2024-25 Program Year Final REC Prices and REC Calculator, List of FEJA Job Training Programs Posted, State of the Program Update

March 29, 2024

Coming up in Illinois Shines *(Program events & due dates found at the Vendor Forums & Key Dates webpage)*

- Events
  - March 29, 2024 – Portal Maintenance from 6:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m. CPT
  - April 5, 2024 - Consumer Protection Working Group at 10:00 to 11:00 a.m. CPT. The meeting's agenda and Zoom link will be posted here at the Program website.
- Due Dates
  - April 1, 2024 - April REC invoicing opens
  - April 2, 2024 - Re-batching opens for AVs
  - April 4, 2024 - Re-batching closes for AVs at 12:00 p.m. CPT
  - April 5, 2024 - Deadline for REC Contract stakeholder feedback. Responses should be sent to IPA.Solar@illinois.gov
  - April 10, 2024 - Equity Accountability System Assessment stakeholder feedback is due. Responses should be sent to IPA.ContactUs@illinois.gov with the subject "[Responder's Name] – Stakeholder Feedback on EAS Assessment"
  - Key Dates Relating to the start of Program Year 2024-25 commencing on June 3, 2024
    - April 19, 2024 – Final Program Guidebook, Final Consumer Protection Handbook, and Final Contract Requirements will be released
    - Mid-April, 2024 – MES 2024-25 Compliance Plans window opens
    - End of April, 2024 – Final 2024 REC Contracts will be released
    - May 1, 2024 – MES Year-End Report submission window opens
    - May 27 - June 2, 2024 – Program Year 2023-24 closure
    - June 3, 2024 – Program Year 2024-25 opens and MES Compliance Plans for Program Year 2024-25 are due
    - July 15, 2024 – MES Year-End Report for Program Year 2023-24 and Annual Reports covering the 2023-24 Delivery Year are due

Stakeholder Support

- **Program Administrator Office Hours** – April 3, 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.
  - **Photos of Arrays** are critical to successful Part II application verification. Below are helpful tips to consider prior to submitting photos of arrays:
    - Multiple photos may be submitted, either assembled into a PDF or as separate JPEG files.
    - It is important to ensure that all modules are visible in the photo because processors count each module. Photos that make it easy to discern the number of modules in each array are best. Aerial photos are accepted but not required.
    - Please submit photos that are in-focus, high resolution, and well-lit; inability to confirm details can result in *Need Info* requests and delay application review.

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

- **Upcoming Portal maintenance on March 29, 2024** – The Portal will be unavailable due to a scheduled system maintenance window today, <mark>March 29, 2024 from 6:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m. CPT.</mark> The Portal is expected to be unavailable to users during this time, which the Program hopes is minimally disruptive to Program participants. **Users working in the portal should save their work prior to the 6:00 p.m. CPT start of system maintenance window, as any unsaved information will be lost when the system is moved into maintenance mode.** The Portal availability may resume earlier than 7:00 p.m. CPT, though AVs and Designees should plan on the full hour.

- **Draft Program Guidebook Feedback** - The Agency thanks stakeholders for feedback submitted on the draft Program Guidebook, and comments have been posted to the Program Documents and Stakeholder Feedback pages. The Agency is reviewing the feedback received and will release a final version of the Guidebook on April 19, 2024, 45 days in advance of the start of the 2024-25 Program Year, for AVs and Designees to become fully compliant with new requirements by June 3, 2024.

- **2024-25 Program Year Final REC Prices and REC Calculator** - The 2024-25 Program Year Final REC Prices and an updated REC Calculator reflecting Program Year 2024-25 REC prices has been added to the Program Documents page of the Program's website.

- **FEJA Job Training Programs and Grantees List Published on Energy Workforce Equity Portal** - On March 20, 2024, the IPA updated the Energy Workforce Equity Portal with the Future Energy Jobs Act (FEJA) Job Training Program List. The list helps identify graduates of qualified FEJA job training programs and can be accessed by clean energy companies participating in the IPA's Illinois Shines program, Self-direct Program, and utility-scale procurements to support their efforts to hire Equity Eligible Persons to meet the Minimum Equity Standards. For more information, please see the announcement published by the IPA.

- **State of the Program Update** – On March 29, 2024, the Program released its newest Illinois Shines *State of the Program* communication, reflecting updates as of the midpoint of Program Year 2023-24. The update shares key areas of Program progress, implemented solutions, current initiatives to address needs and requests shared by stakeholders, and an updated Program vision and commitments that stakeholders can expect from the Program Administrator.

- **Consumer Protection Working Group** - The Agency and its Program Administrators for Illinois Shines and Illinois Solar for All will host the next Consumer Protection Working Group meeting on <mark>April 5, 2024, at 10:00 a.m. CPT.</mark> The Working Group's meeting agendas, Zoom links, and a participation interest form can be found on the Consumer Protection Working Group page on the Program website.

- **Transition to an Equitable Clean Energy Future: Labor and Equity Requirements for IPA Renewable Programs and Procurements Webinar** - On March 20, 2024, the IPA hosted a webinar on the *Transition to an Equitable Clean Energy Future: Labor and Equity Requirements for IPA Renewable Programs and Procurements*. The recording and presentation slides are available on the Agency's website.

- **New to the Program Website** - The following key additions to www.IllinoisShines.com have been shared:
  - Final 2024-25 REC Prices (Program Documents page)
  - 2024-25 Program Year REC Calculator (Program Documents page)
  - Errors in Filling Out Distributed Generation Disclosure Forms Walkthrough Video (Help Guides and Application Tips page)

- **General Program**
  - 2024 REC Contracts - Released for Feedback – Comments are Due April 5, 2024 – On March 22, 2024, the IPA released the draft 2024 REC Contracts for stakeholder feedback. Stakeholders can review the draft 2024 REC Contracts and redline versions of the contracts (March 22, 2024 vs 2022 Contract) on the Program Documents page. Responses are due by <mark>April 5, 2024</mark> and should be sent to IPA.Solar@illinois.gov. After comment review, the final versions of the REC Contracts are expected to be published on the Program website by the end of April 2024.
  - IPA Requests Stakeholder Feedback on Equity Accountability System Assessment – Comments are Due April 10, 2024 - On March 21, 2024, the Agency requested stakeholder feedback on the Equity Accountability System Assessment. Please provide comments via email attachment to IPA.ContactUs@illinois.gov with the subject "[Responder's Name] – Stakeholder Feedback on EAS Assessment" by April 10, 2024.
  - 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, presentation slides, and FAQs have been uploaded to the Program Year Webinars page. 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 PY, and encompasses reporting related to participating entities' Illinois-based project workforce for the 2023-24 PY. Stakeholders are encouraged to visit the Program's EAS page for MES resources and may request support from the Program Administrator by emailing MES@illinoisshines.com.
  - EEC DG Capacity - In accordance with the 2022 Long-Term Plan, any unallocated capacity reserved for Equity Eligible Contractors (EEC) Distributed Generation (DG) projects will become available to be allocated to either EEC Community Solar (CS) or EEC DG projects after nine months of the start of the Program Year. EEC DG capacity is available to be allocated to EEC CS projects within the same Group and subject to waitlist and developer cap procedures. This adjustment to capacity is effective as of March 1, 2024, which is nine months from the start of the 2023-24 Program Year, which began on June 1, 2023.
- **Consumer Education and Protection** – See full Consumer Education and Protection hub on Program website
  - **Annual Complaints Report Published** – See previous announcement

Ongoing Operations Updates

- **April REC Invoicing Opens April 1, 2024** - REC invoices and Quarterly Netting Statements will be made available for download from AV SharePoint folders on April 1, 2024. Invoices must be submitted to the utility by April 10, 2024 to receive payment for the April invoice period. Any invoice amounts not submitted to the utility by April 10, 2024 will be carried forward and included in the next invoice period (July 2024).
- **Part II Verification Cut off for April** - To allow time for invoice calculation and generation, the last valid Part II Verification date for April will be April 24, 2024. Applications that are Part II verified on or before April 24, 2024 will be included in the May invoicing period. Application processing will continue throughout the last week of the month and any applications that are reviewed between April 25, 2024 and April 30, 2024 will be invoiced in June 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)
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
7/16/2024	7/18/2024	8/1/2024

Application Processing Updates

- **Application Processing Tables** - Application processing tables are maintained at 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 2024 REC Delivery Contracts	March 22, 2024	April 5, 2024	Comments should be emailed to IPA.Solar@illinois.gov.
Equity Accountability System Assessment	March 21, 2024	April 10, 2024	Comments should be emailed to IPA.ContactUs@illinois.gov with the subject line "[Responder's Name] – Stakeholder Feedback on EAS Assessment"
Draft Program Guidebook	March 13, 2024	March 27, 2024	Comments received are published here. On April 19, 2024, the IPA will release a final version of the Guidebook, 45 days in advance of the start of the 2024-25 Program Year, for AVs and Designees to become fully compliant with new requirements by June 3, 2024

- **ICC Issues Final Order Approving the 2024 Long-Term Plan** – See previous announcement
- **IPA Issued 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.
- **Illinois Shines Legacy Portal Retirement -** As previously announced, on June 30, 2024 the Program will retired the Illinois Shines legacy Portal administered by the prior Program Administrator, after which AVs and Designees will no longer be able to access it. Please see the previous announcement for more details.
- **Illinois Shines Domain Whitelist -** To ensure that all communications are received by the Program Administrator and not delivered to junk mail, please check with your organization's IT department to "whitelist" the email domains energy-solution.com, illinoisabp.com, and illinoisshines.com.
- **Dropbox Sign Service Interruption – March 30, 2024 -** Dropbox Sign will be undergoing maintenance mode for one hour starting at Saturday, March 30, 2024 at 11:00 p.m. to Sunday, March 31, 2024 at 12:00 a.m. CPT. Please note that the Dropbox Sign services will not be available during this time and the Sign API service will return a HTTP 503 code. More information can be found on Dropbox Sign's website.

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