

Program Closure May 27, 2024 – June 2, 2024, 2024-25 Program Year Welcome Webinar Materials, Program Hours and Support

May 24, 2024

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

- **Events**

- May 27, 2024 at 8:00 a.m. CPT – June 3, 2024 at 7:59 a.m. CPT – Program Year 2023-24 Portal closure
- May 29, 2024 from 10:00 – 11:30 a.m. CPT – Extended Office Hours. Join with this [link](#).
- June 3, 2024 at 8:00 a.m. CPT - 2024-25 Program Year opens
- June 3, 2024 from 10:00 – 11:00 a.m. CPT - Program Year Opening Office Hours. Join with this [link](#).

- **Due Dates**

- 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 REC's 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 REC's 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
 - 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

- **Extended Program Administrator Office Hours** - To provided added stakeholder support for Program Year 2024-25, the Program will provide supplemental, extended office hours availability on **May 29, 2024 from 10:00 – 11:30 a.m. CPT**. Office Hours will also be held on **June 3, 2024 from 10:00 – 11:00 a.m. CPT** support the 2024-25 Program Year opening. Individual AV or Designee support for Program requirements, portal, application, or other questions are invited. Zoom link: <https://energy-solution.zoom.us/j/95588710302Co>.

- **Illinois Shines 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 Block Capacity Dashboard, Application tables, application project reports, and waitlists will resume Tuesday, May 28, 2024.
- **Application Tips and Tricks** - Supplementing previous guidance, the Program Administrator seeks to help supporting stakeholders to avoid project applications entering *Need Info* status and delaying their review and approval.
 - Data discrepancies between the application and the interconnection agreement or Certificate of Completion (COC)/Permission to Operate (PTO) are common causes of *Need Info* requests that delay Part II verification. Please ensure the following are completed and reviewed:
 - Both documents must be uploaded with the Part II project application. The interconnection agreement and COC/PTO are **not** interchangeable.
 - Check that the address, customer name, and AC size reasonably match between the uploaded documents and the data entered in the application. Explain any differences using the *Overview Comments* section.
 - Check that the documents are signed by the Electric Distribution Company.

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

- **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. As further noted through an [additional Program announcement](#), 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. Customers will have the ability to sign a Disclosure Form during the Portal closure **IF** the Disclosure Form was generated **BEFORE** the closure. The Agency has developed one-page letters for Distributed Generation (DG) and Community Solar (CS) customers that AVs and Designees can use to explain why the contract execution of a project may be delayed until June 3, 2024. The [DG customer](#) and the [CS customer](#) Program Closure letters can be found for download on the “Other Resources” section of the [Program Documents](#) page from **May 24, 2024 – June 2, 2024**.**
 - 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**. On [May 21, 2024](#), the Program provided additional information on the Program Closure. 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 Report

During the Illinois Shines Portal closure AVs will still have the capability to pay batch invoices that they received prior to the Program closure date of May 27, 2024, through our payment processor Stripe. Only batches that were submitted and in payment pending status prior to the Program closure will have the capability to pay through Stripe. The batch invoices that are paid during the Program closure will not reflect as paid in the Portal until June 3, 2024. Please contact the Program Administrator for assistance or issues about batch payment during that time. 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 **May 28, 2024 – June 3, 2024**.

- **Community Solar Updates and Reminders for 2024-25 Program Year** - The Program will send an announcement next week going over the Community Solar Updates and Reminders for the 2024-25 Program Year. The announcement will include details on Community-Driven Community Solar (CDCS) and Traditional Community Solar (TCS), TCS scoring criteria changes in the Portal, and TCS application review and scoring timeline.
- **Clarification Announcement – Distributed Generation (DG) Installation Designees** - The Agency has received inquiries as to whether DG installation companies must be registered as a Designee. As defined in the Illinois Shines Program Guidebook, “Designee” refers to third-party (i.e., non-AV) entities that have direct interaction with end-use customers on behalf of the AV or another Designee. The Agency has concluded that DG installers must be registered as Designees. For purposes of registration requirements, installers of DG projects are presumed to interact with the end-use customer by working on the customer’s property, and the purpose of Designee registration requirement is to increase Program transparency.
- **Annual Report Requirement and 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**. Key requirements, dates, and resources are outlined above in the Due Dates section; the Program Administrator emailed stakeholders last week with relevant information and linkages to resources that are and will be available, including pre-recorded walkthrough videos, an updated Annual Report Guide, and more. **A SharePoint permission validation email was sent out this week – please ensure that proper team members have access to SharePoint to review and submit Annual Reports or contact the Program Administrator for assistance.** If the SharePoint permission validation email was not received please contact the Program Administrator.
- **2024-25 Program Year Welcome Webinar Materials** – June 3, 2024 marks the opening of the 2024-25 Program Year. To support stakeholders, the Program hosted an informational webinar on the upcoming 2024-25 Program Year changes on May 23, 2024. The Program Administrator and IPA discussed the 2024 Long-Term Plan, updates to the Program Guidebook and Consumer Protection Handbook, new REC contracts and REC prices, prevailing wage, and other important topics. 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](#), reflecting changes to conform with the 2024 Final Plan, approved on February 20, 2024 by the Final Order of the ICC and stakeholder feedback processes. 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. The [presentation](#) and [recording](#) of the webinar can be found on the [Program Year Webinars](#) page. FAQs from the webinar will be posted next week.
- **Application Processing** – Applications that were submitted in the 2023-24 Program Year and have been waitlisted for the 2024-25 Program Year will be processed on a first-in-first-processed basis before applications submitted on or after June 3. When the new Program Year starts, it is expected that the date of applications being processed will be from December or January. Extended processing times are expected due to the size of the current waitlist.
- **New to the Program Website** – The following key additions to www.IllinoisShines.com have been shared:
 - [Program Closure Letter to DG Customers May 2024*](#) ([Program Documents](#) page)
 - **This document will only be available on the website May 24, 2024 – June 2, 2024.*
 - [Program Closure Letter to CS Customers May 2024*](#) ([Program Documents](#) page)
 - **This document will only be available on the website May 24, 2024 – June 2, 2024.*
 - 2024-25 Program Year Welcome Webinar [presentation](#) ([Program Year Webinars](#) page)
 - 2024-25 Program Year Welcome Webinar [recording](#) ([Program Year Webinars](#) page)

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 “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.*
- **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. This is for any project greater than 23kW that have not yet been energized. Bi-Annual reports are due on **May 31, 2024**.
- **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** - See [previous](#) announcement
- **Equitable Energy Future and the Community Solar Energy Sovereignty Grant Programs** - See [previous](#) announcement
- **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

- **Equity Eligible Contractors (EEC) Program News** - See full [EEC hub](#) on Program website

- **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.

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 today, **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 verified 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)
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.
- **State of Illinois Employment Workshops** - For dates, times, and locations of upcoming State of Illinois Employment Workshops please view this [link](#).
- **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.

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