

Program Year 2024-25 Program Guidebook, Consumer Protection Handbook, and Contract Requirements Documents Released, Year-End Program Closure

April 19, 2024

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

- **Events**
 - April 26, 2024 at 12:00 p.m. CPT - Illinois Power Agency Power Hour – *Climate Change and Health Equity*. Please visit this [link](#) to register for the event.

- **Due Dates**
 - April 24, 2024 - Part II Verification Cut off for April
 - **Key Dates Relating to the start of Program Year 2024-25 commencing on June 3, 2024**
 - April 18, 2024 – Final Program Guidebook, Final Consumer Protection Handbook, and Final Contract Requirements released
 - April 22, 2024 – Release of Final 2024 REC Contracts
 - 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 24, 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.
 - **Need Info Requests for Waitlisted Applications for 2024-25 Program Year** - In advance of Program Year 2024-25, the Program Administrator has begun initial review of waitlisted project applications. Please note that the applications are not being verified, but if more information is needed, a *Need Info* request will be sent.
 - AVs who receive a *Need Info* request for a waitlisted application should provide the information to the Program Administrator following the usual process.
 - Approved Vendors are expected to respond to *Need Info* requests in a timely manner to minimize delays in application approval.
 - Waitlisted project applications with *Need Info* requests that are cured prior to the start of the new Program Year are more likely to be verified in early June once the new Program Year commences on June 3, 2024.

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

- **Updated Program Year 2024-25 Program Guidebook, Consumer Protection Handbook, and DG and CS Contract Requirement Documents Released** - On [April 18, 2024](#), the Program published updated versions of the [Program Guidebook](#), [Consumer Protection Handbook](#), and [Distributed Generation](#) and [Community Solar Contract Requirements](#). These documents reflect changes to conform with the 2024 Long-Term Renewable Resources Procurement Plan, approved by the February 20, 2024 Final Order of the Illinois Commerce Commission, and other stakeholder feedback processes. The announcement highlighted high-level changes to the Program Guidebook and Consumer Protection Handbook. These documents are published 45 days in advance of the start of the 2024-25 Program Year, and **Program participants are required to be in compliance with requirements outlined in these documents by June 3, 2024.** **Please note** that the February 27, 2024 version of the Program Guidebook, and the April 17, 2023 versions of the Consumer Protection Handbook, and Distributed Generation and Community Solar Contract Requirements documents, found at the [Program Documents](#) page of the website, remain in effect until the new Program Year commences on June 3, 2024.
- **Equity Accountability System Assessment Stakeholder Feedback Posted** - The IPA thanks stakeholders for feedback submitted on the [Equity Accountability System Assessment](#). The comments have been posted to the this [page](#).
- **New to the Program Website** - The following key additions to [www.IllinoisShines.com](#) have been shared:
 - [2024-25 Program Guidebook](#) – Published April 18, 2024, in effect starting June 3, 2024 ([Program Documents](#) page)
 - [Redline Between 2024-25 Program Guidebook and 2023-24 Program Guidebook](#) ([Program Documents](#) page)
 - [Consumer Protection Handbook for 2024-25 Program Year](#) – Published April 18, 2024, in effect starting June 3, 2024 ([Program Documents](#) page)
 - [Redline Between April 18, 2024 and April 17, 2023 versions of Consumer Protections Handbook](#) ([Program Documents](#) page)
 - [DG Contract Requirements for 2024-25 Program Year](#) – Published April 18, 2024, in effect starting June 3, 2024 ([Program Documents](#) page)
 - [CS Contract Requirements for 2024-25 Program Year](#) – Published April 18, 2024, in effect starting June 3, 2024 ([Program Documents](#) page)
 - [Redline Comparison between April 18, 2024 DG Contract Requirements and April 17, 2023 DG for Contract Requirements](#) ([Program Documents](#) page)
 - [Redline Comparison between April 18, 2024 CS Contract Requirements and April 17, 2023 CS Contract Requirements](#) ([Program Documents](#) page)

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

- **General Program**
 - **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 8:00 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 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.

- **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, Roosevelt University's Program Director and Professor of Health Sciences, Dr. La Vonne Downey, and Community Benefits – Program Manager, GI Energy Lecturer, Climate Change and Health Certificate program at Yale University, Elena Grossman. Please visit this [link](#) to register for the event.
- **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. The Program has begun limited processing of waitlisted DG projects 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)
4/30/2024	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
8/13/2024	8/15/2024	8/29/2024

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.**

Development Focus	Details	Planned or Actual Delivery
Enhancement		
Advance of Capital - New Question for AVs	This enhancement will add a new question for AV's requesting an advance of capital (Do you plan on using the advance of capital to pay collateral). It will also add a link to the advance of capital criteria to help clarify what is required in the document upload.	April 17, 2024
Update Links to current version of Guidebook in the app (references obsolete version)	Market Facing links to the Program Guidebook throughout out the Portal have been updated to point to the latest version of the document. These links are provided on the home page and on application pages to make it easy to refer to the Program Guidebook when more information is desired.	April 17, 2024

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 are published here .
Draft Program Guidebook	March 13, 2024	March 27, 2024	Comments received are published here . On April 18, 2024, the IPA released a final version of the updated Program 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.

- **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 retire the legacy Illinois Shines 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.
- **Renewable Energy Education & Contractor Clinic** - This event will be hosted on April 23, 2024 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 register [here](#).
- **State of Illinois Employment Workshops** - For dates, times, and locations of upcoming State of Illinois Employment Workshops please view this [link](#).

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