Long-Term Plan to be Filed with the ICC, Community Solar Cure Scoring *Need Info* Requests Due October 23, DG DF API Working Group Update

October 20, 2023

<u>Program News</u>

- **Long-Term Plan Update** - The 2023 Long-Term Plan will be filed with the ICC today, October 20, 2023. The Program Administrator anticipates publishing a Program-specific announcement with details on the filed plan on Monday, October 23, 2023.
- **Community Solar Program News** - Recent CS Program updates include:
    - **Program Year 2023-24 Community Driven Community Solar (CDCS)** - The Program Administrator has completed the Application Review and Scoring Period for all 2023-24 CDCS applications ahead of the original schedule and Preliminary Scores were shared October 6, 2023. Preliminary Scores are not published on the Program website but are shared with individual AVs who submitted applications. AVs have <mark>until 11:59 p.m. CPT on October 23, 2023</mark>, to cure all scoring *Need Info* requests. The Agency shared the following revised 2023-2024 CDCS project selection schedule:
        - August 31, 2023 – September 22, 2023 – Application Review
        - September 23, 2023 – October 6, 2023 – Application Cure Period & Application Scoring
        - October 6, 2023 – Release Preliminary Scores
        - **October 6, 2023 – October 23, 2023 – Application Scoring Cure Period**
        - October 30, 2023 – Release scores, begin two-week appeal period
        - November 13, 2023 – Deadline for AVs to submit appeals to Program Administrator
        - November 29, 2023 – Appeal determinations released to AVs and any changes will be published to the website
        - December 6, 2023 – Random selection event for projects with tied scores (if necessary)
        - December 6, 2023 – Final scores published
- **Distributed Generation Program News** - Recent DG Program updates include:
    - **DG Disclosure Form (DF) Application Programming Interface (API) Working Group** - Following the Working Group kickoff on September 18, 2023, further development on the API has continued and the next DG DF API Working Group is anticipated to be held the week of October 30, 2023, with additional information forthcoming shortly. AVs and Designees interested in participating should email the Program Administrator at admin@IllinoisShines.com.
- **New Disclosure Form (DF) CSV Template Available** - As previously shared, new DF CSV templates have been updated to the Program Portal, and at the Program website's Program Documents page. Participating entities should always ensure they download the current version of the CSV template from the Program Portal.
- **Mentorship Program** - The Illinois Shines Mentorship Program, supporting the equity provisions of the Climate and Equitable Jobs Act, will launch on Monday, October 23, 2023. The inaugural session of the Mentorship Program includes eight meetings and will conclude this winter.
- **EEC Program News** - Recent Equity Eligibility Contractor (EEC) updates include the following:
    - **Equity Investment Eligible Community (EIEC) Map Updated** – Posted on September 28, 2023
    - **Advance of Capital Authorizations Temporary Pause** - Posted on September 13, 2023
    - **EEC Waitlists** - Posted on September 1, 2023

- The **EEC Project Category Hub** has previous updates listed on: Update on Certification of EEC AVs and Designees, Clarification on Advance of Capital Requests for EECs, Update on Certification of EECs, and EEC Developer Cap.
- Consumer Education and Protection
  - The **Consumer Protection Hub** has previous updates listed on: Reminder to Register Designees/Nested Designees, When Are Net Metering Waivers Applicable?, and Disclosure Forms (DFs) - When New DFs are Needed, Signatory Requirement Exceptions, and Portal Inputs.

Ongoing Operations Updates

- **Re-Batching for ICC Meetings -** In advance of each submission of batches to the ICC for approval, AVs are provided 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)
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

- **Extended Part II Application Processing Times -** In early October 2023, the Program Administrator received an unusually high number of Small DG Part II applications. Due to these recurring high volumes week over week, Part II application review time is currently approximately three and a half weeks, exceeding the typical target of two-week processing. To address the queues and resume meeting the two-week processing target, the Program Administrator has shifted resources to add capacity to the Part II processing team. The Program Administrator continues to prioritize the review of applications based upon the submission date.

  The Program Administrator is committed to restoring review times to the typical timeframes that AVs, Designees, and underlying customers expect. AVs and Designees are asked to remember that applications that are incomplete or contain discrepancies from Part I applications will take longer to process and will result in Need Info requests, which require complete and timely AV responses to verify the application. The Program Administrator is available to support AVs and Designees with application questions and appreciates the patience of stakeholders as we calibrate resources to meet application processing needs.

- **Application Processing Tables** - Application processing tables are maintained at IllinoisShines.com/project-application-reports/. These tables are updated daily. For questions about specific project applications, please contact the Program Administrator at admin@IllinoisShines.com.
- **Application Status Update** - As announced on October 13, 2023, two new statuses are now live in the portal and will show in AV project reporting. These statuses are:
  o **Technical Review:** The application is being reviewed by our technical team. This may include technical items related to the system such as battery schematic reviews. This status is intended to provide better clarity than "Reviewed," which was the previous status used for applications undergoing technical review. Turnaround time on technical reviews is approximately two weeks.
  o **NI Unresponsive AV:** The application has a pending *Need Info* (NI) request. An application would be placed in this status after the AV had been contacted about the N*eed Info* request four times by email and the Program Administrator tried to contact the AV by telephone. If the AV remains unresponsive to the request after the phone call attempt, this project will be placed in "NI Unresponsive AV" status until a response is received.
- **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.
  o **Missing Demographic Data** - The Program has observed frequent confusion regarding required Demographic Data on project applications, and stakeholders are asked to keep the following in mind when submitting applications:
    ▪ For project applications submitted after September 15, 2021, the date of passage for the Climate and Equitable Jobs Act (Public Act 102-0662, or "CEJA"), consistent with CEJA requirements, Illinois Shines project applications must include demographic information associated with the construction and installation of a project to participate in the Program. To fulfill this requirement, AVs must provide the projected number of workers and the demographic breakdown by race, gender, and participation in job training or workforce development programs, or other means of compliance with the standard for Equity Eligible Persons (EEP). More information about Part I and Part II application requirements can be found in Appendix I of the Program Guidebook.

    For installations completed prior to September 15, 2021, an exemption may be requested if the AV is unable to obtain demographic information.

Ongoing Program Portal Updates

- Ongoing portal updates, a Portal Development Roadmap, and a library of 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 October. 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.

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.	Comments for Chapter 7, 9, and 10 have been posted at the Program's website. All other comments have been shared at the Agency's website.

- **Part II Verification Cut Off for October -** To allow time for invoice calculation and generation, the last valid Part II Verification date for October will be <mark>October 24, 2023</mark>. Applications that are Part II verified on or before October 24, 2023 will be included in the November invoicing period. Application processing will continue throughout the last week of the month and any applications that are reviewed between October 25, 2023 and October 31, 2023 will be invoiced in December 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, are experiencing technical difficulties with the Program portal, or seek support in resolving other challenges are invited to attend open Office Hours offered by the Program Administrator each week. These Zoom meetings use 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, October 25, 10:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m. CPT
    - Wednesday, November 1, 10:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m. CPT
    - Wednesday, November 8, 10:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m. CPT

REMINDER: All Program updates can be found on the Program Updates webpage, and a 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.