

Advance of Capital Authorizations Temporarily Paused, Reminder for Designee/Nested Designee Registration, 2023-2024 TCS Random Selection Event

September 15, 2023

Program News

- **Advance of Capital Authorizations for Equity Eligible Contractors Temporarily Paused** - As announced on [September 13, 2023](#), given the risks inherent in advancing capital before a system is developed and the goal of utilizing the advance of capital tool to support only EECs facing barriers in access to capital, the IPA is diligently working to ensure prudence and transparency throughout the advance of capital process. Thus, the Agency makes the difficult decision to temporarily pause both the submission and the review of advance of capital requests while the IPA builds out a more robust approach to the review and approval of those requests, with a tentative plan to lift the pause in November 2023. To move forward, the IPA believes that it must first outline the specific criteria it will utilize in reviewing advance of capital applications. Consequently, the IPA plans to spend the coming months outlining a more detailed and precise application review and approval process to ensure that only advance of capital requests that demonstrate genuine need for overcoming barriers to accessing capital are approved.
- **Community Solar Program News** - Recent Community Solar Program updates include the following:
 - **Traditional Community Solar (TCS) Timeline for Projects submitted June 1, 2023** - As announced on [August 24, 2023](#), all projects submitted in the 2022-2023 Program Year have been processed and scored. The appeal period has concluded and the anticipated schedule of next steps for applications submitted for the 2023-2024 Program Year is the following:
 - September 8, 2023, 11:59 p.m. CPT - Deadline for AVs to submit appeals to Program Administrator
 - September 18, 2023 - Appeal determinations released to AVs and any changes to scores will be published on the website
 - **September 20, 2023 at 9:00 a.m. CPT** - Random selection event for projects with tied scores. Registration link: <https://energy-solution.zoom.us/j/92591645721>
 - Additional TCS capacity is available from 2022-23 projects that were withdrawn after project selection. 5.99 MW of capacity has been added to Group A and will be allocated to the Traditional Community Solar Waitlist - Group A. 13.19 MWs of capacity has been added to Group B for a total available capacity of **48.87 MW**. This capacity will be awarded to projects submitted on June 1, 2023 during the random selection event.
 - September 22, 2023 - Final scores published
 - **Program Year 2023-2024 Community Driven Community Solar (CDCS)** - As shared on [September 1, 2023](#), the Program Administrator has begun to review project applications and will continue to share updates as they move through the process of application review and scoring. Detailed information will soon be shared and posted to the Program website's [CDCS Hub](#). The Agency anticipates 2023-2024 CDCS project selection to follow the steps below.
 - August 31, 2023 - September 22, 2023 - Application Review (*approximately 3 weeks*)
 - September 23, 2023 - October 6, 2023 - Application Cure Period (*approximately 2 weeks*)
 - October 7, 2023 - October 27, 2023 - Application Scoring Period (*approximately 3 weeks*)
 - October 28, 2023 - November 10, 2023 - Application Scoring Cure Period (*approx. 2 weeks*)

- November 15, 2023 - Release scores, begin two-week appeal period
 - December 1, 2023 - Deadline for AVs to submit appeals to Program Administrator
 - December 15, 2023 - Appeal determinations released to AVs and any changes to scores will be published on the website
 - December 20, 2023 - Random selection event for projects with tied scores (if necessary)
 - December 22, 2023 - Final Scores published
- **Long-Term Plan Update** - As announced on [August 15, 2023](#), the Agency has released the draft 2024 Long-Term Plan for public review and comment. The IPA welcomes public comments on the draft 2024 Long-Term Plan. **Written comments are due on Friday, September 29, 2023.** The Agency held virtual public hearings for the draft 2024 Long-Term Plan on September 15. The Agency anticipates the next steps in this process with the following schedule:
 - August 15, 2023 - Final Draft Release for stakeholder feedback
 - September 15, 2023 - Virtual public hearings
 - September 29, 2023 - Stakeholder comments due to IPA
 - October 20, 2023 - Filing with ICC
 - February 19, 2024 - ICC Order Expected
- **Distributed Generation Program News** - Recent Distributed Generation Program updates include the following:
 - **Availability of Group A Distributed Generation Capacity** - Initially posted on [September 6, 2023](#).
 - **Distributed Generation (DG) Disclosure Form (DF) Application Programming Interface (API) Working Group Underway** - The kickoff meeting will be held, Monday, September 18, 2023. Follow-up meetings are initially anticipated for the weeks of September 25 and October 2, with additional information to follow. AVs and Designees interested to participate should email the Program Administrator at admin@IllinoisShines.com.
- **EEC Program News** - Recent Equity Eligibility Contractor (EEC) updates include the following:
 - **Advance of Capital Authorizations Temporary Pause** - Initially announced on [September 13, 2023](#)
 - **EEC Waitlists** - Initially posted on [September 1, 2023](#)
 - **Update on Certification of EEC AVs and Designees** - Initially posted on [August 11, 2023](#)
 - **Clarification on Advance of Capital Requests for EECs** - Initially posted on [July 28, 2023](#)
 - **Update on Certification of EECs** - Initially posted on [July 21, 2023](#)
 - **EEC Developer Cap** - Initially posted on [July 14, 2023](#)
- **Consumer Education and Protection**
 - **Reminder to Register Designees/Nested Designees** - The Program's Consumer Protection team has seen an increase in the number of unregistered entities conducting marketing, sales, and other work on behalf of registered AVs and Designees. Every third-party entity that has direct interaction with end-use customers is required to register as a Designee. This includes solar installers, marketing firms, lead generators, and sales organizations. As a reminder, AVs must ensure that both their Designees and Designees of their Designees ("Nested Designees") register with the Program, **prior to** working with any AV or Designee. Designees/Nested Designees must clarify in their registration under which AV and Designee they are registering. **AVs and Designees who fail to ensure Designees and Nested Designees are registered in a timely manner may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including suspension from the Program.**
 - **Disclosure Forms (DFs) - When New DFs are Needed, Signatory Requirement Exceptions, and Portal Inputs** - Initially posted on [August 25, 2023](#)

- **When Are Net Metering Waivers Applicable?** - On [September 8, 2023](#), the Program provided guidance on when Net Metering Waivers are applicable. The announcement also included the Program’s Unavailability of Net Metering Credits Customer Acknowledgement Form ([fillable](#) form and [static](#) form).

Ongoing Operations Updates

- **Part II Verification Cut Off for September** - To allow time for invoice calculation and generation, the last valid Part II Verification date for September will be September 22, 2023. Applications that are Part II verified on or before September 22, 2023 will be included in the October invoicing period. Application processing will continue throughout the last week of the month and any applications that are reviewed between September 23, 2023 and September 30, 2023 will be invoiced in November 2023.
- **Re-Batching for ICC Meetings** - In advance of each submission of batches to the ICC for approval, AVs are provided the opportunity to review the projects that are about to be submitted for re-batching. During re-batching, AVs have the opportunity to withhold or re-batch projects. In the absence of any action by an AV, the Program Administrator will re-batch the projects at their discretion and submit eligible projects to the ICC.

It is extremely important that AVs review their re-batching files on SharePoint to indicate any re-batching preferences, but especially requests to withhold projects from submission. The Program Administrator alerts AVs by email when they have projects that are eligible for re-batching and planned to be submitted to the ICC in the next memo. Unfortunately, sometimes these communications are missed and projects are submitted to the ICC despite an AVs intent to hold a project back.

The Program Administrator requests that AVs who believe they may want to withhold or re-batch projects mark their calendars and review SharePoint folders for re-batching templates. This way, if any email alerts are missed, AVs are still aware of the dates that re-batching opens and can check if any projects are in the upcoming ICC submission. Below are re-batching windows for the rest of 2023:

Re-Batching Opens for AVs	Election Deadline – 12:00 CPT (Re-batching closes for AVs)	Trade Date (ICC Meeting Date)
9/12/2023	9/14/2023	9/28/2023
9/19/2023	9/21/2023	10/5/2023
10/2/2023	10/4/2023	10/19/2023
10/17/2023	10/19/2023	11/2/2023
10/30/2023	11/1/2023	11/16/2023
11/13/2023	11/15/2023	11/30/2023
11/28/2023	11/30/2023	12/14/2023

Application Processing Updates

- **Application Processing Tables** - The Program Administrator updates the application processing tables at IllinoisShines.com/project-application-reports/ on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays. For questions about specific project applications, please contact the Program Administrator at admin@IllinoisShines.com.
- **Application Tips and Tricks** - Supplementing previous guidance, the Program Administrator seeks to continue supporting stakeholders in the avoidance of project applications entering *Need Info* status. Following are important tips for stakeholders to keep in mind when submitting applications.

- One of the most common issues resulting in a *Need Info* status is a data discrepancy between the DF and the project application. AVs can create a new DF to correct discrepancies or changes. The steps to create a revised DF are below:
 - In the portal, use the DF menu's left navigation pane and select the list of DFs.
 - Find the project in question, and hover over the three stacked dots on the far-right side of the screen.
 - Select "Make a copy" to create a new Form ID.
 - Copy the Form ID and then search in the Form ID field to view the copied form.
 - Click "Resume Form" to view the pre-populated Form with the original information. Navigate to the field(s) needing revisions and enter those.
 - Save and continue. After saving, the DF must be renamed.
 - A corrected DF has now been created, for which AVs are required to re-obtain customer signature.
- Additionally, if no changes occurred between DF execution and the Part I application, relevant information on both the DF and the application should match. AVs are encouraged to compare their Part I application to their DF before submission to ensure that unnecessary *Need Info* requests do not delay application review.

Ongoing Program Portal Updates

- Ongoing portal updates and a library of portal help guides can be found at IllinoisShines.com/portal-updates-help-guides/.
- **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 September.** 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.
- **Portal Development Roadmap** - On August 30, 2023, a Portal Development Roadmap was added to the Program website at the [Portal Updates & Help Guides page](#). The Portal Development Roadmap is designed to preview upcoming, planned development for the Illinois Shines portal. Updates on the planned activities will be provided in weekly Program announcements, and detailed in the page's [Portal Updates Blog](#) in conjunction with software releases.

Development Focus	Details	Planned or Actual Delivery
Enhancements, Features and Bug Fixes		
Disclosure Form – Email Validation Error.	Email Validation Errors triggering when a valid email address contains a special characters "-@" Disclosure Form will no longer return an invalid email address error when entering an email address that contains a hyphen/dash (-) immediately before the 'At' symbol (@).	September 15, 2023
Limit number of fees on DG Disclosure Forms to prevent PDF Pagination.	DG Disclosure Forms will now accept a maximum of 5 known fees and 5 unknown fees (for a possible maximum of 10 fees). If the user exceeds 5 of either (known or unknown), the application shows an error	September 15, 2023

	message and does not save the additional fee in the Disclosure Form. This is intended to improve PDF format as adding too many fees will result in pagination issues on the PDF.	
Disclosure Form Validation Error issues on 'Other Party Email Address' field.	DG Disclosure Form displayed a false error message when entering an 'Other Party Email Address' but does not prevent saving of the record or moving forward. The false error message has been removed.	September 15, 2023

Requirements and Reminders

- **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
Draft 2024 Long-Term Renewable Resources Procurement Plan	August 15, 2023	September 29, 2023	

- **IPA Issues Request for AVs and Installer Designees Interested in Serving Stranded Illinois Shines DG Customers** - As previously [announced](#), the Program continues to review submissions on a rolling basis for entities interested in serving stranded customers, with particular interest in identifying AVs and/or installer Designees willing to assist stranded customers with project maintenance/repair work. Please see the full [Request for AVs and Designees](#), including details regarding the opportunity to support stranded customers, eligibility requirements, and anticipated responsibilities.
- **Program Administrator Office Hours** - Existing and prospective AVs and Designees who have Programmatic questions, project application inquiries, or are experiencing technical difficulties the portal or other Program or seek support in resolving other challenges are invited to attend open Office Hours offered by the Program Administrator via Zoom each week, using a waiting room format to support meetings with individual AV or Designee teams for privacy. Upcoming Office Hours and join link: <https://energy-solution.zoom.us/j/95588710302Co>
 - Wednesday, September 20, 10:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m. CPT
 - Wednesday, September 27, 10:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m. CPT
 - Wednesday, October 4, 10:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m. CPT

REMINDER: All Program updates can be found on the [Program Updates webpage](#), and a new [Vendor Forums & Key Dates](#) page at the Program website provides a calendar of upcoming webinars, meetings, support, feedback requests, key dates, holidays, and more. Please visit [IllinoisShines.com/vendor-forums-feedback/](https://illinoisshines.com/vendor-forums-feedback/) for continuous updates.

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