

Designee Renewal, Mentorship Program Registration Opens November 4, Feedback Request for REC Price Cost Inputs

November 1, 2024

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

- **Events**
 - November 15, 2024 from 12:00 p.m. – 1:00 p.m. CPT - Illinois Power Agency Power Hour – *Upcoming Illinois Net Metering Changes* - Register [here](#).
- **Due Dates**
 - November 1, 2024 - November REC invoicing opens
 - November 4, 2024 by 5:00 p.m. CPT – Mentorship Program registration opens
 - November 4, 2024 by 5:00 p.m. CPT - [Bright Neighborhoods Initiative Request for Proposals deadline](#)
 - November 6, 2024 – Election Deadline: Project Re-Batch or Withhold (for the November 21, 2024 ICC Meeting)
 - November 8, 2024 – CDCS Scores expected to be published
 - November 30, 2024 – 180-day prioritization window for Public Schools Subcategories closes

Stakeholder Support

- **Program Administrator Office Hours** - November 6, 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 5, 2024**, in observance of the General Election Day holiday, and November 11, 2024, in observance of Veterans' Day. 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.
 - Ensuring project location addresses are accurate is one way to prevent a *Need Info request that will delay application review*. Below are guidelines for providing accurate project location addresses:
 - P.O. boxes for project location addresses are not acceptable.
 - If an address has not yet been assigned to a site within a parcel, latitude and longitude coordinates *and* parcel number are an acceptable substitute.
 - The project address must match between the application and supporting documents, such as the Proof of Site Control, Site Map, and the Certified Transcripts of Payroll (when projects are subject to prevailing wage requirements).

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

- **Designee Renewal** – 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 will be due on November 29, 2024, for all Designees and Nested Designees that registered in the Illinois Shines program before June 1, 2024.** Designees will receive an email on November 4, 2024, with a link to the [Designee Renewal Microsoft Form](#). A separate email will go out directly to Designees with a link to their SharePoint folder to upload required documents for renewal. As part of their renewal, Designees are required to submit (1) an Illinois Secretary of State Statement of Good Standing dated within the past 12 months and (2) training materials and certifications showing that their agents have been trained in accordance with Program requirements. Any training materials submitted must cover all applicable sections of the

Consumer Protection Handbook. Examples of applicable training materials include PowerPoints, handouts, and other resources shared with Designee agents for Program-related training.

It is the AV's responsibility to ensure that their Designees and Nested Designees are compliant with the renewal requirement. Non-compliance with this requirement may result in the Program Administrator requesting the AV provide its Designee Management Plan for Program Administrator review, as well as possible additional disciplinary actions as set out in the Consumer Protection Violation Response Matrix in the Consumer Protection Handbook. Any Designees and Nested Designees that do not renew their status will receive a Notice of Potential Violation ("NOPV") and may be subject to additional action as set out in the Violation Response Matrix. A Designee may use the renewal form to indicate that it is no longer participating in Illinois Shines, which will remove the Designee from the Program.

- **Mentorship Program Registration Opens November 4** – On November 4, 2024, registration will open for the 2024-25 Mentorship Program for AVs and Designees to sign up to participate as mentees or mentors. The Mentorship Program provides mentees with virtual courses and trainings covering the Illinois Shines program processes and requirements. It also facilitates opportunities to network with other market stakeholders. AVs and Designees certified as Equity Eligible Contractors ("EECs") and/or are minority-owned, woman-owned, veteran-owned, disability-owned, or are considered small businesses are encouraged to register as mentees. Mentees are expected to attend each of the eight 1-hour virtual trainings held on Mondays at 11:00 a.m. CPT between January 6 and March 3, 2025, as well as an in-person networking event to be hosted in March 2025 in the Chicago area.

The Mentorship Program is also soliciting applications from experienced AVs and Designees willing to share insights on Program and solar industry-related topics with mentees as *mentors*. Mentors are experienced AVs or Designees that are expected to attend at least two of the eight 1-hour virtual trainings, to participate as panelists and breakout session participants, and attend the in-person networking event to be hosted in March 2025 in the Chicago area.

Please note that space is limited and mentees will be selected on a first come first served basis.

On Monday, November 4, 2024, at 10:00 a.m. CPT the mentor and mentee registration forms will be posted on the [Mentorship Program page](#). Mentorship Program registration will close on 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.

- **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 will also hold a workshop on November 14, 2024, at 3:00 p.m. CST** to discuss the proposed approach and answer stakeholder questions.

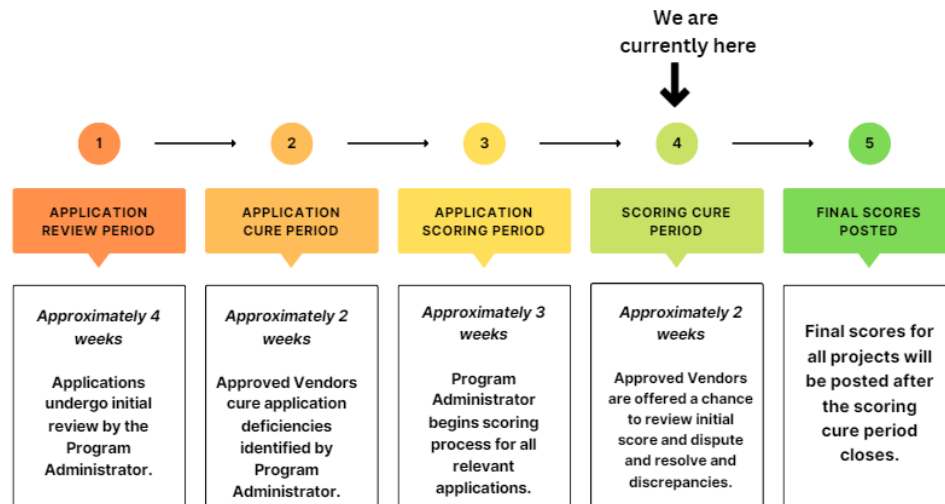
Workshop Link:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/2347666367?pwd=UXpnSXFPTjg2Ykg3MTUzek5ON3k3Zz09&omn=81377673320>

Meeting ID: 234 766 6367 **Passcode:** a1VTg9

- **Community Solar Program News** – See [TCS](#) and [CDCS](#) hubs on Program website for all CS updates.
 - **Community-Driven Community Solar – Score Cure Period Complete** – Preliminary scores were shared individually with each AV via email on October 11, 2024 giving AVs until October 25, 2024 to cure all scoring *Need Info* requests. The Program Administer is now reviewing the information provided by AVs during the cure period which will inform the final scores. **Please see the proposed 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. Scores are expected to be published **November 8, 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.



- **November 2024 Consumer Protection Working Group** – The Agency and its Illinois Shines and Illinois Solar for All Program Administrators hosted the November Consumer Protection Working Group meeting today. The notes from the Working Group will be published on the [Program website](#), where agendas for meetings are also shared. The next Working Group meeting will be held on Friday, December 6, 2024, at 10:00 a.m. CPT. If you are interested in participating in the group and future meetings, please submit the form on the [website](#).
- **New to the Program Website** – The following key additions to <http://www.IllinoisShines.com> have been shared:
 - Updated the [Approved Vendor Program Requirements – Annual Checklist](#) (Program Help Guides and Application Tips page)

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

- **Changes to Illinois Net Metering Bill Credits – Update to Project Submission Deadline** – On [October 10, 2024](#), the Agency noted the updated project submission deadline for **ComEd and Ameren (from December 13 to December 31, 2024. For MidAmerican deadline remaining January 1, 2025)** and updated the [Frequently Asked Questions \(“FAQs”\) document](#) about Net Metering Bill Credit changes.
- **Disclosure Form Updates: New Fields Launched October 29** – On [October 3, 2024](#) the Program Administrator provided additional guidance on new fields launching on Disclosure Forms. In the announcement, the Program provided answers to questions submitted in the stakeholder feedback process, what to expect with the changes to the Disclosure Forms and the new fields that will be added, and what API users can expect with the upcoming changes. Please see the full announcement for details. As explained in the [October 3, 2024](#) announcement, the information entered will not be used in actual Disclosure Form PDFs until 2025.
- **Annual Report** – The Program Administrator is preparing final report packages and will begin the REC Performance Evaluations and CS Parameters Evaluations to determine any Drawdown amounts. Please see the [REC Contract and Annual Report Help Guides](#) section of the website for more guidance on these processes and calculations.
- **Public School Program News** – See [Public School hub](#) on Program website for updates.
 - **180-Day Prioritization Window for Public Schools Subcategories Closes on November 30, 2024** – As stated in the [Program Guidebook](#) Section 1.E, Public Schools projects are allocated by Group, tier, location, and project size. 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 closes on November 30, 2024.

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) |
|---------------------------|---|-------------------------------|
| 11/1/2024 | 11/6/2024 | 11/21/2024 |
| 11/15/2024 | 11/19/2024 | 12/5/2024 |
| 12/3/2024 | 12/5/2024 | 12/19/2024 |

- **November REC Invoicing Opened November 1, 2024** – REC invoices and Quarterly Netting Statements were made available for download from AV SharePoint folders on November 1, 2024. Invoices must be submitted to the utility by **November 10, 2024** to receive payment for the November invoice period. Any invoice amounts not submitted to the utility by November 10, 2024 will be carried forward and included in the next invoice period (February 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 within the expected processing turnaround time of ten business days for Large DG projects. The Program Administrator is outside expectations for Small DG projects (both Part I and Part II) primarily due to high volumes but expects to be within expectations in all categories by the second week of November. Non-critical tasks have been deprioritized to increase application processing capacity, as well as planned training for additional people in the application review process. 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 | | |
| Changed text on Part I application submission popup | The confirmation message displayed when submitting a Part I application has been revised to include greater clarity on next steps, highlighting that Batch Submission must be performed for an application to be fully submitted. | October 30, 2024 |
| Disclosure Form WebForm - Added new Questions | <p>In preparation for future changes to DG Disclosure Forms, to support changes to net metering taking effect in 2025, several new fields have been added to the Disclosure Form creation screens in the Portal. Presence of these fields will allow users to start collecting data now for Disclosure Forms that will be generated in 2025.</p> <p>* Project Specifications - Added questions to collect the customers annual expected electricity usage, to indicate presence and size of a battery component and capture the billing model used for ComEd, Mid-American and Ameren customers (basic, hourly, or ARES).</p> <p>* Rebates - The DG rebate questions have been re-ordered, and questions to capture details of any storage rebate have been added. Rebate amounts will now be calculated. This section will only apply for Disclosure Forms using ComEd or Ameren as the interconnecting utility.</p> <p>* A new 'Net Metering Credit Explanation' field has been added to Disclosure Forms where the interconnecting utility is a municipal utility, a rural electric co-op, or Mt. Carmel to allow AVs and Designees to summarize the utility's net metering benefit.</p> | October 30, 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 Power Agency Power Hour – Upcoming Illinois Net Metering Changes** - Please join the IPA for an educational Power Hour webinar, titled “Upcoming Illinois Net Metering Changes,” on Friday, **November 15, 2024** from 12:00 – 1:00 p.m. CPT. 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 IPA will be hosting an educational webinar to discuss net metering policy changes and potential impacts to

ComEd, MidAmerican, and Ameren customers. The speakers for the webinar include IPA Chief Legal Counsel Kelly Turner, Environmental Law & Policy Center Senior Attorney Brad Klein, and Elevate Energy's Chief Engineer Larry Kotewa. Register [here](#).

- **Illinois Solar for All is Re-issuing the Request for Proposals for Bright Neighborhoods AVs** - The Program Administrator of Illinois Solar for All ("ILSFA") [is re-issuing](#) the Request for Proposals ("RFP") for the Bright Neighborhoods initiative for the city of Waukegan and the Carbondale-Marion micropolitan area, including Jackson, Williamson, and Johnson counties. An AV has already been selected for the Chicago community area. Proposals are due on **November 4, 2024**.
- **Update to the Renewable Portfolio Standard Budget** - The Illinois Power Agency has released an [update to the Renewable Portfolio Standard \(RPS\) REC and Budget Forecast](#). Please see full [announcement](#) for details.

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