

## Group B EEC Soft Close Initiated, Annual Report Support, May REC Invoicing Closes Today

May 10, 2024

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

- **Events**
  - May 23, 2024 – **2024-25 Program Year Welcome Webinar** at 12:00 - 1:00 p.m. CPT. Please use this [link](#) to register for this event.
  
- **Due Dates**
  - May 10, 2024 – Invoices must be submitted to the utility
  - May 13, 2024 – Re-batching opens for AVs
  - May 15, 2024 – Re-batching closes for AVs at 12:00 p.m. CPT
  - May 24, 2024 – Part II Verification Cut off for May
  - **Key Dates Relating to the start of Program Year 2024-25 commencing on June 3, 2024**
    - 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 1, 2024 – 2023-24 Annual Report Response Period begins
    - July 15, 2024 – MES Year-End Report for Program Year 2023-24 and 2023-24 Annual Reports are due

### Stakeholder Support

- **Program Administrator Office Hours** - May 15, 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>. Additional Office Hours will be held to support the Annual Report:
  - May 15, 2024 – **Annual Report Office Hours** at 11:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. Please use this [link](#) to join.
  - May 16, 2024 – **Annual Report Office Hours** at 2:00 p.m. - 1:00 p.m. Please use this [link](#) to join.
- **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.
  - **When to include an ‘Unavailability of Net Metering Acknowledgment Form’ or a ‘Net Metering Letter’:** A [Utility Net Metering Reference Table](#) available at the [Program Documents](#) page of the Program website lists each utility that has participated in the Program thus far and whether they a) provide 1:1 net metering and b) if net metering is provided and if the utility issues a Net Metering Letter. The [Utility Net Metering Reference Table](#) should be referred to when submitting Part I to determine if an Acknowledgment Form is required. For more information on 1:1 net metering and other crediting approaches, please refer to the [November 11, 2022](#) Program Announcement and Section 16-107.5 of the [Public Utilities Act](#).
  - If the utility does NOT provide 1:1 net metering or a materially similar program, the customer is required to sign a form that must be uploaded to the Part I application as an ‘Additional Document’. **If the signed form is not included, this will result in a *Need Info* request, causing delay in review and approval of the project application.**
  - The [Utility Net Metering Reference Table](#) should also be referenced when submitting a Part II application to determine if a ‘Net Metering Letter’ is required. If a utility offers net metering (or a material equivalent) AND provides a ‘Net Metering Letter’ (separate from the Certificate of

Completion/Permission to Operate) confirming that net metering has been approved, then the 'Net Metering Letter' must be included with the application; **its absence will result in a Need Info request causing delay in review and project and approval of the project application.** Currently, the only utility company that does this is ComEd, but the information could be updated at any time and stakeholders should consult the most recent reference table.

- A new Portal validation will go into effect soon that will require a 'Net Metering Letter' when the interconnecting utility is ComEd.

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

- **Group B Equity Eligible Contractor Block Reaches Capacity, Soft Close Period Initiated** - As announced on [May 7, 2024](#), the annual block of capacity for Group B Equity Eligible Contractor (EEC) was reached and a soft close period was initiated, allowing the block to remain open for seven additional calendar days or until the submission of 10 additional megawatts, whichever comes first. The soft close period began on Tuesday, May 7, 2024 and will extend until **May 14, 2024** at 11:59 p.m. CPT or when 10 megawatts have been reached. Any applications batched and submitted to the Program under Group B EEC block after the soft close capacity is reached OR after May 14, 2024 at 11:59 p.m. CPT will be placed on a waitlist.
- **Annual Report Support** - AVs participating in Illinois Shines are required to submit an Annual Report pertaining to the contracts and systems in their portfolio. The Annual Report period begins on July 1, 2024, and additional relevant dates and information will soon be provided to AVs, along with resources and support including pre-recorded instructional materials, and an updated Annual Report Guide. Annual Report preparation and Annual Report Community Solar Subscriber emails were sent to AVs earlier this week, and AVs should watch for further emails with additional details on the Annual Report process and available support. **Office Hours to support the Annual Reports will be held on May 15 at 11:00 a.m. CPT and May 16 at 2:00 p.m. CPT.**  
Zoom link: <https://energy-solution.zoom.us/j/8678382503>.
- **Illinois Power Agency Power Hour – Prevailing Wage and PLAs** - On May 23, 2024 from 12:00 p.m. – 1:00 p.m. CPT, the IPA will host Power Hour 4 – Prevailing Wage and PLAs. This educational webinar will explore prevailing wage requirements and Project Labor Agreements (PLAs) with a focus on equity. Presentations from Illinois Department of Labor Director Jane Flanagan and IPA Chief Legal Counsel Kelly Turner will guide this important discussion on wages and financing in the energy sector. Registration is required. Register at: <https://us06web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZwpdu6qrjlrE9UTKX68icsGiEY72LZqDGMa>
- **Equitable Energy Future and the Community Solar Energy Sovereignty Grant Programs** - The Equitable Energy Future and the Community Solar Energy Sovereignty Grant Programs are both actively accepting applications. Although these are rolling grant opportunities, the first application windows for both grants close soon. Applicant resources are available for each grant on their DCEO Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) Page:
  - Equitable Energy Future – Round 1 Application Deadline: June 30, 2024 – [NOFO Page Link](#)
  - Community Solar Energy Sovereignty - Round 1 Application Deadline: June 30, 2024 – [NOFO Page Link](#)

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

- **General Program**
  - **REC Transfers** - As a reminder, June 1, 2023 - May 31, 2024 constitutes the “2024 delivery year.” RECs successfully transferred during the delivery year are used to calculate any necessary collateral adjustments or contract default. **This means generation data must be uploaded into GATS or M-RETS and transferred to the Buyer by May 31, 2024.**
    - *Please note: Once generation data is uploaded to GATS, it may take up to seven days for the data to process and for a REC certificate to be created. Once created, the certificate needs to be transferred successfully. Keeping this in mind, please endeavor to have all available energy generation data uploaded to GATs at least seven days before May 31, 2024 to allow time for REC certificate creation and transfer.*

- *Generation data uploaded to M-RETS is processed instantly, creating, and transferring RECs per a standing order within moments. Nonetheless, AVs may want to act early out of an abundance of caution. Any RECs generated or transferred after the May 31, 2024 deadline will be counted towards the 2025 delivery year's Annual Report.*
- **Minimum Equity Standard (MES) 2023-24 Year-End Report Open for Submissions** - On [May 1, 2024](#), the Program announced the 2023-24 Year-End Report opening. The announcement provided the new [Program Year 2023-24 MES Year-End Report](#) form, the required data and information to include in the report, key dates, information on the EEP Attestation, a link to the MES Waiver form, and additional resources. Please see the MES section of the Program's [Equity Accountability System page](#) for additional information and resources.
- **Illinois Power Agency Updates Equity Investment Eligible Community Map** - As of April 29, 2024, [the IPA's Equity Investment Eligible Community map](#) has been refreshed to include the updated R3 Areas. These R3 Area designations were determined through a process conducted by the Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority ("ICJIA") regarding the R3 maps. For Program Year 2024-25, the Equity Investment Eligible Community map will include both the updated R3 Areas identified through new analysis and previously identified R3 Areas. Please see the full [announcement](#) for more details on EEP and EEC status impacts.
- **Program Closure May 27, 2024 – June 2, 2024** - On Monday, May 27, 2024 at 8:00 a.m. CPT the Illinois Shines program will close for the 2023-24 Program Year. **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. Please note that the requirement that customers sign Disclosure Forms prior to signing an installation contract or subscription agreement will remain in effect, and Approved Vendors and Designees will need to plan accordingly.** All other activities and support provided by the Program Administrator will remain available. 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, REC pricing and more. The Portal will re-open for the 2024-25 Program Year on June 3, 2024 at 8:00 a.m. CPT. Key additional notes about the Program Closure:
  - Last applicable day for EEP workforce data for purposes of 2023-24 MES compliance via MES Year-End Reports - May 31, 2024.
  - Bi-annual Report deadline - May 31, 2024.
  - Last day of the Delivery Year and last day to have RECs delivered in tracking registry to count towards the 2023-24 Delivery Year Annual Report - May 31, 2024.
  - Other activities and support including Contract generation, Invoices and Quarterly Netting Statement Generation, Program Call Center, Consumer Protection Center, Weekly Office Hours, Sector Strategist availability, and SharePoint access will remain available as usual.
- **Dropbox Sign Security Incident** - [Dropbox Sign \(formerly HelloSign\) disclosed](#) to the Program Administrator on May 1, 2024 that Dropbox Sign experienced an unauthorized access to the Dropbox Sign production environment. The Program Administrator [notified](#) AVs that as Dropbox Sign is used by stakeholders in the Program portal, AVs are encouraged to become familiar with the details of the incident, and to share with their Designees and be prepared to support customers who may have received the Dropbox Sign communication. At present, there is **no action for Approved Vendors to currently take within the Program Portal**.
- **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 \(DG\) and Community Solar \(CS\) Contract Requirements](#). These documents reflect changes to conform with the 2024 Final Plan, approved on February 20, 2024 by the Final Order of the ICC and stakeholder feedback processes. See the announcement for 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 DG and CS 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.

- **IPA Releases Final 2024 Illinois Shines REC Delivery Contracts** - On [April 22, 2024](#), the IPA published the 2024 REC Delivery Contracts on the [Program Documents](#) page on the Program website. These contracts are for use for projects approved in the 2024-25 Illinois Shines Program Year which begins June 3, 2024. All projects approved by the ICC after June 3, 2024, will use the new 2024 REC Contracts, regardless of application submission date. The Program will provide an “off-ramp” option for any already-applied projects expecting to receive an award under the 2022 REC Delivery Contract that is unable to be developed under the updated 2024 REC Delivery Contracts. **Approved Vendors must make this request prior to Part I Verification.**
- **IPA Published 2024 Long-Term Renewable Resources Procurement Plan** - On April 19, 2024, the IPA published the [Final 2024 Long-Term Renewable Resources Procurement Plan](#) (Long-Term Plan), approved with modifications by the Illinois Commerce Commission on February 20, 2024. The final Plan can be found on the [Current Approved Plans](#) page of the IPA website and the Illinois Shines [Program Documents](#) page, along with appendices and a redline comparison of this final Plan with the one filed in October 2023.
- **2024-25 Program Year Welcome Webinar** - June 3, 2024 marks the opening of the 2024-25 Program Year. In support of stakeholders, an informational webinar on the upcoming 2024-25 Program Year changes will be held on May 23, 2024 from 12:00 - 1:00 p.m. CPT. The Program Administrator and IPA will discuss the 2024 Long-Term Plan, Program Guidebook, and Consumer Protection Handbook as well as the updated REC capacity and pricing. Please use this [link](#) to register for this event.
- **U.S. EPA Awards \$156 Million to Bring the Benefits of Solar Energy to Underserved Communities Across Illinois** - See [previous](#) announcement.

### Ongoing Operations Updates

- **May REC Invoicing Opened May 1, 2024** - REC invoices and Quarterly Netting Statements were made available for download from AV SharePoint folders on May 1, 2024. Invoices must be submitted to the utility by today, **May 10, 2024** to receive payment for the May invoice period. Any invoice amounts not submitted to the utility by May 10, 2024 will be carried forward and included in the next invoice period (August 2024).
- **Part II Verification Cut Off for May** - To allow time for invoice calculation and generation, the last valid Part II Verification date for May will be **May 24, 2024**. Applications that are Part II verified on or before May 24, 2024 will be included in the June invoicing period. Application processing will continue throughout the last week of the month and any applications that are reviewed between May 25, 2024 and May 31, 2024 will be invoiced in July 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)
5/13/2024	5/15/2024	5/30/2024
5/17/2024	5/21/2024	6/5/2024
<del>6/3/2024*</del>	<del>6/5/2024*</del>	<del>6/20/2024*</del>
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
8/26/2024	8/28/2024	9/12/2024
9/10/2024	9/12/2024	9/26/2024

[\\*Please note that the Illinois Shines program will not be submitting projects to the ICC for the June 20, 2024 meeting in order to prepare processes for the new Program Year and the new 2024 REC Contracts.](#)

### 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 in some cases may experience slight delays. 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](mailto:admin@IllinoisShines.com).

### Ongoing Program Portal Updates

- The latest portal updates and enhancements, a Portal Development Roadmap, and portal help guides can be found at <https://illinoisshines.com/portal-updates/>.
- **Portal Maintenance and 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 typically unavailable to users; the Program hopes these windows are 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
<a href="#">Equity Accountability System Assessment</a>	March 21, 2024	April 10, 2024	Comments received are published <a href="#">here</a> .

- **IPA Request for AVs and Installer Designees Interested To Serve Stranded Illinois Shines DG Customers** - As previously [announced](#), the Program seeks entities interested in serving stranded customers, and [updates the lists](#) of participating vendors on a rolling basis. The original announcements include 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.
- **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](mailto:admin@IllinoisShines.com) or call 877-783-1820.