



# RISE UP MIDWEST

**Our Call to Action for a Midwest Clean Energy Transition**

**MIDWEST** *Households*

**MIDWEST** *Businesses*

**MIDWEST** *Educators*

**MIDWEST** *Communities*

**MIDWEST** *Advocates*

POWERED BY



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Let's put people to work. Let's make home and business investments that reduce expenses for the long-term. Let's build a strong and resilient electric grid that weathers future crises. Let's invest our energy dollars locally. Let's expand existing Midwest clean energy policies and programs that work. Let's build an energy economy that best serves people and the places we live and love. **Rise Up Midwest!**

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**RiseUpMidwest.org**



# Illinois Solar for ALL:

## Building Clean and Equitable Communities through Job Training



The Illinois Solar for All (ILSFA) program launched in May 2019 as a statewide and state-funded effort to create a more equitable solar marketplace and expand access to the clean energy economy.

By incentivizing participating solar vendors (called “Approved Vendors”) with Renewable Energy Credit payments above market price, the ILSFA program provides income-eligible residents, as well as non-profits and public facilities that provide essential services to low-income and environmental justice communities, access to on-site solar and community solar projects, while guaranteeing they see measurable savings on their electric costs. In doing so, the program, which was a key outcome of the state’s Future Energy Jobs Act (FEJA) of 2016, removes barriers to clean energy access and ensures investment in disadvantaged communities.

**“But building strong and equitable communities requires going beyond placing residents of low-income and environmental justice communities on the receiving end of solar. Enduring growth and wealth-building requires ownership and involvement across the solar landscape.”**

That’s why ILSFA includes job training requirements that support the work of 12 FEJA-funded workforce development programs across the state. These programs fall under three main

categories—a solar training pipeline, a craft apprenticeship program, and a multicultural jobs program—and they offer training and skill-building opportunities designed to prepare trainees for careers in the solar, electrical, and construction industries.

ILSFA prescribes that its participating Approved Vendors hire job trainees to work on a certain amount of their solar projects. Trainees must come from eligible job training programs, which include the 12 FEJA-funded programs, along with outside job training programs that complete a competitive application process. In this way, ILSFA helps create jobs for members of historically marginalized communities. Foster care alumni, people with records, and those who reside in environmental justice and low-income communities are especially encouraged to participate in job training programs.

In addition to administering ILSFA, Elevate Energy collaborates with partners to run one of the FEJA job training programs, called the Clean Energy Jobs Accelerator (the Accelerator), as a separate initiative. The Accelerator comprises two programs: The Solar Jobs Training Program for emerging solar professionals learning foundational skills, and the Contractor Accelerator for small minority-, women-, disadvantaged-, and/or veteran-owned construction firms to deepen their networks and knowledge base. Both programs prioritize participants from environmental justice and

disadvantaged communities, as well as returning citizens and foster care alumni.

Elevate’s Accelerator programs, along with the other ILSFA-approved job training programs, provide a form of ongoing, regenerative economic support for members of disadvantaged communities which can be sustained over time. Trainees develop the skills and experience that can lead to leadership positions and business ownership within the clean energy industry, allowing community members to benefit from all sides of the solar marketplace.

ILSFA’s job training requirements present a model for state programming that should be replicated and built upon. By ensuring members of disadvantaged communities have multiple entry points into the clean energy economy, ILSFA will help build clean and equitable communities across the state. [illinoissfa.com](http://illinoissfa.com)

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# Environmental and Climate Justice:

## Healing through Interfaith Initiatives

Wisconsin Green Muslims is a state-wide grassroots environmental justice group formed in 2005, connecting faith, environmental justice, sustainability, and healing through education and service. We address environmental justice issues related to climate change, clean air and pure water, healthy food, solar energy, energy efficiency, waste reduction, and transportation equity.

Through over 100 one-on-one and small group conversations, listening sessions, and presentations, Wisconsin Green Muslims has reached more than 5,000 people of different backgrounds and a wide variety of constituents throughout Wisconsin. These conversations culminated in the generation of Just Solar guiding principles from the people, by the people, for the people, rooted in our collective values of justice, equity, democracy, and inclusion. Two pathways came up from these listening sessions and conversations: (1) Energy Efficiency to Solar and (2) Solar Trainings to Family Supporting Jobs. We are collectively moving toward equitable 100% efficient and renewable energy in Wisconsin and centering women and communities of color.

Many of us have wounds that stem from the labors of our environmental and climate justice work that are in desperate need of healing. How do we heal? How can we heal? What does healing look like? How can we

be healers for our wounds and the wounds of others in the climate justice movement? How as “wounded healers” can we learn from the other healers of the world and be ourselves effective healers of the world?

At the time of darkness, with environmental and climate injustices disproportionately impacting the most vulnerable, it is important for current and future generations at home and around the world to do everything we can. It is urgent for us to work for light, love, unity, and climate justice healing.

**“People of faith, Muslims included, have a great responsibility to stand up for environmental justice and address the concerns and calamities of the poor and marginalized communities.”**

These groups have the lowest ecological footprints, yet they are the most impacted by environmental and climate disasters. It is a moral issue, and the interfaith voice standing united for environmental justice is instrumental in mobilizing the faithful for the common good.

Currently, Wisconsin Green Muslims has two interfaith healing initiatives: “Wisconsin Faith and Solar” and “Faithful Rainwater Harvesting,” or “FaRaH,” which means joy. These initiatives connect communities with

the unifying powers of sunlight and rainwater, as sacred trusts and gifts, while also providing valuable peer-learning, education, assessments, and collaborative benefits to advance equitable solar and flooding solutions. We aim to increase our understanding, appreciation, and care of our common home.

It is time to light the way. The intensity of light is stronger in darkness, providing greater opportunity for light to lead the way. Let’s continue to work together countering darkness, spreading light and healing justice. [wisconsinmgreenmuslims.org](http://wisconsinmgreenmuslims.org)



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