Escrow Process Launches, 2026 Long-Term Plan Stakeholder Feedback Request, Annual Report Response Window Opens July 1

June 27, 2025

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

- Events
  - July 11, 2025 – Illinois Power Agency Power Hour "Load Growth: How is it shaping power markets?". [Register here](#).

- Due Dates
  - June 30, 2025 - Re-batching opens for AVs
  - July 1, 2025 – Annual Report response window opens
  - July 2, 2025 – Election Deadline for Project Re-Batch or Withdrawal for July 17, 2025 ICC Meeting
  - July 10, 2025 – Feedback deadline for 2026 Long-Term Plan [Stakeholder Feedback Request](#) on Chapter 3 and Program REC Pricing.
  - July 15, 2025 – MES 2024-25 Year-End Report Submission Due

<u>Stakeholder Support</u>

- **Upcoming Program Holiday Hours** - The Program will have limited services and updates on Friday, July 4, 2025, in observance of Independence Day. On this day, the Program Call Center will be closed. Updates to the Block Capacity Dashboard, application tables, application project reports, and waitlists will resume the next business day.
- **Program Administrator Office Hours** – July 2, 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.
  - It's critical to select the correct interconnecting utility when completing a Part I project application. Selecting the incorrect utility will lead to a *Need Info* request that will delay project application review and approval. Similarly, selecting the wrong utility on the Disclosure Form will require a new signed Disclosure Form before application review can be completed. AVs are encouraged to double check this important information before submitting project applications.

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

- **Illinois Shines Escrow Process Launches** – The Illinois Power Agency and Illinois Shines Program Administrator are pleased to [announce the launch of the escrow process](#), first outlined in the 2024 Long-Term Renewable Resources Procurement Plan. The escrow process may be used when an Approved Vendor (AV) fails to make promised pass-through payments to customers. Through the escrow process, Illinois Shines incentive payments will be made to an escrow agent, rather than to the AV. The escrow agent will then disburse any promised payments to customers, with the remainder disbursed to the AV. The details of the escrow process were developed through a stakeholder process in the Fall of 2024, and necessary updates were included in the amendment to the REC Contracts earlier this year. On June 13, 2025, Illinois Shines published a [Rationale Document](#) that responds to stakeholder feedback and explains final decisions on the design and implementation of the escrow process. With the official launch of the initiative, the escrow process is now available for use going forward, should the Program Administrator become aware of an AV that is not passing through promised payments to customers. Questions should be directed to the Program Administrator at admin@illinoisshines.com.
- **Portal Maintenance to Modify Disclosure Form File Naming Convention** – As [previously announced](#), the Program is remediating an issue stemming from the use of identical Disclosure Form file names in the Program

portal. The Program Administrator implemented a solution to block download of signed Disclosure Form PDFs on records identified as potentially impacted by the file naming/save-write conflict issue, and implemented a solution to ensure that moving forward, each uploaded Disclosure Form receives a unique name regardless of how the stakeholder named the file. The Program is coordinating directly with AVs with impacted Disclosure Forms.

- **IPA Hosts Third Stakeholder Workshop for 2026 Long-Term Plan Development, Issues Additional Stakeholder Feedback Request** – On Monday, June 23, 2025, the IPA hosted a third virtual workshop to gather stakeholder feedback as it prepares to develop its 2026 Long-Term Renewable Resources Procurement Plan (Long-Term Plan). The workshop focused on the RPS Budget and REC Portfolio (Chapter 3 and associated workbooks to be included as Appendix B), and the methodology/approach to be used for calculating REC prices for Illinois Shines and Illinois Solar for All (Chapters 7 and 8 and the REC Pricing Model to be included as Appendices D and E). Slides from the workshop are available [here](#). Following the workshop, the Agency has issued a [Stakeholder Feedback Request for the 2026 Long-Term Plan – Chapter 3: REC Portfolio, RPS Goals, Targets, and Budgets and Program REC Pricing](#). Details of the request and how to reply by the **July 10, 2025** deadline can be found [here](#).

- **New Homeowner Handout Available:** *Solar Loan Financing* – In March, the IPA and its Program Administrators launched the Homeowner Handout series to help educate consumers about the decision to go solar and provide resources to help them make informed, confident decisions about going solar with Illinois Shines. The first resource in the series, ***Selecting a Solar Company: Green and Red Flags*** is available in both [English](#) and [Spanish](#) versions, and the latest resource, ***Solar Loan Financing***, is now available, with a Spanish version forthcoming. Further Homeowner Handout resources are in development.

- **New to the Program Website** – The following key additions to http://www.IllinoisShines.com have been shared:
  - [Homeowner Handout: Solar Loan Financing](#) ([Program Brochures & Other Resources](#) page)

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

- **Part II Community Solar Subscriber Verification Timeline Updates** - The Part II application submission and subscriber verification timeline for community solar projects has been updated per Section 5.E. (Part II Submission Timelines for Community Solar Projects) of the [Program Guidebook](#). Approved Vendors must submit Part II applications and update subscriber records earlier during the Quarterly Period to allow the Program Administrator sufficient time to process applications and complete subscriber verifications. These updates also highlight the minimum advance notice for utility subscriber report requests to the Program Administrator. Key dates to the updated timeline:
  - **Part II Application Submission:** 6 weeks prior to the end of the Quarterly Period
  - **Subscriber Data Submission:** 4 weeks prior to the end of the Quarterly Period
  - **Subscriber Utility Reports Requests:** 2 business days advance notice

  Approved Vendors should work to follow these updated timelines for all Part II Verifications for community solar projects moving forward. The Program Administrator will prioritize subscriber verifications for projects submitted 6 weeks prior to the close of the Quarterly Period but will continue in our best effort to complete subscriber verifications and Part II verify projects submitted past this date. Emails will be sent out to all community solar Approved Vendors with more information.

- **MES 2024-25 Year-End Report Submission Due July 15, 2025** – On May 30, the Program opened the MES Program Year 2024-25 Year-End Report submission, which is due from all participating Approved Vendors and Designees on July 15, 2025. All Program Participants should have received an email from the Program Administrator with a link to their secure MES submission portal. Please contact mes@illinoisshines.com for assistance.

- **2025-26 MES Compliance Plans Past Due** – MES Program Year 2025-26 Compliance Plans were due from all Approved Vendors and Designees on June 2, 2025. The Program is following up with entities who have not submitted a 2025-26 Program Year Compliance Plan. Failure to submit could result in disciplinary action. Please contact mes@illinoisshines.com for any assistance.

- **Annual Report Resources; Response Window Opens July 1** – The Annual Report response window will open <mark>on July 1, 2025</mark>, with response submission by Approved Vendors due to the Program Administrator by 11:59 PM

CPT on July 15, 2025 (for those who have not signed a REC Contract Amendment) or by 11:59 PM CPT on August 1, 2025 (for those who have signed a REC Contract Amendment). The Program Administrator will share a link to the Annual Report submission form when it opens on July 1, 2025. Please keep in mind that submission of an Annual Report is a Program requirement, and failure to submit an Annual Report is an Event of Default under the REC Contract.

The Program Administrator created and posted training videos at the Program website, in support of the close of the 2024–25 delivery year and the start of the Annual Reporting period, including:
- o Annual Report and REC Performance Evaluation Walkthrough video
- o Community Solar Parameters Evaluation Walkthrough video.
  - ▪ Please refer to the Community Solar System Parameters Evaluation (Annual Subscriber Evaluation) guide as a supplemental resource.
- o REC Performance Calculation Evaluation Walkthrough video
- o 2024-25 Approved Vendor Annual Report Guide

These on-demand resources enable Approved Vendors to familiarize themselves with the requirements and understand how Annual Report data is utilized to assess REC performance in relation to contractual obligations.

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.
  - o 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.
  - o AVs may withhold a Part I verified application from submission to the ICC **no more than twice** for any given project application. Once a project has been withheld twice, it must either be withdrawn from the Program or submitted to the ICC in the next memo.
  - o 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)
6/30/2025	7/2/2025	7/17/2025
7/22/2025	7/24/2025	8/7/2025
8/5/2025	8/7/2025	8/21/2025
8/18/2025	8/20/2025	9/4/2025

- **Part II Verification Cut Off for July -** To allow time for invoice calculation and generation, the last valid Part II Verification date for July will be July 25, 2025. Applications that were Part II verified on or before July 25, 2025 will be included in the August invoicing period. Application processing will continue throughout the last

week of the month and any applications that are reviewed between July 26, 2025 and July 31, 2025 will be invoiced in September 2025.

Application Processing Updates

- **Application Processing Tables** - Application processing tables are maintained at 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** - Following the May 7, 2025 conclusion of the Small DG soft close period, review of Part I applications has exceeded the 10-day expected turnaround time. The Program Administrator is working to bring application review back into the expected turnaround time and will continue to inform stakeholders of progress. In addition to information available at the Project Application Reports page, the status of individual project applications can be checked with the Project Look Up Tool.

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 Enhancement - Ability to Create Designee Disclosure Forms from AV's API Integration	The API has been updated to allow AV Accounts to submit Disclosure Forms on behalf of Designees working with the given AV, so that Designees using the AV's software can follow the same process the AV users and have Disclosure Forms created from the integration.	June 24, 2025
Combine signature block on six PRN templates	When a ComEd, Ameren. or MidAmerican Utility User logs into the portal to generate Project Removal Notices for any Contract Version/Type, the notices generated will now have all signature sections on a single page and not split over multiple pages. This enhancement will help Approved Vendors, IPA and the utility clearly see where signatures are needed and help reduce accidentally signing a section not intended for them.	June 24, 2025
Approved Vendor Details Page - Associated Designees Tab	Designee access to create Disclosure Forms can now be removed for a single AV without affecting the Designee's ability to create Disclosure Forms for other AVs with whom they are still working.	June 24, 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 were published here.
CS Subscriber Management Function	Survey issued April 7, 2025	April 21, 2025	Results of stakeholder survey under evaluation by Program for requirements updates.

2026 Long-Term Plan Development (Chapters 7, 8, 10)	May 19, 2025	June 11, 2025	Comments were published here
2026 Long-Term Plan Development (Chapter 3 and Program REC Pricing	June 25, 2025	July 10, 2025	Request for Stakeholder Feedback here. Please provide comments via email attachment to IPA.ContactUs@Illinois.gov with the subject **"[Responder's Name] – Response to IPA Workshop 3 Stakeholder Questions"** by July 10, 2025.

- **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.

- **Updated Email Address for Portal API Support** – The Program Administrating is migrating support for the Portal's API users to a new platform, necessitating an updated email address for users to access support. Effective immediately, users seeking assistance should contact the Program Administrator at il-api-support@illinoisshines.com, and discontinue using api-support@energy-solution.com.

- **IPA Power Hour – Load Growth: How Is It Shaping Power Markets?** – On July 11, 2025, join the IPA for an educational Power Hour webinar titled Load Growth: How is it shaping power markets? This webinar will provide an overview on load growth, explore its key drivers and impacts, and take a look at the evolving dynamics of load growth in Illinois. Attendees will gain insights into trends and challenges shaping load growth and how Illinois can prepare for the state's rapidly changing energy landscape. Registration is required to attend this webinar. Speakers for this webinar include IPA Planning & Procurement Chief Jim Rouland, World Resources Institute U.S. Clean Energy Specialist Ian Goldsmith, the Brattle Group Managing Energy Associate Akhilesh Ramakrishnan, and PJM Interconnection Executive Director of Government Services Jason Stanek. Register at this link.

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