

# TCS Launch Recap, CDCS Application Window Closing Soon, Upcoming Equity Accountability System Webinar

November 4, 2022

## Program News

- **Traditional Community Solar Application Launch on November 1, 2022**

### Application Overview

On November 1, 2022, the ability for Approved Vendors to submit Part I applications for Traditional Community Solar (TCS) projects and community solar projects in the Equity Eligible Contractors and Public Schools categories opened in the Program portal. The Program Administrator would like to share the following updates on submitted batches of applications, as of 4:00 p.m., November 4, 2022:

- **353 community solar batches of applications totaling 856.78 MW submitted (in TCS, EEC, and Public Schools categories)**
- 284 community solar batches of applications totaling 685.80 MW submitted in TCS category
- 68 community solar batches of applications totaling 168.98 MW submitted in EEC category
- 1 community solar batch of applications totaling 2.0 MW submitted in Public Schools category

### Blocks Filled

On the first day of application submission availability, all available capacity was allocated to projects submitted, batched, and paid in the Group A TCS and EEC blocks and the Group B TCS block, with final awarded capacity dependent on application review by the Program Administrator.

### Next Steps for Traditional Community Solar

Because the Block capacity allocation has been exceeded for both Traditional Community Solar Groups A and B, a “First Day” Scoring process has been triggered, as previously outlined in the Traditional Community Solar [Final Scoring Guidelines](#) and [Rationale](#), shared on the October 24, 2022 informational webinar and multiple Program communications, and incorporated into the [current Program Guidebook](#) (published October 18, 2022), including the following next steps:

1. **Application Review Period** - Initial review by Program Administrator: Approximately 4 weeks
2. **Application Cure Period** - AVs cure deficiencies identified by Program Administrator: Approximately 2 weeks
3. **Application Scoring Period** - Program Administrator begins scoring process for all relevant applications (those submitted without deficiencies and those that successfully cure deficiencies during the 2-week cure period): Approximately 3 weeks
4. **Scoring Cure Period** - AVs review initial scores and dispute and resolve any discrepancies: Approximately 2 weeks

Final scores and project selection will be posted after Scoring Cure Period. Please note this schedule is tentative and will be dependent on both the quality and quantity of applications received. As a reminder, payment for submitted batches must be made within 10 days of batch submittal.

### Clarifications

In addition to the available published support resources, the Program Administrator offered enhanced support resources during the first two days of TCS application availability. The Agency and Program Administrator are aware of the following issues within the Program portal:

- **REC Estimate** - 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 Value** - Upon submission of a 20-year contract value, when reviewed by AVs, some applications reverted to showing a 15-year contract value. This was a bug related to report viewing in the portal, but does not affect the submitted application nor its review.
- **Inverter Size** - The Program Administrator understands that the term "Inverter Size" in Section 4 the Part I application may be unclear. Inverter size 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 Permit(s)** - Land use permit(s) are required for all projects that are ground mounted and over 250 kW AC in size. The portal currently does not have a specific upload field for this documentation, but a fix is in process. For the time being, Approved Vendors should utilize the Additional Uploads field to submit a land use permit or the confirmation that none is required. For those applications which are 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.
- **Stripe Payments Via Credit Card** - Approved Vendors that selected credit card as the form of payment for their application fees, were charged double the credit card fee on the application fee invoice. To implement the correction for this, the portal was down for maintenance November 2, 2022, for approximately 1 hour. The Program Administrator will contact affected AVs to issue a credit to those that have already paid and issue a correction to the invoices for those that have not.
- **Traditional Community Solar (TCS) & Batching Resources**

In support of the application opening, the Program Administrator has made a variety of resources available for Approved Vendors.

  - TCS & Batching Webinar Resources
    - [Video recording of the webinar](#)
    - [Presentation slides](#)
    - [List of answered questions](#)
  - A package of resources related to Traditional Community Solar:
    - [Final Scoring Guidelines](#)
    - [TCS Scoring Rationale](#)
    - [TCS Clarifications #1](#)
    - [TCS Clarifications #2](#)
  - Portal Resources
    - [Portal Help Guides](#)
    - [Part I Application Guide](#)
    - [Batching Guide](#)
  - Updated [Project Application Reports](#) to include a column with County location.

- **Equity Eligible Contractor Block Next Steps**

The IPA is committed to the success of the Equity Eligible Contractor category. The Agency is currently reviewing submissions to the EEC block through the lens of the requirements of the Illinois Power Agency Act, the Long-Term Plan, the Guidebook, and other Program materials. The Agency will issue additional guidance on the matter of the category reaching capacity in the coming days.

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

The application window for Community Driven Community Solar projects opened on September 1, 2022. The 90-day window will close on November 30, 2022, with applications no longer accepted after that date. Following the close of the application window, the Agency and Program Administrator will begin reviewing and scoring 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 included in the block for 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/>. Recent updates include the following:

- **New Feature Functionality** - Traditional Community Solar Part I application submission was made available on Tuesday, November 1, 2022.
- **Issue Reports and Bug Fixes** – The Program Administrator has received valuable feedback from portal users surrounding the TCS application reopening and is addressing issues related to REC calculation estimates, REC contract display, and payment processing.
- **Future Functionality** – The Program is aiming for availability of Part II application in late November 2022/early December, with more information to follow.
- **Future Functionality** – The Program is aiming for availability of the Disclosure Form API for Community Solar Disclosure Forms before the close of the calendar year.

A growing library of technical documents and portal help guides has been added to the Program website. Stakeholders can access the latest technical support tools at: <https://illinoisabp.com/portal-help/>

- **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, and 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.
- 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 9 – 10:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m. CPT - Join link: <https://energy-solution.zoom.us/j/95588710302>
- 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/95588710302>

- **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. Currently Available Guides include:

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

Resources planned to be published soon:

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

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](mailto:admin@illinoisabp.com) or call 877-783-1820.

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## 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>

- **Expanded Consumer Protection Working Group Meeting on November 4, 2022**

The second meeting of the Expanded Consumer Protection Working Group took place on Friday, November 4, 2022 at 10:00 a.m. CPT via Zoom, in an unrecorded session scheduled for 1.5 hours. The Agency's intent is to use the October and November meetings to solicit stakeholder input on potential adjustments to Program policies and requirements, to inform proposals that will then be put out for written public comment later this calendar year. More information including agendas and notes, including the agenda for the November 4th meeting, will be available at <https://illinoisabp.com/cp-working-group/>. The next Expanded Consumer Protection Working Group will take place on Friday, December 2, 2022, with further information to follow.

- **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>

- **Deadline Extended for Request for Stakeholder Feedback on Workforce Equity Database**

On October 12, 2022 the Illinois Power Agency released a [Request for Stakeholder feedback](#) on the proposed approach for the initial phase of the Energy Workforce Equity Database, which will be a portal tool that includes tools intended to help connect equity eligible persons with clean energy firms seeking to hire them. The deadline for feedback was October 26, 2022. The Agency has now extended that deadline to Friday, November 4, 2022, to allow stakeholders additional time to provide input. Responses should be sent to [IPA.Solar@illinois.gov](mailto:IPA.Solar@illinois.gov).

- **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:**

Register for the [All Region Listening Session](#) 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](mailto: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>

- **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](#)