

Request for Stakeholder Feedback on Consumer Protection Initiatives, Fall 2024 AV Roundtables, AV and Designee Program Satisfaction Survey

September 20, 2024

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

- **Events**
 - No events are scheduled for next week
- **Due Dates**
 - September 25, 2024 - Part II verification cut off for September
 - September 26, 2024 - Election Deadline: Project Re-Batch of Withdrawal (for October 10, 2024 ICC meeting)
 - October 3, 2024 - Last day to submit a Roundtable interest form survey
 - October 7, 2024 - Stakeholder feedback on [Consumer Protection Initiatives](#) deadline

Stakeholder Support

- **Program Administrator Office Hours** – September 25, 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.
 - **Standing Orders** - The Program has observed common issues with standing orders, which will result in a *Need Info* request that will delay application review. Stakeholders are asked to keep the following in mind when submitting applications:
 - When AVs create a standing order in GATS or M-RETS, it is important to double check the information entered is accurate. Ensuing project data in the standing order is complete and correct helps prevent a *Need Info* request.
 - The standing order request must be marked “YES” for irrevocable, the application ID must be correct, and the standing order must be dated after the Trade Date.
 - The Program Administrator is also comparing array data between the project application and the standing order and discrepancies will result in a *Need Info* request.

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

- **Request for Stakeholder Feedback on Consumer Protection Initiatives – Due October 7, 2024** - On [September 16, 2024](#), the Program requested stakeholder feedback on detailed proposals for three new Consumer Protection initiatives: an [escrow process](#), a [stranded customer REC adder](#), and a [Restitution Program](#). A framework for each of these initiatives was approved as part of the 2024 Long-Term Plan, and the Agency is now seeking feedback on more comprehensive proposals for each initiative.
 - [Escrow Process Stakeholder Feedback Request](#): The escrow process will be used when necessary to ensure that customers who have been promised a portion of the REC incentive payment do in fact receive that promised payment.
 - [Stranded Customer REC Adder Stakeholder Feedback Request](#): The stranded customer REC adder creates an economic incentive for Approved Vendors to take on customers who have been stranded by the original solar company.

- [Restitution Program Stakeholder Feedback Request](#): The Restitution Program will provide compensation to customers harmed through their participation in Illinois Shines and Illinois Solar for All.

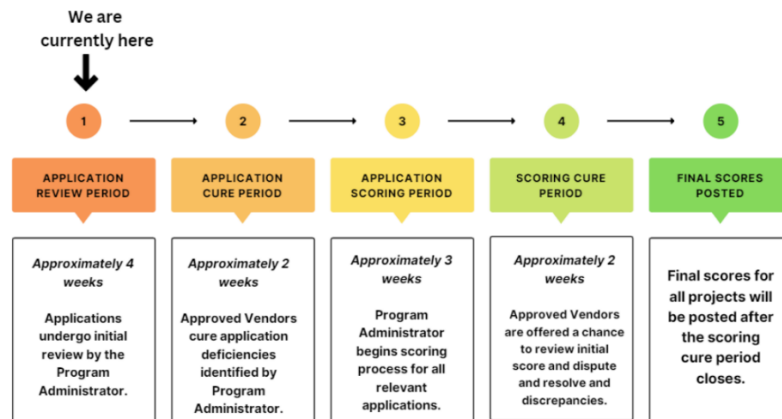
The Agency and Program Administrators request feedback on all aspects of the proposals, and commenters should not feel limited by the specific questions posed. **Please provide comments via email attachment to IPA.Solar@illinois.gov with the subject “[Responder’s Name] – Stakeholder Feedback on CP Initiatives” by [October 7, 2024](#).**

- **Fall 2024 AV Roundtables** - The Program Administrator is excited to announce the next round of AV Roundtable meetings for each of the Program’s project sectors. AV Roundtables provide an opportunity for participants to share Program feedback or suggestions and offer insights on market challenges and conditions. Roundtable participants will also be able to connect with Sector Strategists and other Program Administrator team members. Prior Roundtables have yielded beneficial insights from AVs which help drive specific Program improvements. The Program emailed AVs a Roundtable interest form survey on September 18, 2024. In the survey, AVs can indicate their interest in participating and provide feedback on potential discussion topics. All AVs are encouraged to complete the interest form no later than [October 3, 2024](#).
- **Illinois Shines AV and Designee Program Satisfaction Survey** - The Program Administrator is preparing to deploy the second annual Illinois Shines program Satisfaction Survey. The purpose of the survey is to gauge the satisfaction of AVs and Designees in their participation in the Illinois Shines program. Aggregated results of the survey will be shared in a high-level report, and individual responses will be kept anonymous. The survey will be distributed to AVs and Designees through email on Monday, September 23, 2024.
- **New to the Program Website** - The following key additions to <http://www.IllinoisShines.com> have been shared:
 - Request for Stakeholder Feedback on Consumer Protection Initiatives; [Escrow Process Stakeholder Feedback Request](#), [Stranded Customer REC Adder Stakeholder Feedback Request](#), and [Restitution Program Stakeholder Feedback Request \(Consumer Protection Initiatives page\)](#)
 - [September 6, 2024 Consumer Protection Working Group meeting minutes \(Consumer Protection Working Group page\)](#)
 - The Vendor Forums & Key Dates page has now been renamed to the [Key Dates & Deadlines](#) page
 - Added [Illinois Shines Process Guide \(Become an AV or Designee page\)](#)

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.
 - **Results of Program Year 2024-2025 Traditional Community Solar (TCS) Random Selection Event** - On September 10, 2024, the TCS Random Selection was held, and on September 12, 2024, the [recording](#), [presentation slides](#), [FAQs](#), and the [results spreadsheet](#) were posted to the Program website’s [Traditional Community Solar](#) hub page. Both Group A and Group B project waitlists (projects receiving scores of at least five points) have been updated on the [Block Capacity Dashboard](#) page, and will be further updated as new projects are submitted and scored. A special announcement regarding the random selection event was also shared on [September 12, 2024](#).
 - **Community-Driven Community Solar Update** - 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 was September 3, 2024. Applications are not accepted after the close of the application window. **Please see the proposed schedule below for application review and scoring:**
 - Application Review Period - Applications undergo initial review by Program Administrator
 - Application Cure Period - AVs cure deficiencies identified by Program Administrator
 - 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)

- Scoring Cure Period - AVs are offered a chance to review initial score and dispute and resolve any discrepancies



- **MES 2023-24 Year End Report Next Steps** - The Program is reviewing all submitted Minimum Equity Standard (“MES”) Year-End Reports. Participating entities will be notified of their MES Rating beginning in September. Notice of Potential Violations (“NoPVs”) were sent out on September 10, 224 to entities that failed to submit. The Agency encourages non-compliant entities to respond and get into compliance.
- **Updates to Disclosure Form Deep Dives** - The Program has added information regarding upcoming net metering changes on the [Disclosure Form Deep Dives](#), including supply-only net metering, which will be applicable for customers approved for net metering after January 1, 2025.
- **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 AVs or their Designees providing customers with relevant information about net metering or other crediting approaches. The Agency has created a [Frequently Asked Questions \(“FAQs”\) document](#) to provide information to AVs/Designees and consumers about the changes, which can be found in the linked document and 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 and AV-and Designee-Facing FAQs on the [Vendor FAQs](#) page
 - Consumer-Facing FAQs on the [Consumer FAQs](#) page
 - Changes to Illinois Net Metering Bill Credits information in the [July 26, 2024 Program 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)
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
12/3/2024	12/5/2024	12/19/2024

- Part II Verification Cut Off for September** - To allow time for invoice calculation and generation, the last valid Part II Verification date for September will be **September 25, 2024**. Applications that are Part II verified on or before September 25, 2024 will be included in the October invoicing period. Application processing will continue throughout the last week of the month and any applications that are reviewed between September 26, 2024 and September 31, 2024 will be invoiced in November 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 will 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 noted, though **AVs and Designees should plan on the full three hours.**

Development Focus	Details	Planned or Actual Delivery
Enhancement		
Import (In Progress / Withdrawn) Disclosure Forms from Prior Program Administrator – Distributed Generation Disclosure Forms	<p>This enhancement allows AVs to export their project data to a CSV file from the project application dashboard. The exported report will contain Part I and Part II data based on the filters applied in the dashboard.</p> <p>To use this feature, AVs should navigate to the Project Dashboard (Menu: Vendor -> Project Applications -> View) apply any Search Filters they would like in the column headings, and then select the "Export Project Data" button at the top of the page.</p>	September 17, 2024

Requirements and Reminders

- **Resource Reminder - AV Program Requirements Annual Checklist** - To support AVs in awareness of annual Program requirements, the Program provides an [Approved Vendor Program Requirements Annual Checklist](#), which is available with other helpful tools and resources at the [Program Help Guides and Application Tips](#) page of the Program website. AVs and Designees may also find additional helpful resources at the [Project Category Hub's](#) category-specific pages.
- **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](#).

Proposal or Feedback Topic and Link to Details	Request for Comment Released	Deadline for Comment	Results or Updates to Request
Stakeholder Feedback on Consumer Protection Initiatives - Escrow Process, Stranded Customer REC Adder, and Restitution Program	September 16, 2024	October 7, 2024	
Updating DG Disclosure Forms for Supply-Only Net Metering	August 21, 2024	September 6, 2024	Comments received are published here .

- **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.
- **Free Renewable Energy Contractor Clinic** - The Illinois Shines program and HIRE360 will host a Renewable Energy Contractor Clinic on Tuesday, **October 22, 2024** from 11:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m. CPT. Please see the [previous announcement](#) for event details. Lunch will be provided, and the event includes 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=WhykgeRTDE2nqHQvI9dkUU00ZkZbI0FCv1XakYuDriFUNzc2RFE00U1UWTFQjdDRjk5Q1dVVR1o3WS4u&origin=QRCode>
- **Annual Report Cure Period Continues** - The Annual Report cure period is in progress. The Program Administrator is reviewing responses to discrepancies identified during the Annual Reporting period and has emailed affected AVs to resolve outstanding items. All discrepancies must be resolved by October 15, 2024. Failure to cure discrepancies may be a Program violation. AVs must be responsive to requests for information.

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