



**Questions & Answers
from the November 15, 2022**

Equity Accountability System Webinar, Part 2

Below is a list of frequently asked questions that arose during the second in a two-part webinar series explaining the Equity Accountability System and how it applies to the Adjustable Block Program/Illinois Shines. Please find more detailed information on the Equity Accountability System page of the Program website www.illinoisabp.com/equity-accountability-system/.

Does the Equity Accountability System apply to Designees in the state, or are requirements limited to Approved Vendors?

- The Equity Accountability System applies to Designees in the state, and both the Approved Vendor and Designees need to comply with Equity Accountability System requirements.

You indicated that AVs do not need to report on Designees' workforce diversity, but the Long-Term Plan definition of "project workforce" includes "contractors and their employees, and subcontractors and their employees." These statements appear to be in conflict; can you clarify if we need to report on our contractor/Designees' workforce(s)?

- Please see the Long-Term Plan on pg. 330: Approved Vendors in the Adjustable Block Program do not need to report on data regarding their Designees but shall report which Designees they worked with in the delivery year to allow the Agency to correlate activities and compliance. This is not meant to relieve Approved Vendors of responsibility to comply with the Equity Accountability Standard, but rather to ensure that efforts are not double-counted.

If the contractor/subcontractor is itself a Designee, then the AV does not need to include those workers in their project workforce because that Designee will be submitting its own data on their project workforce. All the AV needs to do is indicate which Designees it is working with, for our own tracking purposes to make sure that Designee reports data for that project.

If the AV's subcontractors are not Designees, then they are included in the AV's project workforce and the AV must report all of the demographic data associated with those workers.

To further clarify, if either an AV or Designee uses contractors or subcontractors that are not themselves a registered Designee, and therefore do not need to submit their own Compliance Plan, those workers should be included in the employing AV/Designee's project workforce for that Compliance Plan.

When is the year-end report for acting in accordance with a previously submitted Minimum Equity Standards Compliance Plan?

- Each Approved Vendor, Designee, or Competitive Procurement Supplier must then submit a year-end report within 45 days after the end of the delivery year in which they have had active participation through activities developing a project or projects. If they have no activity during the year, that may be indicated on the year-end report and compliance obligations will not apply. Therefore, Minimum Equity Standards compliance reports would be due by July 15 for the preceding Program year.

When will the Equity Accountability System database go live?

- We are on schedule for the database implementation by the end of January 2023. We have had some details that we would like to include to make it more user-friendly, and want to allow enough time to make it operational January 2023. More information will be posted in upcoming communications on this rollout.

Is there data to populate the Equity Accountability System database at this time?

- Populating the database will be a process, with a goal of increasing the amounts of data and number of people participating overtime. We do not have an immediate roll call of all Equity Eligible Persons in the state identified, so it will be a process that includes working with the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO), other community organizations, to conduct outreach to make sure people know the database exists, and if they are looking for opportunities in the solar energy workforce, that they create a profile and enter data. The Agency will be working to make sure as many people as possible have access to this database.

Because FEJA trainees or graduates from specific programs qualify as EEPs, will there be outreach to those programs to have these graduates be included in the database?

- We want to try to incorporate as many potentially qualified EEPs as possible, and toward this end, there is outreach to specific programs. We are working closely with DCEO for additional training program information, to provide at a later date. Please note in the definition of FEJA trainees and the statute only lists the Solar Training Pipeline and the Multicultural Jobs Programs created and funded by FEJA. There are other training programs that FEJA funded but which would not be eligible because they are not listed here. Please see the Program website's Equity Eligible Contractor page for further details: <https://illinoisabp.com/become-an-equity-eligible-contractor/>

What is an Equity Investment Eligible Community, and is there a list that can be provided?

- That is defined by statute, and is either an Environmental Justice Community as defined by Illinois Solar For All, for which a map at that Program's website is available (<https://www.illinoisfa.com/environmental-justice-communities/>) or an R3 Program Community (Restore, Reinvest and Renew Program, designated by the Illinois Cannabis Regulation and Tax), and a map can be found here: <https://r3.illinois.gov/eligibility>. The Agency expects to soon offer a single location for both maps, including with the Equity database resources.