

CDCS Application Deadline September 3, TCS Random Selection Event September 10

August 16, 2024

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

- **Events**
 - TCS random selection event on **September 10, 2024 at 1:00 p.m. CPT.**
- **Due Dates**
 - August 23, 2024 at 11:59 p.m. CPT – TCS appeals deadline
 - August 26, 2024 – Part II verification cut off for August
 - August 28, 2024 – Election Deadline: Project Re-Batch of Withdrawal (for September 12, 2024 ICC Meeting)
 - September 3, 2024 – CDCS Application Submission Deadline for Program Year 2024-25

Stakeholder Support

- **Program Administrator Office Hours** - August 21, 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.
 - **Common Site Map Error:** In Part I applications, a discrepancy between the uploaded site map and Part I, Section 4 of the application is a common cause of *Need Info* delays.
 - For example, a site map showing three arrays containing five, five, and 15 modules, respectively, versus Part I, Section 4 of the application indicating three arrays containing five, seven, and 13 modules, respectively, is an example of a discrepancy that would lead to a *Need Info* request and delay application approval.
 - In this example, the discrepancy leads to a request to clarify which submitted information is correct – the site map or the application – and a requirement of the AV to provide the corrected information. The application would not move forward until the discrepancy is resolved.

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

- **IPA to Release Part I of its Equity Accountability System Assessment** - The IPA is expected to release the Part I of its Equity Accountability System (“EAS”) Assessment next week. The EAS Assessment is an IPA-authored report assessing the effectiveness of statutory EAS provisions in promoting equity across the clean energy economy in Illinois. In the announcement, the Agency will provide detailed components of the EAS and next steps. Additional information on IPA initiatives to promote equity across the clean energy economy can be found on the [Equity Accountability System](#) page at the Illinois Shines website and at the IPA’s [Energy Workforce Equity Portal](#).
- **Renewable Energy Contractor Clinic** – The Illinois Shines program and HIRE360 will be hosting a Renewable Energy Contractor Clinic on Tuesday, October 22, 2024 from 11:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m. CPT. This free event will include presentations on how to register as an Equity Eligible Contractor (“EEC”), participate in the Illinois Shines and Illinois Solar for All programs, how to access free business advising and small business resources from the Cook County Small Business Source, and an overview of the grant opportunities by the Department of Commerce & Economic Opportunity (“DCEO”) as well as information on working capital loans, certification support and other no cost resources for contractors that HIRE360 provides. Lunch will be provided. There will

be a networking hour from 5:00 – 6:00 p.m. CPT. The event will take place at 2540 South State Street, Chicago, Illinois 60616. Register here:

<https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=WhykgeRTDE2nqHQvI9dkUU00ZkZbl0FCv1XakYuDriFUNzc2RFE00U1UWTFfQjdDRjk5Q1dVR1o3WS4u&origin=QRCode>

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

- **Community Solar Program News** - See [TCS](#) and [CDCS](#) hubs on Program website for all CS updates.
 - **Community-Driven Community Solar Application Deadline** - As outlined in Section 5 of the Program Guidebook, the Community-Driven Community Solar (“CDCS”) application window closes 90 days after the start of the Program Year. With the Program Year commencing on June 3, 2024, the application submission deadline for Program Year 2024-25 CDCS projects is **September 3, 2024 at 11:59 p.m. CPT. Applications are not accepted after the close of the application window.** Additional information about the review and scoring and CDCS project applications will be published following the close of the application window.
 - **Community-Driven Community Solar – Local Subscriber Verification** - [As shared on August 5](#), all CDCS projects submitted during or after the 2022-23 Program Year will be evaluated against the scoring guidelines outlined in [Appendix F](#) of the Program Guidebook. At Part II application subscriber verification and intervals throughout the 15-Year REC Contract, the Program Administrator will confirm that commitments to local subscribers have been maintained. The Program Administrator will verify that the local subscribers are subscribers in the same county where the project is located, or if that project’s county population is below 50,000, then also in adjacent counties. Please see [the full announcement](#) for additional details on the local subscriber verification process, including a table sharing county populations for purposes of the process.
 - **Traditional Community Solar Scoring Update** - Preliminary scores for all Traditional Community Solar (“TCS”) projects submitted during the “first day” application window on June 3, 2024 were shared individually with each AV on July 19, 2024. In accordance with the TCS scoring guidelines previously published in both the 2024 Long-Term Plan (pg. 164) and the 2024-25 Program Guidebook (pg. 133), the Program Administrator has scored all TCS projects submitted on June 3, 2024, that completed application processing. These scores will be used to determine the waitlist order once random selection takes place and the 20% developer cap is applied. As shared on August 9, 2024, the scores have been posted on the Program website on the [Traditional Community Solar page](#) of the Project Category Hub. Please see the [full announcement](#) for additional details including the process by which AVs may appeal decisions made by the Program Administrator on the scoring of their projects.

Please see the current 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 (*Complete*)
- Scores Published: Please see the [TCS page](#) for published scores (*Complete*)
- **AVs wishing to appeal their project score will have two weeks from the receipt of scores to submit an appeal to the Program Administrator. Appeals must be submitted by 11:59 p.m. CPT August 23, 2024.**
- Random selection event to ordinarily rank projects with tied scores: The Agency expects that random selection of projects within tied score brackets will be necessary based on the current scoring, but this process cannot occur until the appeal process is complete and all scores are

confirmed. The Agency intends to hold the random selection event on **September 10, 2024 at 1:00 p.m. CPT**. During this process, the 20% developer cap will be applied, and the project waitlist position will be determined. TCS Random Selection Event webinar registration link: https://energy-solution.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_wUfQciTZO_K9nTbTXOaxgO

- Final scores and project selection published
- **Equity Eligible Contractor News** – see full [EEC hub](#) on Program website
 - **Program Year 2024-25 Mentorship Program** – See [previous](#) announcement
- **General Program**
 - **IPA Issues Illinois Shines Program Year 2023-24 End of Year Report** - On August 8, 2024, the Program announced the release of the [Program Year 2023-24 End of Year Report](#). The Report presents a detailed infographic which highlights data on some of the most significant and high-impact activities produced by the Program and its participating stakeholders, including dollar value in incentive payments invoiced to utilities for approved and Energized projects, number of project applications reviewed, number of applications ICC approved, and allocated capacity (in MW), for each of the Program’s six project categories, and number of homes and businesses to benefit from Community Solar projects approved in the Program Year, highlights pertaining to the Equity Accountability System, Consumer Protection activities, stakeholder participation, and support provided by the Program and its Program Administrator, among other information. The full report is available at the Program website at <https://illinoisshines.com/about/>.
 - **Annual Reports - Next Steps** - 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 and 2023-24 MES Year-End Reports Past Due** - The 2024-25 Program Year MES Compliance Plans were due June 3, 2024, and 2023-24 Program Year MES Year-End Reports were due July 15, 2024. **Any Compliance Plans or Year-End Reports that have not been submitted ARE OVERDUE** and participating entities who did not comply with these Program requirements may be subject to disciplinary action. The Program Administrator is currently working to review submitted Compliance Plans, and AVs and Designees can expect to be notified of the Pass/Fail result from their Compliance Plan within the next four to six weeks. Program Year 2023-24 Year-End Reports can be submitted via the online form 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 for assistance.
 - **Minimum Equity Standard (MES) Waiver Score Threshold for AVs/Designees Not Employing Subcontractors** - The Equity Accountability System requires entities participating in Illinois Shines to meet the Minimum Equity Standard on an annual basis and to demonstrate their compliance. In rare cases, the Agency may grant a waiver from this requirement where the entity demonstrates significant efforts in outreach activities. Entities submitting MES Waiver requests must receive a minimum score of 20 points based on the scoring rubric; for AVs and Designees that do not employ subcontractors for Illinois Shines project work, the minimum required score to qualify for a Waiver is 16 points. This adjustment acknowledges that the waiver criteria regarding direct outreach to Equity Eligible

Contractors is not applicable to entities that do not employ subcontractors, thus removing the four points typically awarded for this activity in question 4.d of the scoring rubric.

- **MES Waiver Microsoft Form** – See [previous](#) announcement
- **ComEd CC&B Community Solar Billing UPDATE** - As many Illinois Shines participants are aware, ComEd has been experiencing significant delays in applying community solar bill credits to customers’ accounts. Last week, ComEd provided an update that all outstanding community solar bill credits will be included on customers’ bills for July. Many customers will see large amounts of credits added to their account at once; in many cases, the credits may be much more than the customer can use right away. ComEd will allow customers to request “refund checks” for their outstanding community solar credits. This will allow the customer to receive the value of the credits right away, rather than using the credits over subsequent months. Community solar providers may want to ensure that their customers, especially those who reach out with questions or concerns, are aware of this option. **The customer must affirmatively reach out to ComEd to request the refund check.**

Please also note that the Consumer Protection Handbook (Section VI.B.2) has specific requirements that apply when a community solar provider bills a customer for multiple billing cycles at once, including offering customers a no-penalty payment plan if the customer is billed for 3 or more billing cycles at once (or 2 or more billing cycles for ILSFA customers). Community solar providers should review these provisions and ensure they are complying with all applicable requirements.

- **Changes to Illinois Net Metering Bill Credits** – See [previous](#) announcement

Ongoing Operations Updates

- **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)
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
11/15/2024	11/19/2024	12/5/2024

- **Part II Verification Cut Off for August** - To allow time for invoice calculation and generation, the last valid Part II Verification date for July will be **August 26, 2024**. Applications that are Part II verified on or before August 26, 2024 will be included in the September invoicing period. Application processing will continue throughout the last week of the month and any applications that are reviewed between August 27, 2024 and August 31, 2024 will be invoiced in October 2024.

Application Processing Updates

- **Application Processing Update** - The Program Administrator continues making substantial progress reviewing waitlist applications since the start of the 2024-25 Program Year. On June 3, the waitlist volume totaled 7,938 Small DG and 208 Large DG applications. All Large DG applications from the waitlist have been reviewed, and there are only 241 Small DG applications remaining to be reviewed from this list, which are anticipated to be completed by the end the week.

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.**

Requirements and Reminders

- **Stakeholder Feedback** - There are no current proposals and feedback requests, but forthcoming proposals and feedback requests will be shared here. 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.
- **Alert: Notification of Email Phishing Attempts Posing as Illinois Shines Program Administrator** – On July 29, the Program Administrator [alerted stakeholders](#) to phishing attempts sent via email to AVs and Designees urging vendors to take prompt action to “to confirm or update”. **These emails have not been sent from the Program and are not legitimate requests for information. They should not be responded to, and recipients should not click the links in the message. If you clicked the link in the phishing email (or are unsure if you may have) and if you believe you subsequently shared Program portal credentials, please alert the Program Administrator and change your Program portal password immediately.**

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