

2024-25 Program Year Opens June 3, 2024, Final 2024-25 PY Capacity Allocations, MES Compliance Plans for 2024-25 Program Year Due June 3, 2024

May 31, 2024

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

- **Events**

- 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 31, 2024 – Bi-Annual Reports (for AVs with designated systems greater than **25kW** that have not been energized starting six months from the trade date of the applicable product order) are due
- May 31, 2024 – Last day of the delivery year. REC 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 2024-25 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
- June 1, 2024 – REC invoicing opens
- June 3, 2024 – Deadline for submission of MES Compliance Plan for the 2024-25 Program Year
- June 10, 2024 – Community Solar Subscriber Workbooks are due for all Part II Verified (Energized) projects
- **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

- **2024-25 Program Year Program Administrator Office Hours** - In support of 2024-25 Program Year opening, the Program Administrator will host Office Hours on **Monday, June 3, 2024 from 10:00 – 11:00 a.m. CPT**. Individual AV or Designee support requests on Program requirements, portal, project applications, or other questions are invited. Zoom link: <https://energy-solution.zoom.us/j/95588710302Co>.

- **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.
 - **Expansions:** Expansion pricing is applicable to projects that are added on to existing Illinois Shines projects when the expansion project is submitted less than two years from the original project's ICC approval date (*this is a new clarification for the 2024-25 Program Year*).
 - If an already built expansion system is being submitted, AVs should upload the Certificate of Completion (CoC)/Permission to Operate (PTO) in Part I 'Additional Documents' for interconnection date verification.
 - **"Expansion"** must still be marked on Part I Section 2 of the application, even if expansion pricing is not applicable.

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

- **Final 2024-25 Block Sizes Following Capacity Reallocation and Processing of Waitlisted Applications** – On Friday, May 31, the Program will be issuing information on the final 2024-25 Program Year block sizes by group and project category, including updates on capacity awarded to waitlisted projects, and remaining available capacity in each project category. A further announcement on the Process for Uncontracted Capacity Reallocation for the 2024-25 Program Year will be issued following the opening of the 2024-25 Program Year.
- **Program Closure May 27, 2024 – June 2, 2024** - On Monday, May 27, 2024, the Illinois Shines program closed for the 2023-24 Program Year while the Program prepares the Portal for the new Program Year including the 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**. All other activities and support provided by the Program Administrator, including Contract generation, Invoices and Quarterly Netting Statement Generation, Program Call Center, Consumer Protection Center, Weekly Office Hours, Sector Strategist availability, and SharePoint access, remain available.

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), have been unavailable during this period. As further noted through an [additional Program announcement](#), the Program requirement that customers sign Disclosure Forms prior to signing an installation contract or subscription agreement remains in effect, and AVs 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**.

- **Minimum Equity Standard (MES) 2024-25 Program Year Compliance Plan Due June 3, 2024** – On [May 28, 2024](#), the Program published an announcement providing information, guidelines, and resources. MES Compliance Plans are due on **June 3, 2024**. If you haven't already submitted a Compliance Plan for your organization, please do so at this link: <https://forms.office.com/r/qvDmuW5Z74>.
- **Equity Eligible Contractors (EEC) Program News** - See full [EEC hub](#) on Program website.
 - **EEC Subcontractor Application Opens June 3, 2024** – Registration for Equity Eligible Contractor (EEC) Subcontractors, a new distinction in the Program, will be open on **June 3, 2024**. The EEC Subcontractor category is for businesses that qualify as an EEC and seek to participate in the Program but do not yet have a relationship with an AV and/or do not have a customer-facing role for projects submitted to the Program (like Designees). Subcontractors may register as an EEC Subcontractor and will be listed on the Program website and the Agency's Energy Workforce Equity Portal for reference. Such subcontractors need to work with an AV or registered Designee to participate in the Program. The registration process for EEC Subcontractors will be subject to the same eligibility criteria as described in Section 2.B of the Program Guidebook.

Please note that the EEC Designee(s)/Subcontractor(s) must be named at the Part I application. Applicants may demonstrate this commitment in the application by providing documents including but not limited to: Letter of intent signed by all parties, contract, other legal agreement between parties, etc. As the addition of the EEC Subcontractor designation is new this Program Year and the application will not be available prior to June 3, 2024, the Agency will allow for EEC Subcontractors where an EEC Application has not yet been submitted to satisfy this requirement. If this allowance is to be utilized, the named EEC Subcontractor application must be submitted and approved as an EEC prior to the scoring period for applications (which takes place after initial project application review per schedule outlined below).

- **Community Solar Program News** - See full [TCS](#) and [CDCS](#) hubs on Program website
 - **Community Solar Updates and Reminders for 2024-25 Program Year** - On [May 28, 2024](#), the Program issued a Community Solar Updates and Reminders for the 2024-25 Program Year announcement. The announcement included 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.
- **New REC Contracts, and REC Contracts for Waitlisted Projects as of June 3, 2024** - New REC Contracts will be used beginning with any projects sent to the ICC for review after [June 3, 2024](#). As a reminder, 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 beginning with the July 2, 2024 meeting, but submission to that meeting is not certain yet. Any applications processed and approved in the new Program Year, even if they were submitted in the previous Program Year and waitlisted, will receive the 2024 REC Contract.
- **June 2024 Consumer Protection Working Group** - The Agency and its Illinois Shines and Illinois Solar for All Program Administrators will host the next Consumer Protection Working Group meeting on [June 7, 2024](#), at 10:00 a.m. CPT. The Working Group's meeting agendas, Zoom links, and a participation interest form can be found on the [Consumer Protection Working Group](#) page on the Program website.
- **Illinois Power Agency Power Hour – Prevailing Wage and PLAs** - The IPA hosted Power Hour 4 – Prevailing Wage and PLAs on May 23, 2024. The [recording](#) and [presentation](#) can be found on the [IPA's website](#).
- **New to the Program Website** – The following key additions to [www.IllinoisShines.com](#) have been shared:
 - [2024-25 Program Year Welcome Webinar Questions and Answers](#) ([Program Year Webinars](#) page)
 - [Portal Input Rates \(Current Average Retail Rate, and Price to Compare\) for Disclosure Forms](#) document ([Program Documents](#) 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 today, 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.*
 - *Generation data uploaded to M-RETS is processed instantly, creating, and transferring RECs per a standing order within moments.*
 - *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** - AVs 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 **25kW** that have not yet been energized. Bi-Annual reports are due today, **May 31, 2024**.

- **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 on May 20, 2024 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 on May 22, 2024 – 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** - On May 23, 2024, the Program hosted an informational webinar on changes and updates for the upcoming 2024-25 Program Year, which commences June 3, 2024. Topics included the 2024 Long-Term Plan, updates to the Program Guidebook, the Consumer Protection Handbook, new REC contracts and REC prices, prevailing wage, and more. 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 were 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 webinar [presentation](#), [recording](#), and [Questions and Answers](#) can be found on the [Program Year Webinars](#) page.
- **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.
- **Power Agency Updates Equity Investment Eligible Community Map** – 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.
- **Distributed Generation (DG) Program News** - See full [Small DG](#) and [Large DG](#) hubs on Program website
 - **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.

Ongoing Operations Updates

- **June REC Invoicing Opens June 1, 2024** - REC invoices and Quarterly Netting Statements will be made available for download from AV SharePoint folders on **June 1, 2024**. Invoices must be submitted to the utility by June 10, 2024 to receive payment for the June invoice period. Any invoice amounts not submitted to the utility by June 10, 2024 will be carried forward and included in the next invoice period (September 2024).
- **Part II Verification Cut Off for June** - To allow time for invoice calculation and generation, the last valid Part II Verification date for June will be **June 24 2024**. Applications that are Part II verified on or before June 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 June 25, 2024 and June 30, 2024 will be invoiced in August 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.

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, 2024. 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.

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.**

Development Focus	Details	Planned or Actual Delivery
Mass Data Update		
Bulk Update Project Application Status and Verification Date	Approximately 2,000 Part I Applications submitted during the 2023-24 Program Year for blocks that had already closed for the year have completed the verification process and will be advanced to the Part I Verified status in preparation for the 2024-25 Program Year.	May 29, 2024
Enhancements		
Scoring Changes on TCS Applications (Part I Section 8)	<p>Section 8 of the Traditional Community Solar (TCS) project application for TCS Scoring Criteria has been revised to reflect the updated scoring criteria for the 2024-25 Program Year. The first question "Built Environment" and the third question "Equity Eligible Contractors" have been updated with revised options for claimable credits, and the scoring criteria version used will now be listed at the top of the form.</p> <p>All new applications being created will use the new version of the TCS Scoring Criteria going forward. All TCS applications previously submitted will retain the previous version of the scoring criteria and answers in the portal. Any TCS applications filled out but not submitted have been (1) updated to use the new version of TCS Scoring Criteria, (2) had their Section 8 status set back to 'In Progress' and (3) had responses to questions one and three reset. Participants who have filled out TCS applications in preparation for the 2024-25 Program Year launch, will need to revisit Section 8 and complete questions one and three prior to submitting.</p>	May 29, 2024
Program Year 2024-25: Updated DC/AC Ratio - Validation	An optional question was added to the Part I application to check if a system has a battery/storage component, as the 2024 Long-	May 29, 2024

	<p>Term Plan's updated guidelines allow for a higher default DC/AC ratio limit for systems that have a battery.</p> <p>Warnings about DC/AC ratio limit in both Part I Section 4 and Part II Section 1 also have updated wording to reflect the change.</p>	
Require "Net Metering Letter" Attachment when Interconnecting Utility is ComEd	Part II applications will now require a "Net Metering Letter" document to be attached prior to submission when the interconnecting Utility is ComEd.	May 29, 2024
Optional Upload for Part I Applications: Unavailability of Net Metering Credits Customer Acknowledgment	A new 'Optional Document' type has been added to the 'Documents Section' for all Part I Distributed Generation (DG) applications. An "Unavailability of Net Metering Credits Customer Acknowledgment" document should be collected and attached to Part I DG applications when a utility does not give customers the option of net metering credits.	May 29, 2024
Bugfixes		
[Part I Application: Section 4] Adding Array Orientation Before Entering Total Inverter Size AC (kW AC) Results in Generic Error	<p>Issue: Previously in Section 4 of Part I project applications, trying to add a row to the table of array data before populating the [Total Inverter Size AC (kW AC)] field resulted in a generic error message telling the user to contact their administrator rather than explaining how to proceed.</p> <p>Fix: It is still necessary to populate the [Total Inverter Size AC (kW AC)] field before adding rows to the array data so that calculations can be performed in the background, but the error message will now inform the user how to proceed, "Please populate the Total Inverter Size AC (kW AC) before adding array data."</p>	May 29, 2024
Regression: CSV upload for Disclosure Form for Spanish produces English version (DG)	<p>Issue: Distributed Generation (DG) Purchase, DG Lease, DG PPA Disclosure Forms created by CSV upload would render PDFs in English when the Spanish option was selected. Note: DG Disclosure Forms created directly in the Web Portal and from the API with the Spanish option selected would still correctly render PDFs in Spanish, and all Community Solar (CS) Disclosure Form including those created from the CSV upload process would render PDFs in Spanish when the Spanish option was selected.</p> <p>Fix: The issue with the DG CSV upload process has been corrected and now all Disclosure Forms will render PDFs in Spanish when the Spanish language option is selected regardless of Disclosure Form creation method.</p>	May 29, 2024
[DG Disclosure Form API] Calculated Field Audit - Total Cost Incorrectly Does Not Include Fees	Previously, Distributed Generation (DG) Disclosure Forms created via API incorrectly did not include general fees as part of the total cost. This has been corrected so the total cost to the customer should now be the same whether the Disclosure Form has been created via API or the portal web UI.	May 29, 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
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** – See [previous](#) update
- **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.