



Illinois Solar for All

Bright Neighborhoods Overview of First Year Results and Proposed Design Updates

Tuesday, July 2, 2024

10-11 a.m.

Agenda

- Overview and First Year Results
- Proposed Design Updates
 - Community Area Update
 - Initiative Goals for Second Year
 - Change to Site Prescreening
 - Approved Vendor Request for Proposal Updates
 - Updated Outreach Tactic Strategies
 - Income Verification Method Update
- Process for Commenting and Questions



Overview of Bright Neighborhoods and First Year Results



Bright Neighborhoods Purpose and Goal

- In Program Year 6 (2023-2024), the Bright Neighborhoods initiative consolidated the customer acquisition with the Program Administrator to test ways for reducing barriers to participation in the Residential Solar (Small) sub-program and to learn best practices to overcoming those barriers to ultimately increase participation in this sub-program.
- Reported barriers to participation include:
 - Customer unfamiliarity with solar power
 - Distrust in marketers
 - Language barriers
 - A complex application process
 - Electrical and/or roof repair needs
- The initiative set a goal of 50-100 completed installations in each community area.
- Can a change in the delivery model of the Residential Solar (Small) sub-program increase successfully completed projects by consolidating customer acquisition with the Program Administrator?



Community Selection

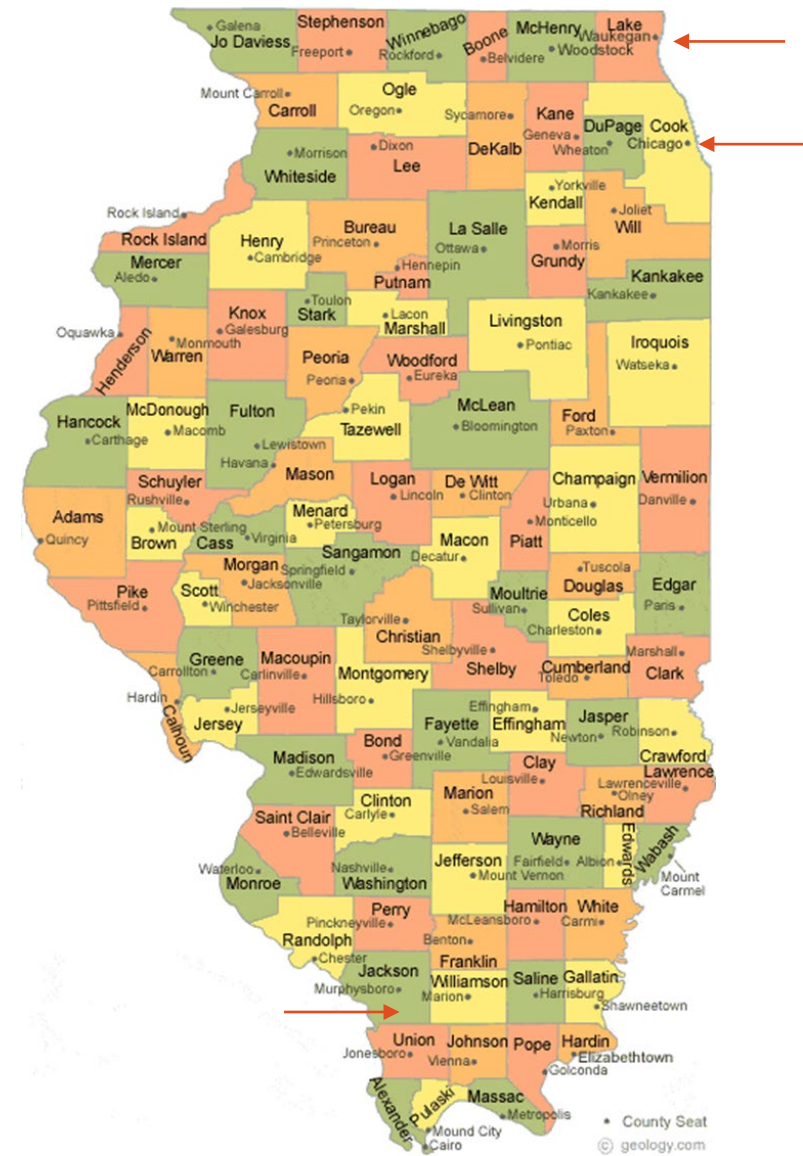
The initiative was outlined to select specific community areas: one Chicago community area, a Cook County or Collar County suburban municipality, and a Metropolitan or Micropolitan Statistical area outside of the ComEd utility territory.

Category	Category Description	Total Section Score
Housing Demographics	Percent of households in the community: under 80% AMI, occupied by owner, and 1–4-unit homes	35
Eligibility by Community Type	Percent of community’s census tracts designated: environmental justice, income eligible, or R3	20
Community Experience with and Visibility of Energy Projects	The number of dropped ILSFA projects, household participation in energy efficiency, energized or approved Adjustable Block Program residential projects, energized or approved ILSFA Residential Solar (Large) or Nonprofit and Public Facilities projects; The absence of completed ILSFA Residential Solar (Small) projects in the community	30
Total Possible Score		75
Unscored Category	Category Description	
Community, Resident, and/or Organization Support	Whether the community has: a Grassroots Educator focusing on the area, residents or local organizations who have advocated for renewable energy or efficiency initiatives, a Community Action Agency with the capacity to help promote the initiative, updated policies to further develop the local solar market, or an Approved Vendor already working in the area; proximity to a CEJA workforce hub; distance from a retired coal fired power plant/mine	N/A



Selected Communities

- West Garfield Park-Chicago
- City of Waukegan
- Carbondale Marion Micropolitan Area (Jackson, Williamson, and Johnson counties)



Approved Vendor Selection

- An Approved Vendor was selected to support each of the community areas through a competitive Request for Proposals (RFP) process.
- The RFP process prioritized the participation of vendors designated as Small and Emerging businesses.
 - West Garfield Park – Selenium Energy
 - Waukegan – UpSouth Energy
 - Carbondale-Marion Micropolitan Area – UpSouth Energy



Outreach and Community Engagement

August 1, 2023 - March 30, 2024 (with a pause in December and January)

- To engage with income-eligible residents, partnering with trusted community-based organizations (CBOs) was a primary focus for outreach.
 - These partnerships included support from local Grassroots Educators.
- The Program Administrator found challenges in reaching community organizations willing to support in West Garfield Park, and in the other two areas took much of the outreach period to establish strong partnerships.
- The support from some of these organizations was more hands-off, promoting event information on their social networks or inviting the Program Administrator to table at an event. Whereas other organizations supported by hosting events and connecting the Program Administrator with other prospective partners.



Marketing and Advertising

- The marketing plan promoted the initiative directly to participants by using streamlined messaging and communication tools, providing ongoing support through enrollment, and employing a multi-channel approach with a range of tactics to communicate the benefits of residential solar with ILSFA.
- Targeted advertising was used within the three community areas to reach the audience to push beyond awareness through consideration into action with deployment of curated advertisements for English and Spanish speakers.
- Outreach events were also promoted through digital display ads.
- Types of advertisements used:
 - Digital display ads (website banner ads)
 - Paid social media (Meta, Nextdoor, and Reddit)
 - Search engine marketing (Google search)



Marketing Tactics and Assets

The marketing tactics and assets created include:

- Bright Neighborhoods webpage
- Social media share kit for community partners
- Community-specific flyers
- Brochures
- Door hangers
- Outreach presentations
- ILSFA branded swag
- A word-of-mouth incentive campaign
- Custom yard signs
- Direct mailers
- Promotional emails
- Event digest-style emails



Paid Media Examples

Bright Neighborhoods Solar Educational Workshop

Tuesday, February 27
from 1-2 p.m.

414 S Lewis Ave.
Waukegan, IL 60085



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Key Takeaways from Marketing Plan

- The paid media campaign delivered 5,923,455 impressions (the number of times posts were seen).
- Digital Display delivered a 0.97% click-through rate (CTR) (the number of times a link is opened compared to the total number of views), which is 0.87% higher than the standard benchmark goal of 0.10% for display banners.
- Paid Search delivered a CTR of 12.00%, which is 10.39% above the industry benchmark goal of 1.61%.
- A total of 139 intake forms were submitted while paid media was running (from both Bright Neighborhoods and non-Bright Neighborhoods communities).



Participant Journey

1. Prospective participants were directed to begin on the Bright Neighborhoods landing page to complete their intake form.
2. The participant was then added to a list for the Program Administrator to follow-up.
3. The Program Administrator followed a six-step marketing engagement process to encourage residents to continue in the program.
4. Once the participant was verified as income-eligible, their next step was to complete an online Site Prescreening Survey and submit photos of the home to gather site suitability details.
5. If the Program Administrator found the home was likely suitable, they would refer the participant to the Approved Vendor for that community, where they would complete a full technical on-site assessment.

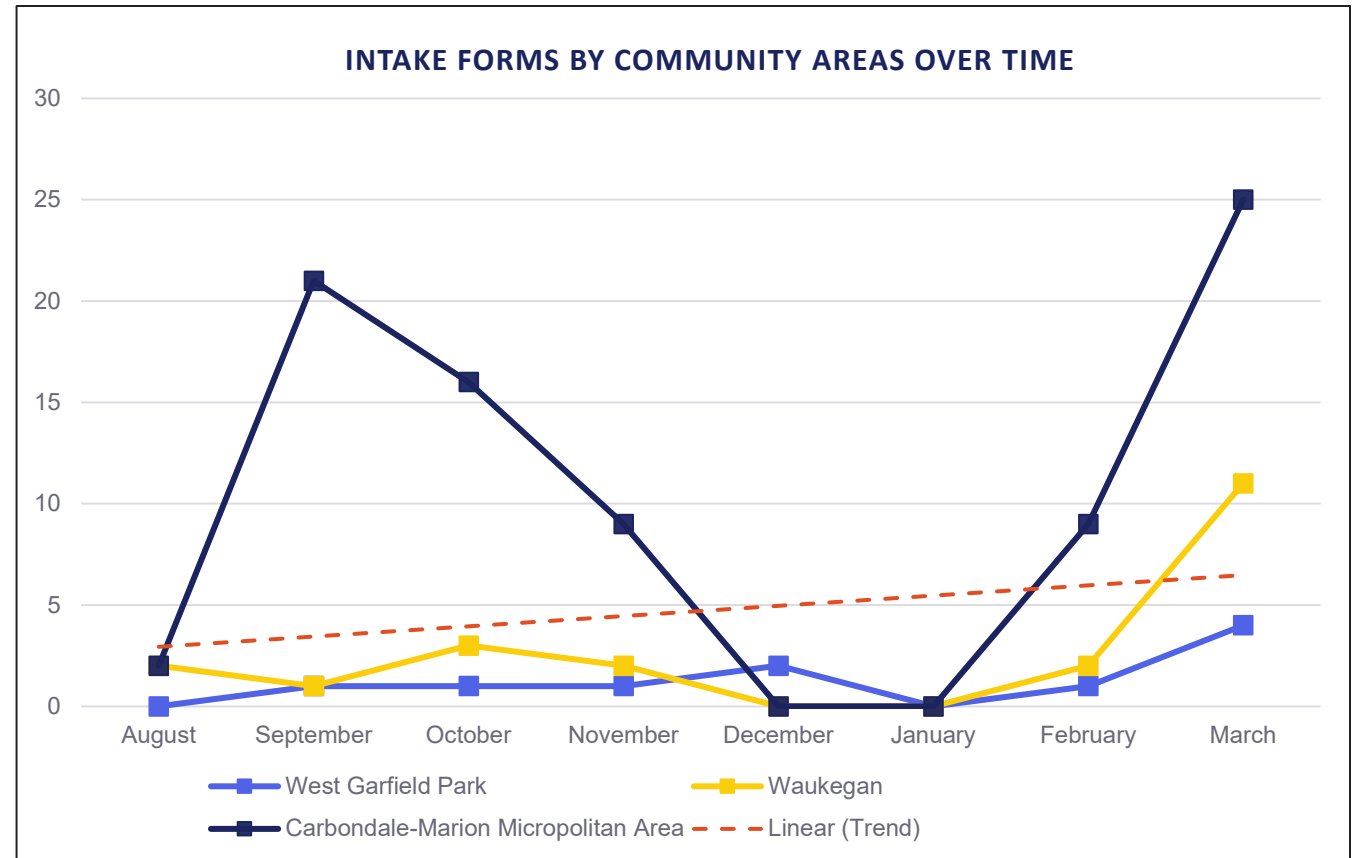


Initiative Key Findings



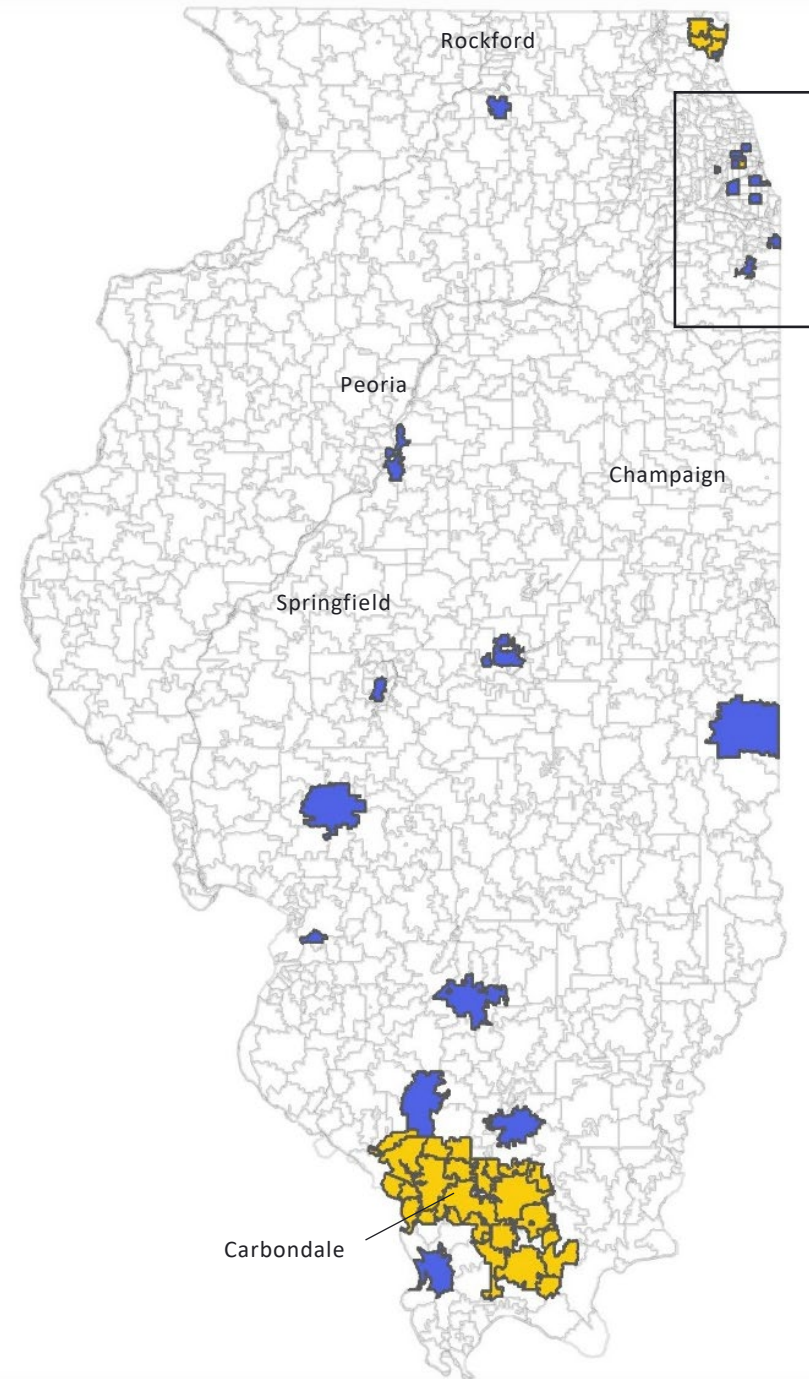
Intake Form Results

- Highest number of intake forms in the Carbondale-Marion Micropolitan Area.
- Similar increase rate in forms from January-March across communities when adding an increase in events and partner support.
 - Mix of educational events, partner hosted events and advertisements supported this increase.



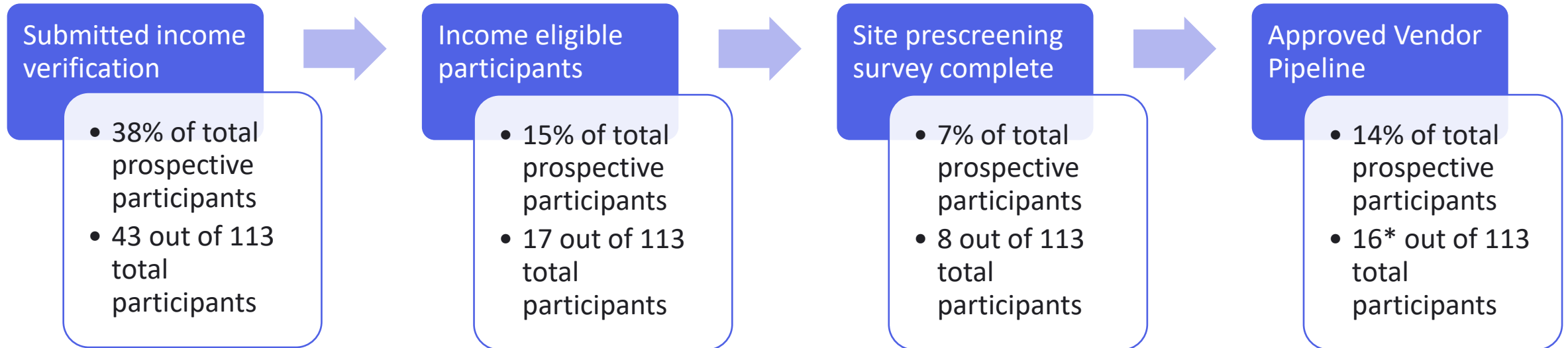
Visibility and Awareness in Neighboring Communities

- The marketing tactics generated interest in neighboring communities, building on overall awareness of the program.
- 38 additional intake forms from households in ineligible communities, more than half of which heard about the program through digital media according to their intake forms.



Drop offs in the participant journey

Goal: 50-100 installations per community



*After mid-year review of the initiative in February 2024, the Program Administrator removed the site prescreening survey as a requirement for participants to complete.

Dropped Participant Referrals

Participant Referrals to the Approved Vendor	Total
West Garfield Park	1
Waukegan	2
Carbondale-Marion	13
Dropped Participant Referrals by Approved Vendor	Total
West Garfield Park	1
Waukegan	2
Carbondale-Marion Metropolitan Area	12
Reasons for Dropped Participant Referrals	Total
Site unsuitable (referred to Illinois Solar for All: Community Solar)	6
Site unsuitable (referred to the Home Repairs Pilot)	5
Unresponsive to Approved Vendor follow-ups	3
No longer interested	1



Proposed Design Updates and Discussion Questions



Initiative Goals for Second Year

Proposed Design Updates



Update initiative goals and strive to achieve a substantial data set of prospective participants to evaluate tactics

A substantial data set is proposed to be defined by setting goals for the number of intake forms, the number of participant referrals, and the number of projects installed.

- 1. Recommends setting a goal of 100-200 intake forms in each community to assess how our tactics increase awareness in each community.*
- 2. Recommends setting a goal of 30-50 participant referrals to the selected Approved Vendors in each community.*
- 3. Recommends 20-25 completed installations in each community.*
- 4. Recommends tracking community solar subscriptions in neighboring communities that share a border with the selected communities*



Community Solar Subscription Tracking Proposed Communities

West Garfield Park (WGP)	*With the proposed update of WGP to the West Side of Chicago	Waukegan	Carbondale-Marion Metropolitan Area
East Garfield Park	Cicero	North Chicago	Randolph County
Austin	Garfield Ridge-Chicago	Park City	Perry County
North Lawndale	Archer Heights-Chicago	Beach Park	Franklin County
Humboldt Park	Brighton Park-Chicago	Zion	Saline County
	McKinley Park-Chicago		Pope County
	Bridgeport-Chicago		Massac County
	New City-Chicago		Pulaski County
	Belmont Cragin-Chicago		Union County
	Hermosa-Chicago		



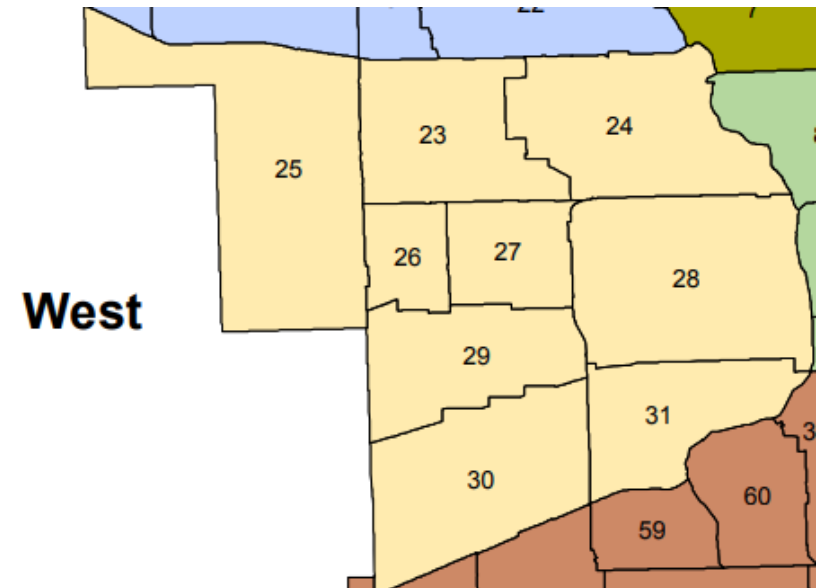
Community Area Update

Proposed Design Updates



Maintain and expand the community areas

- The Program Administrator recommends remaining in the Waukegan and Carbondale-Marion Micropolitan areas.
- The Program Administrator recommends expanding the West Garfield Park Chicago community area to include more of the West Side of Chicago. This includes the Humboldt Park, Austin, West and East Garfield Park, North and South Lawndale neighborhoods. West Town, the Near West Side, and the Lower West Side are not included (due to lower numbers of income-eligible residents).



Neighborhood	Number of submitted intake forms	Median Income	Approximate Number of Households within ILSFA Income Requirements	Proposed to Be Included in Future Pilot Design
23. Humboldt Park	1	\$46,786	9,920 (53.5%)	Yes
24. West Town	--	\$118,293	7,387 (18.5%)	No
25. Austin	4	\$38,407	20,741 (59.9%)	Yes
26. West Garfield Park	--	\$35,233	3,909 (67.2%)	Yes
27. East Garfield Park	4	\$25,692	4,922 (68.5%)	Yes
28. Near West Side	--	\$98,569	9,133 (29.5%)	No
29. North Lawndale	--	\$31,332	7,793 (66.9%)	Yes
30. South Lawndale	--	\$38,953	12,073 (62.2%)	Yes
31. Lower West Side	--	\$61,295	5,412 (40.4%)	No



Change to Site Prescreening

Proposed Design Updates



Drop-off of participants during the Program Administrator site pre-screening survey

- Only 8 of the 17 income verified participants completed their site pre-screening survey.
- The survey did not allow the Program Administrator to successfully assess and divert homes in need of roof repairs through submitted photos by participants.



Integrate the site prescreening survey into the income eligibility intake form

Recommends integrating the site prescreening questions into the income eligibility intake form to gather this information from the participant in one form to determine how to refer the participant with home repair needs.

- The participant could be referred to one of the following:
 1. External funding programs serving their area (identified through the Home Repairs and Upgrades initiative)
 2. Notifying the Bright Neighborhoods selected Approved Vendor of the issue (if they are willing to support home repairs)
 3. Referring the participant to an Approved Vendor who is participating in the Home Repairs and Upgrades initiative (pending stakeholder feedback on the updates to the Approved Vendor Request for Proposal)



Approved Vendor Request for Proposal Updates

Proposed Design Updates



Deferred Maintenance Barrier in Bright Neighborhoods

- 5 of the 16 participants referred to the Approved Vendor were unable to move forward due to a need for home repairs.
- The small and/or emerging businesses supporting the initiative were unable to support identified repairs because of financial constraints.



Adjust the Approved Vendor RFP to address lack of participation in the Home Repairs and Upgrades initiative

The Program Administrator proposes the following options to address the issue of deferred maintenance and the difficulties for small and emerging businesses to support these repair needs.

- 1. Adding a preference on the RFP that would give additional points to a vendor who is willing to work on the Home Repairs and Upgrades initiative. The prioritization for Small and Emerging businesses would remain on the RFP, but the selected vendor would not be required to meet both preferences.*
- 2. Explore the opportunity for mentorship where the Approved Vendor works with a designee, the designee qualifying as a small and emerging business, and the Approved Vendor can financially support participation in the Home Repairs and Upgrades initiative while achieving the small and emerging business prioritization with the designee.*



Updated Outreach Strategy Tactics



Applying learnings from the first year of outreach to Program Year 2024-2025 outreach

- In West Garfield Park, will focus on identifying and establishing partnerships.
- In Waukegan and the Carbondale-Marion Micropolitan area will work with the established partnerships from the first year (local elected officials, public entities, houses of worship).
- New prospective partners include houses of worship, school districts, Community Action Agencies and strengthening relationships with local elected officials.
- Each community will have a unique outreach plan that may include house parties, tabling at community hosted events, hosting coffee chats or focus groups to learn from residents and stakeholders and hosting educational workshops.
- The Program Administrator will continue to provide the “concierge” service to prospective participants, hosting a monthly virtual Q&A to engage with interested participants from any of the eligible communities.



Income Verification Method Update



Adding self-attestation

According to the IPA's 2024 Long-Term Plan and the ICC Final order, Bright Neighborhoods will add self-attestation as an income verification method for residents residing in HUD Qualified Census Tracts. This change will be added to the Bright Neighborhoods Program Year 7 design document and the Agency will provide recommendations on whether to incorporate self-attestation in its next Long-Term Plan.



Process for Commenting and Questions



Questions and Comments

- Responses are due by no later than **Wednesday, July 10, 2023, at 5:00 PM CST** and should be sent to bright@illinoisSFA.com
- The IPA and Program Administrator are seeking feedback on:
 - Initiative Goals for Second Year
 - Community Area Update
 - Change to Site Prescreening
 - Approved Vendor Request for Proposal Updates
 - Updated Outreach Tactic Strategies
- Responses and questions will be made public and published on the ILSFA website. However, should a commenter seek to designate any portion of its responses as confidential, that commenter should provide both public and redacted versions. Independent of that designation, if the Program Team determines that a response contains confidential information that should not be disclosed, it reserves the right to provide its own redactions.



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