

2023-24 MES Year-End Report Deadline, Annual Report Requirement and Support, Equity Accountability System Survey

June 14, 2024

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

- **Events**
 - No events are scheduled for next week
- **Due Dates**
 - June 17, 2024 – Election Deadline – Project Re-Batch or Withdrawal (for July 2, 2024 ICC Meeting)
 - 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** – In observance of Juneteenth, next week’s Office Hours will be moved to Thursday, June 20, 2024 - 10:00 – 11:00 a.m. CPT – Office Hours provide support to individual AVs or Designees regarding Program requirements, portal, application, or other questions. Zoom link: <https://energy-solution.zoom.us/j/95588710302Co>.
- **Illinois Shines Holiday Hours** - In observance of Juneteenth, the Program will have limited services and updates on **Wednesday, June 19, 2024**. The Program Call Center will be closed, and updates to the Block Capacity Dashboard, application tables, application project reports, and waitlists will resume Thursday, June 20, 2024.
- **Application Tips and Tricks** - The Program Administrator publishes [Tips and Tricks](#) to help support stakeholders in avoiding project applications entering *Need Info* status and delaying their review and approval.
 - **Site Map** It is important that the site map submitted with the Part I application shows all individual, countable modules. If graphics or labels obstruct the ability for the processor to count the modules to compare against the application, the application will be sent to Need Info.

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

- **Minimum Equity Standard (MES) Reminders – 2023-24 Program Year Year-End Report Deadline, 2024-25 Program Year Compliance Plans Past Due** - As noted in previous announcements, Program Year 2023-2024 Year-End Reports are due on July 15, 2024, and 2024-25 Program Year MES Compliance Plans were due on June 3, 2024. **Any compliance plans that have not been submitted ARE OVERDUE**. Failure to comply with this Program requirement by June 17 **may result in disciplinary action**. The Program Administrator is currently working to review submitted compliance plans. AVs and Designees can expect to be notified of the Pass/Fail result from their compliance plan within the next four to six weeks. If you have not submitted your MES Compliance Plan, please do so at <https://forms.office.com/r/qvDmuW5Z74>. Resources on the Minimum Equity Standard and Equity Accountability System can be found here, <https://illinoisshines.com/equity-accountability-system/>, and stakeholders may contact the Program Administrator’s MES team at mes@illinoisshines.com for assistance.
- **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 announced Community Solar Updates and Reminders for the 2024-25 Program Year, including details and next steps on Traditional Community Solar (TCS) and Community-Driven Community Solar (CDCS) application and review timelines, scoring criteria updates, and more. The waitlisted Community Solar projects that were awarded capacity during the 2024-25 Program Year opening will be listed at TCS

and CDCS Category Hub pages at the Program website. There must be available capacity for the full project AC size before a project can come off the waitlist.

- **The Program Administrator will begin submitting previously waitlisted community solar projects to the ICC for approval beginning with the July 24, 2024 ICC meeting. Beginning July 5, 2024, Approved Vendors should watch closely for Part I verification and re-batching emails, signaling that projects are being moved forward for ICC submission. If Approved Vendors have projects that are not yet ready for a contract, it is critical to mark those projects as *Withheld* in AV re-batching workbooks. It is also very important for Approved Vendors to confirm capacity factor information prior to this date to help ensure contract accuracy.**
- **Find a CS Project Report – Updates Requested** - The IPA and Program Administrator seek updated Illinois Shines Community Solar project information from Approved Vendors for the *Find a Community Solar Project* report [at the Illinois Shines Program website](#), including project-specific information known to AVs. This report is valuable to interested subscribers, the Agency, and other stakeholders. A template to edit or add projects has been sent to Community Solar AVs; if you did not receive the template, please contact the Program Administrator. Please email your completed template to communitysolar@illinoisshines.com **by June 21, 2024** for inclusion in the next report update. Updates to this list will be made quarterly, and Approved Vendors are encouraged to reach out with any necessary updates between these releases.
- **Equity Accountability System (EAS) Survey** – The IPA Act requires the Agency to assess the effectiveness of the Equity Accountability System in increasing participation of Equity Eligible Persons and Equity Eligible Contractors in IPA programs and procurements. The Agency must conduct this analysis within one year of awarding the first contracts that resulted from the implementation of the Equity Accountability System. As outlined in Section 10.6.1 of the Long-Term Plan, the Agency will consider, at minimum, the success of the EAS by considering demographic data from Minimum Equity Standard Compliance Plans, the number of MES waivers requested, the number of Equity Eligible Contractors and on what basis they qualify as an EEC, and the number of Equity Eligible Persons registered in the Energy Workforce Equity Portal and on what basis they qualify as an EEP. In addition, on June 14, 2024, the Agency issued surveys (including versions for both EECs and EEC Designees, and non-EEC Approved Vendors and Designees) to solicit feedback on whether the EAS is working as intended. The Agency encourages participation in these surveys to ensure broad and representative feedback is included in the EAS Assessment. The deadline for these surveys is Wednesday, June 26, 2024. Find relevant surveys here:
 - [Survey for Non- EEC Certified Approved Vendors and Designees](#)
 - [Survey for EEC AVs and EEC Designees](#)
- **New to the Program Website** – The following key additions to www.IllinoisShines.com have been shared:
 - [Waitlisted TCS projects that were awarded capacity during the 2024-25 Program Year opening \(TCS project category hub page\)](#)
 - [Waitlisted CDCS projects that were awarded capacity during the 2024-25 Program Year opening \(CDCS project category hub page\)](#)

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

- **General Program**
 - **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 during the Annual Report period between **July 1, 2024 and July 15, 2024**. On May 20, 2024 the Program Administrator emailed stakeholders with relevant information and linkages to resources including pre-recorded walkthrough videos and more; this week, the [2023-24 Program Year Annual Report Guide](#) was added to the ‘REC Contract and Annual Report Help Guides’ section of the [Program Help Guides and Application Tips](#) page. **If your team members did not receive a SharePoint permission validation email or cannot access SharePoint to review and submit Annual Reports, please contact the Program Administrator for assistance.** Key Dates Relating to Annual Reports:
 - 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 to inform AVs of discrepancies on Annual Reports
- October 14, 2024 – Annual Reports are finalized
- November 15, 2024 – Program Administrator Drawdown calculations complete
- **2024-25 Illinois Shines Program Year Opening and Resources** - The 2024-25 Illinois Shines Program Year commenced on June 3, 2024 and introduced new and expanded capacity for project categories to continue the expansion of solar development in Illinois, as well as new requirements and Program features, updated Program documents, new REC prices and contracts, stakeholder resources, and more. A [June 3, 2024](#) announcement provided updated Program documents and links including the 2024 Long-Term Plan, the 2024-25 Program Guidebook, 2024-25 Consumer Protection Handbook, updated Contract Requirements, 2024-25 REC Prices, 2024 15-Year and 20-Year REC Delivery Contracts, Updated AV Renewal, AV and EEC applications, and more.
 - On June 4, 2024, the Program issued an [Update on Illinois Shines Block Capacity Following the 2024-25 Program Year Opening](#) including additional information.
 - On June 5, 2024, the Program issued a [detailed memo](#) on the Uncontracted Capacity Reallocation Process for the 2024-25 Program Year, and
 - On May 23, 2024, the Program hosted an informational webinar on updates for the 2024-25 Program Year. The [presentation slides](#), [recording](#), and [Questions and Answers](#) can be found on the [Program Year Webinars](#) page.
- **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.
- **IPA Updates EIEC Map** - On June 3, the Illinois Power Agency refreshed the [Equity Investment Eligible Community \(EIEC\) map](#) for Program Year 2024-25. This updated map reflects the removal of previously eligible 2022 Environmental Justice Community (EJC) areas used in Program Year 2023-24. More details on this update in [the June 3, 2024 announcement](#).
- **IPA Updates Equity Eligible Persons (EEP) Form on the Equity Portal** - On May 21, 2024, the IPA [updated the Equity Eligible Person \(EEP\) Form](#) on the Illinois [Energy Workforce Equity Portal](#). Individual residents may use this form to obtain certification of EEP status.

The EEP form update allows third parties (such as an that EEP's employer) to complete the form on behalf of an EEP. If a third party is completing the form on behalf of an EEP, that individual EEP must first expressly grant permission for a third party to complete the form on their behalf through an [Attestation Form](#).

- **Equity Eligible Contractors (EEC) Program News** – See full [EEC hub](#) on Program website
 - **EEC Subcontractor Application Opened on June 3, 2024** – Registration for Equity Eligible Contractor (EEC) Subcontractors, a new distinction in the Program, opened on June 3, 2024. As a reminder, entities should use the [EEC application](#) (at the Program's [Become an EEC webpage](#)) and select *Subcontractor* to apply. EEC Subcontractor registration 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.
 - **EEC Single Project AV Clarification** - See [previous](#) announcement

Ongoing Operations Updates

- **ComEd Community Solar Portal Outages** – The Program Administrator is aware that the ComEd Community Solar Portal has experienced outages since mid-February 2024, impacting the ability to add/remove subscribers and CS subscriber billing. The Program Administration team is working hard to support Approved Vendors impacted by these outages and will provide updates as this system comes back to full operating capacity.
- **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)
6/13/2024	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
9/24/2024	9/26/2024	10/10/2024

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.
- **Application Processing Update** – Following the start of the 2024-25 Illinois Shines Program Year, the Program Administrator has made substantial progress reviewing waitlist applications. On June 3, the waitlist volume totaled 7,938 Small DG and 208 Large DG applications. Since June 3, over 574 Small DG Part I and 50 Large

DG Part I previously waitlisted applications have been reviewed. Over 1,500 Small DG Part I and 40 Large DG Part I applications have been verified.

The Program Administrator has increased application processing staffing and will continue to add processors over the coming weeks to address the high volume of applications to be reviewed. With increased staffing, the forecasted throughput is approximately 800 DG applications weekly.

Reviewing Part I DG applications is a high priority that must be balanced with the priority of reviewing Part II DG and Community Solar applications. Staffing is evaluated and reassigned week over week to address each of these areas while considering the necessity to resource *Need Info* requests and cures, technical review, and quality assurance tasks. Currently the Program Administrator anticipates completing the review of all previously waitlisted DG applications by the end of July. With continued high volumes of new applications being submitted, the Program Administrator expects to be within a two-week turnaround time for application review at the end of September for all application categories. This forecast is subject to change, and updates will be provided in each Weekly Announcement until processing times are back within a normal range.

Application review data and progress is updated each weekday and can be referenced at the Program website's [Project Application Reports](#) tables, which provide a summary of batched/submitted, reviewed, and verified application volumes, as well as the outstanding queue of applications to be reviewed and those in *Need Info* status.

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
Enhancements		
Revised Illinois Shines Portal Landing Page	An announcement about the June 30, 2024 retirement of the legacy site has been added to the current portal.	June 11, 2024
Disclosure Form Portal True-up	This enhancement aligns all Disclosure Form field length input masks on the portal with that in the CSV and API intake methods. This will help ensure that all data ingested into Disclosure Forms match up and help reduce PDF pagination issues.	June 11, 2024
CS Pagination - Large Field Character limits: Several Fields: EG "supply_rate_formula" still allow 2000 characters, causing pagination issues	This enhancement reduces the Community Solar Disclosure Form payment method questions maximum text length from 2000 characters to 500 characters. This change will help reduce pagination issues in the PDF disclosure form.	June 11, 2024
Bugfixes		
Correct kWh text on DF REC Calculator	The Unit Label on the "Projects estimated first year production (kWh)" field in the "Illinois Shines Incentive Payment" section of DG Disclosure Forms was corrected from KW to kWh.	June 11, 2024

Restore password expiring email reminder process	The Portal will now send Notification Emails asking Users to Change their Login Password 10 days before their password is scheduled to expire.	June 11, 2024
[DG DF API] Missing mapping for field 2	Lease and PPA Distributed Generation Disclosure Forms created via API did not include a key value pair for the conditionally required question "Explain the calculation for the purchase price:*" (located in the final section "Additional Terms and Disclosures:"). A new key value pair has been added so AV/Ds using the API can now include an explanation.	June 11, 2024

Requirements and Reminders

- Illinois Power Agency Power Hour - Tax Incentives for Solar Energy: the 101 on the Inflation Reduction Act** – On June 28 at 12:00 p.m.- 1:00 p.m. CPT, the IPA will host *Power Hour 5 - Tax Incentives for Solar Energy: the 101 on the Inflation Reduction Act*. This informational webinar will include a detailed presentation from Jeremy Kalin, Impact Counsel at Avisen Legal, who will explore IRA tax credits for solar energy projects. Register at: https://us06web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZcqc06urTltGtVLKgAYaHXV8n6PvbbAH2I?x_zm_rtaid=DnyYc5IMQcS3tgo0VJJYg.1716398575014.e799390260be88091cb9339ab3757dfc&x_zm_rhtaid=180#/registration
- 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.
- Stakeholder Feedback** - There are no active stakeholder feedback requests at this time. Details on previous proposals and feedback requests can be found [at the Program website](#)
- 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.

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