

MES 2025-26 Compliance Plan Open for Submissions, EEC Subcategory Merging, Solar Restitution Program Rationale Document, Small DG Block Reaches Capacity and Soft Close Initiated

May 2, 2025

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

- **Events**
 - May 22, 2025 at 12:00 p.m. CPT - Welcome to Program Year 2025-26 webinar (Register at [this link](#))
 - May 27, 2025 at 8:00 p.m. CPT - End of Year Program Pause
 - June 2, 2025 at 8:00 a.m. CPT - 2025-26 Program Year Opens
- **Due Dates**
 - May 6, 2025 - Re-batching opens for AVs
 - May 8, 2025 - Election Deadline for Project Re-Batch of Withdrawn for May 22, 2025 ICC Meeting
 - May 10, 2025 - May REC Invoicing Deadline
 - May 25, 2025 - REC Contract Amendment signature is due

Stakeholder Support

- **Program Administrator Office Hours** - May 7, 2025, 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/91402926068>
- **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 a *Need Info* request is issued, timely response to the Program Administrator is required. A tip for AVs is to search email inboxes for “needs more information” to quickly find requests for information related to applications placed in *Need Info* status. AVs may request clarifications as needed, or to initiate dialog to work through unusual situations, and responding to a *Need Info* email - rather than starting a new email thread - will result in quicker processing. *Need Info* requests are sent on Mondays and Wednesdays.

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

- **Minimum Equity Standard (“MES”) 2024-25 Year-End Reports and 2025-26 Compliance Plans** - On April 30, [the Program announced](#) that MES Program Year 2025-26 Compliance Plans opened for submission, and on April 24, [the Program published](#) resources and guidance to support 2024-25 MES Year-End Report submissions, including key dates and details. The announcements followed an April 15 MES Compliance webinar providing guidance and schedule information for both Program Year 2024-25 Year-End Reports and Program Year 2025-26 MES Compliance Plans. Further information is available at the Program’s [Equity Accountability System hub](#), and a [recording of the webinar](#) and [presentation slides](#) can be found at the [Program Year Webinars](#) page; a Q&A document is forthcoming.
- **Small DG Block Reaches Capacity, Soft Close Initiated** - The annual block of capacity for the Small Distributed Generation block has been filled. For Program Year 2024-25, 208.17 MW of capacity was allocated for Small DG. Following the application of available capacity for projects waitlisted in this category, the remaining capacity for Small DG was **142.00 MW** for this Program Year. The block reached capacity at 1:28 p.m. CPT, Thursday, May 1, 2025 when a batch submittal reached the 142.00 MW allotted for this category for the 2024-25 Program year. The soft close period began **today, May 2, 2025**, and will extend until **May 9, 2025** at 11:59 p.m. CPT or until 10 additional megawatts of capacity are batched and submitted to the Program. Currently, 208.58 MW have been allocated and batched to the Small DG block including projects that composed the waitlist. The Program Administrator will announce if the 10 MW of soft close capacity is reached prior to May 9, 2025. Any applications batched and submitted to the Program under the Small DG category

after the soft close capacity is reached OR after May 9, 2025 at 11:59 p.m. CPT will be placed on a waitlist and posted [to the Program website](#).

- **Rationale Document for Solar Restitution Program Published** – In the 2024 Long-Term Renewable Resources Procurement Plan (“2024 Long-Term Plan”), the Illinois Power Agency (“IPA” or “Agency”) proposed the creation of a solar restitution program (“Solar Restitution Program”) for customers harmed through their participation in Illinois Shines or Illinois Solar for All. Following a stakeholder feedback request it issued on September 16, 2024, the Agency reviewed the provided feedback, considered the issues, and made final determinations regarding details of the Restitution Program, and [on April 28](#), published a [Rationale Document](#) discussing the stakeholder feedback received by the Agency and explains the Agency’s decisions made with respect to the development of the Restitution Program. See Section 9.9 of the 2024 Long-Term Renewable Resources Procurement Plan (“2024 Long-Term Plan”) and the stakeholder feedback request for additional background information. Full details of the Solar Restitution Program will soon be announced.
- **2026 Long-Term Plan Workshops Held** – The Illinois Power Agency hosted 2026 Long-Term Plan Workshops on April 30 (Chapter 8 – Illinois Solar for All) and May 1 (Chapters 7 and 10 – Illinois Shines and Equity Accountability System). The Agency and its Program Administrators appreciate the participation and thoughtful perspectives shared by stakeholders at the workshops. The Agency will release written questions for stakeholder feedback at a later date.
- **EEC Subcategory Merging Completed; Block Capacity Dashboard Updated**- As provided in the Long-Term Plan Section 7.4.6.4, [on May 1, 2025](#) the Program and Agency opened EEC subcategory capacity to the entire category 11 months into the Program Year, and thereafter reallocate any uncontracted capacity in the category at the close of the Program Year following the process outlined in Section 7.3.4. On May 1, 2025 the Program updated the Block Capacity Dashboard by merging the EEC capacity bars, combining CS and DG projects (maintaining Group A and Group B distinctions). Regarding applicable waitlists, the Program will first review Community Solar projects in the order in which batches are received, and thereafter, project applications received on or after May 1, 2025 will be added to the current waitlists in the order in which they are received.
- **2025-26 Program Year Welcome Webinar** - June 2, 2025 marks the opening of the 2025-26 Program Year. In support of stakeholders, an informational webinar on the upcoming 2025-26 Program Year changes will be held on May 22, 2024 from 12:00 - 1:00 p.m. CPT. The webinar will be recorded. The Program Administrator and IPA will discuss the 2025-26 Program Year Program Guidebook, the 2025-26 Consumer Protection Handbook, updated REC capacity and prices, and more. Please use [this link](#) to register for this event.
- **May 2025 Consumer Protection Working Group** - The Agency and its Illinois Shines and Illinois Solar for All Program Administrators hosted the May 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, June 6, 2025, 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.
- **Public Schools Case Study Now Available** – On May 1, the Program published its first case study, highlighting [how one Illinois school district turned to Illinois Shines](#) to achieve important financial and environmental benefits for its community. The case study describes the school district’s motivations to consider solar energy, its exploration of the benefits of doing so through Illinois Shines, and provides details about the process it undertook, the role of school board leadership and a project champion, its work with an Illinois Shines Approved Vendor, and information about the resulting system and its initial and expected impacts on energy and cost savings.
- **New to the Program Website** – The following key additions to <http://www.IllinoisShines.com> have been shared:
 - [Public Schools Case Study \(Exploring Solar With Illinois Shines page\)](#)

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

- **Program Year 2025-26 Program Documents and REC Prices Released** - The Illinois Power Agency [on Friday, April 18](#) published updated versions of the [Program Year 2025-26 Program Guidebook](#), [Consumer Protection Handbook](#), [Distributed Generation \(DG\)](#) and [Community Solar \(CS\)](#) Contract Requirements, and [2025-26 REC Prices](#). These documents conform with the Illinois Commerce Commission’s (ICC’s) Final Order on the IPA’s 2024 Long-Term Renewable Resources Procurement Plan, dated February 20, 2024, and other stakeholder feedback processes. The documents are published 45 days in advance of the start of the 2025-26 Program

Year in order to provide transparency and time to review changes prior to the compliance period, and Program participants are required to be in compliance with requirements outlined in the documents by June 2, 2025 and throughout the 2025-26 Program Year. **The April 18, 2024 versions of the Program Guidebook, the Consumer Protection Handbook, Distributed Generation (DG) and Community Solar (CS) Contract Requirements, and 2024-25 REC Prices remain the effective versions of the documents until the new Program Year commences on June 2, 2025.**

- **Portal Updates: Revised Menu and End of Year Program Pause** - The Program Portal's main menu will be updated in an April release, offering simplified navigation and main menu access to Disclosure Forms, project applications and batches, without need to expand AV or Designee folders to see these options. Dual-role users (acting as both AVs and Designees) will have ability to navigate to a central location to access all Disclosure Forms via a single list of the AV IDs to select from.

This menu change will enable more granular restrictions for this year's Program pause between the end of the 2024-25 Program Year and the launch of the 2025-26 Program Year. **The pause will begin on the evening of Tuesday, May 27, 2025 at 8:00 pm CPT and run until the 2025-26 Program Year launch on Monday June 2, 2025, at 8:00 am CPT.** During the program pause, access to project applications and batches will be unavailable in the Portal, but all Disclosure Form functionality will be fully available.

- **Reminder: REC Contract Amendments Signatures Due May 26, 2025** – On March 24, REC Contract Amendments were distributed to utilities, who had until April 11, 2025 to sign them. Following utility signature, the documents are automatically routed via DocuSign to each AV with an active REC Contract for their signature by May 26, 2025. **It is critical that AVs sign the amendment within 45 days, by 11:59 p.m. CPT on May 26, 2025. Failure to do so is considered a Program violation and may lead to suspension.** A [Frequently Asked Questions \(“FAQs”\) document](#) was created to support AVs. If you **did not received a request through the signature platform, DocuSign, to sign the amendment**, are having technical difficulties, or if you have other questions or concerns, please email the Program Administrator at admin@IllinoisShines.com as soon as possible.
- **Illinois Shines Media Kit** – In support of regular media inquiries regarding its policy proposals and procurements, including Illinois Shines, the Program has week published the [Illinois Shines Media Kit](#) to provide short summaries of information commonly requested by journalists preparing stories about the Program, and to offer useful context, details, dates, definitions, data and visual assets for use in developing stories. In all cases, the Illinois Power Agency encourages interested parties to contact the Agency to discuss these or additional topics, including the Agency's work and priorities, in greater detail.
- **Upcoming REC Transfers in Preparation for the 2024-25 Annual Report** – As a reminder, RECs delivered between June 1, 2024 - May 31, 2025 are considered to be within the “2025 delivery year.” AVs must successfully transfer RECs to the Buyer during this timeframe in order to be used to calculate any necessary collateral adjustments or contract default for the 2024-25 Annual Report. As AV's prepare for the 2024-25 Annual Report, keep the following in mind:
 - The Buyer counts RECs based on when they are *successfully transferred*, **not** when they are generated.
 - Upload all available energy generation data to GATS **before May 23, 2025**, since data processing and REC certificate creation **may take up to seven days**. Once created, **transfer** the REC certificate **to the Buyer before 11:59 p.m. CPT on May 31, 2025**.
 - Ensure RECs are **delivered before May 31, 2025**, as any REC delivered after this deadline **will not count** toward the 2024-25 Delivery Year Annual Report.
 - For AVs with systems eligible for the 3-Year Rolling Average Collateral Drawdown process, upload all available energy generation data before May 23, 2025 **to minimize potential Drawdowns on posted collateral**.
 - *Although M-RETS processes Generation Data instantly (creating and transferring RECs per a standing order within moments), AVs should act early out of an abundance of caution.*

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)
5/6/2025	5/8/2025	5/22/2025
5/19/2025	5/21/2025	6/5/2025
6/2/2025	6/4/2025	6/18/2025
6/13/2025	6/17/2025	7/2/2025

- **Part II Verification Cut Off for May** - To allow time for invoice calculation and generation, the last valid Part II Verification date for May will be May 26, 2025. Applications that were Part II verified on or before May 26, 2025 will be included in the June invoicing period. Application processing will continue throughout the last week of the month and any applications that are reviewed between May 27, 2025 and May 31, 2025 will be invoiced in July 2025.

Application Processing Updates

- **Application Processing Tables** - Application processing tables are maintained at [IllinoisShines.com/project-application-reports/](https://illinoisshines.com/project-application-reports/). These tables are updated daily. For questions about specific project applications, please contact the Program Administrator at admin@IllinoisShines.com.
- **Application Processing Update** - Current application processing time is within the expected 10-day turnaround in all categories, which the Program Administrator expects to maintain for the foreseeable future.

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		
API Lease - "who_keeps_rebate" has an incorrect option. ("Seller" instead of "Lessor")	When a Lease Disclosure Form is created via API, the key "who_keeps_rebate" will now accept "Lessor" as the expected value without an error, and will indicate an error if "Seller" is selected instead. Other allowed key values of Approved Vendor, Installer and Customer will continue to be accepted.	April 30, 2025
Dates are incorrect format for Export Disclosure Forms for AV and Designee	Export of Disclosure Forms has been updated to export all date fields in the mm-dd-yyyy format. This report is accessible in the portal from the View Disclosure Forms page (Menu: Disclosure Forms -> View), apply desired search criteria in the filters and select the "Export Disclosure Form Data" button at the top of the page.	April 30, 2025
Update CS Scoring Criteria text for PY2025-26 (rename "D – Agrivoltaics" to "D – Agrivoltaics or dual-use solar")	Minor text updates have been made in Section 8 (TCS scoring Criteria) of Part 1 applications for Traditional Community Solar (TCS) Projects for additional clarification.	April 30, 2025
Project Application Dashboard Improvements Part 2	The Application Dashboard has been updated to allow individual users to hide, unhide, and reorder filter columns; these changes will persist on page refresh and user logout. The Reset Column(s) button can be used to unhide all columns and reorder to the default order at once. The application dashboard is found under Menu: Project Applications -> View	April 30, 2025
New Program Year: Update Menu Layout	The Portal's main menu has been revised for simplified navigation. Folders to access Disclosure Forms, project applications and batches will be displayed on the main menu. Users will no longer need to expand the Vendor or Designee folders to see these options. Dual-role users (acting as both AVs and Designees) will be able to navigate to a central location to access all Disclosure Forms, where they will be presented with a single list of the AV ID's to select from.	April 30, 2025
New Program Year: Enable Market Access to Disclosure Forms during Program Pause	All Disclosure Form functionality will be fully available during this year's Program Pause at the end of the 2024-25 program year. The pause will begin on the evening of Tuesday, May 27, 2025 at 8:00 pm CPT and run until the 2025-26 Program Year launch on Monday June 2, 2025, at 8:00 am CPT. During the program pause, access to project applications and batches will be unavailable in the Portal.	April 30, 2025

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
Equity Eligible Contractor Certification	April 1, 2025	April 18, 2025	Comments to be published
Draft Program Guidebook	March 7, 2025	March 26, 2025	Final version released April 18, 2025 ; compliance required by June 2, 2025.
Draft Consumer Protection Handbook	March 7, 2025	March 26, 2025	Final version released April 18, 2025 ; compliance required by June 2, 2025.

Draft DG Contract Requirements	March 7, 2025	March 26, 2025	Final version released April 18, 2025; compliance required by June 2, 2025.
Draft CS Contract Requirements	March 7, 2025	March 26, 2025	Final version released April 18, 2025; compliance required by June 2, 2025.
Draft REC Prices	March 7, 2025	March 26, 2025	Final REC Prices published April 18, 2025.
CS Subscriber Management Function	Survey issued April 7, 2025	April 21, 2025	Results of stakeholder survey under evaluation by Program for requirements updates.

- **IPA Request for AVs and Installer Designees Interested in Serving 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.

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