how to maneuver through the process. Now I have the confidence to begin applying the knowledge that I have learned and become an active participant in the (Illinois Shines) program.”

**– Advantage Construction, Fall Cohort Mentee**

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“The Mentorship Program has helped me better understand what is required for the program and how I can meet my business goals.”

**– New City Development, Fall Cohort Mentee**

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“I learned a lot. Learning how to submit the various forms and documents properly was priceless.”

**– 8City Outreach, Fall Cohort Mentee**

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# Mentorship Program Recommendations

Based on analysis of implementation, survey results, and conversations during mentee check-ins, the Program Administrator recommends the following enhancements to increase mentee learning and retention with updated curriculum and participation processes. The timeline of development and implementation of the 2026-27 Mentorship Program will be the same as that from PY 2025-26.



Fall Mentees at the Graduation Ceremony



## Application Worksheets

Develop and assign Part I and Part II project application worksheets for both Distributed Generation (DG) and Community Solar (CS) projects for virtual trainings three and four, respectively, to allow mentees to practice filling out project applications.



## Project Application Submission Tutorial Training

Include in the fifth virtual training a live presentation and breakout rooms facilitated by Program Administrator subject-matter experts on application processing to review completed application worksheets and answer mentee questions.



## Syllabi Incorporation into Virtual Courses

Incorporate the syllabi into the virtual courses to increase visibility and allow for seamless reference.



## Expanding Training Topics

Enhance virtual trainings with new mentor panel and breakout session topics.



## Portal Access to Virtual Courses

Publish eLearning virtual courses in the Illinois Shines Portal for AVs and Designees as onboarding curriculum and for mentee reference following their participation.



## Expansion of In-Person Networking Event

To facilitate expanded networking between mentee graduates and the Illinois Shines market, consider increasing the number of program participants and inviting partner organizations.



## Mentor Office Hours

To allow for additional engagement between mentees and mentors, facilitate 45-minute office hours following each virtual training in which up to two mentors are available to mentees to ask questions in a 1:1 setting facilitated by the Program Administrator.

# Appendix A – Mentee Participation

## Fall Cohort Mentees

Program Participant Type	Number of Participants
Approved Vendor	18
Designee	6
EEC Subcontractor	0

AV Type	Number of AVs
DG Installer	14
DG Project Developer	10
CS Project Developer	5
SREC Broker/Aggregators	6
Non-Profit	3

Designee Type	Number of Designees
Disclosure Form	3
CS Subscriber	1
Marketing/Sales	5
Installer	3
Maintenance & Repair	3

Business Type	Number of Businesses
Equity Eligible Contractor	13
Small Business	10
Minority-Owned Business	5
Women-Owned Business	3
Disability-owned Business	1
Veteran-Owned Business	0
None	3

Primary Project Type	Number of Projects
TCS	8
CDCS	8
Small DG	14
Large DG	12
Public Schools	5
EEC CS	8
EEC DG	11

## Winter Cohort Mentees

Program Participant Type	Number of Participants
Approved Vendor	12
Designee	3
EEC Subcontractor	2

AV Type	Number of AVs
DG Installer	9
DG Project Developer	10
CS Project Developer	7
SREC Broker/Aggregators	1
Non-Profit	0

Designee Type	Number of Designees
Disclosure Form	3
CS Subscriber	1
Marketing/Sales	3
Installer	1
Maintenance & Repair	1

Business Type	Number of Businesses
Equity Eligible Contractor	6
Small Business	8
Minority-Owned Business	4
Women-Owned Business	3
Disability-Owned Business	1
Veteran-Owned Business	2
None	4

Primary Project Type	Number of Projects
TCS	4
CDCS	5
Small DG	11
Large DG	10
Public Schools	4
EEC CS	5
EEC DG	6

# Appendix B – Virtual Training Series

## Introduction to the Mentorship Program – October 1, 2025; January 14, 2026

- Overview of the Mentorship Program
- Overview of the LMS
- Q&A Session
- Breakout Session

## Illinois Shines Program Overview – October 8, 2025; January 21, 2026

- Q&A Session with Subject Matter Experts
- Mentor Panel: How AVs and Designees Can Participate in the Program
- Breakout Session:
  - Participating as a Project Developer
  - Participating as an Aggregator
  - Participating as an Installer

## Application Processes and Portal Deep Dive Part 1 – October 15, 2025; January 28, 2026

- Q&A Session with Subject Matter Experts
- Mentor Panel: Developing Projects
- Breakout Session:
  - Best Practices for Acquiring Project Permits
  - Approaches for Building Community Buy-In
  - Securing System Interconnection

## Application Processes and Portal Deep Dive Part 2 – October 22, 2025; February 4, 2026

- Q&A Session with Subject Matter Experts
- Mentor Panel: REC Management and REC Service Agreements
- Breakout Session:
  - Partnering with Project Developers as a SREC Aggregator
  - Negotiating REC Service Agreements
  - Using PJM-GATS and M-RETS

### **Ongoing Program Requirements Part 1 – October 29, 2025; February 11, 2026**

- Q&A Session with Subject Matter Experts
- Mentor Panel: Meeting the Minimum Equity Standard (MES) and Hiring for a Growing Business
- Breakout Session:
  - Hiring and Retaining Equity Eligible Persons (EEPs)
  - Partnering with Community-Based Organizations (CBOs)
  - Growing a Small Business

### **Ongoing Program Requirements Part 2 – November 5, 2025; February 18, 2026**

- Q&A Session with Subject Matter Experts
- Mentor Panel: Designee and Subcontractor Management
- Breakout Session:
  - Choosing the Right Designee or Subcontractor for Community Solar Projects
  - Choosing the Right Designee or Subcontractor for Distributed Generation Projects
  - Choosing the Right Designee or Community Partner for Subscriber Acquisition

### **Marketing Best Practices, Consumer Protection, and Ongoing Support– November 12, 2025; February 25, 2026**

- Q&A Session with Subject Matter Experts
- Mentor Panel: Strategies Marketing to Different Audiences
- Breakout Session:
  - Marketing to Residential Landowners
  - Marketing to Commercial Landowners
  - Marketing to Agricultural Landowners

### **Funding Opportunities – November 19, 2025; March 4, 2026**

- Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO) Presentation
- Illinois Finance Authority (IFA) Presentation
- Q&A Session

# Appendix C – Virtual Courses

## Illinois Shines Program Overview – October 8, 2025; January 21, 2026

- History of Illinois Shines
- How Illinois Shines Works
- Program Participant Roles
- Approved Vendor Registration and Renewal
- Designee Registration and Renewal
- Certifying as an Equity Eligible Contractor (EEC)
- Program Categories

## Application Processes and Portal Deep Dive Part 1 – October 15, 2025; January 28, 2026

- Application Review Process
- Part I and II Application Timeline
- REC Contracting and Re-Batching
- Creating a Batch
- Creating a Disclosure Form
- Submitting a Part I Application
- Requesting an Advance of Capital

## Application Processes and Portal Deep Dive Part 2 – October 22, 2025; February 4, 2026

- Block Capacity Dashboard and Waitlist Procedures
- TCS and CDCS Scoring
- Submitting a Part II Application
- Expansions, Co-Locations, and Size Changes
- Energization and Extensions
- Assigning Projects to a New Approved Vendor

## Ongoing Program Requirements Part 1 – October 29, 2025; February 11, 2026

- Minimum Equity Standard (MES)
- Annual Reporting and REC Performance Evaluation
- Prevailing Wage Requirements
- Overview of SharePoint

## **Ongoing Program Requirements Part 2 – November 5, 2025; February 18, 2026**

- Inspection Process
- Community Solar Subscriber Verification
- Designee Management Plan

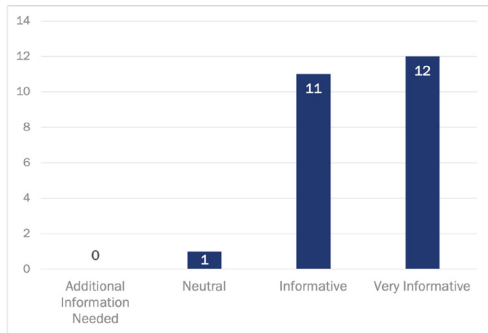
## **Marketing Best Practices, Consumer Protection, and Ongoing Support– November 12, 2025; February 25, 2026**

- Consumer Protection Overview
- Marketing Overview
- Website Overview
- Ongoing Support

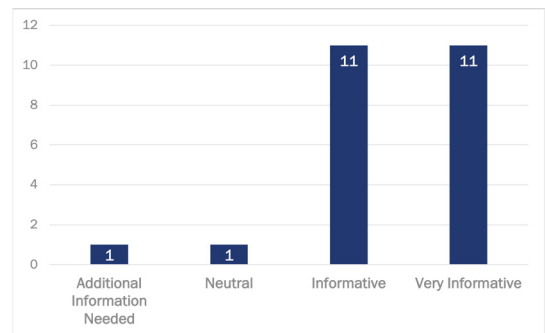
# Appendix D – Program Completion Survey Responses

Please rate how informative each virtual course was in familiarizing yourself with Illinois Shines.

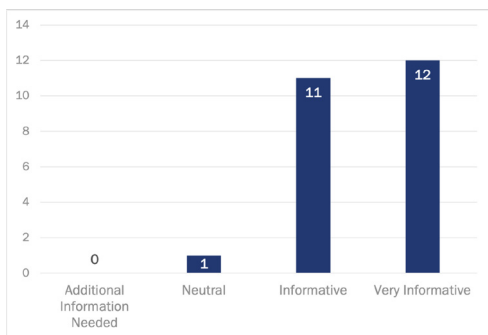
### History of Illinois Shines



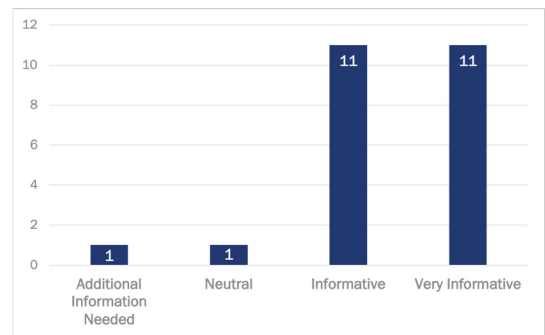
### Approved Vendor (AV) Registration and Renewal Designee Registration and Renewal



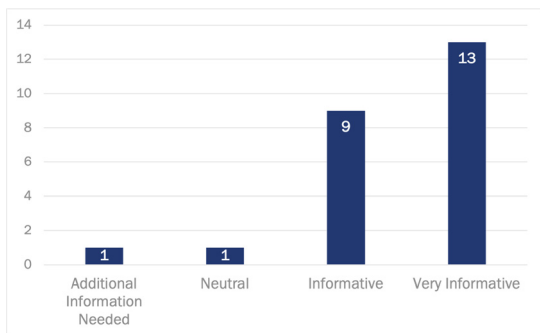
### How Illinois Shines Works



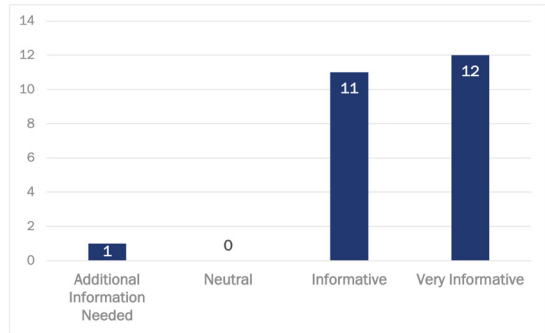
### Certifying as an Equity Eligible Contractor (EEC)



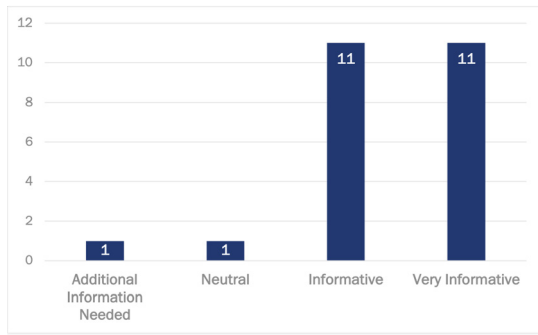
### Program Participant Roles



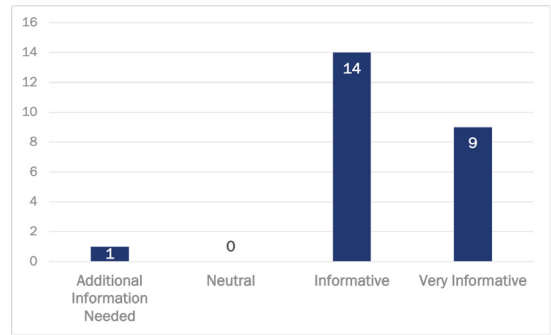
### Program Categories



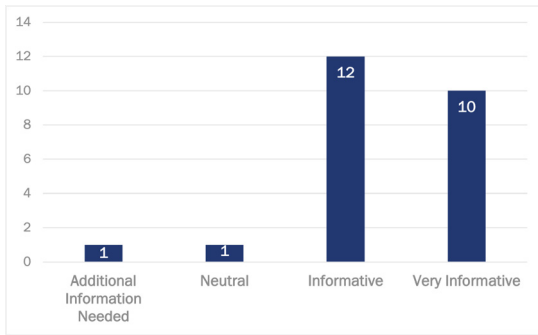
### Part I and II Application Timeline



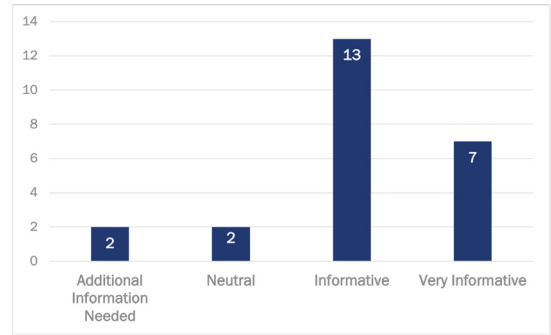
### Submitting a Part I Application



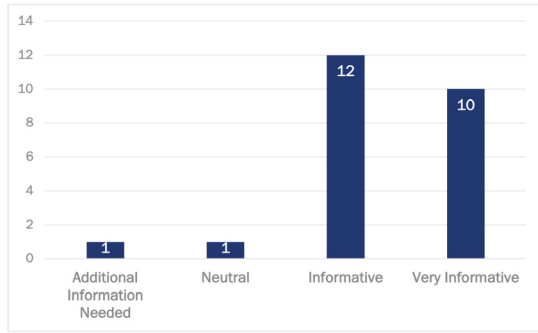
### Application Review Process



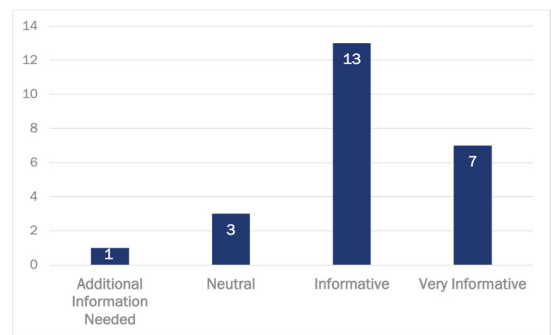
### Requesting an Advance of Capital



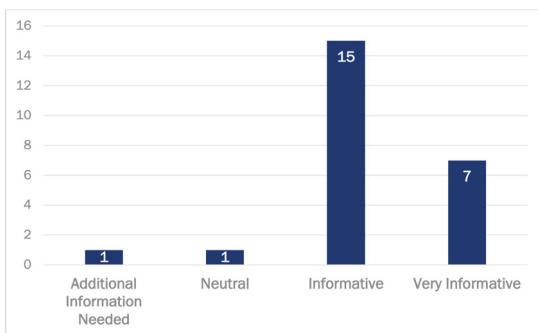
### Creating a Batch



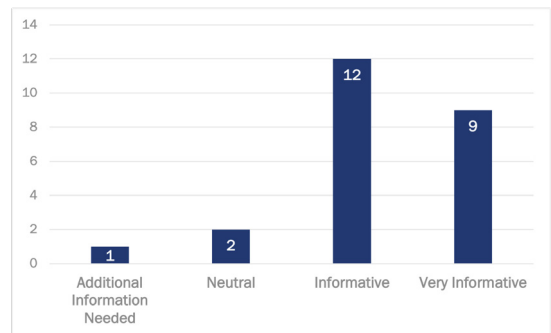
### Block Capacity Dashboard and Waitlist Procedures



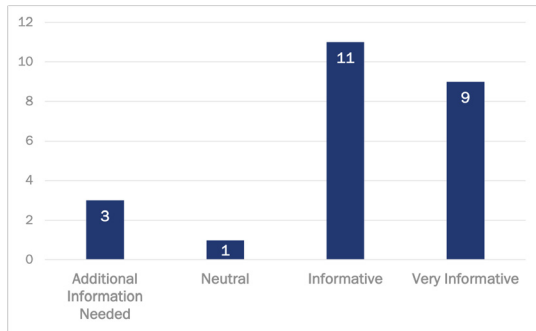
### Creating a Disclosure Form



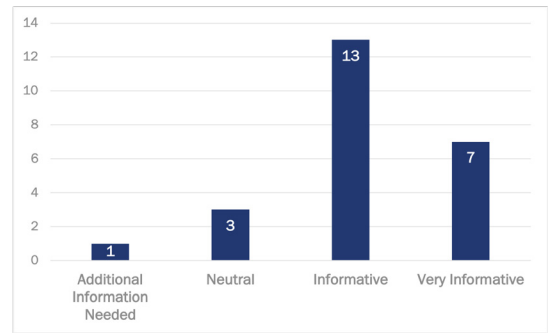
### TCS and CDCS Scoring



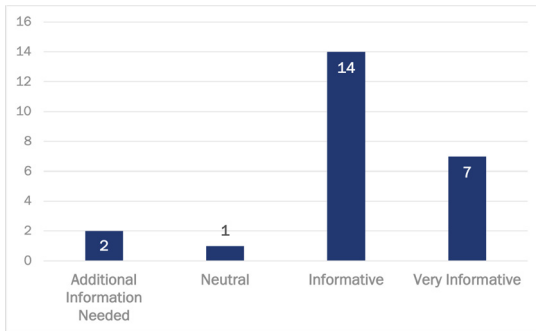
### Submitting a Part II Application



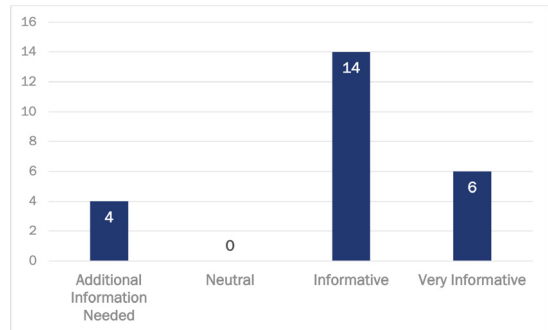
### Minimum Equity Standard (MES)



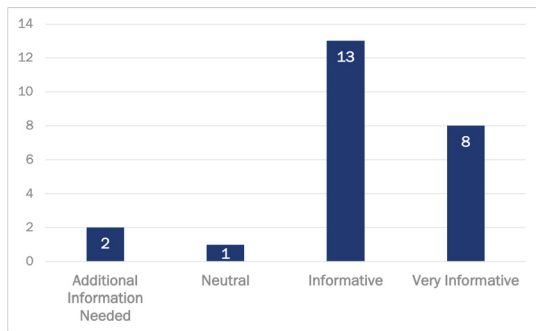
### Expansions, Co-Locations, and Size Changes



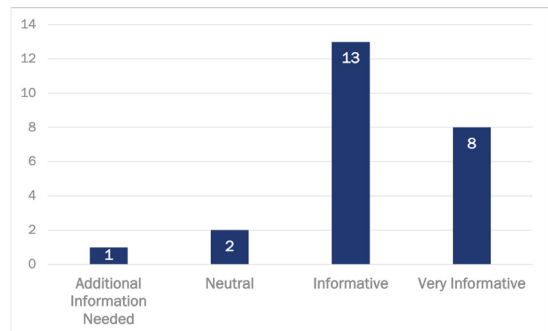
### Annual Reporting and REC Performance Evaluation



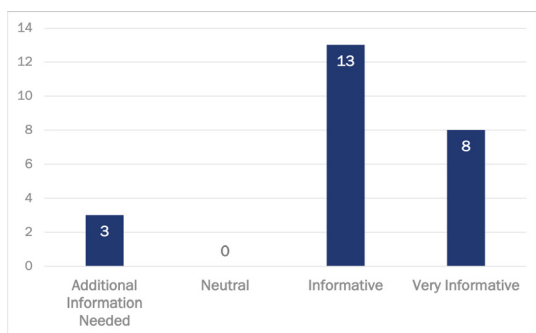
### Energization and Extensions



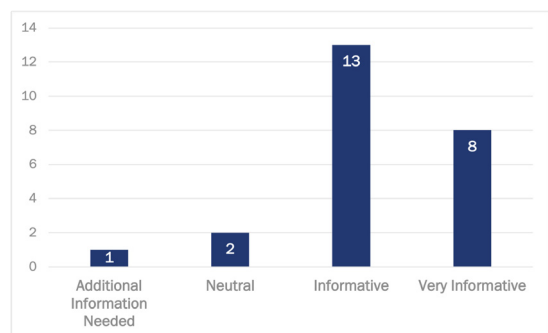
### Prevailing Wage Requirements



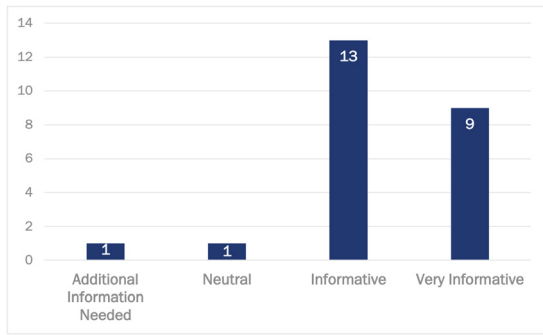
### Assigning Projects to a New Approved Vendor



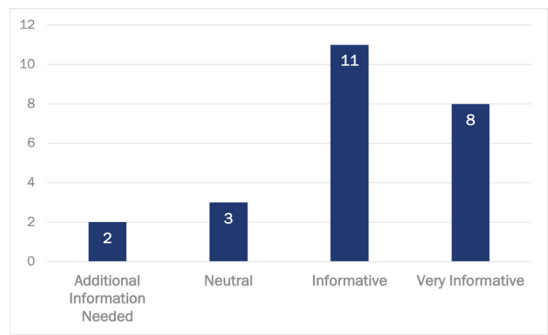
### Overview of SharePoint



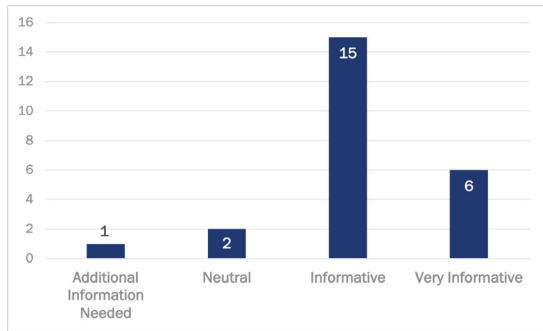
### Inspection Process



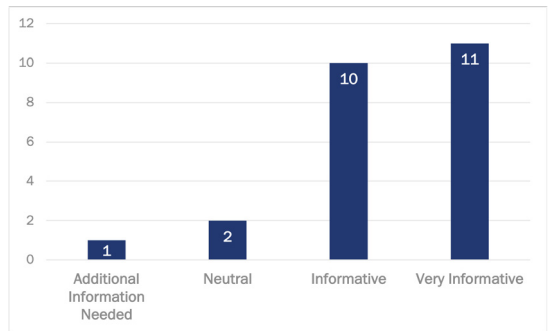
### Marketing Overview



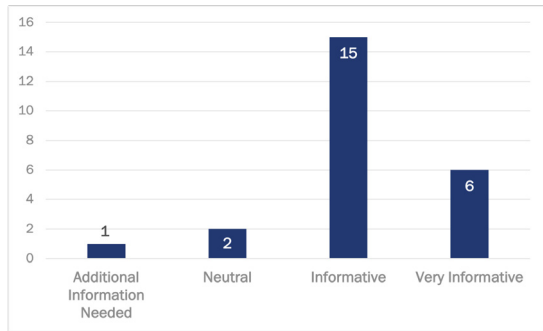
### Community Solar Subscriber Verification



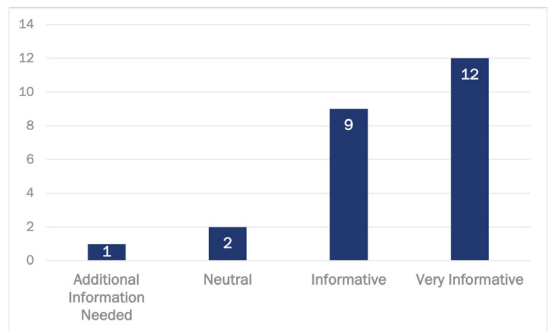
### Website Overview



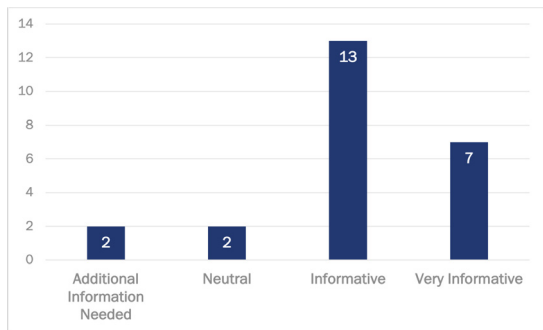
### Designee Management Plan



### Ongoing Support

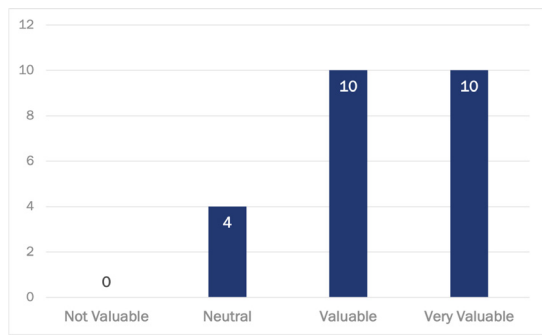


### Consumer Protection Overview

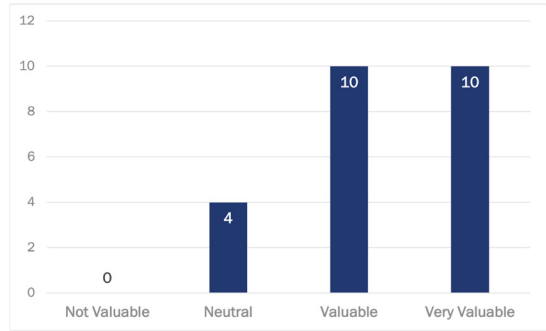


Please rate how valuable each mentor panel was in providing solar industry and Program insights.

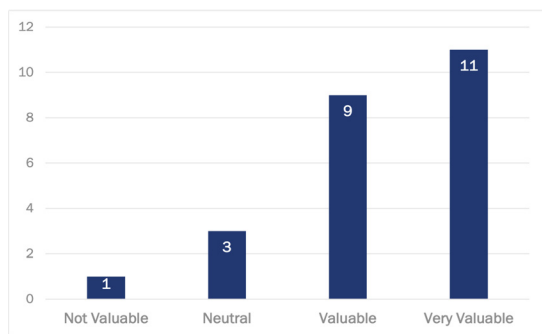
Participating as an Approved Vendor or Designee



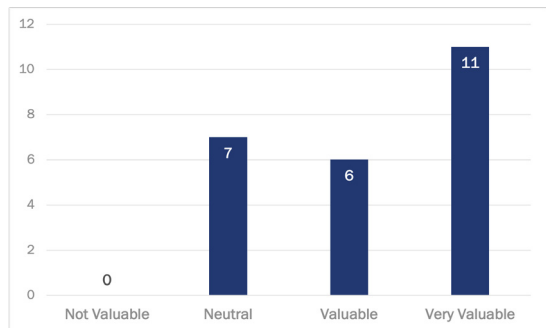
Designee and Subcontractor Management



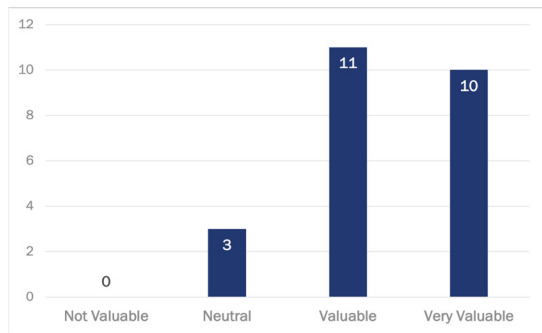
Developing Projects



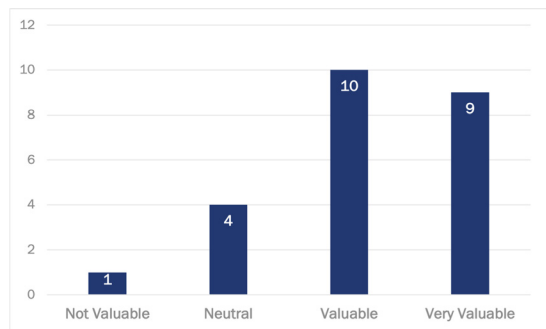
Marketing Strategies for Generating Leads and Subscribers



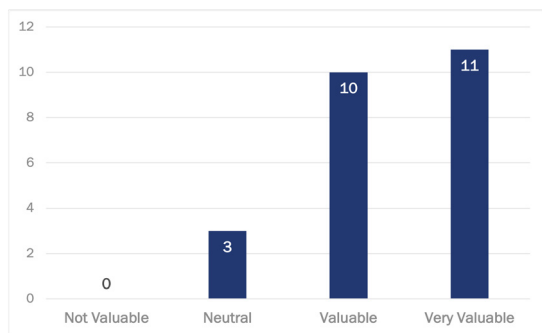
REC Management and REC Service Agreements



Please rate how valuable to Financing Opportunities training was in providing information on financing opportunities.

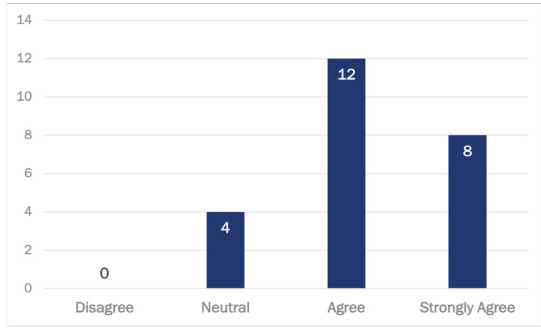


Meeting the Minimum Equity Standard (MES) and Hiring for a Growing Business

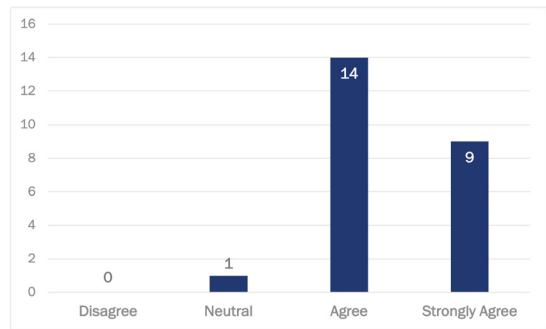


Please rate your level of agreement with the following statements.

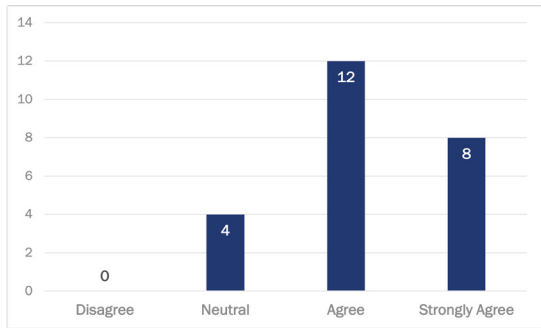
The syllabi were helpful in preparing me for each week's virtual training.



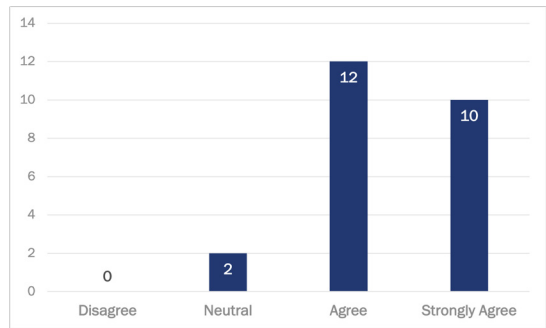
The link to the LMS module and list of courses were helpful in preparing me for each week's virtual training.



The guiding questions helped my understanding of the material.

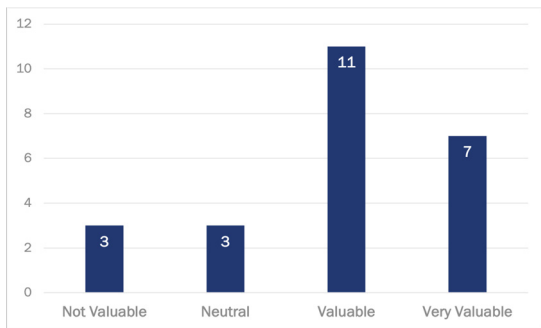


The suggested resources were helpful in familiarizing myself with Program topics.

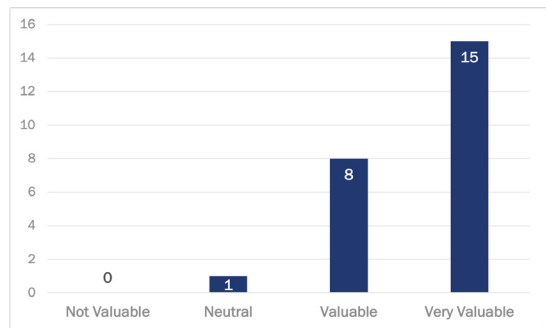


Please rate how valuable each component of the Mentorship Program was to your participation in Illinois Shines and your business goals.

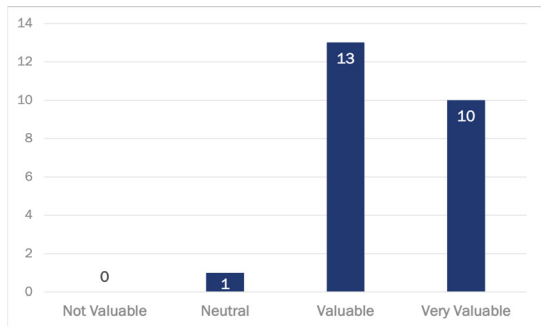
Icebreakers



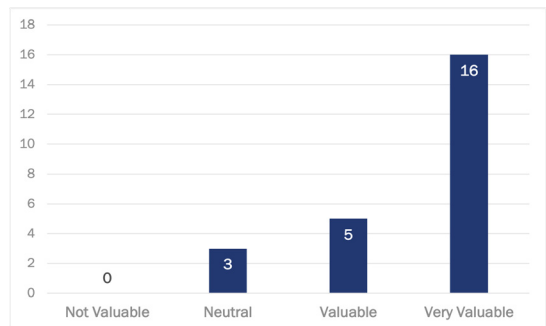
Q&A Sessions



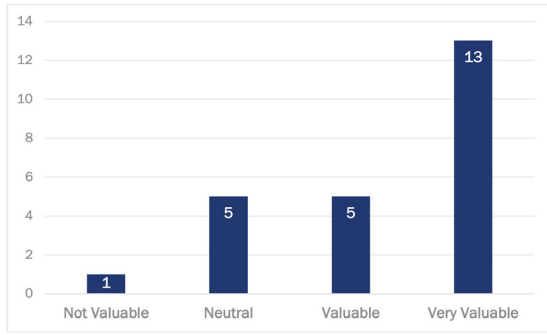
Virtual Courses



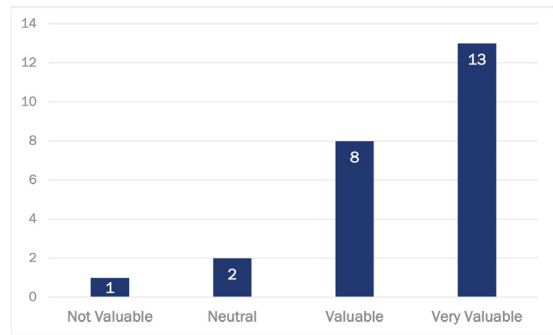
Mentor Panels



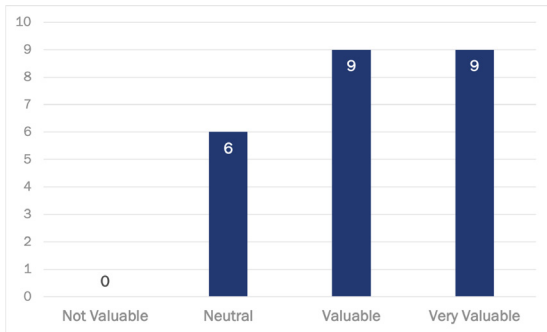
### Breakout Sessions



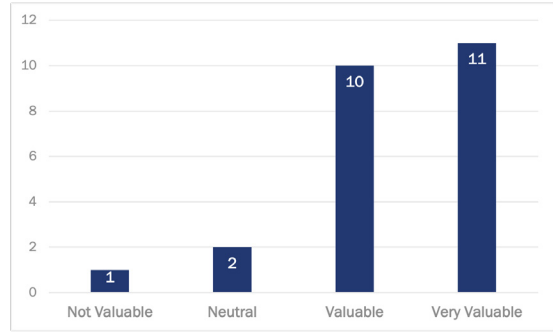
### Mentor Roster



### Financing Opportunities Presentations

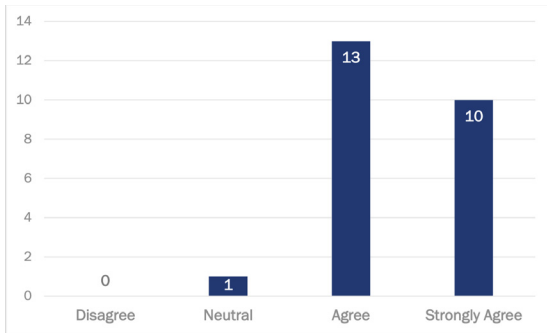


### Mentee Roster

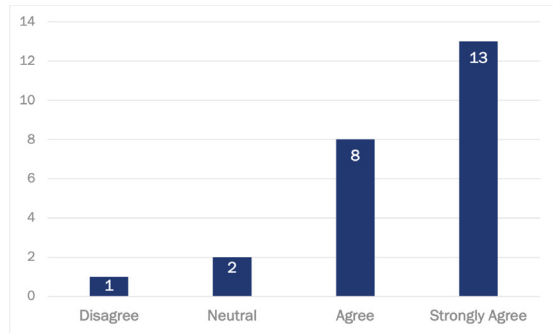


Please rate your level of agreement with the following statements regarding the Mentorship Program components.

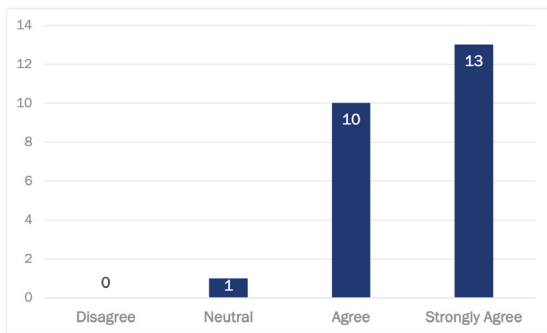
The LMS platform was easy to use and helpful in building my understanding of the Illinois Shines program.



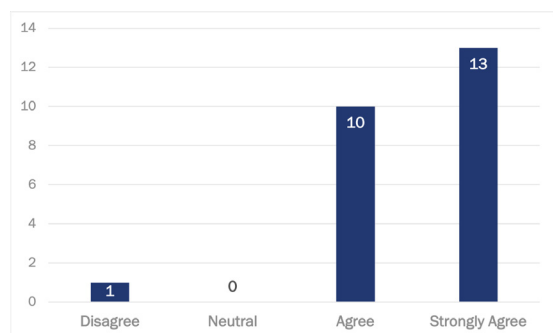
The order of the mentor panels was helpful in building my understanding of the Illinois Shines program and solar industry topics.



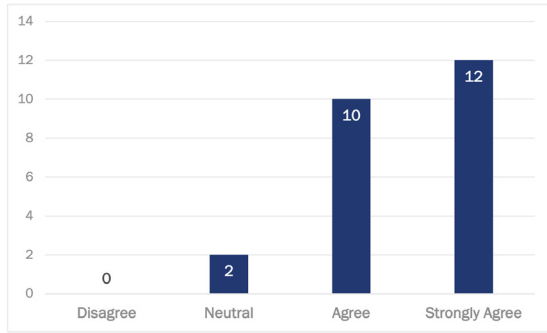
The knowledge checks were useful in reinforcing topics and concepts.



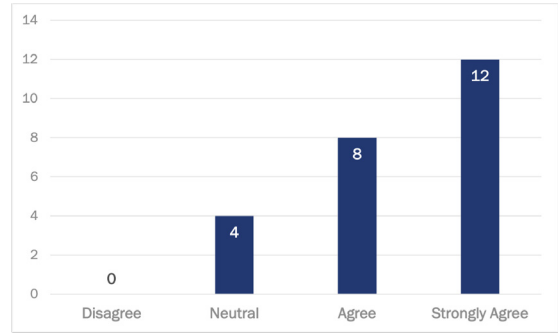
Attendance to weekly, 1-hour and 15-minute virtual trainings was manageable.



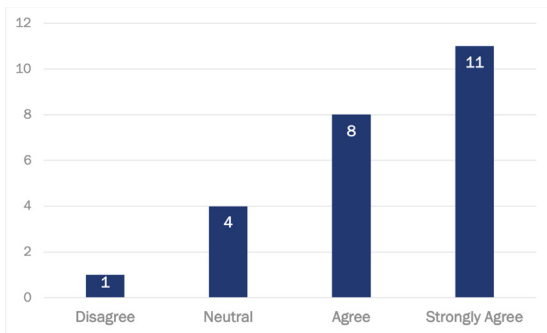
Completion of weekly, assigned virtual courses was manageable.



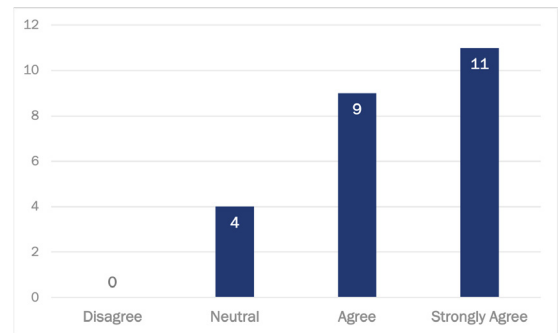
The Q&A sessions were valuable in answering questions that I had about Illinois Shines and solar industry topics.



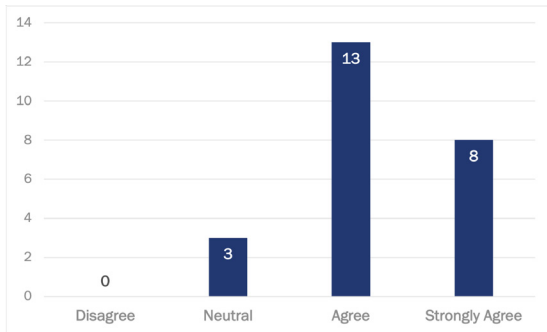
The breakout sessions were helpful for discussing topics and building my understanding of the Illinois Shines program.



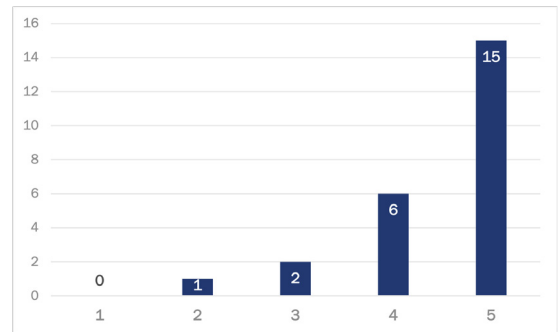
The mentee and mentor rosters were helpful for connecting with other Illinois Shines program participants.



The mid-program check-in was valuable for sharing feedback and answering my questions.

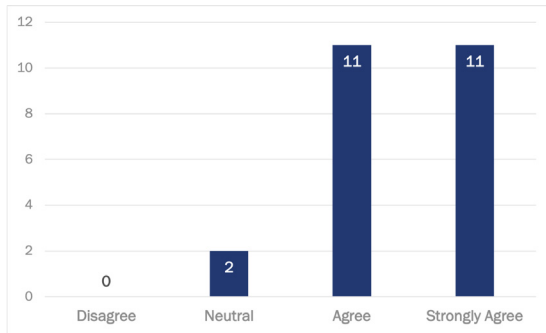


Please rate the format and structure of the Mentorship Program.

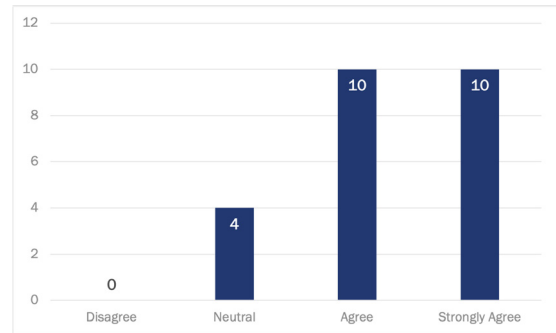


Please rate your level of agreement with the following statements in relation to your completion of the Mentorship Program.

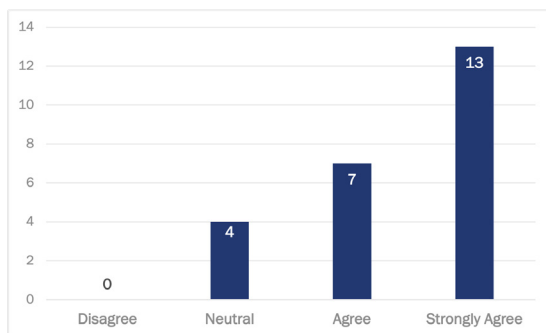
I better understand the requirements for participating in the Program.



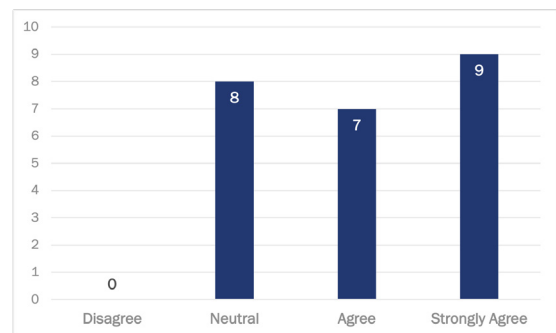
I have a better understanding of solar project development.



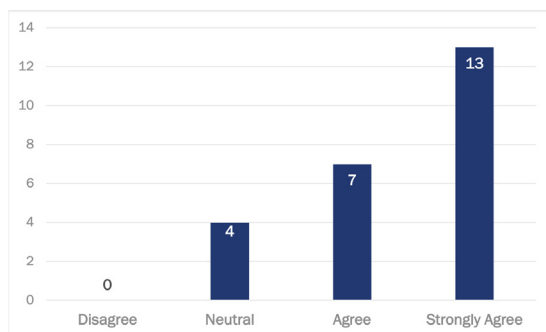
I am better equipped to participate in the Illinois Shines Program.



I have made connections with other Program participants and market stakeholders.



I better understand how to submit project applications to the Program.



How would you rate your level of knowledge of Illinois Shines *before* completing the Mentorship Program?

**Average: 5.3 out of 10**

How would you rate your level of knowledge of Illinois Shines *after* completing the Mentorship Program?

**Average: 8 out of 10**

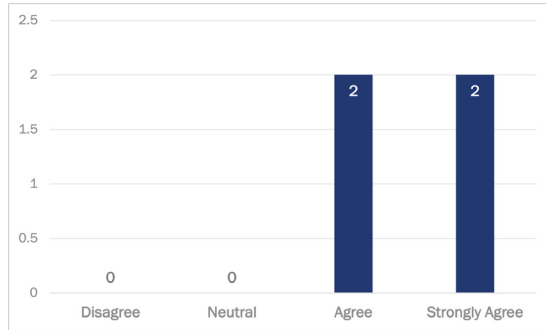
How would you rate your experience connecting with fellow Program participants and market stakeholders in the Mentorship Program?

**Average: 7.3 out of 10**

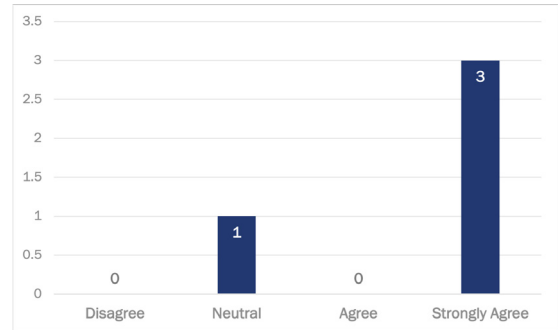
# Appendix E – Mentorship Program Graduation and Celebration Post-Event Survey Responses

Please rate your level of agreement with the following statements on the networking component of the Mentorship Program Graduation and Celebration.

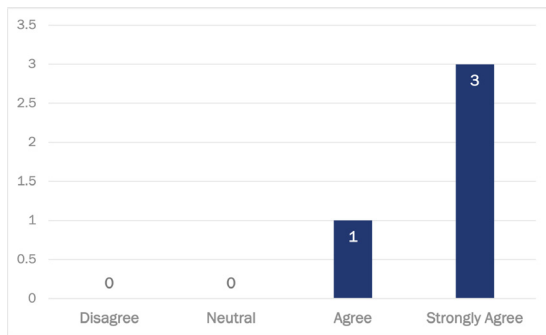
I learned more about the Illinois Shines Mentorship Program.



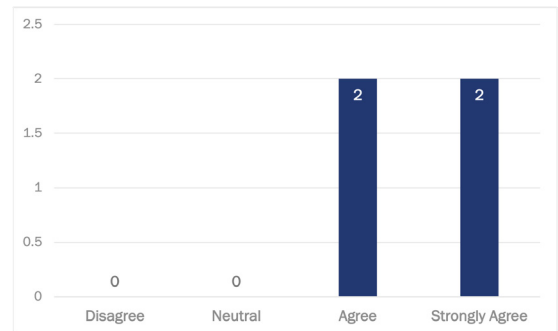
I had conversations that were informative and helpful.



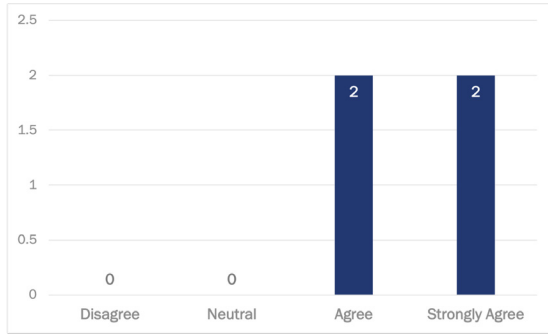
I connected with Illinois Shines Program AVs and Designees.



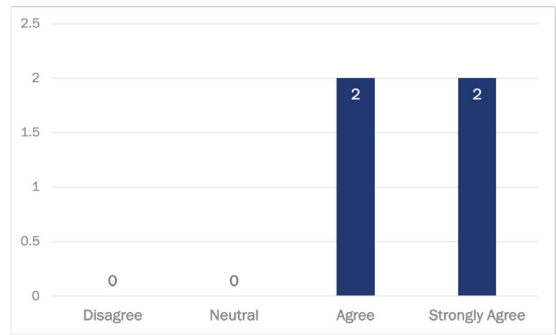
The venue was accessible.



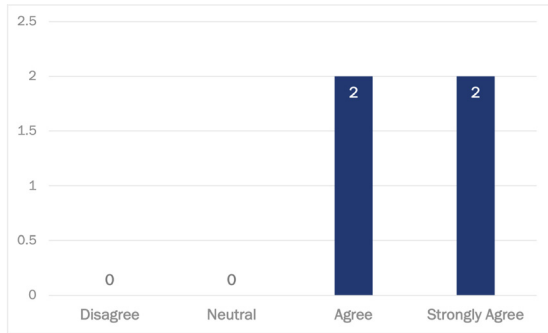
**Parking was easy to access.**



**The time and date of the event was manageable for my schedule.**



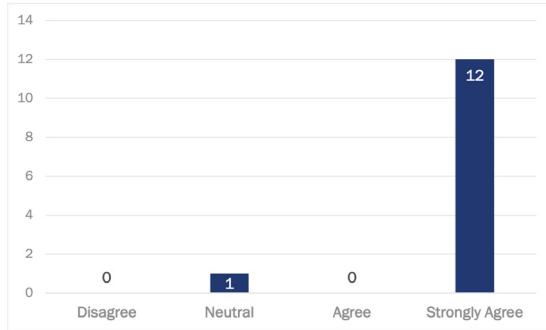
**The food and beverages provided were satisfactory.**



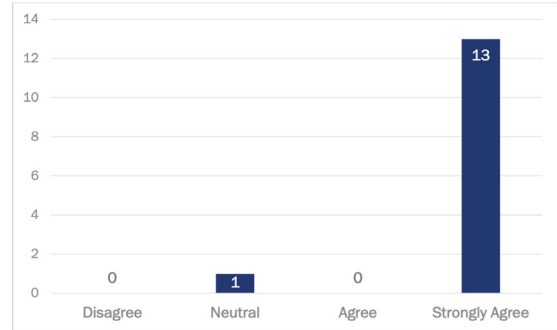
# Appendix F – Financing Opportunities Webinar Post-Event Survey Responses

Please rate your level of agreement with the following statements.

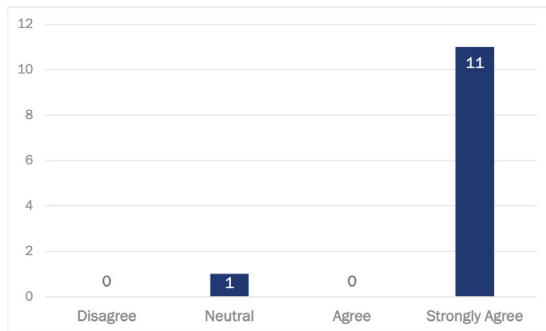
I learned about financing opportunities and resources that I previously didn't know about.



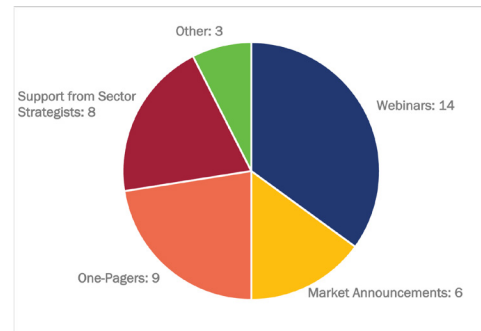
The financing opportunities and resources presented were relevant to my work and achieving my business development goals.



The presentations were informative and helped me better understand the financing opportunities and resources available to me.



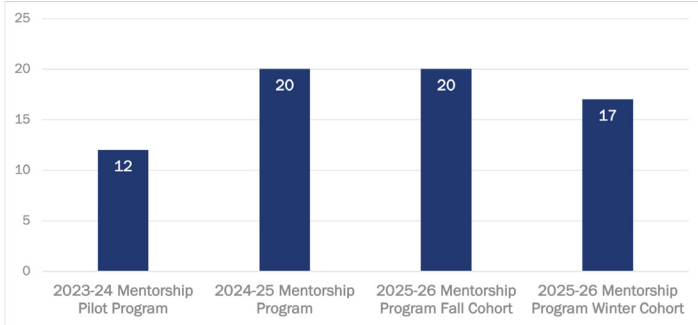
What means of support from the Illinois Shines Program Administrator would be helpful in connecting you with financing opportunities?



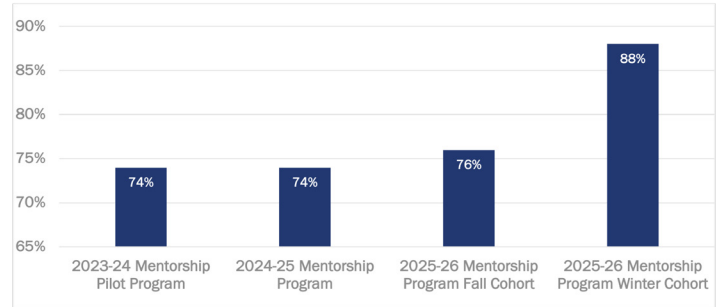
# Appendix G – Mentorship Program Lifetime Performance Indicators

## Participation Metrics

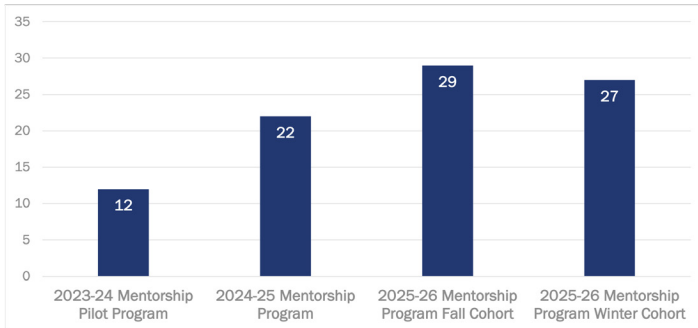
Mentees by Cohort



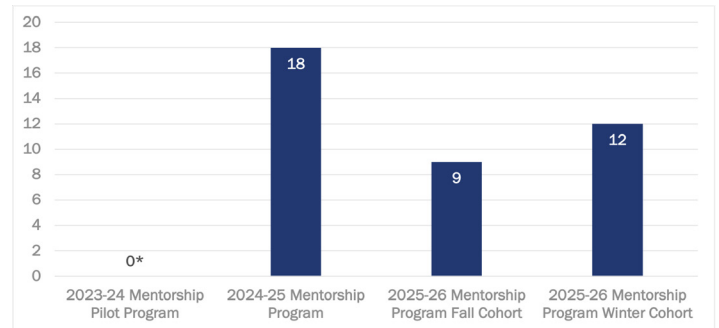
Average Rate of Attendance by Cohort



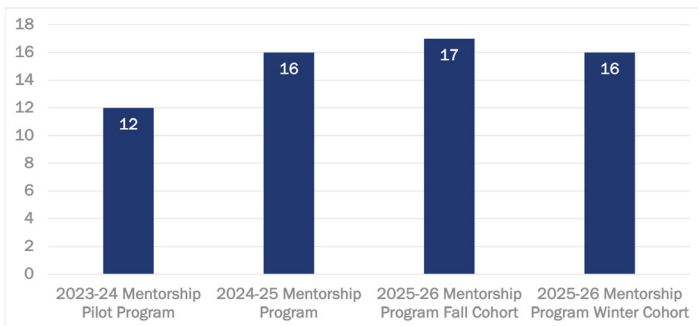
Mentee Participants by Cohort



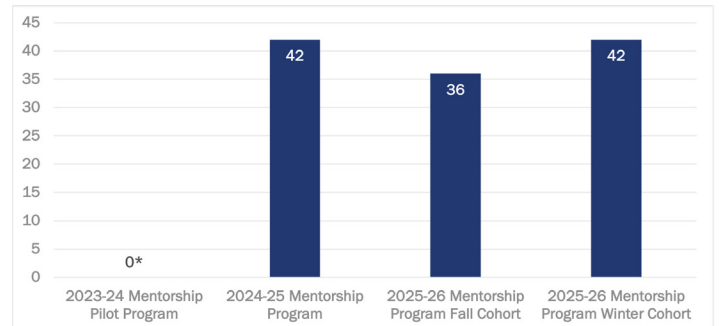
Total Mentee Participants Attending Networking Event by Cohort



Graduated Mentees by Cohort

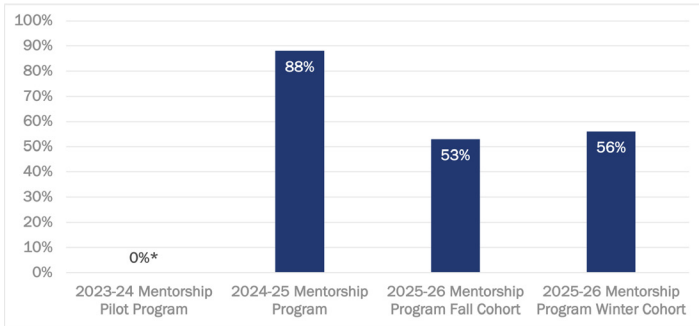


Total Mentees Attending Networking Event by Cohort

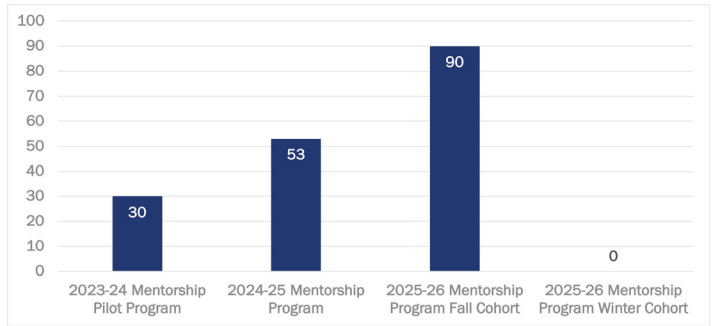


\* No networking event held

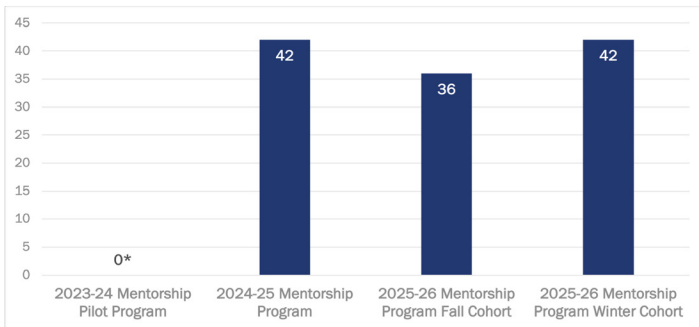
**Percentage of Graduate Mentees Attending Networking Event by Cohort**



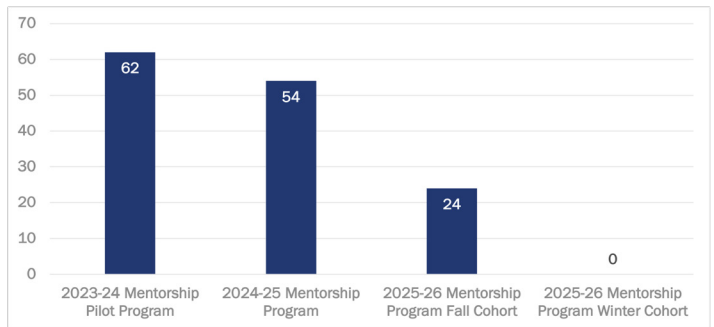
**Total Mentee Part II Submissions After Participation by Cohort**



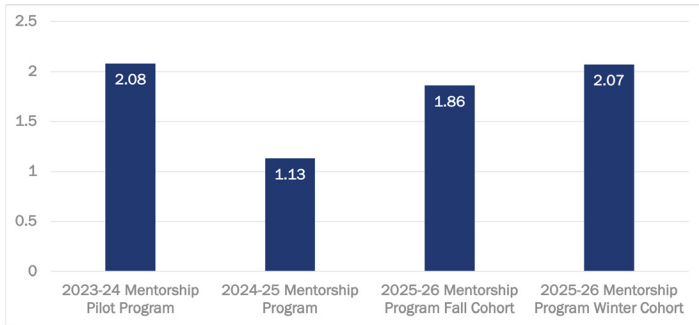
**Total Networking Event Attendees by Cohort**



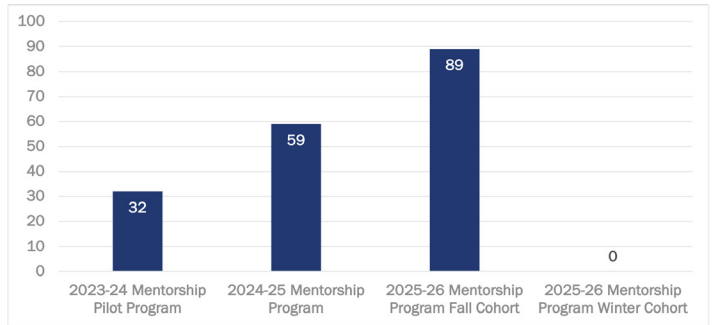
**Total Mentee Part I Verifications After Participation by Cohort**



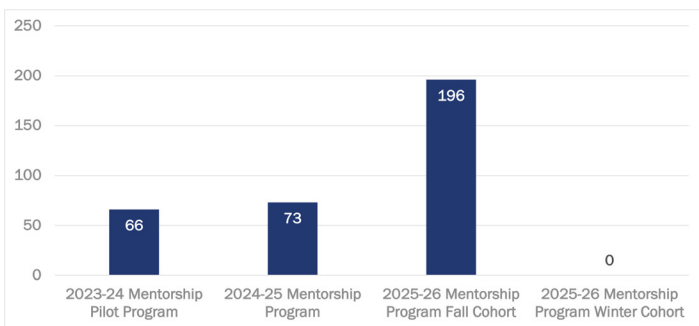
**Average Years of Mentee Participation in Illinois Shines prior to Mentorship Program Participation**



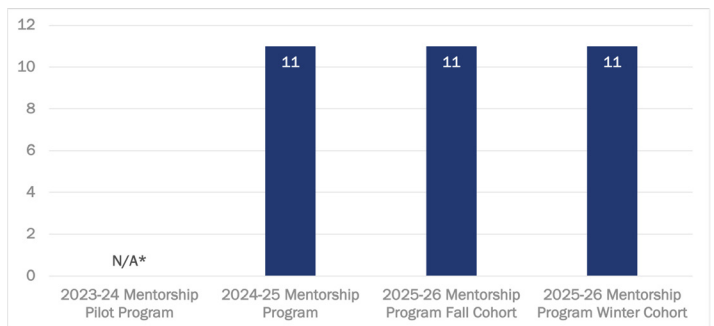
**Total Mentee Part II Verifications After Participation by Cohort**



**Total Mentee Part I Submissions After Participation by Cohort**



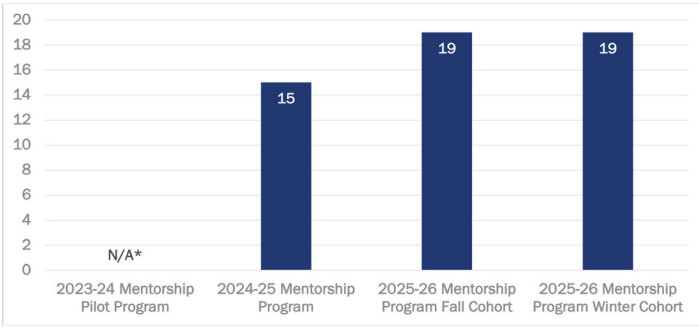
**Mentors by Cohort**



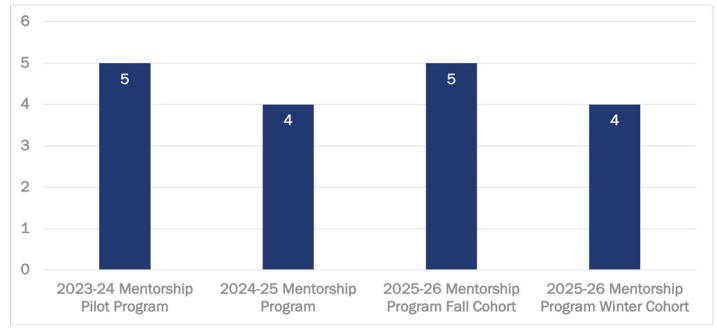
\* No networking event held

\*N/A = No participating mentors

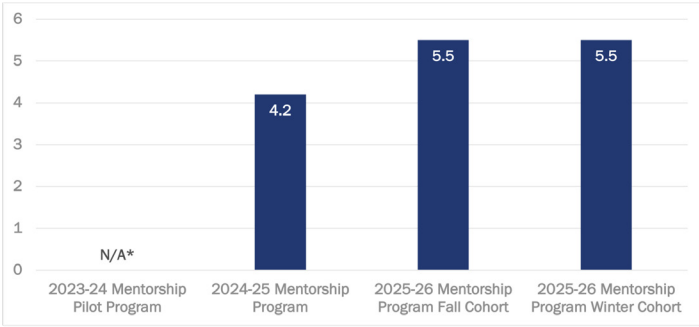
**Mentor Participants by Cohort**



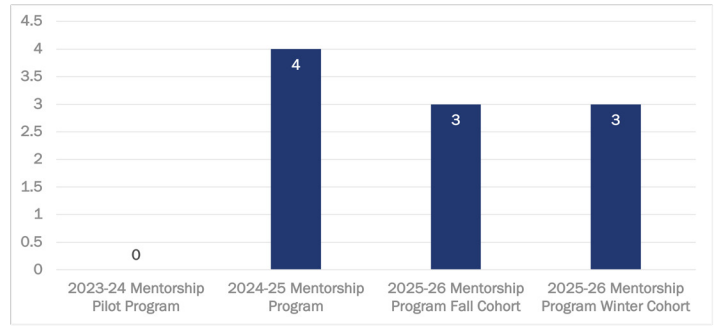
**Participating MBEs by Cohort**



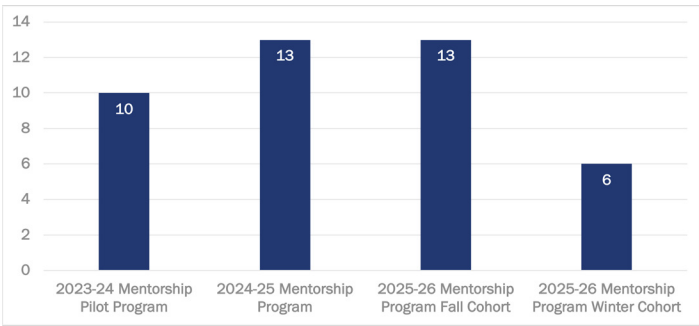
**Average Years of Mentor Participation in Illinois Shines prior to Mentorship Program Participation**



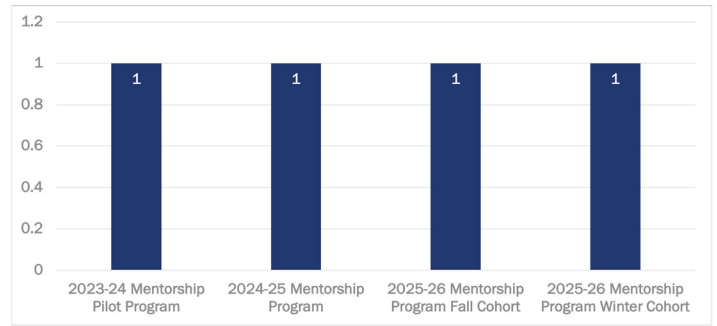
**Participating WBEs by Cohort**



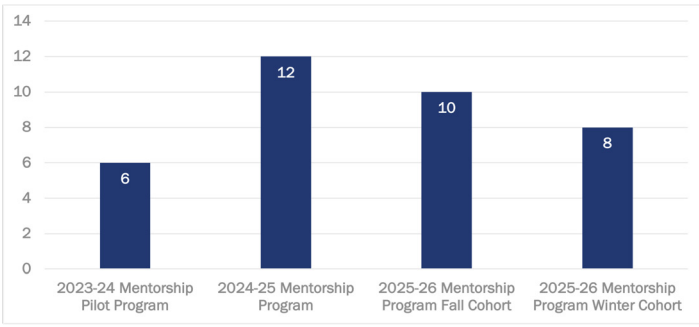
**Participating EECs by Cohort**



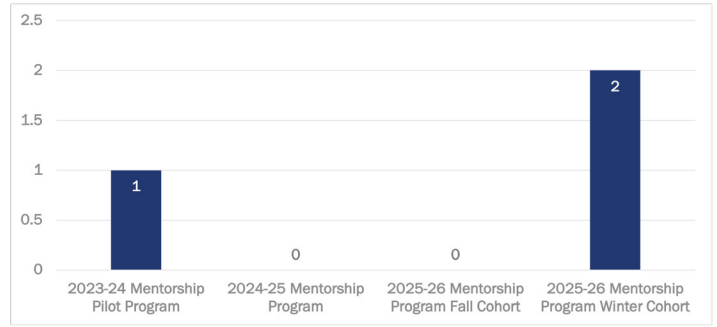
**Participating Disability-owned Businesses by Cohort**



**Participating Small Businesses by Cohort**



**Participating Veteran-owned Businesses by Cohort**



\*N/A = No participating mentors



**Illinois Shines**



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