

Gov. Pritzker Announces \$156 Million Federal Grant to Support Solar Power Development in Illinois

by Office of Governor J.B. Pritzker
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CHICAGO - Governor JB Pritzker announced Illinois has been selected as a recipient of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Solar for All grant. Illinois will receive \$156 million from the EPA through the Illinois Finance Authority to expand existing solar programs and increase solar adoption rates. The program, funded through the Inflation Reduction Act, provides funds to local governments and nonprofits across the country to develop long-lasting solar programs that benefit low-income and disadvantaged communities who have historically been left out of solar development. "The Biden-Harris administration recognizes the same truth I did when I signed the Climate and Equitable Jobs Act into law—we cannot rely on any sort of clean energy

future that doesn't make space for those who have historically been left on the margins," said Governor JB Pritzker. "This award will help businesses and households throughout Illinois invest in solar, creating jobs and reducing reliance on traditional energy sources."

The EPA selected 60 applicants to receive funding under the \$7 billion Solar for All grant competition. The program has three main goals: reducing climate and air pollution; uplifting disadvantaged communities; and mobilizing financing to spur additional deployment of low-cost solar energy.

The award, which will be distributed through the Illinois Finance Authority/Climate Bank (IFA), expands the existing Illinois Solar for All program and Adjustable Block Program/Illinois Shines (Illinois Shines). Illinois solar programs were granted additional opportunities, including funding and better regulatory structure, under the Climate and Equitable Jobs Act, signed into law by Governor Pritzker in 2021.

In addition to expanding existing solar affordability programs in Illinois, the grant funding will improve and extend direct community engagement efforts to expand residential solar adoption, create tools for contractors to braid multiple funding streams, and support local governments to streamline the application and permitting process. The program will also leverage and build on Illinois' soon-to-be-implemented clean energy workforce development programs to grow an equitable workforce.

"The Illinois Climate Bank is grateful to President Biden and USEPA Administrator Michael Regan for the Solar for All award under the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund," said Chris Meister, Executive Director of the Illinois Finance Authority/Climate Bank. "Thanks to the leadership of Governor JB Pritzker and his nation-leading legislation, the Climate and Equitable Jobs Act (CEJA), the Illinois Climate Bank is ready to deploy the Illinois allocation of the federal Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund through equitable climate finance."

"Illinois has long been at the forefront of the energy transition, and today's announcement is a testament to our unwavering dedication to a cleaner, greener future," said U.S. Senator Dick Durbin (D-IL). "This investment will empower communities across our state to embrace clean energy and reduce their carbon footprint."

"I am thrilled to have helped secure \$156 million from EPA for Illinois to support the clean energy transition," said Representative Sean Casten (IL-6). "I fought for this funding because it will allow us to create jobs for Illinoisans, decrease carbon emissions while increasing energy efficiency, and support households across Illinois by creating affordable, resilient, and clean solar energy."

“Creating a sustainable future for generations to come means making sure every one of our neighbors has access to solar energy,” said Congressman Eric Sorensen (IL-17). “Through expanding solar options for our communities, the Solar for All program will help lower costs, reduce electricity bills, and ensure working families can make ends meet. I was proud to join colleagues from across the Illinois delegation in urging the Environmental Protection Agency to award this funding to our state and I am excited to see how this critical program will make life more affordable for Central and Northwestern Illinois.”

“Access to solar for low-income and disadvantaged communities is vital for the future of our fight against climate change,” said Congressman Mike Quigley (IL-5). “I’m incredibly pleased that Illinois has received one of the Biden administration’s Solar for All grants. Not only will it advance our efforts for the planet, but it will also help create jobs, lower energy costs, and advance environmental justice for communities in need. I was proud to support the Inflation Reduction Act, which funds these grants, and I look forward to continuing to work with partners on the federal, state, and local level on more projects to combat climate change.”

“As energy demands grow and families struggle with high utility bills, it’s critical that we bring more clean energy to our power grid,” said Congresswoman Nikki Budzinski (IL-13). “I was proud to advocate for additional federal resources to support new solar energy production right here in Illinois and I’m thrilled to see those dollars coming home to help bring down costs for families and reduce our impact on the environment. I look forward to seeing how the expansion of the Solar for All program benefits communities in Central and Southern Illinois.”

“The United States is at a critical juncture in our nation's history where the renewable energy investments we make today will light a path for future generations,” said Congresswoman Robin Kelly (IL-02). “I am pleased to see this \$156 million investment ensure that disadvantaged communities in our state can participate in the benefits of residential solar. I will continue to work with my colleagues in Congress and state leaders to strengthen our state’s domestic energy production, create jobs, and protect our environment.”

“Solar power can light the way to a brighter future for Illinois, but it requires making smart investments today,” said Congressman Raja Krishnamoorthi (IL-8). “As Co-Chair of the bipartisan Congressional Solar Caucus, I am glad Illinois has secured \$156 million in funding to make a downpayment on that future by expanding Illinois Solar for All and Illinois Shines to directly benefit low-income communities across our state.”