

Guidance on Group A DG Capacity and Waitlists, Upcoming CDCS Random Selection Event

December 1, 2023

Program News

- **Distributed Generation (DG) Program News** - Recent DG updates include the following:
 - **Guidance on Group A Distributed Generation Capacity and Waitlists** - On November 20, 2023, the Agency published distinct guidance on Group A Distributed Generation capacity and waitlists for both [AVs](#) and [Consumers](#).
 - **DG Disclosure Form (DF) Application Programming Interface (API) Working Group Concluded** - The DG DF API Working Group sessions have concluded, and organizations already preparing to use the API should contact the Program Administrator at api-support@energy-solution.com for any needed support and official readiness. Participating entities who are interested to become familiar with either the DG or CS APIs may also contact the Program Administrator at the email above.
- **Community Solar Program News** - Recent CS Program updates include:
 - **Upcoming Program Year 2023-24 Community-Driven Community Solar (CDCS) Random Selection Event** - As announced on November 17, the Agency will hold a Random selection event for projects with tied scores on **December 6, 2023 at 2:00 p.m. CPT**. Registration link: https://energy-solution.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_2m44QuuCTOiN2-FDKEu3EQ
- **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 **due December 31, 2023**. Participating Approved Vendors and Designees should 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 Contractor (EEC) Program News** - Recent EEC updates include the following:
 - **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.
 - **Advance of Capital Evaluation Criteria** - Stakeholders comments were due on November 14, 2023, and five commenters submitted their feedback. Comments have been posted to the [Program website](#) and are currently under Agency review. The Agency tentatively estimates finalizing and publishing the final Advance of Capital evaluation criteria in the following weeks and begin accepting re-submissions of requests during the month of December.
 - The [EEC Project Category Hub](#) has previous updates on: [Equity Investment Eligible Community \(EIEC\) Map Updated](#), [Advance of Capital Authorizations Temporary Pause](#), [EEC Waitlists](#), and other items.
- **180-Day Prioritization Window for Public Schools Subcategories Closed** - As [previously shared](#), the 180-Day Prioritization Window for Public Schools subcategories closed on November 28, 2023. This block is now open to all project types.

- **Designee Renewal Process** - Designee renewals were due on November 30, 2023 for all Designees and Nested Designees that were registered in the Program before August 1, 2023. As part of the renewal, Designees are required to submit training materials showing that their agents have been trained in accordance with Program requirements. Examples of applicable training materials include PowerPoints, handouts, and other resources shared with Designee agents for Program-related training. **If training materials are not received, the renewal application cannot move forward and will be considered incomplete.** 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. It is the AV's responsibility to ensure that their Designees and Nested Designees are compliant with this Program requirement; non-compliance may result in the Program Administrator requesting the AV provide its Designee Management Plan for Program Administrator review, and possible additional responses as set out in the Consumer Protection Program Violation Response Matrix located in Section X.D. of the [Consumer Protection Handbook](#). **Any Designees and Nested Designees that do not renew their status will receive a Notice of Potential Violation and may be subject to disciplinary action.** The application for Designee renewal can be found here: <https://forms.office.com/r/NJF18YrAnT>.
- **Consumer Education and Protection**
 - **Consumer Protection Working Group** - The Agency and its Program Administrators for Illinois Shines and Illinois Solar for All hosted the December Consumer Protection Working Group meeting today, December 1, 2023. The presentation and notes from the Working Group will be published on the [CP Working Group page](#) on the Program website. The Working Group meets the first Friday of each month, with the next meeting to be held on Friday, January 5, 2024, at 10:00 a.m. CPT. If you are interested in participating in the group and future meetings, please submit the [form](#) on the website.
 - **DG Project Look Up Tool** - The Program website has restored a Project Look Up tool, enabling customers to view the status of DG projects submitted to the Program. The tool, which requires the entry of an Application ID, a Disclosure Form ID, or the customer email address, is available at the Program website's [Project Status page](#).
 - The Vendor-oriented [Consumer Protection Requirements and Resources Hub](#) contains important information and links, including information on Net Metering Credits and Vendor DF Resources. Recent updates include: [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](#).
- **New to the Program Website** - The Program has added two new resources for participating entities: [REC Performance Evaluation](#) and [Approved Vendor Program Requirements Annual Checklist](#). These tools and other help resources can be found at the [Portal Updates & Program Help Guides page](#). Additional resources including some REC related guides will be available soon.

Ongoing Operations Updates

- **November REC Invoicing Opened December 1, 2023** - REC invoices and Quarterly Netting Statements were made available for download from AV SharePoint folders today, December 1, 2023. Invoices must be submitted to the utility by **December 10, 2023** to receive payment for the December invoice period. Any invoice amounts not submitted to the utility by December 10, 2023 will be carried forward and included in the next invoice period (March 2024).
- **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)
12/14/2023	12/18/2023	1/3/2024
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

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 capacity will be released.
- **Extended Part II Application Processing Times** - As [previously shared](#), the Program Administrator received an unusually high number of small DG applications this fall. The Program Administrator has made progress in reducing the overall queues and anticipates review times will be back within the two-week expectation by the end of the calendar year unless application volumes spike again. Current processing times are just over a month for Part I and Part II.
- **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 Tips and Tricks** - Supplementing previous guidance, the Program Administrator seeks to continue supporting stakeholders in the avoidance of project applications entering *Need Info* status.
 - **System Photos:**
 - Project applications require the submission of a photograph depicting the entire system. Using multiple photographs can be helpful in this regard, and AVs are encouraged to use this approach to better facilitate application review and verification.
 - Multiple photographs can be uploaded as separate files in the “Additional Documents” area of the application or may be combined into a single document and uploaded in the “Photograph(s) of the project” area. In addition, labeling the photos within such a document is extremely helpful in aiding review by application processors.

Ongoing Program Portal Updates

- **Portal Upgrade to PVWatts API Version 8 Planned for December 12, 2023** - The Program portal currently uses [PVWatts](#) API version 6, to calculate REC values, which is due to be retired in early Jan 2024. A release currently scheduled for December 12, 2023, will upgrade the portal to PVWatts API version 8, which is the most current version. PVWatts V8 also updates the weather data to 2020 TMY data from the NREL National Solar Radiation Database (NSRDB) for locations covered by the database.
- 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.

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
Advance of Capital Evaluation Criteria	October 31, 2023	November 14, 2023	The Agency is reviewing submitted comments. Comments have been posted to the Program Website .
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.
- **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, December 6, 10:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m. CPT
 - Wednesday, December 13, 10:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m. CPT
 - Wednesday, December 20, 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.