Illinois Solar for All

Affordable solar energy.
More savings. A brighter tomorrow.

Illinois Solar for All Annual Summary

Program Year 5
June 2022 - May 2023

Illinois Solar for All makes solar installations more affordable for income-eligible residents, allowing more people to enjoy savings on their electric bills. The program helps the State of Illinois meet its renewable energy goals outlined in the Future Energy Jobs Act and the Climate and Equitable Jobs Act.

ILSFA saw continued expansion during its fifth program year, from June 2022 to May 2023. The program approved nearly 30 percent more solar projects compared with the previous program year.

The ILSFA Advisory Committee was also launched during this program year. The committee is comprised of stakeholders representing a breadth of perspectives and expertise, as well as representatives from state agencies and utilities. The purpose of the committee is to explore updates and improvements to ILSFA and share these ideas with the Illinois Power Agency (IPA).

Program Impact

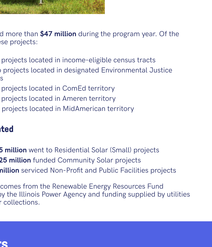
Delia Perez, a resident of the Lawndale neighborhood in Chicago, participated in the Illinois Solar for All: Community Solar program to save money on her electric bill while also helping the environment. She now saves an average of $50 per month and said, "I want to see my grandchildren get solar."

ILSFA **approved 263 projects**, an increase of nearly 30% over the previous program year and the **largest number of projects approved in a given year** since the program's inception. These projects had a total capacity of 17.4 megawatts AC.

Together, these projects will prevent approximately **21,028 metric tons of greenhouse gases** from entering the atmosphere each year. That equals the emissions released by nearly **4,905 gasoline-powered passenger vehicles** driven for one year, based on national average data.

Projects

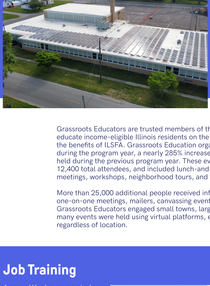
Residential Solar projects continue to bring solar savings to more income-eligible homeowners and households who reside in designated Environmental Justice Communities across the state.



- ILSFA approved **225 Residential Solar** projects, all of which were single-family homes. Of these projects, 67 were in Environmental Justice Communities, 96 were in income-eligible census tracts, and four projects were Energy Sovereignty.
- ILSFA approved **33 Non-Profit and Public Facilities** projects. Of these 33 projects, 19 were Energy Sovereignty, and 12 were in Environmental Justice Communities.
- ILSFA approved **five Community Solar** projects.

These projects advance ILSFA's goal of increasing access to solar energy in communities statewide. Notably, this also demonstrates how ILSFA prioritizes projects in areas that suffer disproportionately from environmental hazards that can cause long-term negative health effects.

Project Funding



More than $25 million of ILSFA funds allocated went to Community Solar projects.

ILSFA allocated more than **$47 million** during the program year. Of the funding for these projects:

- 92% went to projects located in income-eligible census tracts
- 43 % went to projects located in designated Environmental Justice Communities
- 78% went to projects located in ComEd territory
- 21% went to projects located in Ameren territory
- <1% went to projects located in MidAmerican territory

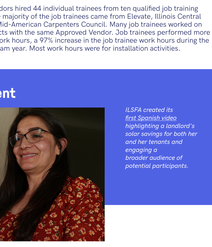
Funds Allocated

- More than **$5 million** went to Residential Solar (Small) projects
- More than **$25 million** funded Community Solar projects
- Nearly **$17 million** serviced Non-Profit and Public Facilities projects

ILSFA funding comes from the Renewable Energy Resources Fund administered by the Illinois Power Agency and funding supplied by utilities from ratepayer collections.

Approved Vendors

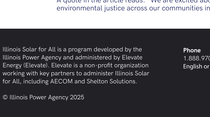
To ensure that more people can benefit from solar energy, ILSFA helps create jobs for members of historically marginalized communities and encourages minority and women-owned business enterprises to become Approved Vendors.



ILSFA welcomed 24 new Approved Vendors during the program year, bringing the total number of registered ILSFA Approved Vendors to 93. Of all 93 Approved Vendors, nine are minority or women-owned business enterprises (MWBE) and three Approved Vendors have indicated their MWBE certification is pending.

Twelve Approved Vendors had at least one project approved. Across all three ILSFA sub-programs, three MWBE Approved Vendors submitted three projects, two of which were approved.

Grassroots Education



BCMW Community Services, an agency that reduces poverty and strengthens communities, became an ILSFA Grassroots Education organization in 2020. The following year, a related BCMW Head Start/Early Head Start child development program followed the standard ILSFA application process and added solar panels to its facility through the Non-Profit and Public Facilities sub-program. The organization now expects total savings of more than 10%.

Grassroots Educators are trusted members of their communities who educate income-eligible Illinois residents on the basics of solar energy and the benefits of ILSFA. Grassroots Education organizations held 515 events during the program year, a nearly 285% increase over the number of events held during the previous program year. These events attracted more than 12,400 total attendees, and included lunch-and-learns, community meetings, workshops, neighborhood tours, and more.

More than 25,000 additional people received information on ILSFA through one-on-one meetings, mailers, canvassing events, phone banks, and more. Grassroots Educators engaged small towns, large cities, and suburbs, and many events were held using virtual platforms, enabling participation regardless of location.

Job Training

Approved Vendors are required to hire trainees from Qualified Job Training programs to complete a certain percentage of their ILSFA solar projects. This builds a strong renewable energy workforce and helps create solar industry careers for members of historically marginalized communities.

Approved Vendors hired 44 individual trainees from ten qualified job training programs. The majority of the job trainees came from Elevate, Illinois Central College, and Mid-American Carpenters Council. Many job trainees worked on multiple projects with the same Approved Vendor. Job trainees performed more than 14,200 work hours, a 97% increase in the job trainee work hours during the previous program year. Most work hours were for installation activities.

Public Engagement

ILSFA created its first Spanish video highlighting a landlord's solar savings for both her and her tenants and engaging a broader audience of potential participants.

ILSFA continued to engage and inform the public. Four program newsletters were shared with approximately 4,000 people. The newsletters featured essential program milestones, testimonials from participants, and Grassroots Education activities. ILSFA created four video testimonials that were shared in newsletters and featured on the ILSFA website. It also sent 68 email announcements to approximately 1,200 stakeholders.

ILSFA launched a campaign during this program year to spread the word about Grassroots Education opportunities and to generate more interest from community organizations than the previous year. ILSFA also implemented design and content updates to the website to bring participant voices to the forefront.

Media coverage is essential to raise awareness of ILSFA throughout the state and nationally. During the program year, 64 news articles mentioned ILSFA, including in outlets such as *Energy News Network*, *Chicago Tribune*, *Solar Power World*, *PV Magazine*, *In These Times*, and *South Side Weekly*.

One example is an article from *PV Magazine* reporting on the Chicago Urban League, an iconic South Side advocacy organization that is demonstrating its commitment to renewable energy by installing solar through Illinois Solar for All. A quote in the article reads: "We are excited about what this means for environmental justice across our communities in Chicago."

Illinois Solar for All is a program developed by the Illinois Power Agency and administered by Elevate Energy (Elevate). Elevate is a non-profit organization working with key partners to administer Illinois Solar for All, including AECOM and Shelton Solutions.

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