

AV Application Stakeholder Feedback Request due January 11, Minimum Equity Standard (MES) Mid-Year Report Past Due

January 5, 2024

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

- **Due Dates**
 - Wednesday, January 10, 2024 - Invoices must be submitted to the utility
 - Thursday, January 11, 2024 - [AV Application Stakeholder Feedback Request](#) Due

Stakeholder Support

- **Program Administrator Office Hours** - January 10, 2024 - 10:00 – 11:00 a.m. CPT - individual AV or Designee support for Program requirements, portal, application, or other questions. Zoom join link: <https://energy-solution.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.
 - In reviewing completed Disclosure Forms, the Program Administrator has noticed several concerning patterns of fields being completed incorrectly or incompletely, which then provides incorrect or inadequate information to the customer. When the Program Administrator finds Disclosure Forms with errors, it may require the AV or Designee to have the customer re-sign a corrected Disclosure Form, and patterns of erroneous Disclosure Forms may lead to pre-disciplinary and disciplinary action.

In the recently shared [linked resource](#), AVs and Designees can refer to several specific examples of errors that the Program Administrator commonly sees in Distributed Generation Disclosure Forms which includes screenshots and additional details.

A compilation of Application Tips and Tricks from announcements can now be found at the [Program Help Guides and Application Tips webpage](#) of the Program website.

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

- **AV Application Stakeholder Feedback Request due January 11 – Input Requested**
 - 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. **Please use the subject line "[Responder's Name] – Response to AV Application Feedback Request"** The updated AV application would take effect June 1, 2024, for the next Program Year.
 - Stakeholders can review the redlined [AV Application](#) and [Program Guidebook Section 2](#) updates on the Program website's [Become an AV or Designee](#) page.
- **Minimum Equity Standard (MES) Mid-Year Report Deadline; Past Due Notice** - MES Mid-Year Reports were due December 31, 2023. Participating Approved Vendors and Designees who have not yet submitted their mid-year report should do so as soon as possible. Participating Approved Vendors and Designees are required to submit their Mid-Year Report for Program Administrator review by completing the form [found here](#).

- **Minimum Equity Standard (MES) Year End Report Details Forthcoming** - Details on the MES Year End Report will be released soon by the Program Administrator. The MES Year End Report will be due following the close of this Program Year and will encompass reporting related to participating entities' workforce across the 2023-24 Program Year.
- **Micro Grant of \$10,000 7th District Small Business Restoration Grant** - State Senator Mike Simmons announced the launch of the 7th District Small Business Restoration Grant with \$2.5 million in funds available to assist small businesses located in the 7th District. The grant is provided in partnership with the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity and facilitated by five local organizations:
 - Andersonville Chamber of Commerce
 - Rogers Park Business Alliance
 - Edgewater Chamber of Commerce
 - Uptown Chamber of Commerce
 - Lincoln Square Ravenswood Chamber of Commerce

Applications for the 7th District Small Business Restoration Grant close February 2, 2024 at 5 p.m. To apply or learn more about eligibility and application requirements, visit: www.7sbrg.org.

- **New to the Program Website** - The following key additions to www.IllinoisShines.com have been shared:
 - New [Errors in Filling Out DG Disclosure Forms \(Vendor Disclosure Form Resources page\)](#)
 - Qualified Person [Project Attestation Form \(Program Documents page\)](#)
 - Application Tips & Tricks Blog ([Program Help Guides and Application Tips page](#))

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

- **General Program**
 - **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 is 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

- Approximately January 8, 2024 (or “notice date”) – Contracting Utilities provide formal notification of the amount of Drawdowns to AVs.
- 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).
- 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.
- 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.

- [REC Performance Evaluation Guide](#)
- [REC Performance Evaluation Walk through Video](#)
- **2023 Illinois Shines AV and Designee Program Satisfaction Survey Results** - On December 21, 2023 the Program Administrator [issued an announcement sharing the results](#) of the 2023 Illinois Shines AV and Designee Program Satisfaction Survey. The Program thanks participating entities for sharing their feedback, which will be reviewed and considered.
- **Equity Eligible Contractors (EEC) Program News** - See full EEC [hub on Program website](#)
 - **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.
- **Distributed Generation (DG) Program News** - See full [Small DG](#) and [Large DG](#) hubs on Program website
 - **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](#).

Ongoing Operations Updates

- **January REC Invoicing Opened January 1, 2024** - REC invoices and Quarterly Netting Statements were made available for download from AV SharePoint folders on January 1, 2024. Invoices must be submitted to the utility by January 10, 2024 to receive payment for the January invoice period. Any invoice amounts not submitted to the utility by **January 10, 2024** will be carried forward and included in the next invoice period (April 2024).
- **Part II Verification Cut Off for January** - To allow time for invoice calculation and generation, the last valid Part II Verification date for January will be January 24, 2024. Applications that are Part II verified on or before January 24, 2024 will be included in the February invoicing period. Application processing will continue throughout the last week of the month and any applications that are reviewed between January 25, 2024 and January 31, 2024 will be invoiced in March 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 early 2024:

Re-Batching Opens for AVs	Election Deadline – 12:00 CPT (Re-batching closes for AVs)	Trade Date (ICC Meeting Date)
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** – See prior [announcement](#).
- **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

- **Portal Upgrade to PVWatts API Version 8 Completed December 21, 2023** - The Program portal upgraded PVWatts® to Version 8 (the most current version) as part of a December 21, 2023 release. The Program portal previously used 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** – Scheduled system maintenance windows continue on **Tuesday and Thursday evenings (from 8:00 p.m. to 11:00 p.m. CPT)**, during which times the Portal is expected to be unavailable to users, which the Program hopes is minimally disruptive to Program participants. **Users working in the portal should save their work prior to the 8:00 p.m. CPT start of system maintenance window, 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.**

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 approving the 2024 Long-Term Plan no later than February 20, 2024, which will contain the final determination on any contested issues. The Agency will subsequently 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.