

Minimum Equity Standard Year-End Report Webinar, Project Inspection Resumption, Annual Complaints Report Published

March 8, 2024

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

- **Events**
 - No events are scheduled for next week
- **Due Dates**
 - March 10, 2024 – Invoices must be submitted to the utility

Stakeholder Support

- **Program Administrator Office Hours** – March 13, 2024 - 10:00 – 11:00 a.m. CPT - Individual AV or Designee support for Program requirements, portal, application, or other questions. Zoom 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.
 - **Overview Comments** - Adding comments to the application overview may prevent many types of *Need Info* delays. Overview comments may be used to explain changes, relationships, and discrepancies. Examples of comments to provide additional clarification include:
 - Providing an explanation on why the name on the Proof of Site Control is different from the name on the Interconnection Agreement. One example would be: *Jack Baker and Jane Miller are a married couple*. If a comment is not made explaining the relationship between the two names, the application would go to *Need Info*.
 - Indicating that the installer has changed from the DF to Part I or from Part I to Part II. This would go to *Need Info* unless overview comments are used to explain the change. An example of this comment would be: *The installer is Company ABC. Business XYZ uses its services as a subcontractor and obtains the documentation for the customer*.
 - The AC size changes, requiring a new DF to be signed. The overview comments can be used to alert the processor that a new DF has already been signed. This type of comment would include: *A new DF (12345) has been signed due to change in AC size*.
 - Keep in mind that applications must still meet requirements; overview comments cannot be used to circumvent Program requirements.

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

- **Minimum Equity Standard (MES) 2023-24 Year-End Report Webinar and Resources** - An informational webinar on the MES 2023-24 Year-End Report was held on March 6, 2024. The [recording](#) and [presentation slides](#) have been uploaded to the [Program Year Webinars](#) page on the website, and questions and answers from the webinar will soon be published. As a reminder, the Program published guidance on the MES Year-end Report on [February 27, 2024](#). The MES Year-End Report is due July 15, 2024, following the close of this Program Year, and encompasses reporting related to participating entities' Illinois-based project workforce for the 2023-24 Program Year. Stakeholders are encouraged to visit the program's Equity Accountability System page for MES resources and may request support from the Program Administrator by emailing MES@illinoisshines.com. FAQs related to the webinar will be released next week to ensure proper clarity is provided to Program participants on these important equity provisions.

- **Project Inspections to Resume March 2024** – On [March 6, 2024](#), the Program announced details on the resumption of project inspections starting on March 18, 2024, including an overview of inspection types, minor and material deficiencies, and the inspection results process that will be provided to stakeholders. Inspections are critical to ensure Program requirements are met and that the installed system matches the equipment described in the Part II application, including site plans and photos. For assistance or questions relating to project inspections, contact the Inspection Team at inspections@illinoisshines.com.
- **Annual Complaints Report Published** - On February 29, 2024, the Agency filed the [2023 Annual Complaints Report](#). Under the Long-Term Plan, the Agency is required to file this report annually with the Illinois Commerce Commission to document the frequency and nature of complaints related both to Illinois Shines and Illinois Solar for All. The report also includes details of enforcement actions taken by the respective Program Administrators related to such complaints. This year's report highlights both data surrounding complaints as well as certain trends related to complaints.
- **Register for IPA Power Hour– Renewable Energy Projects Financing: Distributed Solar** – The Agency will host the March Power Hour on **March 29, 2024** at 12:00 p.m. CPT. Please visit this [link](#) to register for the event.
- **Final Illinois Power Agency Policy Study Published** – As recently shared, the Agency published the IPA Policy Study on March 1, 2024, as required by Section 1-129 of the Illinois Power Agency Act. The Policy Study was published following a request for public comment, and analyzed the potential impacts of three policy proposals from the Illinois General Assembly's Spring 2023 legislative session. The policy study, and public comments received, are available at the Agency's website at <https://ipa.illinois.gov/ipa-policy-study.html>.
- **New to the Program Website** - The following key additions to www.IllinoisShines.com have been shared:
 - [Utility Net Metering Reference Table](#) ([Program Documents](#) page)
 - The [Block Capacity Dashboard](#) now includes the amount of capacity that is waitlisted due to the developer cap
 - 2023 [Annual Complaints Report](#) ([Program Violations and Complaint Reports](#) page)
 - MES 2023-24 Year-End Report [recording](#) and [presentation slides](#) ([Program Year Webinars](#) page)
 - March's Consumer Protection Working Group [minutes](#) ([Consumer Protection Working Group](#) page)

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

- **General Program**
 - **Resources for Equity Eligible Contractors and Small Businesses** - As previously shared, the program added a [Mentorship Program page](#) to the program website, providing resources in support of Approved Vendors and Designees that are minority-owned, woman-owned, veteran-owned, disability-owned or small businesses, and EECs. The Mentorship Program page features a report summarizing the inaugural Illinois Shines Mentorship Program, FAQs from the Mentorship Program's eight sessions, and the first edition of the [Small and Emerging Business Guide](#) published for new businesses seeking information on getting started with Illinois Solar for All or Illinois Shines.
 - **Illinois Shines Legacy Portal Retirement** - On June 30, 2024, the Program will be retiring the Illinois Shines legacy Portal administered by the prior Program Administrator, after which AVs and Designees will no longer be able to access it. **To minimize disruptions to AVs and Designees and ensure they have necessary portal data, the Program requests users who still access the legacy portal provide information on how they currently use the legacy Portal and how often it is accessed.** Approved Vendors and Designees who continue accessing the Illinois Shines legacy portal should provide this information to the Program Administrator at admin@IllinoisShines.com.
 - **Security Enhancement: Illinois Shines Portal Password Expiration – Updated Date** - To maintain security of the portal and its data, effective after the **March 19** portal maintenance window, registered

users will be required to update their password every 180 days. AVs and Designees can change their passwords at their convenience but will receive a reminder notice 10 days prior to expiration. If a registered user fails to change their password, their password will become expired, and users will need to request a new one before they can log in. To establish a new password for an expired account, select the "Forgot Password" link on the Portal login page and the system will send the user an email with a link and instructions for setting a new password. Steps to change your password before expiration:

1. Login to the [Illinois Shines Portal](#).
2. View your profile by selecting the **person** icon in the upper right corner next to your name.
3. Scroll to the bottom of your profile and select the **Change Password** button.
4. Enter your new password in both fields and select the **Change** button.
5. Once back on your profile select **Save**.

Please Note: Passwords already over 180 days in age on **March 19, 2024**, when this update is released will be locked out and require use of the Forgot Password option. **The Program Administrator suggests registered users be proactive and update their password now.**

- **ComEd Electric Choice ID Implementation and the CS March Quarterly Reporting Period Update** - The IPA is aware that the ComEd community solar subscription portal has been inaccessible since February 15, 2024. The IPA has been in contact with impacted AVs.
- **Energy Workforce Equity Portal Participation Sees Continued Growth** - See [prior](#) announcement
- **IPA Annual Report** - See [prior](#) announcement

Ongoing Operations Updates

- **March REC Invoicing Opened March 1, 2024** - REC invoices and Quarterly Netting Statements were made available for download from AV SharePoint folders on March 1, 2024. Invoices must be submitted to the utility by **March 10, 2024** to receive payment for the March invoice period. Any invoice amounts not submitted to the utility by March 10, 2024 will be carried forward and included in the next invoice period (June 2024).
- **Part II Verification Cut Off for March** - To allow time for invoice calculation and generation, the last valid Part II Verification date for March will be **March 25, 2024**. Applications that are Part II verified on or before March 25, 2024 will be included in the April invoicing period. Application processing will continue throughout the last week of the month and any applications that are reviewed between March 26, 2024 and March 31, 2024 will be invoiced in May 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 the next re-batching windows:

Re-Batching Opens for AVs	Election Deadline – 12:00 p.m. CPT (Re-batching closes for AVs)	Trade Date (ICC Meeting Date)
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
4/30/2024	5/2/2024	5/16/2024
5/13/2024	5/15/2024	5/30/2024
5/17/2024	5/21/2024	6/5/2024
6/3/2024	6/5/2024	6/20/2024
6/13/2024	6/17/2024	7/2/2024
7/8/2024	7/10/2024	7/24/2024

Application Processing Updates

- **Extended Application Processing Times Resolved** - The Program Administrator is reviewing the final few Part I applications for the current Program Year and anticipates that all remaining applications will be processed by the week of March 11. Part II applications are currently being processed within 10 business days. AVs may still submit applications for closed blocks to be placed on a first-come-first-served waitlist. Waitlisted applications will not be verified until after the start of the new Program Year.
- **Application Processing Tables** - Application processing tables are maintained at [IllinoisShines.com/project-application-reports/](https://illinoisshines.com/project-application-reports/). These tables are typically updated daily, but the Program Administrator is currently experiencing technical issues and data on the [Project Application Reports](#) page and it may not be updated daily. Thank you for your patience as the Program Administrator works on a solution. For questions about specific project applications, please contact the Program Administrator at admin@IllinoisShines.com.

Ongoing Program Portal Updates

- Ongoing portal updates, a Portal Development Roadmap, and a library of help guides can be found at <https://illinoisshines.com/portal-updates/>. 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, which can also be found [at the Program website](#):

Proposal or Feedback Topic and Link to Details	Request for Comment Released	Deadline for Comment	Results or Updates to Request
Draft Policy Study Open for Public Comment	January 22, 2024	February 26, 2024	Comments received are published here . On March 1, 2024 the Agency finalized the IPA Policy Study, which is available at https://ipa.illinois.gov/ipa-policy-study.html

- **ICC Issues Final Order Approving the 2024 Long-Term Plan** - On February 20, 2024, the Illinois Commerce Commission (ICC) issued a Final Order in which it approved the Administrative Law Judge’s Proposed Order, with modifications, of the 2024 Long-Term Plan. The Final Order is available in [Docket 23-0714](#). The Agency has 60 days to publish a final 2024 Long-Term Plan that conforms to the 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; a final version of the Plan will be added when it becomes available. **A new Program Guidebook that outlines requirements for the 2024-25 Program Year will be released on April 19, 2024.**
- **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. 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.