

Release of Latest State of the Program Communication, Mentorship Program Registration Now Open, Final CDCS Scores Posted

November 8, 2024

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

- **Events**
 - November 13, 2024 – Community Solar AV Roundtable
 - November 14, 2024 – Virtual Workshop for Request for Stakeholder Feedback on REC Price Cost Inputs. Join [here](#), Meeting ID: 234 766 6367, and Passcode: a1VTg9
 - 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 10, 2024 – November REC invoicing deadline
 - November 22, 2024 – Stakeholder feedback on [REC Price Cost Inputs](#) deadline
 - November 29, 2024 – Designee Renewal deadline for all Designees and Nested Designees that registered in the Illinois Shines program before June 1, 2024
 - November 30, 2024 – 180-day prioritization window for Public Schools Subcategories closes

Stakeholder Support

- **Program Administrator Office Hours** - November 12, 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 11, 2024, in observance of Veterans Day. On this day, 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. Please note that the Program will have limited services November 28 – 29, in observance of Thanksgiving.
- **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.
 - **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 whether the utility a) provides 1:1 net metering and b) if net metering **is** provided, does the utility issue a Net Metering Letter. For more information on 1:1 net metering and other crediting approaches, please refer to the [November 11, 2022](#) Program Announcement and Section 16-107.5 of the [Public Utilities Act](#).
 - The [Utility Net Metering Reference Table](#) should be referred to when submitting a Part I application 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’. **If the signed form is not included, this will result in a Need Info request that will delay application review.**
 - The [Utility Net Metering Reference Table](#) should also be referenced when submitting a Part II application to determine if a ‘Net Metering Letter’ is required. If a utility offers net metering (or a material equivalent) AND provides a ‘Net Metering Letter’ (separate from the *Certificate of Completion/Permission to Operate*) confirming that net metering has been approved, then the ‘Net Metering Letter’ must be included with the application; **its absence will result in a Need Info request that will delay application review.** Currently, the only utility company that does

provide a Net Metering Letter is ComEd, but the information could be updated at any time and stakeholders should consult the most recent reference table.

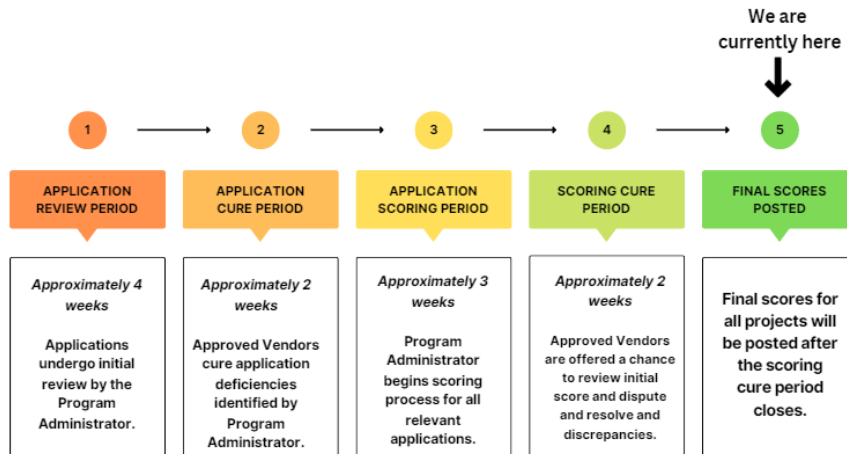
Program News – New or Updated Items (All Program updates can be found on the [Program Updates webpage](#))

- **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. The communication details key areas of Program progress, implemented solutions, current initiatives, forums to solicit and address stakeholder needs and requests, and an updated Program vision and stakeholder commitments from the Program Administrator. The Program and Illinois Power Agency appreciate the continued participation of stakeholders in helping to grow and strengthen Illinois Shines.
- **Change in Ameren PTO Letters** - The Program Administrator recognizes that the new Ameren Permission to Operate (“PTO”) letters no longer include the customer’s name and address. PTO letters are provided directly to AVs from the utility and are included in project applications. 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. This can be submitted as an ‘Additional Document’ in the Portal prior to submitting the application. A “Certificate of Completion’ document can serve as the additional documentation. Providing documentation at time of submission will prevent the application from necessitating a *Need Info* request that will delay application review.
- **Mentorship Program Registration Now Open** - 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. AVs and Designees that are certified as Equity Eligible Contractors (“EEC”) and/or are minority-owned, woman-owned, veteran-owned, disability-owned, or are considered small businesses are encouraged to register. 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. 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.
- **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, which is expected to be on December 11, 2024. Please see information on the expected 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 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. Appeals are **due November 22, 2024**.
- Random Selection event to ordinarily rank projects with tied scores. At this time, the **Program expects to hold the Random Selection 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_c7gqCKVXTA



- 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

- October 14, 2024 - Annual Report cure period ends. REC delivery information considered final for use in REC Performance Evaluation (*Completed*)
- November 7, 2024 - Program Administrator provides Drawdown calculations to contracting utility by this date (*Completed*)
- TBD Date (approximately December) – Draft Drawdown calculations made available to AVs on SharePoint for review. This is available now in your 2024 Annual Report folder for review.
- "Notice Date" (TBD date – approximately December or January) – 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.

- New to the Program Website** – The following key additions to <http://www.IllinoisShines.com> have been shared:
 - Updated Portal Development Roadmap ([Portal Updates](#) page)
 - 2024-25 Mentorship Program [mentee](#) and [mentor](#) application forms ([Mentorship Program](#) page)
 - [State of the Program communication](#) ([About the Program](#) page)
 - [How to Determine if Electricity Customer Receives Competitive or Non-Competitive Service](#) document ([Program Help Guides and Application Tips](#) page under 'Additional Help Guides')
 - Program Year 2024-2025 Community-Driven Community Solar Scores ([CDCS Hub](#) page)

Program News – Previously Published 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.** Please see previous [announcement](#) for more details.
- **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

- **Changes to Illinois Net Metering Bill Credits – Update to Project Submission Deadline** – See previous [announcement](#).
- **Disclosure Form Updates: New Fields Launched October 29** – See previous [announcement](#).
- **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)
11/15/2024	11/19/2024	12/5/2024
12/3/2024	12/5/2024	12/19/2024

- **November REC Invoicing Opened** – 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 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 and Small DG Part I. The Program Administrator is outside expectations for Small DG projects 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 (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.**

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](#).

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