

AV Application Stakeholder Feedback Request, CDCS Random Selection Event Results

December 8, 2023

Program News

- **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 is also proposing to update Section 2 of the Program Guidebook with the following edits related to AV applications:
 - A new requirement that AVs must promptly submit a renewal application if there is a transfer of ownership of 50% or more of the entity, or if there is a new basis for the AV to answer "yes" to one of the questions in the Company and Affiliate History section (formerly referred to as the Legal and Regulatory section);
 - Language reflecting the existing process and requirements for an AV to change its registration status to "inactive" or "withdrawn";
 - Clarification that an AV may not simply fail to renew its application and failure to renew may lead to disciplinary action, which may also apply to an entity's participation in Illinois Shines as a Designee (if applicable);
 - Revision of Section 2.D - Evaluation Criteria for Approved Vendors; and
 - Clarification about how conditional application approvals are handled.
 - The Program Administrator seeks feedback on the proposed updated AV application and the proposed edits to Section 2 of the Program Guidebook.
 - Stakeholder feedback is due January 11, 2024 and should be submitted to admin@illinoisshines.com.
 - Stakeholders can review the redlined [AV Application](#) and [Program Guidebook Section 2](#) updates on the Program website's [Become an AV or Designee](#) page.
- **Community Solar Program News** - Recent CS Program updates include:
 - **Program Year 2023-24 Community-Driven Community Solar (CDCS) Random Selection Event Results** - On [December 7, 2023](#), the results of the CDCS Random Selection event were posted to the Program website's CDCS page. The Random Selection Event was hosted on December 6, 2023 and the [recording](#), [presentation slides](#), and the [results spreadsheet](#) detailing Group A and Group B project awards and waitlists for each Group (projects receiving scores of at least ten points), are posted to the CDCS page of the Program website's Project Category Hubs. A [special announcement](#) regarding the Random Selection Event was published on December 7, 2023..
- **Equity Eligible Contractors (EEC) Program News** - Recent EEC updates include the following:
 - **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 estimates finalizing and publishing the final Advance of Capital evaluation criteria in the next week and will begin accepting re-submissions of requests during the month of December.
 - **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.

- **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 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.
- **Distributed Generation (DG) Program News** - Recent DG updates include the following:
 - **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](#).
 - **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.
- **Public Schools Program News** - Recent Public Schools updates include the following:
 - **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.
 - **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 Program has added new resources for participating entities:
 - A [Become an Equity Eligible Contractor](#) flyer has been added to the [Become an EEC or Designee page](#).
 - A [REC Performance Calculation Evaluation Walkthrough](#) video has been added to the [Portal Updates & Program Help Guides page](#).

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 on 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)
12/28/2023	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 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 for Part I and mid-January for Part II, as new application submissions remain high. 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.
 - **Certified Installers:** A system must be installed by an entity certified as a Distributed Generation Installer in good standing with the Illinois Commerce Commission (ICC). As outlined in the Program Guidebook, Section 4(d), “*The installer must be registered as a Designee of the AV (for projects that*

are already installed).” If the installer name listed on the project application cannot be associated with an ICC DG Certified entity, the installer will not be accepted. AVs can check the status of a DG installer here: <https://www.icc.illinois.gov/authority/distributed-generation-installer>.

Ongoing Program Portal Updates

- **Update: Portal Upgrade to PVWatts API Version 8 Now Planned for December 21, 2023** – Updating a previous item, the Program portal upgrade to PVWatts® Version 8 (the most current version) is now scheduled as part of a December 21, 2023 release. The Program portal currently uses PVWatts® API Version 6 to calculate REC values, which is due to be retired in early January 2024. PVWatts® Version 8 also updates the weather data to 2020 typical meteorological year (TMY) data from the NREL National Solar Radiation Database (NSRDB) for locations covered by the database; NSRDB weather data used in PVWatts® V6 is generally from 2015. This update provides production estimates based on the latest, state-of-the-art models from NREL that may differ from the Version 6 estimates, depending on the project location and inputs. For a complete description of PVWatts® V8, see the [description on the PVWatts website](#).
- 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
AV Application Stakeholder	December 8, 2023	January 11, 2024	
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 13, 10:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m. CPT
 - Wednesday, December 20, 10:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m. CPT
 - Wednesday, December 27, 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.