# Illinois Shines | IPA ILLINOIS POWER AGENCY

# Advance of Capital– Final Criteria Posted, Designee Renewal – Final Notice, Draft Drawdown Calculations Now Available

## December 15, 2023

Next Week in Illinois Shines *(Program events & due dates are found on the [Vendor Forums & Key Dates webpage](#))*

- Events
  - Monday, December 18, 2023 – Mentorship Program session #8 (*by invitation*)
- Due Dates (no key due dates next week)

Stakeholder Support

- **Program Administrator Office Hours** - Wednesday, December 20, 2023 - 10:00 – 11:00 a.m. CPT - individual AV or Designee support for Program requirements, portal, application, or other questions. Zoom join link: [https://energysolution.zoom.us/j/95588710302Co](https://energysolution.zoom.us/j/95588710302Co)
- **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.
  - **Metering Device Identification** - The Program Administrator has observed some project applications including incorrect identification of the metering device, resulting in a *Need Info* request which delays application verification. For example, some applications indicate Enphase microinverters as the metering device for the project; however, Enphase products utilize unique instruments to provide accurate communication of solar production from the microinverters to the monitoring portal, and in systems utilizing this equipment, the IQ Combiner Box or the IQ Gateway is considered the metering device. Ensuring the correct metering device is indicated in the project application can help avoid delays in application processing. For technical or other assistance on project applications, please contact the Program Administrator at [admin@illinoisshines.com](mailto:admin@illinoisshines.com).

Program News – New or Updated Items *(All Program updates can be found on the [Program Updates webpage](#))*

- **Advance of Capital Evaluation– Final Criteria Posted** - On [December 12, 2023](#), the Agency published an announcement which provided the [Final Criteria](#) and [Rationale](#) for the advance of capital evaluation criteria. The Agency has resumed accepting new advance of capital requests through Part I applications. Please see the [full announcement](#) for explanation and details.
- **Draft Drawdown Calculations Now Available to AVs on SharePoint** - Following the cure period for the 2023 Annual Report, the Program Administrator has calculated Drawdowns resulting from the REC Performance Evaluation process and has reported these calculations to the contracting utility. The contracting utility is responsible for providing formal notification of any Drawdown amounts to AVs. Once this formal notification is made, the AV is required to act within a short window of time. To allow AVs more time to become familiar with the calculations and receive support from the Program Administrator before the formal notification on Drawdowns is sent, the Program Administrator are providing DRAFT calculations for your review. Calculations are not final until they have been delivered by the Contracting Utility. There are no changes anticipated between the draft and final calculations; however, if any issues come to light before final calculations are sent there may be adjustments to address those concerns.

  Timeline for Drawdowns and Related Events
  - October 13, 2023 – Annual Report cure period ends. REC delivery information considered final for use in REC Performance Evaluation.

- o November 15, 2023 – Program Administrator provides Drawdown calculations to Contracting Utility.
- o December 8, 2023 – Draft Drawdown calculations made available to AVs on SharePoint for review. **Available now in your 2023 Annual Report folder.**
- o Approximately January 8, 2024 (or "notice date") – Contracting Utilities provide formal notification of the amount of Drawdowns to AVs.
- o 5 Business Days after notice date – Deadline for AV to communicate if they prefer to make a cash payment instead of allowing the letter of credit used for collateral to be drawn upon (if applicable).
- o 15 Business Days after notice date – Utility will draw on collateral unless an alternative request was received from AV (see above) and/or payment was received by the 14th business day after notice date.
- o 90 days after drawn upon collateral – AV required to top up collateral, if required.

**Resources:**
Please see 6(d)(v)(1) on page 9 and Section 4.3 on page 26 of the 2019 REC Contract for full detail on this process.
- o REC Performance Evaluation Guide
- o REC Performance Evaluation Walk through Video

- **Designee Renewal – Final Notice** - Designee renewals were due on November 30, 2023, for all Designees and Nested Designees that registered in the Illinois Shines program before August 1, 2023. For those Designees that failed to renew their registration, the Program Administrator is preparing to send a Notice of Potential Violation, and may request Designee Management Plans from their AVs. It is the AV's responsibility to ensure that their Designees and Nested Designees are compliant with this Program requirement. If a Designee or Nested Designee is no longer participating in Illinois Shines, it should use the renewal form to indicate this, and it will be removed from the Program. The application for Designee renewal can be found here: https://forms.office.com/r/NJF18YrAnT.

**Program News – Previously Published Items** (*All Program updates can be found on the Program Updates webpage)*

- **General Program**
    - o **AV Application Stakeholder Feedback Request**
        - ▪ The Program Administrator proposes to update the current AV application to improve clarity and relevance; incorporate questions on demographic information the Agency is required to collect from AVs; and reflect the application's use for verifying Equity Eligible Contractors.
        - ▪ The Program Administrator seeks feedback on the proposed updated AV application and stakeholder feedback is due **January 11, 2024**. Feedback should be submitted to admin@illinoisshines.com. <mark>The updated AV application will go into effect June 1, 2024 for the next Program Year.</mark>
        - ▪ Stakeholders can review the redlined AV Application and Program Guidebook Section 2 updates on the Program website's Become and AV or Designee page.
    - o **Minimum Equity Standard (MES) Mid-Year Reports Due – December 31, 2023** - Mid-Year Reports to show progress toward meeting the Minimum Equity Standard for the 2023-24 Program Year are <mark>due December 31, 2023.</mark> Participating Approved Vendors and Designees are required to submit their Mid-Year Report for Program Administrator review by completing the form found here. If your organization is struggling to meet the requirement, the Program Administrator will reach out after your submission is received to share additional resources and guidance.
- **Equity Eligible Contractors (EEC) Program News -** See full EEC hub on Program website

- o **Equitable Energy Future Grant Program NOFO -** The Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO) released a Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) for their Equitable Energy Future Grant Program on November 16, 2023. This grant is available to EECs developing projects that meet defined eligibility requirements with awards ranging between $250,000 - $1,000,000 to cover predevelopment/preconstruction expenses. Applications will be considered until June 30, 2024. This grant program is not associated with the Illinois Shines program or the IPA.
- **Distributed Generation (DG) Program News -** See full Small DG and Large DG hubs on Program website
  - o **Guidance on Group A Distributed Generation (DG) Capacity and Waitlists -** As previously shared, guidance on Group A DG capacity and waitlists was provided for AVs and Consumers.
- **Public Schools Program News –** See full Public Schools hub on Program website
  - o **Other Funding Sources for Public Schools Solar Project Development Outside of Illinois Shines -** The Program has published a resource at the Public Schools project category hub sharing other funding sources for public schools solar development not offered through the Illinois Shines program or the Illinois Power Agency. Funding is subject to change based on availability and requirements of the associated entity.
- **New to the Program Website -** The following key additions to www.IllinoisShines.com have been shared:
  - o All Project Category Hub pages include category-specific updates, news, and reminders that originally appeared in full Program announcements. AVs and Designees are still expected to read all Program announcements, but the website's project category hub blogs are designed to feature information most relevant for each project category.
  - o Minutes from the December 1, 2023 Consumer Protection Working Group (Consumer Protection Working Group page)

## Ongoing Operations Updates

- **Part II Verification Cut Off for December -** To allow time for invoice calculation and generation, the last valid Part II Verification date for December will be **December 20, 2023.** Applications that are Part II verified on or before December 20, 2023 will be included in the January invoicing period. Application processing will continue throughout the last week of the month and any applications that are reviewed between December 21, 2023 and December 31, 2023 will be invoiced in February 2024.
- **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 and for the first part of 2024:

| Re-Batching Opens for AVs | Election Deadline – 12:00 CPT (Re-batching closes for AVs) | Trade Date (ICC Meeting Date) |
|---|---|---|
| 12/28/2023 | 1/2/2024 | 1/17/2024 |
| 1/12/2024 | 1/17/2024 | 1/31/2024 |
| 1/23/2024 | 1/25/2024 | 2/8/2024 |
| 1/31/2024 | 2/2/2024 | 2/20/2024 |
| 2/20/2024 | 2/22/2024 | 3/7/2024 |
| 3/5/2024 | 3/7/2024 | 3/21/2024 |
| 3/19/2024 | 3/21/2024 | 4/4/2024 |
| 4/2/2024 | 4/4/2024 | 4/18/2024 |
| 4/16/2024 | 4/18/2024 | 5/2/2024 |

## Application Processing Updates

- **Reminder that Project Submissions to Group A Still Encouraged** - Although both distributed generation blocks of annual capacity for Group A have been exhausted for this Program Year, AVs may still submit applications to reserve a place on the waitlist for the next Program Year for each Program category. AVs are encouraged to submit applications as they are ready instead of holding applications until June 2024. Applications on the waitlist will be processed in the order in which they were received once the new Program Year starts on June 1, 2024 when new Program Year capacity will be released.
- **Extended Part II Application Processing Times** – See prior announcement.
- **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.

## Ongoing Program Portal Updates

- **Update: Portal Upgrade to PVWatts API Version 8 Now Planned for December 21, 2023** – See prior announcement.
- Ongoing portal updates, a Portal Development Roadmap, and a library of help guides can be found at IllinoisShines.com/portal-updates-help-guides/. As of November 14, 2023, portal releases will take place on Tuesday nights. Stakeholders can refer to the Portal Updates page to view the latest market facing enhancements.
- **Updates on Portal Issues, Improvements, and Future Releases -** The planned system maintenance windows on **Tuesday and Thursday evenings** (from 8:00 p.m. to 11:00 p.m. CPT) will extend through December. 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 some cases, Portal availability may resume earlier than 11:00 p.m. CPT, though **AVs and Designees should plan on the full three hours**. In the event that portal restoration is unexpectedly incomplete as of 11:00 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 | | |
| Validation when bi-facial question not answered on arrays | This enhancement adds a validation to array details sections (Part II, Section 4 and Part II, Section 1) where section cannot be completed until bi-facial question is answered for each array. | December 13, 2023 |
| Part II: Validations | This feature adds program specific validations into the Part II application. These validations will serve to help users get instant feedback when entering project specifications that are outside the bounds of the Program. Validations include but are not limited to:<br><br>• Warning message will appear if "ANSI C.12" is not selected as the metering standard for a project with AC inverter size > 10 kW AC.<br>• Warning message will appear if Inverter Size AC kW changes by more than the greater of 25% or 5 kW from the size noted on Part I. The warning message will display the value originally entered on Part I.<br>• GATS Unit IDs must be in the format NON###### and cannot be NON000000.<br>• M-RETS Unit IDs must be in the format M##### with the letter M followed by four or five numbers and cannot be M0000. | December 13, 2023 |
| New Disclosure Forms (DF) submitted missing required data: DG-CSV (2) - [93. 15-year capacity factor must be less than 100.] and check validation errors for UI generated forms | This enhancement adds a validation check for the Capacity Factor calculation in the DG CSV templates in that it only allows values less than or equal to 100. This enhancement should help catch any bad data entered in fields whose values are used in calculating Capacity Factor. | December 13, 2023 |
| DG Purchase DF – Guide to Going Solar brochure conditionality | This fix ensures "Guide to Going Solar" brochure information will only be added to DG DF PDFs when the DF being generated is for a Purchase Project with a REC incentive being passed on to the customer. Currently this additional information is included for all DG DFs, regardless of relevance. This change will shorten DFs by two pages when the information is not applicable. | December 13, 2023 |
| Pricing Table: Rounding issue with base prices in DG purchase form - 883 comment | This enhancement updates the release updates the retail rate prices to include decimal places up to the third place. This will allow more precise retail rates to be displayed in the DG price to compare section of the PDF documents. | December 13, 2023 |
| Refund Date - Modify Refund Date Verbiage & Allow backdating | This enhancement modified verbiage of CS DF Refund date question from "Date subscriber will receive a refund if the CS project is not completed or energized" to "Date that triggers refund if CS project is not completed or energized". Also modified field validation to allow backdating. | December 13, 2023 |
| CS DF API: Retrieve DF - Calculated Values Returned | For this bug fix in the CS API, "Estimated bill credits for first year" values should match between API and PDF generated, and all calculated values in DF should be returned by API call. | December 13, 2023 |
| DG API: Create DG DF (Key/Values for DG) | This enhancement provides an API Endpoint for submitting DG DFs. Feature will allow users to submit a Purchase, Lease, and or PPA DF and have it automatically be sent to the end user. | December 13, 2023 |

| Development Focus | Details | Planned or Actual Delivery |
|---|---|---|
| **Enhancements, Features and Bug Fixes** | | |
| DG API: Request DF Data | This enhancement of the *get disclosure* end-point of the DF API, originally developed for CS projects, has been updated to support retrieval of DFs related to DG projects. AVs with access to the API can find additional documentation in the Greenhouse portal. | December 13, 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 |
|---|---|---|---|
| AV Application Stakeholder Feedback | December 8, 2023 | January 11, 2024 | |
| Advance of Capital Evaluation Criteria | October 31, 2023 | November 14, 2023 | Final advance of capital evaluation criteria and rationale were released on December 12, 2023. |
| Draft 2024 Long-Term Renewable Resources Procurement Plan | August 15, 2023 | September 29, 2023 | The filed 2024 Long-Term Plan and Redline between the Draft 2024 Plan and Filed 2024 Plan, along with stakeholder 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. |

- **Long-Term Plan Update -** As announced on October 23, 2023, the IPA filed the 2024 Long-Term Plan with the ICC on October 20, 2023. Stakeholders can engage with the filed 2024 Long-Term Plan in Docket 23-0714 following the ICC's rules of practice. Please keep in mind that the filed 2024 Plan is not finalized upon filing and anything contained within the Plan should be considered preliminary. The Agency expects a final order from the ICC regarding any contested issues in the 2024 Long-Term Plan no later than February 20, 2024, which will contain the final determination on any contested issues. Then the Agency will publish a final 2024 Long-Term Plan in compliance with that final order, marking the conclusion of this process. Stakeholders can access the filed 2024 Long-Term Plan and Redline between Draft 2024 Long-Term Plan and Filed 2024 Long-Term Plan on the Program Documents page on the website.
- **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.

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