

Draft Program Guidebook Released, REC Pricing Updates, MES Waiver Rationale Published

March 17, 2023

Program News

- **Draft Program Guidebook Released for Feedback – Comments Due April 3, 2023**

On March 14, 2023, the Agency released a [draft Illinois Shines Program Guidebook](#) for stakeholder feedback, and on March 15, [a redline comparison version](#) against the current October 18, 2022 version. This draft Guidebook will undergo stakeholder feedback, the Agency will review comments submitted, and then release a final version of the Guidebook for the 2023-24 Program year, which commences on June 1, 2023. All changes in this draft version of the Program Guidebook are to be considered proposals upon which stakeholders can provide feedback. Comments on the draft Program Guidebook are **due April 3, 2023**. Comments should be emailed to IPA.Solar@illinois.gov.

- **Minimum Equity Standard – Compliance Plans and Waivers**

- On March 13, 2023, the Agency and Program Administrator held a webinar, Minimum Equity Standard (MES): Compliance Plan and Waiver Request Training, for stakeholders. The webinar followed two earlier webinars held on the Equity Accountability System on [October 4 and November 15, 2022](#), and included review of prior presentations, the MES Compliance Plan process and draft form, information on the Energy Workforce Equity Portal, and the Waiver Request Process. A recording of the webinar, the presentation slides, and a Q&A document can be found at the [Equity Accountability System page](#) of the Program website, and additional information about the release of Compliance Plan materials, a rationale document supporting the release of the Waiver Request and Evaluation, and other resources will be soon be added.
- The Program Administrator expects the MES Compliance Plan submission form to be available to Program participants in April 2023 for the 2023-24 Program year.
- The [final MES waiver](#) was released last week on March 10, 2023 and the rationale to accompany the final decisions can be found here: <https://illinoisabp.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/MES-Waiver-Rationale-31722-v002.pdf>

- **Traditional Community Solar Scores – Deadline for Appeals**

In accordance with the [TCS scoring guidelines](#), the Program Administrator has scored all TCS projects submitted on November 1, 2022 that are Part I verified. These scores will be used to determine which projects will be selected for a REC contract once random selection (if needed) takes place and the 20% developer cap is applied. The scores and a full announcement regarding the scoring process were posted on the Program website on the [Solar Project Categories page](#) under the Traditional Community Solar sub-section.

An Approved Vendor may appeal decisions made by the Program Administrator on the scoring of their projects. An Approved Vendor has two weeks from March 10, 2023 to file an appeal. Submitted appeals must be received by the Program Administrator at admin@illinoisabp.com, by **11:59 pm CPT March 24, 2023**. As the determination of appeals may influence a project's final score, and thus possibly the final selection of projects, all appeals must be reviewed by the Agency within a distinct timeframe. The Agency intends to have all submitted appeals determined by April 21, 2023, subject to the quantity and substance of appeals submitted.

- **REC Pricing Updates** - The Agency is conducting two processes to update REC prices for the Illinois Shines Program and the Illinois Solar for All Program:

- **Proposed 2023-2024 REC Prices** - The first process is a refresh of inputs into the current REC pricing model to establish the REC prices for the 2023-2024 program year. The Agency issued a [Request for Stakeholder Feedback](#) on the proposed prices. Comments are **due by March 24, 2023** and should be sent to IPA.ContactUs@illinois.gov.
- **Update to REC Pricing Model & REC Prices for Subsequent Years** - This second process is a review of the REC pricing approaches for consideration of changes in methodology to be included in the next

Long-Term Renewable Resources Procurement Plan (“LTRRPP”). The Agency has engaged Sustainable Energy Advantage (“SEA”) to conduct that review. The report developed by SEA will be used by the Agency to develop the REC pricing methodology for the next LTRRPP. SEA [released a written request for stakeholder feedback](#) on March 7, 2023, with comments **due on March 28, 2023**. SEA hosted a public webinar for Illinois Shines and ILSFA stakeholders on Tuesday March 14, 2023 to discuss REC pricing policy issues, options, and implications. A recording of the webinar and presentation slides can be found at the [Renewable Resources Workshops page](#) of the Agency’s website.

Ongoing Operations Updates

- **Schedule B’s Soon To Be Available**

March REC invoicing is closed, and as the Program Administrator resumes verification of Part II applications, Schedule B’s will soon be placed in Approved Vendor SharePoint folders. Further information will be provided shortly.

Application Processing Updates

- The Program Administrator continues to publish regularly-updated application processing details at IllinoisABP.com/project-application-reports/ and appreciates the patience of stakeholders. The PA and Agency are taking steps to address the longer-than-expected delays in processing applications and released [a detailed plan](#) earlier today addressing the application backlog. For questions about specific project applications, or other Program information, please contact the PA at admin@illinoisabp.com.

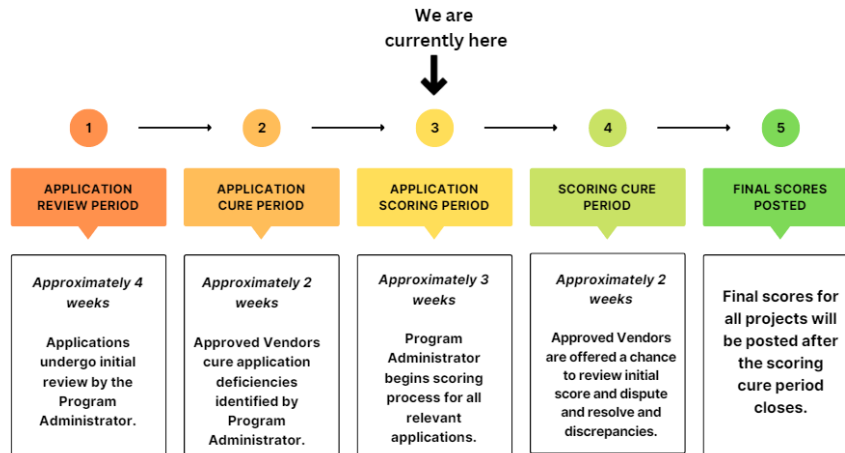
Application Processing as of Friday, March 17, 2023			
Project Category	Application Type	Reviewing Applications Submitted As Of:**	Applications in Process Queue
Small Distributed Generation	Part I	November 3, 2022	4,018
Small Distributed Generation	Part II	January 6, 2023	3,560
Large Distributed Generation	Part I	November 3, 2022	94
Large Distributed Generation	Part II	January 11, 2023	72
Traditional Community Solar – Waitlist Reallocation	Part I	None submitted at this time	0
Traditional Community Solar – Waitlist Reallocation	Part II	December 19, 2022	6
Traditional Community Solar – November 2022*	Part I	Scores announced March 10	262
Traditional Community Solar – November 2022*	Part II	None submitted at this time; Part I applications in scoring process	0
Community-Driven Community Solar	Part I	In scoring period	67
Community-Driven Community Solar	Part II	None submitted at this time; Part I applications in scoring process	0
Public Schools	Part I	December 19, 2022	4
Public Schools	Part II	None submitted at this time	0
Equity Eligible Contractor	Part I	November 1, 2022	85
Equity Eligible Contractor	Part II	Not reviewing at this time due to open ICC docket	0

*Includes only applications submitted on November 1, 2022

**As used here, “Submitted” means the application has been Batched, and the Batch has been Paid

- **Community-Driven Community Solar Application Review and Scoring Process**

Effective February 20, 2023, Community-Driven Community Solar entered the Scoring phase, which was expected to last for approximately three weeks, from February 20 - March 10, 2023; the scoring period is expected to extend for additional time, and the PA will continue to share updates as we move through the process.



Ongoing Program Portal Updates

- Ongoing portal updates can be found at IllinoisABP.com/portal-updates/, and a library of diverse, updated portal help guides can be found at IllinoisABP.com/portal-help/.

Updates on Portal Issues, Improvements, and Future Releases

- A nightly, planned system maintenance window for the Program portal has been extended for the month of March from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. CPT, each night. 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.

Development Focus	Details	Planned or Actual Delivery
Bugs and Other Fixes		
Disclosure Form Remediation	DF enhancements will continue to be implemented, with information forthcoming on the impact to the DF Leniency Period that remains in effect.	Enhancements ongoing
Community Solar DF API	The first version of this functionality will be released soon, pending beta testing. On March 7, 2023, the latest CS DF API Working Group met, reviewing the draft Developer's Guide and discussing beta testing.	Week of March 27, following upcoming beta testing
Proof of Residential Project	Document Upload is shown for Section 2 Large DG, and not for Small DG	Week of March 6, 2023
Distributed Generation DF API	A Working Group will be developed soon	TBD
Re-batching Functionality	On/off toggle, ability to create batches by project and by batch Screen, export Batch Shuffling and Batch Audit Log	TBD – Tentatively planned for Q2 2023
Required Functionality		
Program Year (PY) 2023-2024 Updated Disclosure Forms	Implementation of updated English and Spanish Disclosure Forms covering all DG and CS	June 1, 2023 for Program Year opening
Equity Accountability System Compliance Plans and Waivers	Submission of mandatory EAS Compliance Plan or Waiver Request for 2023-2024 Program Year	April 2023. See below item on MES Compliance Training informational webinar.

Requirements and Reminders

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

Per 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 PA 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 AVs 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.

Deadline to comply is April 4, 2023.

- **Community Solar March Quarterly Subscriber Verification Concluded** – The March Quarterly Subscriber Verification processes concluded on March 11, 2023, when the Program Administrator downloaded completed Workbooks from SharePoint. March 10, 2023 was the last day to make changes to the *Program Administrator’s* subscriber records in Approved Vendor subscriber workbooks for the quarterly review.

- **Energy Workforce Equity Portal Training**

The IPA will be hosting the [Energy Workforce Equity Portal](#) training on **April 4, 2023, at 12 p.m. CPT**, for clean energy companies participating in the Adjustable Block Program and developers of utility-scale wind and solar projects. This training will enable participants to get acquainted with the portal and its various functionalities. This includes advertising jobs and searching for Equity Eligible Persons seeking employment, as they register on the portal. Registration is required to attend the training. **Attendees can register at this link:** <https://us06web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZcvdOCtrDoiHNx8bo-KTMaVH4GOPcWtxffk>

- **Stakeholder Feedback**

This table outlines current and forthcoming proposals and feedback requests:

Proposal or Feedback Topic	Request for Comment Released	Deadline for Comment	Details of Proposal/Feedback Request Available at:
Consumer Protection Proposals #2 - 13	December 2, 2022	January 27, 2023. Comments have been shared at Program website and are under Agency review.	https://illinoisabp.com/consumer-protection/ and Proposal Packet
Minimum Equity Standards (MES) Waiver Process	February 8, 2023	February 22, 2023. Comments have been shared at Program website and are under Agency review.	https://illinoisabp.com/equity-accountability-system/
Public Schools (Multiple topics, including anchor tenant requirement)	February 22, 2023	March 3, 2023. Comments have been shared at Program website and are under Agency review.	https://illinoisabp.com/solar-project-categories/#public-schools
REC Pricing Update for 2023-24 Program Year	March 1, 2023	March 24, 2023	https://ipa.illinois.gov/renewable-resources/stakeholder-engagement.html
New DG Disclosure Forms – Project Performance (“Efficiency”) Disclosures	March 2, 2023	March 10, 2023. Comments have been shared at Program website and are under Agency review.	https://illinoisabp.com/consumer-protection/
REC Price Modeling Update for Next Long-Term Plan	March 7, 2023	March 28, 2023	https://illinoisabp.com/2023/03/07/independent-rec-pricing-review-request-for-written-comments/
Program Guidebook updates for Program Year 2023-24	March 14, 2023	April 3, 2023	https://illinoisabp.com/2023/03/14/draft-guidebook-released-for-feedback-comments-due-april-3-2023/ and Redline to past version of Guidebook

- **EEC Block Capacity – Long-Term Plan Reopening**

The Illinois Commerce Commission approved the request to re-open 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
- Proposed Order – Due March 16, 2023
- Brief on Exceptions – Due March 23, 2023
- Reply to Briefs on Exceptions – Due March 30, 2023
- With the docket open, the Agency will seek to provide an update on the question of dealing with applications submitted on November 1, 2022 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.

- **3G Cell Pack Switch Out**

The IPA is aware that, as of about May 2022, inverters with communication modules using 3G cellular are no longer supported by internet service companies. These inverters will have to be upgraded with a 4G or 5G cellular module, Wi-Fi connection, or some other replacement communication protocol. If an inverter is not upgraded, the solar array’s ability to auto-report production data will cease, or has already ceased. Since some customers may not be aware that an inverter for their array may stop auto-reporting production data, many AVs have been notifying affected customers and assisting with inverter updates where needed. As a reminder, AVs are responsible for entering system production in the tracking registry where the system is registered. If the process in upgrading inverters has posed an issue in production data reporting, please contact your sector strategist to explain the barrier and the steps being taken to resolve the issue.

- **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 PA offers via Zoom, using a waiting room format to support meetings with individual AV or Designee teams for privacy. Upcoming Office Hours include the following dates and times with more dates expected to follow, using Join link: <https://energy-solution.zoom.us/j/95588710302Co>

- Wednesday, March 22 – 10:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m. CPT
- Wednesday, March 29 – 10:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m. CPT
- Wednesday, April 5 – 10:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m. CPT

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 [IllinoisABP.com/events-engagement/](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.