

Group B EEC Block Closed, 2024-25 Program Year Welcome Webinar, Annual Report Key Dates

May 17, 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. The webinar will be recorded.

- **Due Dates**

- **May 17, 2024 – Re-batching opens for AVs**
- May 21, 2024 – Re-batching closes for AVs at 12:00 p.m. CPT
- May 24, 2024 – Part II Verification Cut off for May
- May 31, 2024 – Bi-Annual Reports are due
- May 31, 2024 – Generation data must be uploaded into GATS or M-RETS and transferred to the Buyer. *Any RECs generated or transferred after the May 31, 2024 deadline will be counted towards the 2025 delivery year's Annual Report*
- May 31, 2024 – Last applicable day for EEP workforce data for purposes of the 2023-24 MES Year-End Report
- 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 Annual Report
- **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 15, 2024 – [MES Year-End Report](#) for Program Year 2023-24 and 2023-24 Annual Reports are due
- **Key Dates Relating to Annual Reports**
 - Mid-June – A step-by-step guide for completing the Annual Report will be released
 - May 17, 2024 – [Community Solar Parameters Evaluation](#) and [Annual Report and REC Performance Evaluation Walkthrough](#) videos published
 - May 20, 2024 – Annual Report Resources email sent to AVs
 - July 1, 2024 – Annual Report Response Period begins
 - July 15, 2024 – Annual Report Response Period ends
 - July 16, 2024 – Annual Report Cure Period begins
 - October 1, 2024 – Last day for Program Administrator to inform Approved Vendors of discrepancies on Annual Reports
 - October 14, 2024 – Annual Reports are finalized
 - November 15, 2024 – Program Administrator Drawdown calculations complete

Stakeholder Support

- **Program Administrator Office Hours** - May 22, 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>.

- **Illinois Shines Program Holiday Hours** - In observance of Memorial Day, the Program will have limited services and updates on **May 27, 2024**. The Program Call Center will be closed, and updates to the Capacity Dashboard, Application tables, and application project reports and waitlists will resume Tuesday, May 28, 2024.
- **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 and delaying their review and approval.
 - An ‘Unavailability of Net Metering Acknowledgement form’ (previously the ‘Net Meter Waiver’) is intended to provide customers with critical information that informs the decision to purchase a solar project. This form can be found on the [Net Metering Credits](#) page.

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

- **Group B Equity Eligible Contractor Block Now Closed** - The Group B Equity Eligible Contractor (EEC) soft close period [concluded on May 14, 2024](#), and applications batched and any projects submitted to the Program to the category after May 14, 2024 will be placed on a waitlist. New capacity for this category will be released next Program Year, which commences on June 3, 2024.
- **Annual Report** - 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 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 last week, and AVs should watch for further emails with additional details on the Annual Report process and available support. Relevant dates regarding the annual report can be found in the Due Dates section of this announcement.
- **Bi-Annual Reports** – AV’s that have designated systems that have not been energized starting six months from the trade date of the applicable product order will received an email this week with additional details on Bi-Annual Reports. The purpose of the report is to understand the status of these projects. Bi-Annual reports are due on **May 31, 2024**.
- **IPA Releases Request for Qualifications 24-RFQ-03 for Racial Disparity Study Consultant** – On [May 13, 2024](#), the Agency released a [Request for Qualifications \(RFQ\)](#) seeking qualified and knowledgeable experts or expert firms to conduct a complete, comprehensive, and legally supportable Racial Disparity and Availability Study to assess the presence and impact of racial discrimination or disparities in Illinois’ clean energy economy. **Responses to the RFQ are due June 21, 2024**. The Agency will subsequently issue a Request for Proposals and invite responses from firms who were found qualified through the RFQ process. A planned schedule, including an RFQ Offerors Conference Call on June 6, 2024 at 2:00 p.m. CPT, is included in the RFQ announcement.
- **EEC Single Project AV Clarification** - As [previously announced](#), Equity-Eligible Persons (“EEPs”) that serve as the majority-owner of an Equity Eligible Contractor (“EEC”) AV may not submit additional requests to certify EEC AVs for which they serve as the majority-owner EEP, except for the case of Single-Project AVs (“SPAVs”) as provided under the 2024 Long-Term Plan. The IPA received inquiries as to whether an EEC-AV may serve as the majority owner of an EEC-certified Single-Project Approved Vendor, rather than an individual EEP serving as the majority owner. The Agency recognizes the important role SPAVs can play in the successful development of projects and does not intend to limit an EEP’s ability to utilize business practices available to non-EEPs. The Agency does not believe it would further the objectives of the Equity Accountability System or the Equity Eligible Contractor category to require EEC SPAVs to be owned by an individual EEP rather than an EEC-AV. Therefore, the Program Administrator will allow EEC-AVs to serve as the majority-owner of EEC SPAVs moving forward.
- **DG Installer Designee Clarification** – As provided in the [Program Guidebook](#) published on April 18, 2024, all entities that install distributed generation facilities, with the exception of self-installers, must be certified by the Illinois Commerce Commission prior to installing any distributed generation facilities in the State of Illinois,

and must provide a Distributed Generation Installer certification during Designee registration and renewal starting June 3, 2024.

- **New to the Program Website** – The following key additions to www.IllinoisShines.com have been shared:
 - [Minutes](#) from the May 3, 2024 Consumer Protection Working Group ([Consumer Protection Working Group](#) page)
 - [Community Solar Parameters Evaluation](#) video ([Program Help Guides and Application Tips](#) page)
 - [Annual Report and REC Performance Evaluation Walkthrough](#) video ([Program Help Guides and Application Tips](#) page)
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Program News – Previously Published Items (All Program updates can be found on the [Program Updates](#) webpage)

- **General Program**
 - **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 webinar will be recorded. The Program Administrator and IPA will discuss the 2024 Long-Term Plan, the 2024-25 Program Year Program Guidebook, and the 2024-25 Consumer Protection Handbook, updated REC capacity and prices, and more. **Please use this link to register for this event.**
 - **REC Transfers** - As a reminder, June 1, 2023 - May 31, 2024 constitutes the “2023-2024 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.*
 - **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:
 - May 31, 2024 - 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 ReportOther 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.

- **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.
- **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.
- **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. The webinar will be recorded. 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](#)
- **IPA Releases Final 2024 Illinois Shines REC Delivery Contracts** – See [previous](#) announcement
- **IPA Published 2024 Long-Term Renewable Resources Procurement Plan** – See [previous](#) announcement
- **Dropbox Sign Security Incident** – See [previous](#) announcement

Ongoing Operations Updates

- **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)
5/17/2024	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
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. The Program Administrator is aiming to resume memo submission using the new 2024 REC Contracts with the July 2, 2024 meeting, but submission to that meeting is not certain yet.

Application Processing Updates

- **Application Processing Tables** - Application processing tables are maintained at 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.

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
Equity Accountability System Assessment	March 21, 2024	April 10, 2024	Comments received are published here .

- **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 or call 877-783-1820.