

Clarification on Net Metering Waiver, Disclosure Form API Working Group, CDCS Application Window Closing

November 11, 2022

Program News

- **Clarification on Net Metering Waiver: Customer Acknowledgment Form Required for Distributed Generation Projects that Cannot Net Meter**

The Agency has developed a form that an Approved Vendor or Designee must provide to the customer for signature if the Approved Vendor or Designee is offering a distributed generation project that cannot take advantage of net metering. Stakeholders can access both [fillable](#) and [standard PDFs](#) of the waiver.

Section 16-107.5 of the Public Utilities Act sets out net metering requirements for regulated electric utilities (i.e., ComEd, Ameren, and MidAmerican) and for Alternative Retail Electric Suppliers. Section 16-107.5 does not set out requirements for municipal electric utilities or rural electric cooperatives. The provision in the Consumer Protection Handbook prohibiting Approved Vendors and Designees from offering projects that cannot net meter is intended to restrict companies from offering distributed generation projects that cannot take advantage of either the net metering benefits set out in Section 5/16-107.5 or a substantially comparable crediting approach.

Therefore, the waiver process and Customer Acknowledgment Form is required if the customer's project is **not** eligible to receive credits for electricity that the project sends to the grid pursuant to a crediting approach substantially comparable to the net metering approaches provided by a regulated electric utility under Section 16-107.5 of the Public Utilities Act.

The Agency does not consider the below crediting approaches to be comparable to net metering as set out in Section 16-107.5, and therefore the Form is required in the following circumstances. (This is not a complete list of circumstances when the Form would be required.)

- For eligible customers whose electric service has not been declared competitive pursuant to Section 16-113 of the Public Utilities Act as of July 1, 2011 (generally residential and small commercial customers), if the customer would receive credits for net exported electricity at a rate that is not comparable to, and is less than, the customer's electricity supply rate.
- The project would only be eligible for net billing, where the customer pays for gross electricity usage and that charge is netted against credits for electricity that the project sends to the grid, if/when those credits are not comparable to, and are less than, the net metering crediting rate that a customer would receive if they were located in the ComEd, Ameren, or MidAmerican territories (pursuant to 16-107.5).

If an Approved Vendor or Designee has questions about whether a specific crediting approach would require the Customer Acknowledgment Form, they may reach out to the Program Administrator for additional guidance.

- If a customer's project is eligible to receive net metering credits under Section 16-107.5 of the Public Utilities Act, or is eligible to receive credits under a substantially comparable crediting approach, then the Form is not required.
- **API Working Group – Call for Participation and Feedback**
The Agency and Program Administrator seek engagement from stakeholders regarding usage, functionality, and interest to provide feedback on the development of a Disclosure Form API (Application Program Interface). A Disclosure Form API will be incorporated into the Program portal to support the upload of Disclosure Forms. Approved Vendors and Designees interested to share their interest in guiding

development and provide feedback on the new API functionality by completing a feedback form found here: <https://forms.office.com/r/6mELmE0rMv>

- **CDCS 90-day Application Window Ends November 30, 2022**

On November 30, 2022, 90 days after the September 1, 2022 opening, the Community Driven Community Solar (CDCS) project application window will close. **As a reminder, projects must be batched and batches submitted prior to the November 30, 2022 deadline, meaning the last day for application submittals is November 29, 2022.** Following the close of the application window, the Agency and Program Administrator will begin reviewing and scoring CDCS projects based on the scoring criteria included in Section 1.G. of the current [Program Guidebook](#). Projects will be selected in the order of highest to lowest score until the block is fully allocated. Once scoring is complete, Approved Vendors will be notified of their project score(s) and whether their submitted project(s) will be awarded capacity from this Program year. Projects that were not selected and that have a minimum score of at least 10 points will be placed on a waitlist for the 2023-2024 delivery year.

- **Ongoing Program Portal Updates**

The Program Administrator continues to update and optimize the new Program portal, provide new and updated supporting documents, as well as additional Office Hours for support, with updated sessions outlined in the Transition Updates section below. Ongoing portal updates will now be published on the Program website at <https://illinoisabp.com/portal-updates/> in addition to a growing library of technical documents and portal help guides located at <https://illinoisabp.com/portal-help/>. Recent updates include the following:

Updates on Portal Issues/Improvements

- **REC Estimates** - Some Approved Vendor's REC estimates vary from the estimates being generated by the portal as part of the Part I application. The IPA and the Program Administrator are reviewing all Part I REC estimates to ensure that they align with the requirements of the REC Contract and are being calculated correctly. The findings of this review will be communicated once review is complete. Approved Vendors will be given the opportunity to review any corrections during the Part I approval process. Any corrections needed will be applied prior to REC contract generation and submission to the ICC.
- **Contract Values** - Upon submission of a 20-year contract value, when reviewed by AVs, some applications reverted to showing a 15-year contract value. This bug related to report viewing in the portal, but did not affect the submitted application nor its review, and this view issue has been addressed and is functioning properly.
- **Inverter Size** - The Program Administrator clarified that the term "Inverter Size", as used in Section 4 the Part I application, is intended to mean the nameplate capacity size AC for the project. If there are multiple inverters, AVs should input the sum of those inverters' capacity in AC; if there is a single inverter, AVs should input the AC size of that single inverter. If you made an error in the submission of the system size for one or multiple submitted projects, please reach out to the Program Administrator. Because this impacts system size, the original invoice for batch fees will not correctly correspond with the application fees of the size of the project(s); some AVs may receive updated invoices for application fees as a result.
- **Land Use Permits** - Land use permit(s) are required for all projects that are ground mounted and over 250 kW AC in size. Until the portal includes a specific upload field for this documentation, Approved Vendors should utilize the Additional Uploads field to submit a land use permit or the confirmation that none is required. For applications submitted without the required land use permit documentation, the IPA will allow projects to submit the permit during the application review cure period. All land use permits that are submitted during the cure period must meet all other Program/application requirements.
- **Portal Features and Fixes** - Two portal enhancements that were part of a release on November 8, 2022 included 1) addition of Company Name (in addition to the Vendor ID) to the workbench where

AVs or Designees select the Vendor for a Disclosure Form; and 2) A bugfix that resolved an issue affecting a limited number of Disclosure Form PDFs that could not be generated. The Program Administrator continues to work on other system improvements and identified issues, and appreciates the feedback of stakeholders.

Future Release Information

- The Program is aiming for availability of Part II application in late November/early December 2022, with more information to follow.
- The Program is aiming for availability of the Disclosure Form API for Community Solar Disclosure Forms before the close of the calendar year.

• **Ongoing Operations Updates**

The Program Administrator continues to work diligently to ensure that Program operations and processes are functioning efficiently and effectively to ensure ongoing Program success and stakeholder support. Recent and forthcoming operational updates include:

- Processing of project applications submitted prior to July 1, 2022, and transition to the new Program Administrator is nearly complete. Stakeholders are asked to watch for any “Need Info” requests from the Program Administrator for additional information to finalize any processing. The Program Administrator will soon begin reviewing applications submitted in the new portal, in the order in which they were received.
- Part II applications are currently being processed in the order that they were received. Applications will need to be Part II verified by November 18, 2022 to be included in December REC invoices.
- The Program Administrator has completed all Community Solar subscriber verifications from September Quarterly Reports. The Program Administrator will be following up with AVs shortly with Schedule Bs and requests to update standing orders. Workbooks will be re-distributed to AV and Designee SharePoint folders soon to allow for updates for the upcoming December Subscriber Verification, for which Quarterly Reports will be due by December 10, 2022. **The Program Administrator will reach out directly to Approved Vendors subject to the December Quarterly Report with additional instructions.**
- November REC invoices are available on SharePoint for AVs to download now.

Transition Updates

• **Program Administrator Office Hours**

To support AVs and Designees experiencing technical difficulties with use of the portal or in resolving other challenges, the Program Administrator is pleased to continue offering open Office Hours to answer questions, provide support, and gather feedback. Sessions are held with individual AV or Designee points of contact, via Zoom, utilizing a waiting room for individual appointment privacy. Please remain in the waiting room until the Administrator admits you. Upcoming office hours are planned for the following dates and times with more dates expected to follow:

- Wednesday, November 16 – 10:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m. CPT - Join link: <https://energy-solution.zoom.us/j/95588710302>
- Wednesday, November 23 – 10:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m. CPT - Join link: <https://energy-solution.zoom.us/j/95588710302Co>

- **Portal Help Guides**

The Program Administrator has launched a package of resources and technical guidance for portal use. The main resource page is available at [IllinoisABP.com/portal-help](https://illinoisabp.com/portal-help), and direct links to the specific resources are available at the links below:

- [How to Reset Your Password](#)
- [Portal Overview](#)
- [Manage Your Disclosure Forms](#)
- [Part I Applications \(DG and CS\)](#)
- [Batching](#)

Resources planned to be published soon:

- Distributed Generation Disclosure Form Walkthrough
- Community Solar Disclosure Form Walkthrough
- Part II Applications (DG and CS)

- **Events & Engagement Page at Program Website**

A new [Events & Engagement](#) page has been added to the Program website, with a calendar to share upcoming webinars, meetings, support, feedback requests, key dates, holidays, and more. Please visit the page for continuous updates.

REMINDER: All transition updates can be found on the [ABP Transition Hub webpage](#).

CONTACT US: For Portal, application, or Program-specific questions and inquiries, please contact admin@illinoisabp.com or call 877-783-1820.

Requirements and Reminders

- **Upcoming and Recorded Equity Accountability System Webinars, and Additional Resources**

In accordance with Chapter 10 of the [Final 2022 Long-Term Plan](#), the Agency and Program Administrator are leading introductory webinars to the Equity Accountability System (EAS), providing an overview of the EAS, discussion of key elements, future opportunities and requirements for Approved Vendors and Designees, and available support from the Program Administrator. The first webinar was held October 4, 2022, and [questions and answers](#) have now been posted to the [Equity Accountability System page](#) of the Program website, along with a recording of the webinar, presentation slides, and an attestation form that stakeholders are asked to complete following viewing of the webinar.

On **November 15, 2022, at 10:00 a.m. CPT**, the Program Administrator and Agency are holding a second webinar on the EAS, to provide more information on annual compliance plan submission and assessment with more education and training to follow in early 2023. Participants are encouraged to ask questions during the Question & Answer section of the webinar. **Attendees can join the webinar via Zoom at this link:** <https://energy-solution.zoom.us/j/95834352530>

- **3-year Rolling Average: Buyer and Seller Obligations**

Under the REC contract, there is a process to analyze the RECs that a designated system has delivered vs. the RECs that a designated system is contracted to deliver. The exact terms for this process varies by contract, however, and at this time, only 2019 contracts are impacted. This process to determine Delivery Year REC Performance takes effect only once a system has been Energized for 3 full delivery years and is calculated as a 3-Year Rolling Average analysis. This ensures that the Utilities acquire the RECs that they have paid for. The result of this analysis allows the Buyer (contracting utility) to draw down on collateral for projects with a REC Delivery Shortfall, after which, the Seller (Approved Vendor) will be required to top up the collateral balance within 90 days. Next steps are as follows:

- Program Administrator determines drawdowns by contract

- Buyer informs Seller of drawdown payment
- Seller has to respond to Buyer within 5 days
- Seller has 90 days to post additional collateral; failure to do so could result in removal from the REC contract and loss of incentive funds.

Please reference Section 6.d of the 2019 REC Delivery Contract for a full explanation of Buyer and Seller obligations.

- **Illinois Department of Labor (IDOL) Prevailing Wage Training Webinars**

As noted in the [2022 Long-Term Renewable Resources Procurement Plan](#), most Adjustable Block Program projects must comply with the Illinois Prevailing Wage Act, which requires that employees engaged in construction activities related to a project be paid prevailing wage; minimum compensation levels are set by the Illinois Department of Labor. Information regarding prevailing wage can be found on the Program's [Prevailing Wage Hub](#). IDOL is hosting informational webinars on prevailing wage requirements and will answer questions as time allows during scheduled webinars, which will be held via WebEx at the following upcoming dates and times.

- Wednesday, November 16 at 3:20 p.m. CPT – Join link:
<https://illinois.webex.com/illinois/j.php?MTID=mbcef9ff65828f936043500c4b3a33d26>

- **DCEO Job Training Programs**

The Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO) invites stakeholders to provide input on the clean energy jobs curriculum that will be used in workforce training programs through the Illinois Climate and Equitable Jobs Act (CEJA).

Here's how to get involved:

- 1) **Attend a public listening session where you can share what you think. Review any information that is provided following the [All Region Listening Session](#) held on November 10, 2022 from 1:00 – 3:00 pm**
- 2) **Complete DCEO's feedback survey here:** <https://forms.office.com/r/N8NWuX4wRw>
- 3) **Send questions and comments to CEO.CEJA@illinois.gov.**

Learn more about the CEJA workforce programs, stakeholder process, and program launch at their website here: <https://dceo.illinois.gov/climateandequitablejobs.html>

- **Upcoming Stakeholder Feedback Requests – Consumer Protections**

Reminder to all stakeholders that the Agency plans to request stakeholder feedback on various consumer protections items that relate to the Adjustable Block Program before the year is out. The feedback requests will include but are not limited to:

- New Disclosure Forms
- Designee management plans
- Marketing requirements for ARES
- The Program's disciplinary process
- Contract requirements

Stay tuned for more information on these upcoming requests for feedback.

- **Program Year 2022-2023 Resources Available for Stakeholders**

On September 1, 2022, the launch of the Program Year 2022-2023, a variety of resources were released for Prospective and Approved Vendors and Designees. Resources are available at the following links:

- [Approved Vendor Application \(includes Equity Eligible Contractor application\)](#)
- [Welcome to Program Year 2022-2023 Webinar](#)
- [Program Year 2022-2023 Resource Guide](#)
- [Program Year 2022-2023 Webinar Q&A](#)
- [Designee Equity Eligible Contractor Application](#)