

Community Solar Projects – Requests for Data, Ongoing Portal and Operations Updates, Equity Portal Beta Testing Invitation

January 13, 2023

Program News

• **Community Solar Projects – Requests for Data**

The IPA and Program Administrator seek updated Community Solar project information from developers to populate the [Find a Community Solar Project](#) list on the Program website, including project-specific information known to AVs. This list is valuable to potentially interested subscribers, the Agency, other developers, and other stakeholders. The PA will contact AVs with Community Solar projects to confirm if they would like to opt in and have projects included, and those interested will be provided with a template to complete. Updates to this list will be made quarterly, and AVs are encouraged to reach out with any necessary updates between these releases. To submit a template, email communitysolar@illinoisabp.com by January 27, 2023, for inclusion in the next update.

• **Ongoing Program Portal Updates**

The Program Administrator continues to update the Program portal, and provide new help guides, informational webinars, and open Office Hours. Ongoing portal updates can be found at <https://illinoisabp.com/portal-updates/>. A growing library of diverse portal help guides, including updated materials, can be found at [IllinoisABP.com/portal-help](https://illinoisabp.com/portal-help).

Updates on Portal Issues/Improvements

- **Fixes and Features** – The Program Administrator has continued progress on a number of fixes and improvements to the Program portal, including the following:
 - A software release on January 13, 2023, will include enhancements to Disclosure Forms including cosmetic improvements and fixes to data fields and validations. Continued fixes and enhancements to Disclosure Forms are in progress, with further information on the impact to the Disclosure Form Leniency Period that remains in effect.
 - Data migration and synchronization efforts have continued across various application batches, including syncing legacy application data and updating batch information, including application and batch status, further enabling participants and the Program Administrator to proceed with application submission and review across both Part I and Part II applications.

Future Release Information

- The Program Administrator and Agency appreciate the continued patience and input of stakeholders as development continues on the Program portal. The PA and Agency are dedicated to sharing more information with AVs and Designees, and expect to provide further information shortly on a variety of planned functionality and enhancements, including but not limited to:
 - Community Solar Disclosure Form API – This functionality is expected to be available in Q1 2023. The Program Administrator has continued to synthesize the input of Approved Vendors participating in the CS DF API Working Group, and expects to deliver a draft specifications document by the end of January for stakeholder feedback. Feedback on the specifications document will then support development, with more information about release to follow. If you are interested to participate in future API development meetings, please contact the Program Administrator at admin@illinoisabp.com with subject line “CS DF API”.
 - Distributed Generation Disclosure Form API, including an upcoming Working Group
 - Other functional and cosmetic updates to both CS and DG Disclosure Forms
 - Re-batching functionality (tentatively aimed for release in the portal in early 2023).

Nightly Portal Maintenance Plan

- In support of ongoing system maintenance, feature rollout, and bug fixes, and following a successful period in December with the help of portal users, **the Program portal will have a nightly, planned**

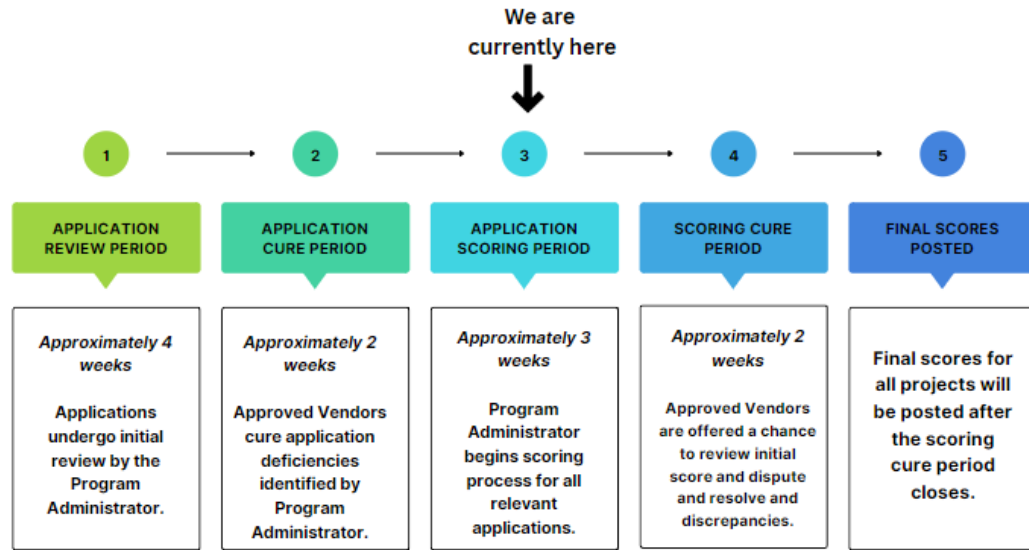
system maintenance window from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. CPT, each night from January 6, 2023, through January 31, 2023. During these maintenance windows, scheduled after typical business hours, the Portal may be unavailable to users, which the PA and Agency hope will be minimally disruptive to Program participants. While the portal may not be in maintenance mode every evening during this period, this notice is shared so that users may plan accordingly. **Any users working in the portal should save their work prior to the 6:00 p.m. CPT start of the system maintenance window each day, as any unsaved information will be lost when the system is moved into maintenance mode.** In the event that portal restoration is unexpectedly incomplete as of 8:00 p.m. CPT on a given evening, an update notice will be sent to Approved Vendors and Designees.

- **Ongoing Operations Updates**

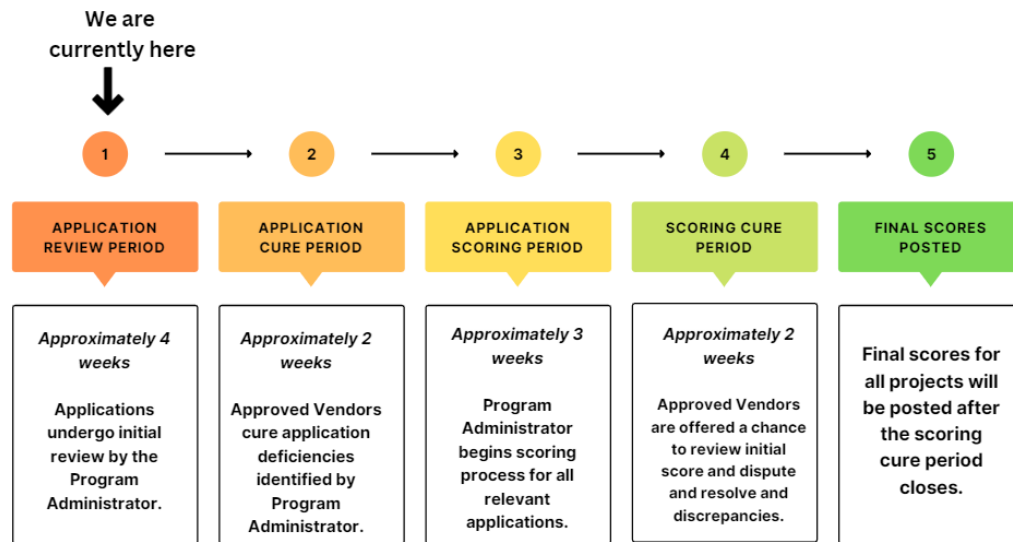
Recent and forthcoming operational updates include:

- **Community Solar December Quarterly Subscriber Verification** - The Program Administrator is reviewing Quarterly Reports and will be following up with Approved Vendors in the coming weeks regarding needed clarifications and reviewed subscription rates.
- **Application Processing Update** - The Program Administrator's Application Processing team is managing the review and scoring of Traditional Community Solar applications, Community-Driven Community Solar applications, and Part I and Part II Distributed Generation applications. TCS and CDCS application review and scoring will last into the first quarter of 2023, at which point processing of Distributed Generation applications can resume at full capacity. The planned schedule and sequence for application processing for 2023, includes:
 - DG Applications, with processing in the order received within subgroups:
 - New Part I DG apps received in the portal on or after September 1, 2022
 - New Part II DG apps received in the portal on or after December 15, 2022
 - The PA continues review of Part II applications, and is implementing functionality, completing data migration, and addressing bugs to support the submission and review of Part II applications, and including continued focus on responding to and processing Need Info responses. Further information on progress will be shared shortly, as the PA implements solutions and adds resources to accelerate application review. Support for stakeholders includes an updated portal help guide, a recorded webinar, presentation, and Questions and Answers, and ongoing Office Hours. Stakeholders experiencing any challenges should contact the Program Administrator via email at admin@illinoisabp.com or join us at Office Hours. The Program Administrator and Agency appreciate the continued patience of stakeholders.
 - Community Solar Applications (TCS & CDCS):
 - These projects will move through the Program as a group, due to the scoring element, and this is expected to last into the first quarter of 2023.
- **Traditional Community Solar Application Review and Scoring Process**

The Program Administrator completed initial review of submitted TCS applications and concluded the application cure period on December 21, 2022, and the process is now in the Scoring phase. The Program Administrator and Agency have made significant progress in scoring of TCS applications, with this phase is expected to conclude approximately the second week of January 2023. Emails regarding the scoring cure period will be sent out to Approved Vendors the week of January 16, 2023.



- **Community-Driven Community Solar Application Review and Scoring Process**
The Program Administrator is currently working on initial review of CDCS applications submitted to the Program during the application window, which closed on November 29, 2022. The PA will continue to share updates as we move through the process of application review and scoring.



- **Energy Equity Portal - Invitation for Beta Testers**

The Illinois Power Agency (IPA) is seeking five Approved Vendors or Designees to help beta test the job posting functionality of the Energy Workforce Equity Portal. This beta testing is expected to run the week of **January 16, 2023**. The process will involve Approved Vendors and Designees participating in the Adjustable Block Program testing the functionality of the form to post positions for which they are seeking to hire Equity Eligible Persons.

Beta testing space is limited to five participants. Beta testers will be chosen on a first come, first serve basis. Therefore, those that are interested in participating should express their interest as soon as possible by emailing IPA.Solar@illinois.org with subject line "Energy Equity Portal Beta Test". Once selected, the IPA will inform beta testers of next steps.

The beta testing will allow the IPA to test the Energy Workforce Equity portal before it launches on January 31. The feedback the IPA receives from beta testers will help fine-tune the portal and make necessary

improvements to deliver a great user experience. Over the course of 2023, the IPA will be including additional functionality and resources to the portal.

Transition Updates

- **Program Administrator Office Hours**

AVs and Designees experiencing technical difficulties with use of the portal or in resolving other challenges are invited to utilize open Office Hours that the Program Administrator offers via Zoom. Office Hours use a waiting room format to support meetings with individual AV or Designee teams for privacy. Upcoming Office Hours are planned for the following dates and times with more dates expected to follow:

- Wednesday, January 18 – 10:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m. CPT - Join link: <https://energy-solution.zoom.us/j/95588710302Co>
- Wednesday, January 25 – 10:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m. CPT - Join link: <https://energy-solution.zoom.us/j/95588710302Co>
- Wednesday, February 1 – 10:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m. CPT - Join link: <https://energy-solution.zoom.us/j/95588710302Co>

REMINDER: All transition updates can be found on the [ABP Transition Hub webpage](#), and a new [Events & Engagement](#) page at the Program website provides a calendar of upcoming webinars, meetings, support, feedback requests, key dates, holidays, and more. Please visit <https://illinoisabp.com/events-engagement/> for continuous updates.

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

Requirements and Reminders

- **Small Subscriber Clarification**

The following is a clarification of the definition and application of the term “Small Subscriber” for the purpose of meeting Small Subscriber requirements, including minimum subscription levels and calculating REC price adders where applicable. To be considered a Small Subscriber for these purposes, the subscription or sum of multiple subscriptions to each individual Community Solar project under one utility account may not exceed 25 kW AC.

This does not change the requirement outlined in Section 10 of the Program Guidebook which defines a Small Subscriber as, “A residential or small commercial customer with a subscription below 25 kW.” Furthermore, the Program Guidebook requires that the small commercial customer accounts must be within one of the following rate classes:

- Commonwealth Edison: “watt-hour delivery class” or “small load delivery class”
- Ameren Illinois: “DS-2”

The Program Administrator will review subscriptions to confirm that customers with multiple subscriptions on the same utility account which exceed 25 kW in cumulative size on a single project will not be counted as Small Subscribers for purposes of meeting Program requirements related to subscription levels and calculation of REC price adders for the next quarterly invoicing period following this announcement (i.e., the March-May 2023 invoicing period). Review of future quarterly community solar reports will follow this protocol with respect to multiple subscriptions and will continue to include the verification of rate class of any subscriptions used to fulfill Small Subscriber requirements.

- **Input Requested: Survey for Installers on Disposing and Recycling Solar Panels**

The Illinois Sustainable Technology Center’s (ISTC) Renewable Energy Equipment Recovery-Reuse Program focuses strategies for recovering and recycling of solar modules, wind turbine blades, energy storage systems and electric-drive vehicle batteries. These technologies have been identified as emerging waste concerns for the

state of Illinois and across the US. The Program also fosters stakeholder mobilization across this sector, gathering input from individuals and organizations involved in managing a changing waste stream. A current goal of the Program is evaluation of waste material streams emerging from each of these renewable energy systems to inform future collection infrastructure, management strategies, and related policy approaches. During this process, ISTC wants to hear from solar installers about their approach to disposing and recycling of solar panels through a short survey. This will help our state to better anticipate the amount of decommissioned solar panels that will need to be managed in the near future. The survey takes 10-15 minutes to complete, and it is expected to remain open through the end of January 2023. Participation in the survey is optional for all Program participants. The survey can be accessed with this link: <https://surveys.illinois.edu/sec/43453876>.

- **Stakeholder Feedback – Consumer Protection Proposals**

As previously shared, the Agency seeks public comment on thirteen proposals to update consumer protection documents for Illinois Shines (Adjustable Block Program) and Illinois Solar for All programs. Following incorporation of public comment, the Agency intends to finalize these documents for the 2023-2024 Program Year beginning June 1, 2023. The proposals and request for feedback can be found here: <https://illinoisabp.com/consumer-protection/>. Comments on Proposal #1 (Disclosure Forms) were due December 30, 2022, and the Agency appreciates the comments from numerous stakeholders, which have been posted and can viewed at <https://illinoisabp.com/consumer-protection/>: Comments on Proposals #2 through #13 are due: **January 27, 2023**. Please see the [Proposal Packet](#) to review the proposals.

- **EEC Block Capacity – Group B**

The Program Administrator and IPA have received inquiries regarding the timeline for the award of REC Contracts under Group B of the Equity Eligible Contractor (“EEC”) Category. The Program Administrator has begun reviewing Part I applications submitted to the EEC, Group B Category to determine whether those projects qualify under Program requirements. The Illinois Commerce Commission approved the request to reopen the 2022 Long-Term Plan in [Docket No. 22-0231](#), and stakeholders are invited to interact with the docket in accordance with the ICC’s rules of practice, with the following schedule in effect:

- Objections to the Agency’s proposal – Due February 2, 2023
- Responses to objections – Due February 16, 2023
- Replies to responses – Due March 2, 2023
- With the docket open, the Agency will seek to provide an update on the question of dealing with applications submitted on November 1 in EEC Group A once the above schedule has concluded; the Program Administrator may hold Group B applications for ICC approval if it appears possible that Commission action may impact Group B capacity.

- **Systems Out of Compliance for Failure to Deliver RECs - 90 Days to Comply**

According to Section 6(a) of the [2019 REC Delivery Contract](#), and 4.1(a) of the [2021 REC Delivery Contract](#), all systems must be registered in either the GATS or M-RETS tracking registry. For systems larger than 5 kW, the first REC must be delivered within 90 days of the date the system is Energized/Part II verified. For systems equal to or less than 5 kW, the first REC must be delivered within 180 days of the date the system is Energized/Part II verified.

According to Section 12(e) of the [2019 REC Delivery Contract](#), and 2.3(e) of the [2021 REC Delivery Contract](#), “Seller shall upload meter readings to PJM-EIS GATS or M-RETS at least annually prior to the registry cutoff to produce RECs for generation occurring in May as well as all previous months for which generation has not been recorded.”

The Program Administrator has identified systems that are out of compliance with the REC contract for not delivering a REC and updating the tracking registry within one year of Part II verification. These systems have been communicated with Approved Vendors over SharePoint and/or email. Projects will be removed from the Program if they do not deliver a REC within 90 days of notice from the PA for failure to comply with requirements of the REC Contract.