

Year-End Program Closure, Updated MES Submission Materials and Supplemental Guidance, Stakeholder Feedback Published

April 12, 2024

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

- **Events**
 - No events are scheduled next week

- **Due Dates**
 - April 16, 2024 – Re-batching opens for AVs
 - April 18, 2024 at 12:00 p.m. CPT - Re-batching closes for AVs
 - **Key Dates Relating to the start of Program Year 2024-25 commencing on June 3, 2024**
 - April 11, 2024 – [2024-25 MES Compliance Plans](#) window opened
 - April 19, 2024 – Final Program Guidebook, Final Consumer Protection Handbook, and Final Contract Requirements will be released
 - End of April, 2024 – Final 2024 REC Contracts will be released
 - May 1, 2024 – MES 2023-24 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 17, 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.
 - **Data Inconsistencies** are a common issue that leads to *Need Info* delays. The following are examples of data inconsistencies the Program encounters often:
 - **Qualified Person:** Applications must include the full name of the ‘Qualified Person’ to ensure the application will not result in a *Need Info* delay. For example – Jane Doe instead of Jane D. This is a common occurrence the Program Administrator sees in Part II, section 3.
 - **Project Address:** Ensuring the address listed on supporting documentation is the same address listed in the project application is essential, especially for critical items such as Interconnection Agreements, Net Metering Approvals, and Certified Transcripts of Payroll (for projects subject to prevailing wage). If address information doesn’t match, the application will enter a *Need Info* status and result in delayed review.

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

- **Program Closure May 27, 2024 – June 3, 2024** - On Monday, May 27, 2024 at 8:00 a.m. CPT the Illinois Shines program will close for the 2023-24 Program Year and will re-open Monday, June 3, 2024 at a.m. CPT. During this closure the Portal will be unavailable for use by stakeholders while the Program prepares the portal for the new Program Year including updated block capacity configurations and more. **All portal functions,**

including the ability to submit Part I project applications or to download or submit Disclosure Forms (in all forms and manners including API, CSV, PDF), will be unavailable during this period. All other activities and support provided by the Program Administrator will remain available. The Portal will re-open for the 2024-25 Program Year on Monday, June 3, 2024 at 8:00 a.m. CPT.

- **Minimum Equity Standard (MES) – Updated Submission Materials and Supplemental Guidance** - On [April 11, 2024](#), the Program published a resource with updated Minimum Equity Standard (MES) submission materials and guidance. The announcement provided key dates, the [Equity Eligible Persons \(EEP\) Attestation](#) form, [updates to the Program Year 2023-24 MES Year-End Report template](#), release of the [MES Compliance Plan for Program Year 2024-25](#), additional guidance for union entities seeking an MES waiver, and other helpful clarifications, guidance, and additional resources.
- **REC Contracts Feedback Comments Posted** - The Agency thanks stakeholders for feedback submitted on the Draft 2024 [REC Contracts](#). The comments have been posted to the [Stakeholder Feedback](#) page.
- **Illinois Power Agency Power Hour – Climate Change and Health Equity** - The Agency will host the April Power Hour on **April 26, 2024** at 12:00 p.m. CPT. This educational webinar will explore the connections between climate change and public health with a specific focus on equity. Ensuring equity in the growing clean energy economy is a top priority for the Agency. Presenters include IPA's Deputy Legal Counsel, Sarah Duffy, and Roosevelt University's Program Director and Professor of Health Sciences, Dr. La Vonne Downey. Please visit this [link](#) to register for the event.
- **Upcoming External Events** - Below are external events that the Illinois Shines program team will participate in.
 - **Renewable Energy Education & Contractor Clinic** - This event will be hosted on April 23-24 by the Minority Business Development Center. Speakers include representatives from Illinois Shines, Illinois Solar for All, and the Illinois Department of Commerce & Economic Opportunity. The clinic will include interactive workshops, training sessions, and networking opportunities with industry leaders. Please see this [link](#) for more information and register [here](#).
 - **State of Illinois Employment Workshops** - For dates, times, and locations of upcoming State of Illinois Employment Workshops please view this [link](#).
- **New to the Program Website** - The following key additions to [www.IllinoisShines.com](#) have been shared:
 - Updated MES submission materials and resources ([Equity Accountability System](#) page)
 - [Equity Eligible Person \(EEP\) Attestation](#) form ([Equity Accountability System](#) page)
 - [Program Year 2024-25 MES Compliance Plan submission](#) form ([Equity Accountability System](#) page)
 - [Consumer Protection Working Group April 5, 2024 meeting minutes](#) ([CP Working Group](#) page)
 - Stakeholder Feedback on the Draft 2024 REC Contracts ([Stakeholder Feedback](#) page)
 - [2019 Reasons for Removal](#) document ([Program Documents](#) page, *REC Contracts* section)

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

- **General Program**
 - **Initial Review Underway on Waitlisted Distributed Generation (DG) Projects** - As previously shared, even where project category blocks have exhausted their available allocated capacity for the current Program Year, customers may still purchase, install, and finance solar projects, and vendors may continue to submit applications. This week, the Program announced that limited processing of waitlisted DG projects has begun in advance of the new Program Year when more capacity will become available, and these applications will now reflect as "Updated" in the website's [Project Look Up](#). These projects will not be Verified by the Program Administrator until new capacity is released for the 2024-25 Program Year, commencing June 3, 2024.

Ongoing Operations Updates

- **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)
4/16/2024	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
7/29/2024	7/31/2024	8/14/2024

Application Processing Updates

- **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/>. 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 received are published here . Final 2024 REC Delivery Contracts will be published at the end of April, 2024.
Equity Accountability System Assessment	March 21, 2024	April 10, 2024	Comments received will be published here .
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.

- **Program Guidebook Reminder** - **The current [Program Guidebook](#) is in effect through June 2, 2024.** The draft Program Guidebook for the 2024-25 Program Year, published for stakeholder feedback on [March 13, 2024](#), is in final development by the Agency and will be finalized and published by April 19, 2024. **The 2024-25 Program Guidebook does not go into effect until the start of the 2024-25 Program Year on June 3, 2024.**
- **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.
- **IPA Power Hour– Renewable Energy Projects Financing: Distributed Solar** – See [previous](#) announcement

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