

MES Mid-Year Report Form Now Open, REC Price Inputs Feedback Deadline, Public Schools 180-Day Prioritization Window Closure

November 15, 2024

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

- **Events**
 - December 4, 2024 – Equity Eligible Contractor Roundtable
 - December 11, 2024 – Public Schools Roundtable
- **Due Dates**
 - November 19, 2024 – Election Deadline: Project Re-Batch or Withhold (for December 5, 2024 ICC Meeting)
 - November 22, 2024 – Stakeholder feedback on [REC Price Cost Inputs](#) deadline
 - December 2, 2024 – **(UPDATED DUE DATES)** 180-day prioritization window for Public Schools Subcategories closes **and** Designee Renewal deadline for all Designees and Nested Designees that registered in the Illinois Shines program before June 1, 2024
 - December 6, 2024 – Registration for [Mentorship Program](#) closes

Stakeholder Support

- **Program Administrator Office Hours** - November 20, 2024 from 10:00 – 11:00 a.m. CPT - Individual AV or Designee support for Program requirements, Portal, application, or other questions.
<https://energy-solution.zoom.us/j/8678382503?omn=98063266350>.
- **Upcoming Illinois Shines Holiday Hours** - The Program will have limited services and updates on November 28 – 29, 2024 in observance of Thanksgiving. On these days, the Program Call Center will be closed, and updates to the Block Capacity Dashboard, application tables, application project reports, and waitlists will resume the next business day.
- **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.
 - **Part II application review includes a comparison of documentation between the Program and the Generation Attribute Tracking System (“GATS”) Registry.** On average, 50% of recent Part II projects that resulted in a *Need Info* request to clarify or correct GATS discrepancies. AVs are advised to ensure accurate information that is consistent with the application is entered into GATS to avoid a delay in application review and approval. Below are a few items to check before submitting a Part II application:
 - GATS Standing Order - The GATS ID on the application must clearly correspond to GATS ID provided on the application.
 - The ‘Proof of Irrevocable Transfer’ uploaded as a Part II document must represent the project registered to the GATS ID noted in Part II Section 2 of the application.
 - The ‘Standing Order’ must align with the contracting utility noted on the application.
 - Projects are required to provide ‘proof of having initiated an irrevocable Standing Order’ which can be modeled with a status of ‘Pending’ or ‘Approved.’
 - ‘Standing Orders’ must have a ‘Certificate %’ of 100% and be marked as **‘Irrevocable.’**
 - GATS Registry Details – In coordination with GATS, the Program Administrator has enhanced their review of the GATS project data against the project application.
 - The address associated with the ‘Standing Order’ must align with the ‘Project Location’ provided on the application.

- The ‘System Characteristics’ detailed in the GATS Registry must align exactly with the array details provided in the Part II application. Each characteristic is confirmed by the Program Administrator: System size, module quantity, module size, tilt, orientation, and array type.
- The AC size is not required in GATS; however, if the AC size is listed in the registry, it cannot differ from the AC size listed on the application.

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

- **Minimum Equity Standard (MES) Mid-Year Reports Due – December 31, 2024** – As announced on [November 12, 2024](#), Mid-Year Reports to show progress toward meeting the MES for Program Year 2024-25 are due **December 31, 2024**. Participating AVs and Designees should submit their Mid-Year Report by completing the form found [here](#). If your organization faces challenges in fulfilling these obligations, the Program Administrator is available to provide additional resources and guidance to help you reach compliance.
- **Designee Renewal Updated Due Date – December 2, 2024** – Designees and Nested Designees of the Illinois Shines program are required to renew their status annually, per Section 2.G of the Program Guidebook. **In the 2024-25 Program Year, Designee renewals are now due on Monday, December 2, 2024 for all Designees and Nested Designees that registered in the Illinois Shines program before June 1, 2024.** Please see previous [announcement](#) for more details.
- **Public School Program News** – See [Public School hub](#) on Program website for updates.
 - **180-Day Prioritization Window for Public Schools Subcategories Updated Closure Date – December 2, 2024** – As stated in the [Program Guidebook](#) Section 1.E, Public Schools capacity is allocated by Group, tier, location, and project size subcategories. If any of the allocations are not filled within the first 180 days of the Program Year, Public School projects will be accepted on a first come, first serve basis regardless of Tier, EJC location, or project size. **The 180-day prioritization window will close on Monday, December 2, 2024.**
- **Illinois Power Agency Power Hour – Upcoming Illinois Net Metering Changes** - The IPA hosted Power Hour 7 - *Upcoming Illinois Net Metering Changes* today. Net metering, one of the key drivers of solar energy in Illinois, will be undergoing significant changes effective January 1, 2025. With this development coming down the pike, the educational webinar held discussions on net metering policy changes and potential impacts to ComEd, MidAmerican, and Ameren customers. The recording of the event will be shared on the IPA’s [website](#).
- **New to the Program Website** – The following key additions to <http://www.IllinoisShines.com> have been shared:
 - [November 1, 2024 Consumer Protection Working Group meeting minutes \(Consumer Protection Working Group page\)](#)
 - Consumer Protection Initiatives Rollout Graphic ([Consumer Protection Initiatives page](#))

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

- **Request for Stakeholder Feedback on REC Price Cost Inputs – Due November 22** – On October 31, 2024, the Program released a [Request for Stakeholder Feedback](#) that seeks input on the approach the IPA plans to implement in 2025 to collect cost data on projects participating in the Illinois Shines and Illinois Solar for All programs. Written responses to this request for feedback are due **November 22, 2024. Please provide comments via email attachment to IPA.Solar@illinois.gov with the subject “[Responder’s Name] – Feedback on REC Price Cost Collection.”** The Agency held a workshop on November 14, 2024, to discuss the proposed approach and answer stakeholder questions, the [recording](#) of the workshop and [presentation slides](#) are available to review on the Agency’s [website](#).
- **Annual Report Update** – The Program Administrator has finalized REC Performance Evaluations and CS Parameters Evaluations to determine any Drawdown amounts. Drawdown reports have been shared with the contracting utilities for review. The contracting utility is responsible for providing formal notification of any Drawdown amounts to AVs. Once this formal notification is made, the AV is required to act within a short window of time. To allow AVs more time to become familiar with the calculations and receive support from the Program Administrator before the formal notification on Drawdowns is sent, the Program will provide draft calculations for AVs to review in the coming weeks. Calculations are not final until they have been delivered

by the contracting utility. There are no changes anticipated between the draft and final calculations; however, if any issues come to light before final calculations are sent there may be adjustments to address those concerns. Please see the projected timeline for Drawdowns and related events below:

Timeline for Drawdowns and Related Events

- Approximately the week of December 2 – Draft Drawdown calculations made available to AVs on SharePoint for review.
- Approximately the week of January 6 – Contracting utilities provide formal notification of the amount of Drawdowns to AVs.
- 5 business days after notice date – Deadline for AV to communicate if they prefer to make a cash payment instead of allowing the letter of credit used for collateral to be drawn upon (if applicable).
- 15 business days after notice date – Utility will draw on collateral unless an alternative request was received from AV (see above) and/or payment was received by the 14th business day after notice date.
- 90 days after drawn upon collateral – AV required to top up collateral, if required.

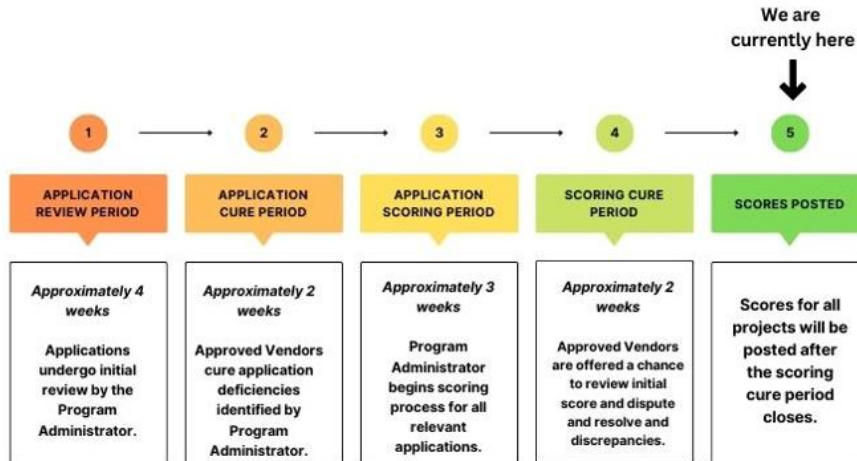
Please see 6(d)(v)(1) on page 9 and Section 4.3 on page 26 of the [2019 REC Contract](#) for full detail on this process. For more guidance on these processes and calculations see the [REC Contract and Annual Report Help Guides](#) section of the website.

- **Community Solar Program News** – See [TCS](#) and [CDCS](#) hubs on Program website for all CS updates.
 - **Community-Driven Community Solar – Final CDCS Scores Posted** – The Program Administrator released scores on [Friday, November 8, 2024](#). These scores will be used to determine which projects will be selected for a REC Contract once the random selection takes place on December 11, 2024. Please see information on the Random Selection event below. The scores and full announcement regarding the scoring process were posted on the Program website on the [CDCS Program Category Hub](#).

AVs have two weeks from November 8, 2024 to appeal project scoring. Submitted appeals must be received by the Program Administrator at admin@illinoisshines.com **by 11:59 CPT on November 22, 2024**. As the determination of appeals may influence a project's final score, and thus possibly the final selection of projects, all appeals must be reviewed by the Agency within a distinct timeframe. The Agency intends to have all submitted appeals determined by **December 6, 2024**, subject to the quantity and substance of appeals submitted.

Please see the schedule below for application review and scoring:

- 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. Appeals are **due November 22, 2024**.
- Random Selection event to ordinally rank projects with tied scores. If a Random Selection event is needed, the **Program will hold the event on December 11, 2024 at 11:00 a.m. CPT**. Register for the event here:
https://energy-solution.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_yLyHUCbOTPa_c7gqCKVtXA



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)
11/15/2024	11/19/2024	12/5/2024
12/3/2024	12/5/2024	12/19/2024

- **Part II Verification Cut Off for November** – To allow time for invoice calculation and generation, the last valid Part II Verification date for November will be **November 21, 2024**. Applications that are Part II verified on or before November 21, 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 November 22, 2024 and November 30, 2024 will be invoiced in January 2025.

Application Processing Updates

- **Application Processing Update** - The Program Administrator is currently within the expected processing turnaround time of ten business days for all DG categories, both Part I and Part II applications.

Ongoing Program Portal Updates

- The latest Portal updates and enhancements, a Portal Development Roadmap (updated November 6, 2024), 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		
As a Vendor: Forgot Password returns generic error if user cancels password change.	This enhancement removes an error message when the user selects "Forgot Password", receives an email with a change password link, goes to the link, and then cancels out of the prompt.	November 13, 2024
Rebate Calculations (Net Metering and Storage) (Web and common flow)	This enhancement provides calculations and new fields on Disclosure Forms in support of net metering changes. The changes include: *The 'Generation Rebate' amount will now be calculated, not entered by the AV or Designee. The calculation is based on the project size and whether the customer receives competitive or non-competitive service. *In DG Section 6.5 "Utility Rebates", the question 'Is the customer eligible for rebates calculated based on the \$300 rate, or the \$250 rate?*' should display if either 'Storage Rebate' = yes or 'Generation Rebate' = Yes (currently only asked for 'Storage Rebate' = yes) for Ameren and ComEd customers. *The new calculated value for 'Battery Rebate Amount' should display under the storage rebate when 'Storage Rebate' = yes	November 13, 2024
Project app: REC estimate does not recalculate when inputs change	This enhancement will combine the PVWatts call and REC Details into the same action. It will also add other functionality that should help prevent errors when revisiting an applications' system details and recalculating the REC Details.	November 13, 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](#).

Proposal or Feedback Topic and Link to Details	Request for Comment Released	Deadline for Comment	Results or Updates to Request
Stakeholder Feedback on REC Price Cost Inputs	October 31, 2024	November 22, 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.

- **Illinois Shines Releases Latest State of the Program Communication** – On [November 4, 2024](#), the Program released its latest [State of the Program communication](#), reflecting Program Year 2024-25 updates. Please see the previous [announcement](#) for more details.
- **Mentorship Program Registration is Open** – As announced on [November 1, 2024](#), registration for AVs and Designees for the 2024-25 Mentorship Program is now open on the [Mentorship Program](#) page. The Mentorship Program provides mentees with virtual courses and trainings covering Program processes and requirements and facilitates opportunities to network with other AVs/Designees. The Mentorship Program is also soliciting applications from experienced AVs and Designees willing serve as mentors and share insights on Program and solar industry-related topics with mentees. More information and registration forms can be found on the Mentorship Program page. **The Mentorship Program has seen a good response for mentee registrations, and registration will continue to accept mentee applications for interested parties for future cohorts.** Mentorship Program registration will close **December 6, 2024 at 11:59 p.m. CPT**. Please contact the EEC Sector Strategist at eec@illinoisshines.com if you have questions about the Mentorship Program.
- **Change in Ameren PTO Letters** - Permission to Operate (“PTO”) letters are provided directly to AVs from the utility and are included in project applications. The new Ameren PTO letters no longer include the customer’s name and address. Due to this change, in order to prove the PTO letter is for a specific project for application, AVs should provide additional documentation to link the approval to the customer. Additional details can be found in this previous [announcement](#).

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