New Program Year Launch, Results of Traditional Community Solar Random Selection Event, Application Processing Updates, Upcoming Maintenance Windows

June 2, 2023

Program News

- **Results of Traditional Community Solar Random Selection Event –** On May 31, 2023, the Agency published the results of the TCS Random Selection event, used to break ties between Day 1 TCS projects submitted for the 2022-2023 Program year. The event was hosted on Tuesday, May 30, 2023 and the recording, presentation slides, and the resulting spreadsheet detailing Group A and Group B project awards (subject to block capacity and 20% developer cap limitations) and Day 1 waitlists for each group (projects receiving scores of at least 5.0), are posted to the Program website's Solar Project Categories page.

- **Annual Reports -** AVs participating in Illinois Shines are required to submit an Annual Report pertaining to the contracts and systems in their portfolio.
  - On May 1, 2023, AVs received an email that gave an overview of the Annual Report process including the model, requirements, and a general timeline for important Annual Report dates. Community Solar AVs received an email that provided guidance on updating their Subscriber Workbook which included important reminders**; Subscriber updates are due June 10, 2023.**
  - An informational webinar was held Tuesday, May 9, 2023, and the recording and presentation slides have been uploaded to the Program Year Updates page on the website.
  - Updates on SharePoint folder permissions are due by <mark>today, June 2, 2023.</mark> For support, contact the Program Administrator.
  - **Annual Reports will open on July 1, 2023 and are due no later than July 17, 2023. Failure to submit an Annual Report is an Event of Default under the REC Contract and could impact an Approved Vendor's standing in the Program.**

- **New Program Year -** The 2023-2024 Illinois Shines Program year began on June 1, 2023. The new Program year brings new block capacity across project categories and groups, new REC prices, updated contract requirements, an updated Program Guidebook, an updated Consumer Protection Handbook, new Disclosure Forms, the start of the first year of the Minimum Equity Standard requirements, and more. An announcement published on June 1, 2023 provided updated Program documents including:
  - Program Guidebook – May 31, 2023 version – updated to conform with the ICC's Order on Rehearing dated May 4, 2023 (Docket 22-0231) and to correct typographical errors
  - Consumer Protection Handbook – published April 17, 2023 - effective June 1, 2023
  - Contract Requirements effective June 1, 2023 – Distributed Generation and Community Solar
  - Program Year 2023-2024 REC Prices
  - REC Payments Calculator
  - Updated Distributed Generation and Community Solar Program brochures and *Guide to Going Solar* flyer/timeline at www.IllinoisShines.com
  - Program Year 2023-2024 Webinar – May 25, 2023 - recording, presentation slides, Q&A
  - As a reminder, the Program website recently updated the block capacity dashboard to provide a clearer resource for stakeholders to view the status of Program capacity, and restored the Project Map, a dynamic, visual map tool to search projects by Approved Vendor, Energization status, Program category, projects or kilowatts, county, zip code, and application ID to view project information.

- **New Disclosure Forms for Program Year 2023-2024 -** On May 5, 2023 the Program announced the release of new DG and CS Disclosure Forms, which will be available in the portal and required for use by participating AVs and Designees effective June 1, 2023. An additional announcement with updates was sent out on May 18, 2023. Below are notable highlights from the announcements and additional information regarding the new DFs.
  - The Program Administrator has provided the new CSV Disclosure Form templates on the Program's Resources page and published updated PDF and video DF walkthroughs on the Portal Help Guide page.
  - <mark>**The Disclosure Form leniency period for Community Solar (creating a limited exception to the requirement that Disclosure Forms must be signed before the subscription contract) will**</mark>

==extend through June 29, 2023==. This extension does not apply to Distributed Generation Disclosure Forms, and the leniency period for the DG Disclosure Forms officially ended on May 31, 2023 as shared in the May 5 announcement.

- o The SharePoint workaround process for the CSV upload of Disclosure Forms has been discontinued and may not be used (effective May 31, 2023).
- o The Program Administrator has received inquiries regarding what information is required in the "Insurance for loss or damage to the project" field in the "Project Operations, Maintenance, Warranties, and Guarantees" section of the updated DFs. Please note that you are not required to copy and paste the entire insurance provisions included in your customer contracts. In fact, the 300-character limit on this field would not allow it in most cases. Rather, this section is meant to accomplish two goals: (1) acknowledge whether your contract includes insurance coverage for loss or damage to the project and (2) provide an area for a brief explanation of any key details of that coverage and/or limitations of that coverage. If your explanation includes limitations or exceptions, you must specify that in your description. For example: "Exceptions – damage as a result of hail, customer intentionally damages system." If you require additional space to include your description, please feel free to do so in the "Additional details or explanatory information" box toward the end of the DF. If you use that field, please reference the earlier section your description concerns. For example, "Additional insurance coverage limitations include…"
- o A [REC payments calculator](#) has been added to the Program website and can be used to calculate the estimated value for specific projects for Disclosure Form submission.
- o **Users interested in utilizing the Community Solar Disclosure Form API that were not part of the API working group can reach out to [admin@illinoisabp.com.](mailto:admin@illinoisabp.com) Final CSV templates are available on the Program website's [Resources](#) page, in the Disclosure Forms section.**
- o A stakeholder informational webinar was held Thursday, May 18, 2023 and the [recording](#), [presentation slides](#), and [Q&As](#) have been uploaded to the [Program Year Updates](#) page on the website.
- **Long-Term Plan Update -** The Illinois Power Agency will be seeking stakeholder feedback on Chapter 7 of the next Long-Term Renewable Resources Procurement Plan. Stakeholders will be invited to provide feedback with the following planned schedule:
  - o Release of Chapter 7 Stakeholder feedback request – June 8, 2023
  - o Chapter 7 Stakeholder feedback comments due to IPA– June 28, 2023
  - o Final draft of Long-Term Plan for Public Comment – August 15, 2023
  - o Public Comments due to IPA – September 29, 2023
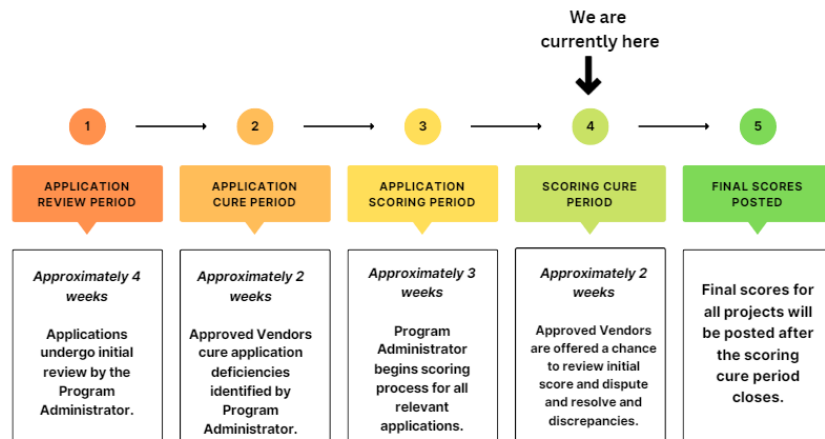 - o Filing of the Long-Term Plan with the ICC – October 20, 2023

Ongoing Operations Updates

- **Portal Tips and Tools -** Below are tips to assist those submitting applications:
  - o *Need Info -* Resolving the high *Need Info* volume and resulting delays in application approvals is a high priority. The *Need Info* working group, created to address this volume of applications continued to resolve currently flagged applications and prevent erroneous patterns. The *Need Info* working group has identified the most common causes of *Need Info* requests resulting from AV submissions on project applications. These include:
    - ▪ Part I Applications
      - Inconsistency or errors in Financing/Ownership structure: For example, project is listed as "Customer-Owned", but owner listed on DF and/or Application is conflicting.
      - Documents uploaded for wrong property address.
    - ▪ Part II Applications
      - Meter photos which do not show cumulative lifetime meter reading as required.
      - The number of modules in the application do not match the number of modules shown in the array photos as required.
      - Demographic and zip code information missing or incomplete. Reminder, this requirement comes from the Climate and Equitable Jobs Act.

- The inverter information in the application does not match the inverter photos.
- **May REC Invoicing Opened June 1, 2023 -** REC invoices and Quarterly Netting Statements will be made available for download from Approved Vendor SharePoint folders on the morning of June 1, 2023. Invoices must be submitted to the utility by June 10, 2023 to receive payment for the June invoice period. Any invoice amounts not submitted to the utility by June 10, 2023 will be carried forward and included in the next invoice period (September 2023).

Application Processing Updates

- **Application Processing Tables -** The Program Administrator updates the application processing tables at IllinoisABP.com/project-application-reports/ on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays. On June 1, 2023, the Program Administrator published its newest Weekly Detail on Application Processing Progress announcement, including updated processing tables and staffing and portal improvements. For questions about specific project applications, please contact the Program Administrator at admin@illinoisabp.com.
- **Community-Driven Community Solar Application Review and Scoring Process –** The Program Administrator has completed the application scoring period. Community-Driven Community Solar projects entered the scoring cure period on May 26, 2023. AVs, please check your SharePoint folders for more information regarding the curing of any *Need Info* requests related to project scores. Please respond promptly when possible so the scoring cure process can close out on time.

Ongoing Program Portal Updates

- Ongoing portal updates can be found at IllinoisABP.com/portal-updates/, and a library of portal help guides can be found at IllinoisABP.com/portal-help/.
  ### Updates on Portal Issues, Improvements, and Future Releases
  - The planned system maintenance windows on **Tuesday and Thursday evenings (from 8:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. CPT) will extend through June**. During these maintenance windows, the Portal is expected to be unavailable to users, which the Program Administrator and Agency hope will be minimally disruptive to Program participants. **Any users working in the portal should save their work prior to the 8:00 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 10:00 p.m. CPT on a given evening, an update notice will be sent to AVs and Designees.
  - **An additional special software release will occur on Friday, June 2 from 8:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. CPT and Monday, June 5 from 8:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. CPT.**
  - The Program Administrator has identified an issue related to Version 1 DF that were started but not generated/completed prior to June 1. The Portal will transfer data from "in progress" Version 1 DFs to the new Version DF framework. However, because the fields have changed, the user must manually click through each section and fill in required fields that have not populated (required fields are marked with an asterisk). The Portal will allow users to open a Version 1 DF and "generate" the Version 2 DF without filling in the missing information, but the Portal will not allow the resulting DF to be sent for e-signature or downloaded as a PDF.

If you return to an "in progress" Version 1 DF, you must fill in any and all required fields. If you accidentally generated a DF without complete information, and are receiving an error message when you try to send it for e-signature or download the PDF, you unfortunately must start over and generate an entirely new Version 2 DF. Additionally, if you sent a completed DF for e-signature but your customer is reporting they never received it, please review the DF data to make sure all required fields were completed before sending.

Development Focus	Details	Planned or Actual Delivery
Enhancements, Features and Bug Fixes		
New DFs for 2023 Program Year	All DF have been updated for the 2023 Program year. The revised DG disclosure form PDF is shorter (4 pages) and now includes efficiency information and infographics. The CS form PDFs have been enhanced as well and is now 2 pages. Visit https://illinoisabp.com/portal-help/ for updated user guides.	June 1, 2023
Capacity Management for 2023 Program Year Blocks	Capacity Management logic has been updated for the 2023 Program Year Blocks. Block limits are configurable by administrators within the portal. The portal will automatically close blocks once the maximum allocation is reached and start waitlisting projects. Application Processors can view live capacity data from the "Capacity Block" tab under Administration > Capacity Block Workbench.	June 1, 2023
API for Community Solar Disclosure Forms	An API has been released for AV and Designees who wish to build automated integrations between their systems and the IL Shines portal. This API is specific to Community Solar DFs and includes functionality to create a DF, retrieve status and calculated values from a DF or it's associated Project Application, retrieve a PDF copy of the DF for signature, and upload a signed PDF of the DF. Details of API functionality have been shared with members of the API Working Group. Any new AVs or Designees interested in developing their own integration between their applications and the IL Shines portal are encouraged to register for the API Working Group by completing the intake form (https://forms.office.com/r/ZsDHWsTaYH), and then emailing admin@illinoisabp.com to request API Access	June 1, 2023
Identified Application and Disclosure Form Issues - Launch Related	The Program Administrator is addressing identified issues including: - TCS "Same County" – The question is required but cannot be edited. We are adjusting validations to allow editing. - Lease Template download button links to the wrong template. It will be updated to the correct link. - Completed DFs are missing required info. This occurs on DFs created in the old DF version and submitted in the new DF version. If sections in the old DF are "Completed", but the new DF has new required fields in those sections, that requirement is not currently being enforced.	Tentatively planned for June 3, 2023
Re-batching Functionality	On/off toggle, ability to create batches by project and by batch Screen, export Batch Shuffling and Batch Audit Log.	Tentatively planned for Q3 2023.
Development Focus	**Details**	**Planned or Actual Delivery**
Required Functionality		
Program year (PY) 2023-2024 Updated Disclosure Forms	Implementation of updated English and Spanish DFs covering all DG and CS.	June 1, 2023 for Program year opening.

Requirements and Reminders

- **Minimum Equity Standard (MES) Compliance Plans -** On April 14, 2023, the Agency launched the Minimum Equity Standard (MES) for Illinois Shines, including the publication of the Minimum Equity Standard Compliance Plan submission form, and associated resources and support, updated instructional content at the Program website's Equity Accountability System page, a MES sample document to preview the Compliance Plan submission form, a *Guide to the Equity Accountability System*, FAQs (last edited May 25, 2023) on the Minimum Equity Standard, past webinars regarding compliance with equity requirements, and MES Waiver Request and Rationale document. <mark>**MES Compliance Plans were due June 1, 2023**</mark>. The Program Administrator is working

to score the plans. AVs and Designees can expect to be notified of their MES Score by mid-June. If you have not submitted your MES Compliance Plan, please contact the PA at admin@illinoisabp.com for assistance,

- **Stakeholder Feedback -** This table outlines current and forthcoming proposals and feedback requests:

Proposal or Feedback Topic and Link to Details	Request for Comment Released	Deadline for Comment	Results or Updates to Request
REC Pricing Update for 2023-24 Program Year	March 1, 2023	March 24, 2023. Comments have been shared at the Agency's website.	https://illinoisabp.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/2023-2024-ABP-REC-Prices-For-pub-17-April-2023.xlsx
REC Price Modeling Update for Next Long-Term Plan	March 7, 2023	April 4, 2023. Comments have been shared at the Agency's website.	Under Agency review. To be included in Next Long-Term Plan
Program Guidebook updates for Program Year 2023-24	March 14, 2023	April 3, 2023. Comments have been shared on Program website.	Final document: https://illinoisabp.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/Current-Program-Guidebook_May_31_2023.pdf • Program Guidebook Rationale
Long-Term Plan	June 8, 2023	September 29, 2023	October 20, 2023

- **ILSFA Request for Proposals** – On May 25, 2023, Illinois Solar for All re-issued the Request for Proposals (RFP) for the Residential Solar Pilot for qualified and eligible solar companies seeking to serve as Approved Vendors in the Waukegan and Carbondale-Marion Micropolitan areas. To qualify, Offerors must be Approved Vendors under the Illinois Shines (Adjustable Block Program) or ILSFA programs. Illinois Shines Approved Vendors that are not ILSFA Approved Vendors are required to become ILSFA Approved Vendors to participate in the Pilot. Preference will be given to small and emerging businesses.

  An Approved Vendor has already been selected for the West Garfield Park area. **The remaining two communities, Waukegan and the Carbondale-Marion area, including Jackson, Williamson, and Johnson counties, are open for proposals.**

  The relevant timeline for the RFP is as follows:
  - Residential Solar Pilot RFP Released: May 25, 2023
  - RFP Question Period Ends: June 7, 2023, 12 p.m. CPT
  - **Residential Solar Pilot RFP Proposals Due: June 20, 2023, 5 p.m. CPT**
  - Approved Vendors Selected and Announced: July 17, 2023

- **EEC Block Changes – Long-Term Plan Reopening -** On May 9, 2023, the Agency made a compliance filing of a modified Long-Term Renewable Resources Procurement Plan to conform with the changes stated in the ICC's Order on Reopening in Docket No. 22-0231. The ICC's Order modified the EEC category including changes to the EEC block size for the 2022-23 Program year, new EEC subcategories, and a developer cap. This modified Plan is now the current approved Plan can be found in the Program's website Resources page in the Long-Term Renewable Resources Procurement Plan section. An announcement outlining these changes in more detail was released on May 19, 2023.

- **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, 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, June 7, 10:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m. CPT
  - Wednesday, June 14, 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/ for continuous updates.

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