

# Changes to Illinois Net Metering Bill Credits, Reminder About Project Re-Batching or Withholding, Program Year 2024-25 Mentorship Program

July 26, 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**
  - July 31, 2024 – Election Deadline: Project Re-Batch of Withdrawal (for August 14, 2024 ICC Meeting)

## Stakeholder Support

- **Program Administrator Office Hours** - July 31, 2024 from 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>.
- **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.
  - The Program Administrator will share tips, tricks, and reminders, and will answer questions at an upcoming ISEA Business Members webinar on August 1. See more information in this announcement below. A checklist with key clarifications and reminders will be shared at the webinar and at the Program website, to facilitate accurate and complete application submittals and reduce *Need Info* requests that can delay application review and approval.

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

- **Changes to Illinois Net Metering Bill Credits** - Illinois Shines prioritizes educating and informing customers about all aspects of their decision to go solar, including the significant financial commitment of solar installation. This includes Approved Vendors or their Designees providing customers with relevant information about net metering or other crediting approaches. Historically, Illinois utilities have been required to provide customer bill credits for excess energy produced by their residential or small commercial solar system at the full retail rate but under the state’s [Climate and Equitable Jobs Act](#) (“CEJA”), net metering offerings will change to supply-only starting January 1, 2025. This means that for customers interconnecting renewable energy systems to the grid in ComEd, Ameren, or MidAmerican territories after December 31, 2024, full retail rate net metering will no longer be available. In simplest terms, customers will be credited for excess electricity that their solar project sends to the grid at their electricity supply rate. Though the law sets a deadline of December 31, 2024 for a solar system to be approved for interconnection, installed, and have received permission to operate from the utility, all required documentation must be received by the utility no later than 5 p.m. CPT on December 13, 2024 to be eligible to receive permission to operate by December 31, 2024. The Agency has created a [Frequently Asked Questions \(“FAQs”\) document](#) to provide information to Approved Vendors/Designees and consumers about the changes. These FAQs can be found in the linked document as well as on the Program’s website:
  - FAQs Related to Changes in Net Metering in Illinois (AVs and Designees) – July 26, 2024 on the [Net Metering Credits](#) page
  - Approved Vendor- and Designee-Facing FAQs on the [Vendor FAQs](#) page
  - Consumer-Facing FAQs on the [Consumer FAQs](#) page

- **MES Waiver Microsoft Form** - The Agency and Program Administrator have transitioned the MES waiver submission from a PDF template to a [fillable Microsoft Form](#). While the content of the waiver has not changed, the Microsoft Form is more efficient for the submitter to complete and assists the Program Administration team with more expedient data collection for review. **Supplemental documentation must still be submitted to [mes@illinoisshines.com](mailto:mes@illinoisshines.com), with the subject line “\*Company Name\* MES Waiver Request”.** The new form is available on the [Equity Accountability System](#) page.
- **Equity Eligible Contractor News – see full EEC hub on Program website**
  - **Program Year 2024-25 Mentorship Program** - Following the successful Mentorship Pilot Program in Program Year 2023-24, a second cohort of the eight-week training series will be held from January to March 2025. The Mentorship Program is open to new Approved Vendors and Designees that are minority-owned, woman-owned, veteran-owned, disability-owned or considered a small business with the goal to help those new Program participants learn about Program requirements and application procedures. EECs are encouraged to apply to participate as well. Registration to participate in the 2024-2025 cohort will begin in November, 2024. Please contact the EEC Sector Strategist at [eec@illinoisshines.com](mailto:eec@illinoisshines.com) if you have questions about the Mentorship Program or would like to express early interest in applying.
- **Illinois Power Agency Power Hour – Long-Term Regional Transmission Planning, State Initiatives, and the Power Grid** – The IPA hosted Power Hour 6 - *Long-Term Regional Transmission Planning, State Initiatives, and the Power Grid* today, July 26, 2024. This educational webinar provided an overview on the role of Regional Transmission Organizations in long-term regional transmission planning and current challenges that states are facing on transmission reform, and highlighted Illinois’ policies and initiatives around transmission planning and policy implementation. The recording of the event will be shared on the IPA’s [website](#).
- **New to the Program Website** - The following key additions to [www.IllinoisShines.com](http://www.IllinoisShines.com) have been shared:
  - [Check My Project Status button](#) (added to the website’s navigation bar)
  - [FAQs Related to Changes in Net Metering in Illinois \(Net Metering Credits page\)](#)
  - [Information on Program Year 2024-25 Mentorship Program \(Mentorship Program page\)](#)
  - [Contracting Utility Registry Accounts \(Program Documents page, Other Resources section\)](#)
  - [Updated Minimum Equity Standard Waiver Form \(Equity Accountability System page\)](#)

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

- **General Program**
  - **Disclosure Form REC Incentive Calculator Adjustments** - The Illinois Shines Program Portal calculates REC incentive values for Disclosure Forms using applicable REC prices based on the date the Disclosure Form is created. For project applications submitted in the 2024-25 Program Year, which commenced June 3, 2024, Disclosure Forms and contracts should reflect calculations using 2024-25 REC Prices (except in select cases where a Disclosure Form submitted after June 3, 2024, correctly applies PY 2023-24 REC prices, such as a reissued Disclosure Form for a project approved and granted capacity in the previous Program Year). On [July 19, 2024, the Program issued an announcement](#) that addressed two issues with the Disclosure Form concerning REC pricing calculation, and corrective actions taken by the Program Administrator and which should be taken by Approved Vendors where necessary. The Program Administrator is available to answer questions and provide assistance to stakeholders in addressing this situation.
  - **Clarification of “Interconnecting Utility” and “Contracting Utility”** - The Program Administrator has become aware of some confusion on why projects located in Ameren territory have been contracted to ComEd. [The interconnecting utility and the contracting utility may or may not be the same entity.](#) The interconnecting utility is the utility that issues the interconnection agreement and to whose infrastructure the project system is connected. The contracting utility (also known as the Buyer) is the utility that signs the REC Contract and purchases the RECs delivered by the system. There are only three contracting utilities: ComEd, Ameren, and MidAmerican. A project system may be interconnected to Ameren but contracted with ComEd for REC delivery, or vice versa. The Program Administrator

determines which utility will serve as the Buyer for each contract. While a batch may contain projects in multiple utility service territories, the Program Administrator will strive to assign contracts to the utility where the bulk of the projects are located but may not always be able to do so because consideration is made to allow each utility to meet its pro-rata share of the Renewable Portfolio Standards (“RPS”) REC targets and available RPS funding. The REC price for each system will be based on the applicable Group for that system’s physical location, and not based on service area of the contracting utility. A new resource, [Contracting Utility Registry Accounts](#), can be found at the [Program Documents](#) page in the Other Resources section.

- **AV Project Reassignment Requests** - Please note that only the current AV of a project can submit a request to reassign a project to another AV. Property owners, project owners, and other AVs may not submit a request to reassign a project to another AV.
- **CEJA Workforce Development News** - The Governor Pritzker [announced](#) the grantees for the CEJA Climate Works Pre-Apprenticeship Program. The Climate Works Pre-Apprenticeship Program provides training opportunities in the trades to expand the clean energy talent pipeline and boost diversity in clean energy trade industries. The program also prioritizes underrepresented populations and residents living in communities that have historically faced economic and environmental barriers. DCEO also awarded several other program administrators for CEJA job training programs and hubs and the [list](#) can be found on DCEO’s [Program Announcements webpage](#). AVs and Designees seeking to add Equity Eligible Persons to their project workforce may find this resource helpful.
- **Annual Reports - Next Steps** - AVs with an active REC Contract are required to submit an Annual Report pertaining to the contracts and systems in their portfolio during the Annual Report period. Annual Reports were due July 15. Submission of an Annual Report is a Program requirement, and failure to submit an Annual Report is an Event of Default under the REC Contract that puts both the Approved Vendor and its contracted projects in jeopardy of continued participation in the Program. The Annual Report Cure Period began on July 16, and the Program Administrator will contact AVs to cure any report discrepancies. Key dates relating to Annual Reports:
  - 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

Annual Report resources are available to AVs at the Program website’s [Help Guides and Application Tips and Frequently Asked Questions](#) pages.

- **Minimum Equity Standard (“MES”) Reminders**

- **2024-25 Program Year MES Compliance Plans Past Due** - The 2024-25 Program Year MES Compliance Plans were due on June 3, 2024. **Any Compliance Plans that have not been submitted ARE OVERDUE** and participating entities who did not comply with this Program requirement by June 17 may be subject to 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.
- **2023-24 Program Year MES Year-End Report Past Due** - As noted in previous announcements, Program Year 2023-24 MES Year-End Reports were due July 15, 2024. **Any Year-End Reports that have not been submitted ARE OVERDUE.** The online form can be accessed here: <https://forms.office.com/r/FM6YbtEFWd>. Failure to submit an MES Year-End Report will result in escalation to the Program Administrator’s Consumer Protection Team consistent with Sections X.C-D of the Consumer Protection Handbook and may risk future good standing in the Program and result in disciplinary action. Resources on the MES 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](mailto:mes@illinoisshines.com) for assistance.
- **Project Workforce Definition** - On July 12, 2024, the Program Administrator released an [announcement](#) clarifying the definition of project workforce and questions around the 5% threshold as it relates to compliance with the Minimum Equity Standard.

- **Community Solar Program News** - See full [TCS](#) and [CDCS](#) hubs on Program website.
  - **Traditional Community Solar (TCS) Scoring Update** - Preliminary scores for all TCS projects submitted during the “first day” application window on June 3, 2024 were shared individually with each AV July 19, 2024. AVs can find the TCS scoring file located in their AV SharePoint folder with preliminary scores. Please see the initial, planned scoring schedule below.
    - Application Review Period: Applications undergo initial review by Program Administrator – Approximately 4 weeks (*Complete*)
    - Application Cure Period: Approved Vendors cure deficiencies identified by Program Administrator – Approximately 2 weeks (*Complete*)
    - Application Scoring Period: Program Administrator begins scoring process for all relevant applications (those submitted without deficiencies and those that successfully cure deficiencies during the 2-week cure period) – Approximately 3 weeks (*Complete*)
    - **Scoring Cure Period: AVs are offered a chance to review initial score and dispute and resolve any discrepancies – Approximately 2 weeks (currently July 19 - August 2)**
    - Scores published: AVs wishing to appeal their project score will have two weeks from the receipt of scores to submit an appeal to the Program Administrator
    - Random selection event to ordinally rank projects with tied scores
    - Final scores and project selection published
  - **Community-Driven Community Solar (“CDCS”) – Part II Demonstration of Project Commitments and Permissible Changes** – See [previous](#) announcement

#### **Ongoing Operations Updates**

- **ComEd Community Solar Portal Outages** - The Program Administrator remains aware of the ComEd Community Solar Portal outages that began in mid-February 2024, with impacts to CS subscriber billing and the ability to add/remove subscribers. The Program Administrator is working hard to support AVs impacted by these outages and will provide updates from ComEd as this system comes back to full operating capacity.
- **Re-Batching for ICC Meetings** – **Due to an increase in late requests to withhold projects from submission to the ICC, the Program Administrator would like to remind AVs of the important information below.**

In advance of each submission of batches to the ICC for approval, AVs are provided the opportunity to withhold or re-batch projects. **AVs must indicate any requests to withdraw or withhold projects during the two day re-batching window. 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)
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
9/30/2024	10/2/2024	10/17/2024
10/15/2024	10/17/2024	10/31/2024
10/21/2024	10/23/2024	11/7/2024
11/1/2024	11/6/2024	11/21/2024

### Application Processing Updates

- 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 4,935 Small DG Part I previously waitlisted applications have been reviewed and over 4,219 verified. The Program Administrator is pleased to announce that the full queue of previously waitlisted Large DG Part I applications has been processed, and we are exceeding our expectation to process applications within two weeks of batch/paid submittals for the Large DG Part I category.

Currently the Program Administrator anticipates completing the review of all previously waitlisted DG applications by the beginning of August. We are currently reviewing applications from early April. Please note that nearly 1,600 applications were received in the first few weeks of that month. Once that very large batch has been processed, the application processors will be able to make more visible progress towards the end of the previously waitlisted application queue, processing apps from right before the start of the current program year when another large spike of submittals occurred. The Program Administrator expects to be within a two-week turnaround time for review of applications submitted in the 2024 –25 Program Year 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.

### 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
<b>Bugfix</b>		
Backfill PV Watts API version for apps calculated before v8	A new field has been added to track the version of the PV Watts API that was used in a given Project Application. The field "PV Watts API version" will show in Part 1 (Section 5) and Part 2 (Section 1) when the REC Estimate Methodology is "PVWatts" and will show either "v8" or "v6 or earlier"	July 25, 2024
<b>Enhancement</b>		
DG Disclosure Forms: Update calculator links	The REC Calculator feature on DG Disclosure Forms was calculating the "Expected value of the REC incentive payment(s)" based on the pricing of the Program Year when the Disclosure Form was started. This has been revised to use the prices of the current program year when the "Calculate" button is pressed. This will help ensure that Disclosure Forms that were started but not submitted in a previous program year reflect accurate REC payments for customers. Additionally, DG Disclosure Forms contained an out of date link to the 2023-24 manual REC Payment Calculator. This link has been updated to point to the Program Documents page on the Illinois Shines website, allowing AVs and Designees to choose the correct REC Payment Calculator by Program Year.	July 18, 2024

### Requirements and Reminders

- **Stakeholder Feedback** - This table outlines current and forthcoming proposals and feedback requests. 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.
- **ISEA Webinar: Illinois Shines Distributed Generation Application Guidance** - The Program Administrator has been invited by the Illinois Solar Energy Association to jointly present a webinar to ISEA Business Members on specific application guidance, common mistakes, and tips and tricks when submitting Illinois Shines DG applications, including improving application submissions to avoid *Need Info* requests that delay review. The webinar will be held on **August 1, 2024 from 1:00 p.m. – 2:00 p.m. CPT**. For more information and to register via Zoom, please visit <https://www.illinoissolar.org/event-5789788>.

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