

**EXPANDED CONSUMER PROTECTION WORKING GROUP AGENDA**

**Friday, July 12, 2024**

**Poll Question Series 1:**

Which marketplace participant best describes you?	
Approved Vendor	11 out of 31
Designee/Nested Designee	4 out of 31
Consumer	1 out of 31
Government Agency	10 out of 31
Non-Profit Advocacy/Community Group	3 out of 31
Prospective Approved Vendor/Designee	0
Other	2 out of 31

TOPIC 1	Impact of recent solar business closures on Program entities' business practices
<b>BACKGROUND</b>	Over the past several months, several Approved Vendors and Designees have gone out of business. In some of these situations, the entity going out of business did so without prior notice to its customers, the Program Administrator, or other Approved Vendors and/or Designees with which it shares customers under the Program. Given the importance that each entity can play in providing required information for Illinois Shines customer applications, the Program Administrator is interested in learning how Approved Vendors and their Designees communicate with one another on the status of projects so that, for example, an Approved Vendor has all the required documentation needed to proceed with project applications as seamlessly as possible and can communicate to customers regarding the status of their application should one of its Installer Designees go out of business without advanced notice.
<b>ISSUES/ QUESTIONS TO DISCUSS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>What lessons are stakeholders drawing from recent business closures and how are those lessons impacting their own business practices?</i></li> <li>• <i>What are the common business practices surrounding Approved Vendor line of sight on the status of installations from their Installer Designees?</i></li> <li>• <i>How are Approved Vendors changing their approach to Designee management given the increase in installers going out of business?</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Are Approved Vendors amending their requirements surrounding access to installation status and documentation in response to the increase in installers going out of business?</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>• <i>What consumer questions/concerns are stakeholders receiving regarding recent solar business closures? How are stakeholders responding to those questions/concerns?</i></li> </ul>
<b>MEETING MINUTES</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One Approved Vendor noted the need for better insights into what projects have been sold by a Designee and when a Designee may be struggling with its financial health.</li> <li>• One stakeholder noted the improved stranded customer resources on the Illinois Shines Program Administrator's website but explained that some customers are frustrated when they need to pay out of pocket to have their systems repaired after their original installer goes out of business. This</li> </ul>

	<p>stakeholder noted that at least one third-party finance partner is assisting stranded customers with covering the cost of such repairs.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The IPA explained the upcoming REC adder program and Solar Restitution Program – both described in the <a href="#">2024 Long-Term Plan</a> and that the Solar Restitution Program will allow for retroactive participation.</li> </ul>
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TOPIC 2	Input on Program Administrator/Illinois Power Agency practices regarding Program change announcements
<b>BACKGROUND</b>	<p>After some recent changes to the Illinois Shines program that included stakeholder feedback processes, the Agency and Program Administrators received feedback from some Program participants that they were not aware of the proposed changes and/or were unaware of the opportunity to provide written comment on the proposed changes.</p> <p>The recent Illinois Shines program updates followed the process outlined in Section 9 of the 2024 Program Guidebook. That section allows for Guidebook updates “both as the program changes and as additional questions and issues arise” and that “[m]inor updates to the Guidebook will be made by the IPA in consultation with the Program Administrator on a regular basis.” The Guidebook states that these amendments will be announced on the Program website. “[M]ore significant changes to the Guidebook that would benefit from stakeholder input” will include a “notice of the stakeholder process and a copy of the draft changes” published on the Program website. The Guidebook states that the stakeholder process will include the opportunity to review the proposed change, attend a meeting and/or webinar on the same, and provide written comments on the same. Any submitted comments will be considered by the Agency and Program Administrator before adopting any significant changes.</p> <p>A similar process is followed for changes to the Consumer Protection Handbook.</p> <p>The Agency and Program Administrators seek feedback from Program participants and other stakeholders regarding recommendations for effective communication of changes to Program requirements.</p>
<b>ISSUES/ QUESTIONS TO DISCUSS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>What concerns do stakeholders have with the existing stakeholder feedback process for significant Program changes?</i></li> <li><i>What proposed additional communication strategies or amendments to existing processes do stakeholders have to improve visibility/participation in stakeholder feedback process?</i></li> </ul>
<b>MEETING MINUTES</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Stakeholders suggested having a calendar or timeline for stakeholder processes on the Program website. When the Program Administrator shared an existing calendar webpage, one stakeholder suggested ways to improve the existing calendar.</li> <li>Some stakeholders recommended the addition of a banner or announcement feature within the application portal to enhance visibility, particularly for special announcements.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• One stakeholder provided positive feedback on the thoroughness of the weekly Program updates but recommended allowing stakeholders to self-identify which topics they would like additional stand-alone updates on.</li></ul>
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