

TCS Appeals Deadline – August 23, Stakeholder Feedback for Net Metering Changes to Disclosure Forms, IPA Releases Part I of its Equity Accountability System Assessment

August 23, 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 28, 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.
 - **When to include an ‘Unavailability of Net Metering Acknowledgment Form’ or a ‘Net Metering Letter’:** A [Utility Net Metering Reference Table](#) is available at the Program website which lists each utility that has participated in the Program thus far and a) whether they provide 1:1 net metering and b) if net metering **is** provided and if the utility issues a Net Metering Letter.
 - The Utility Net Metering Reference Table should be referred to when submitting Part I to determine if an acknowledgement form is required.
 - If the utility does **NOT** provide 1:1 net metering or a materially similar program, the customer is required to sign a form that must be uploaded to the Part I application as an ‘Additional Document’. In addition to the document being signed, **all fields must be populated**, including the “I will receive credits for surplus electricity that my project generates and sends back to the grid as follows:” field. This field should include either “not applicable” or a description of how the interconnecting utility does handle surplus electricity.

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

- **Stakeholder Feedback for Net Metering Changes to Disclosure Forms** - On [August 21, 2024](#), the IPA released a request for stakeholder feedback on a proposal by the Illinois Shines and Illinois Solar for All (“ILSFA”) programs to update Distributed Generation Disclosure Forms to reflect the change for residential and small commercial customers from “full retail rate” net metering to “supply only” net metering in the ComEd, Ameren, and MidAmerican service territories. This change will be in effect for new net metering customers starting in 2025, and the proposed updates would change the approach for calculating the value of electricity from solar projects. This [linked document](#) describes separate proposals for Illinois Shines and ILSFA and breaks down each proposal into three sections: changes to the user inputs into the Portal; changes to the Portal calculations related to the value of electricity, and utility rebate payments; and changes to the Disclosure Form PDF presented to the customer. Please see the full announcement for additional information. Comments should

be provided via email attachment to IPA.Solar@illinois.gov with the subject “[Responder’s Name] – Stakeholder Feedback on DF Updates” by September 6, 2024.

- **IPA Released Part I of its Equity Accountability System Assessment** – On [August 6, 2024](#), the IPA released [Part I of its Equity Accountability System \(“EAS”\) Assessment](#). 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 provided 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](#).
- **Illinois Shines API Test Environment: New Quarterly Test Data Refresh Process** – The Program has alerted current test users of the portal’s API that on that on October 1, 2024 the Program Administrator will purge all test data from the API Test Environment, and refresh the database with the latest copy from Production. Please see the [full announcement](#) for more details or contact the Program Administrator with questions.
- **Notification of Email Phishing Attempts Posing as Illinois Shines Compliance** – On [August 19, 2024](#), the Program Administrator notified participants to a new email phishing attempt to AVs and Designees, urging vendors to review compliance to information by clicking a linked PDF document embedded in the email. The message represented that the sender was the Program and used a spoofed sender address of “kristenfernand@illinoisabp.com” **These emails have not been sent from the Program, are not legitimate notices, and recipients should neither respond to them nor click the link(s) in the message.**
- **New to the Program Website** – The following key additions to <http://www.IllinoisShines.com> have been shared:
 - August 2024 - Stakeholder Feedback Request: Updating DG Disclosure Forms for Supply-Only Net Metering - (Responses due September 6, 2024) ([Stakeholder Feedback](#) page)

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 ordinally 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_wUfQciTZQ_K9nTbTXOaxgQ
- Final scores and project selection published

- **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/>.

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

- **2024-25 Program Year MES Compliance Plans and 2023-24 MES Year-End Reports** - 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. The Program Administrator is currently reviewing submitted Compliance Plans and Year-End Reports.
- **Minimum Equity Standard (MES) Waiver Score Threshold for AVs/Designees Not Employing Subcontractors** – See [previous](#) announcement

- **ComEd CC&B Community Solar Billing UPDATE** – 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 has completed the review of all Small DG waitlisted applications and is currently reviewing applications from the 2024-25 Program Year across all project categories.
- 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.
- **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=WhykgeRTDE2nqHQvi9dkUU00ZkZbl0FCv1XakYuDriFUNzc2RFE00U1UWTFQjdDRjk5Q1dVR1o3WS4u&origin=QRCode>

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