IPA Launches Dedicated Small and Emerging Business Hub, Roundtable Interest Forms Deadline, Consumer Protection Working Group

September 27, 2024

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

- Events
    - October 4, 2024 – Consumer Protection Working Group. Join with this [link](#)
- Due Dates
    - October 1, 2024 – October REC invoicing opens
    - October 2, 2024 – Election Deadline: Project Re-Batch or Withhold (for October 17, 2024 ICC Meeting)
    - October 3, 2024 - Last day to submit an AV Roundtable [interest form](#)
    - October 7, 2024 - Stakeholder feedback on [Consumer Protection Initiatives](#) deadline
    - October 10, 2024 – October REC invoicing deadline
    - October 11, 2024 – Last day to submit response to annual [Program Satisfaction Survey](#)

Stakeholder Support

- **Program Administrator Office Hours** – October 2, 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 from resulting in a *Need Info* request and delaying their review and approval.
    - **Battery Backup:** As energy storage becomes increasingly more common as an add-on to solar projects, it is important to understand how to successfully note battery backup components in the application.
    - Part II Section 4 of the application "Equipment Details" includes a battery prompt '**Does your system have a battery backup?**' with a dropdown menu allowing a "Yes" or "No" selection.
        - If the system does include a battery backup, please answer "Yes" and ensure that the battery schematic document has been uploaded as a Part II Document.
            - Indicating that a battery backup exists but not including a schematic will result in a Need Info request that will delay application review.
        - If the system does not include a battery backup, please answer "No." No additional schematics are expected to be uploaded with the project documentation for systems that do not include a battery backup.
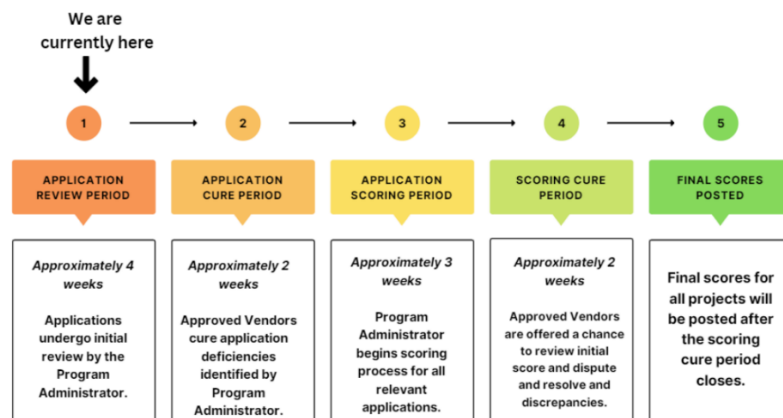
Program News – New or Updated Items *(All Program updates can be found on the [Program Updates webpage](#))*

- **Illinois Power Agency Launches Dedicated Small and Emerging Business Hub** - On [September 26, 2024](#) the IPA [announced](#) the launch of a dedicated [Small and Emerging Business Hub](#), with a goal to centralize industry-specific information to help small and emerging businesses connect with targeted programs and resources that meet their needs in entering the clean energy economy. The Hub, which resides on the [Energy Workforce Equity Portal](#), streamlines new and existing resources to small and emerging businesses navigating the solar landscape in Illinois. The announcement provides details on the Hub including resources available to AVs and Designees, the concept for the Hub, and highlights key features of the Hub.
- **October 2024 Consumer Protection Working Group** - The Agency and its Illinois Shines and Illinois Solar for All Program Administrators will host the next Consumer Protection Working Group meeting on ==October 4, 2024==, at 10:00 a.m. CPT. The Working Group's meeting agendas, Zoom links, and a participation interest form can be found on the [Consumer Protection Working Group](#) page on the Program website.

- **New to the Program Website** - The following key additions to http://www.IllinoisShines.com have been shared:
  - Assignment and Assumption Agreement document (Program Documents 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 2024-25 Traditional Community Solar (TCS) Random Selection Event** - The TCS Random Selection was held on September 10, 2024. Resources from the event have been posted to the Program's Traditional Community Solar page. Project waitlists have been updated on the Block Capacity Dashboard page.
  - **Community-Driven Community Solar Update** - 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

- **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. Please see the full announcement for details on each initiative. 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 emailed AVs a Roundtable interest form on September 18, 2024. For more information on the Roundtables please see the previous announcement. 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 emailed AVs and Designees the second annual Illinois Shines Program Satisfaction Survey. This survey is not limited to one respondent per AV or Designee, as the Program recognizes that multiple people per company may be involved in the Program. Please fill out the survey by October 11, 2024.

- **Changes to Illinois Net Metering Bill Credits** - The Agency has created a [Frequently Asked Questions ("FAQs") document](#) to provide information to AVs/Designees and consumers about the Net Metering Bill Credit 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)
9/30/2024	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

- **October REC Invoicing Opens October 1, 2024** - REC invoices and Quarterly Netting Statements will be made available for download from AV SharePoint folders on October 1, 2024. Invoices must be submitted to the utility by October 10, 2024 to receive payment for the November invoice period. Any invoice amounts not submitted to the utility by October 10, 2024 will be carried forward and included in the next invoice period (January 2024).
- **Part II Verification Cut Off for October** - To allow time for invoice calculation and generation, the last valid Part II Verification date for October will be October 23, 2024. Applications that are Part II verified on or before October 23, 2024 will be included in the November invoicing period. Application processing will continue throughout the last week of the month and any applications that are reviewed between October 24, 2024 and October 31, 2024 will be invoiced in December 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.

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	

- **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. Register here: https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=WhykgeRTDE2nqHQvI9dkUU0OZkZbI0FCv1XakYuDriFUNzc2RFE0OU1UWTFFQjdDRjk5Q1dVR1o3WS4u&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.
- **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, 2024 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.

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