

2023-2024 TCS Score Release, 2024 Long-Term Plan Draft Release, Community-Driven Community Solar Application Deadline, Disclosure Form Tools

August 25, 2023

Program News

- **Traditional Community Solar (TCS) Timeline for Projects Submitted June 1, 2023** – All projects submitted in the 2022-2023 Program Year have been processed and scored. Projects in Group A that met the minimum waitlist score of 5 points have been added to the Group A 2023-2024 Waitlist, as there was no available capacity for these projects. Any Group A projects submitted in the 2023-2024 Program Year will follow the same process. Projects submitted on November 2, 2022 to May 31, 2023 in Group B that met the minimum waitlist score of 5 points were awarded capacity for the 2023-2024 Program Year. After these awards, there is 35.68 MW of Group B capacity available for projects submitted on June 1, 2023. The TCS Scores for Group B projects submitted on June 1, 2023 were published on August 24, 2023 on the Traditional Community Solar [page](#) of the website, and a [corresponding public announcement](#) was shared. The anticipated schedule of next steps is the following:
 - September 8, 2023, 11:59 pm CT – 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 – Random selection event for projects with tied scores
 - September 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 Agency anticipates the next steps in this process with the following schedule. The IPA welcomes public comments on the draft 2024 Long-Term Plan. **Written comments are due on Friday, September 29.** The Agency will also hold virtual public hearings for the draft 2024 Long-Term Plan on September 15.
 - Final Draft Release for stakeholder feedback - August 15, 2023
 - Virtual public hearings - September 15, 2023. Meeting information for public hearing for each utility's service area can be found [here](#).
 - Stakeholder comments due to IPA - September 29, 2023
 - Filing with ICC - October 20, 2023
 - ICC Order Expected - February 19, 2024
- **Program Year 2023-2024 Community-Driven Community Solar (CDCS)** - The CDCS application window for the 2023-2024 Program Year closes at 11:59 p.m. CST on **August 30, 2023** (90 days after start of Program Year). Please see Section 5 of the Program Guidebook for more information. Applications will not be accepted after close of the application window until the next Program Year. Waitlisted projects from the 2022-2023 Program Year will receive 2023-2024 capacity. After capacity is awarded to those projects, there will be 1.5 MW of capacity available for Group A (all 2023-24 projects will go on a waitlist if point minimum is reached) and 17.53 MW of capacity available for Group B projects submitted in the 2023-2024 Program Year. The [August 4, 2023](#) announcement included reminders for a successful CDCS application submission.
- **Mentorship Pilot Interest Form** - The Agency and Program Administrator will launch a Mentorship Pilot program in Fall 2023, with the goal of fostering relationships between market participants and empowering small businesses, Diverse Business Enterprises (DBEs), and Equity Eligible Contractors (EECs) with the tools and training to successfully participate in Illinois Shines. Entities interested in participating in the Mentorship Pilot are asked to complete a form available at <https://forms.office.com/r/dMTyxVyLji> by **September 1, 2023**. There are a limited number of slots available for the first cohort of the Mentorship Pilot, and mentees will be selected on a first come, first serve basis.
- **Designee Management Plans** - Section X.B.1 of the Consumer Protection Handbook states that “[e]very Approved Vendor that works with or uses Designees is required to have and follow a Designee Management Plan as of September 1, 2023,” and provides details on required plan components. The Program Administrator

shared additional guidance on this requirement on [August 9, 2023](#). With the **September 1, 2023**, deadline fast approaching, AVs are encouraged to reach out to the Program Administrator at admin@IllinoisShines.com with any questions in meeting this Program requirement.

- **DG DF API Working Group - Call for Participation and Feedback** - The Agency and Program Administrator seek engagement from stakeholders regarding usage, functionality, and feedback on the development of a Distributed Generation (DG) Disclosure Form (DF) API (Application Programming Interface) to be incorporated into the Program portal; a Community Solar DF API was recently added to the Program portal. For those who have expressed interest, an availability survey will be sent for an initial meeting of the DG DF API Working Group expected to be held September 15 or September 18, 2023. Participation is still welcomed by interested AVs and Designees.
- **Illinois Power Agency Webinar - *Bring Solar to School: Benefits, Challenges, and Opportunities*** - Please join the Illinois Power Agency on **Thursday, August 31 at 12:00 p.m. CST** for the Power Hour Webinar, *Bring Solar to School: Benefits, Challenges, and Opportunities*. Webinar speakers include Audrey Steinbach, Senior Program Manager for Illinois Shines; Matt Seaton, Chief Financial Officer, Illinois State Board of Education; Gabriela Martin, Program Director (Energy), Illinois Clean Energy Community Foundation; and Mia Korinke, Campaign Mobilization Director, Climate Jobs IL. During the webinar, the speakers will highlight how public schools (K-12) can take advantage of state incentives to install solar, discuss challenges that schools face to go solar, and will highlight opportunities and best practices for solar adoption. Register link: https://us06web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZlvcO-pqTsuE9VjgesFJ_eXbUmYfqi_V9fA#/registration
- **Disclosure Forms (DFs) – When New DFs are Needed, Signatory Requirement Exceptions, and Portal Inputs**
 - **When New DFs are Needed** - The standard DF has been a central consumer protection requirement since Program inception. The baseline requirement is that if information provided to the customer in their DF substantively changes, a new DF must be provided to and signed by the customer to ensure the customer has up-to-date and accurate information about their project. The [Program Guidebook](#) explicitly provides limited exceptions to this requirement for changes in AC size below a certain threshold. This week, a [chart was published to the Program website](#) to address several additional circumstances and whether specific changes in information contained in a Disclosure Form trigger the requirement to have the customer sign a new Disclosure Form. One entry in the chart concerns the Program requirement that when the DC size decreases by the greater of 5% or 1kW AC, a new Disclosure Form is required. The Program Administrator acknowledges some market confusion previously on this DC size decrease threshold requiring a new Disclosure Form. **Accordingly, please note that the Program Administrator will require a new DF for Part I and Part II applications submitted on, or after, September 1, 2023 that meet this criteria. For Part I and Part II applications submitted prior to September 1, 2023, the Program Administrator will require entities to provide proof that the customer was aware of, and signed off on, the project size decrease. Such proof may come in the form of a new DF, a scope change document, and/or an installation contract that permits such size changes without additional customer approval.**
 - **DF Signatory Requirement Exceptions** - As stated in Section V of the [Consumer Protection Handbook](#), “[t]he signatory on the Disclosure Form must be the holder of the relevant utility account, or, if the account holder is a company or organization, an individual authorized to sign on behalf of the account holder.” There are limited exceptions where the signatory on the Disclosure Form may vary from this requirement. These limited exceptions, along with clarifications on who should sign Disclosure Forms when the customer is a company or other organization, are outlined in [a new document published to the Program website](#).
 - **Portal Inputs – Average Retail Rate and Price to Compare** - A new Portal Inputs document published to the Program website provides input rates utilized for Program portal calculations. The document will be updated quarterly.
 - For Distributed Generation, these include the Current Average Retail Rate (for ComEd/Ameren/MidAmerican) used to calculate the Savings Estimates for DG Disclosure

Forms, and for rural electric co-ops or municipal utilities, an average statewide retail rate is used and updated annually.

- For Community Solar, a Price to Compare is provided for the utilities.
- **EEC Program News** - Recent Equity Eligibility Contractor (EEC) updates have included the following:
 - **Update on Certification of EEC AVs and Designees** - Initially posted on [August 11, 2023](#)
 - **EEC Developer Cap** - Initially posted on [July 14, 2023](#)
 - **Update on Certification of EECs** - Initially posted on [July 21, 2023](#)
 - **Clarification on Advance of Capital Requests for EECs** - Initially posted on [July 28, 2023](#)

Ongoing Operations Updates

- **Re-Batching for the September 14, 2023 ICC Meeting Open Monday, August 28 – Wednesday, August 30 12:00 p.m. CPT** - In advance of each submission of batches to the ICC for approval, Approved Vendors 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 Approved Vendors review their re-batching files on SharePoint to indicate any re-batching preferences, but especially requests to withhold projects from submission. The Program Administrator makes an effort to alert 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 Approved Vendors 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, Approved Vendors 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 p.m. CPT (Re-batching closes for AVs)	Trade Date (ICC Meeting Date)
8/28/2023	8/30/2023	9/14/2023
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

- **Part II Verification Cut-Off for August** - To allow time for invoice calculation and generation, the last valid Part II Verification date for August is today, **August 25, 2023**. Applications that are Part II verified on or before August 25, 2023 will be included in the September invoicing period. Application processing will continue throughout the last week of the month and any applications that are reviewed between August 26, 2023 and August 31, 2023 will be invoiced in October. **For CS projects, due to additional invoice calculations that need to be done, the last valid Part II Verification date for August was August 18, 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 Tools** - Following up from previous guidance, the Program Administrator continues to support stakeholders in avoiding project applications going into *Need Info* status. Below are several tips for stakeholders to keep in mind when filling out applications.

- The Program Administrator continues to identify common causes of *Need Info* requests resulting from AV submission on project applications. Here are some common issues that result in delays while information is verified.
 - Plot map and the application show different azimuth of arrays
 - Plot map and the application show a different number of modules
 - AC size between the Disclosure Form and the application vary by more than the allowable amount
 - Installer is not registered as a Designee of the AV (for projects that are already installed)
 - Plot map does not match the application because the wrong document was uploaded
 - Proof of site control is missing a signature or a date
 - Property owner on the Disclosure Form and/or application does not match the name on the site control *and* the relationship is not specified in Part I, Section 6
- ***As a reminder, when Approved Vendors are aware of differences between the information on the Disclosure Form and the application or supporting documents, please be proactive and explain them in the comment section of Part I Overview or Part II Differences. This is very helpful and will likely result in quicker application validation.***

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.

Development Focus	Details	Planned or Actual Delivery
Enhancements, Features and Bug Fixes		
Update 'Required Part 2 Documents' Table when conditions change to remove documents that are no longer required	Please see Portal Updates Blog for detail	August 17, 2023
Show 'Subject to prevailing wage' field to Approved Vendors (AVs)	Please see Portal Updates Blog for detail	August 17, 2023
Make prevailing wage document required	Please see Portal Updates Blog for detail	August 17, 2023
API Bugfix: Create Disclosure Form - Invoice Type field: correct selection mapping	Please see Portal Updates Blog for detail	August 17, 2023

Requirements and Reminders

- **Find a Community Solar Project Report Update** - The IPA and Program Administrator seek updated community solar project information from Approved Vendors to populate the Find a Community Solar Project report [at the Illinois Shines Program website](#), with project-specific information known to AVs. This report is valuable to interested subscribers, the Agency, other developers, and other stakeholders. A template to like to edit or add projects has been sent to community solar AVs. Please email your completed template to communitysolar@illinoisshines.com by **September 1, 2023** for inclusion in the next report update. Updates to this list will be made quarterly, and Approved Vendors are encouraged to reach out with any necessary updates between these releases.
- **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, August 30, 10:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m. CPT
 - Wednesday, September 6, 10:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m. CPT
 - Wednesday, September 13, 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/ for continuous updates.

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