

# Updates Following 2025-26 Program Year Re-Opening, Winter Mentorship Registration, Program Releases MES Year-End Report Implementation Report

November 14, 2025

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## Coming up in Illinois Shines

2025 Program events and due dates can be found at the [Key Dates & Deadlines webpage](#).

- **Key Dates**
  - **November 19** - Racial Disparity and Availability Study Informational Meeting
  - **December 8** - Public Schools AV Roundtable
- **Deadlines**
  - **November 14** - Re-Batching Opens for AVs (For Dec. 4, 2025, ICC Meeting)
  - **November 18** - Election Deadline – Project Re-Batch or Withdrawal (For Dec. 4, 2025, ICC Meeting)
  - **November 20** - Part II Verification Deadline

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## Stakeholder Support

- **Program Administrator Office Hours** – November 19, 2025, from 10:00 – 11:00 a.m. CPT - Individual AV or Designee support for Program requirements, Portal, application, or other questions. Join link: <https://energysolution.zoom.us/j/91402926068>. Office hours are held weekly.
- **Application Tips and Tricks** - The Program Administrator publishes [Tips and Tricks](#) to help support stakeholders avoid *Need Info* requests that delay application review and approval.
  - **Have Your Documents in Order If You Submit an Appeal** - An AV or Designee may appeal a decision or action of the Program Administrator or request an exception from particular Program guidelines due to extenuating circumstances. Appeals should be submitted on company letterhead and should include a rationale, and any necessary supporting information, documents, or communications. Appeals must be submitted to [IPA.Solar@illinois.gov](mailto:IPA.Solar@illinois.gov) and [admin@illinoisshines.com](mailto:admin@illinoisshines.com). The IPA may request additional information, materials, and/or have a discussion with the AV or Designee to better understand the basis of the request. There is no standard timeline for the appeal review process, but upon submission the IPA will work to issue a final determination as soon as possible. An AV or Designee will receive a formal response from the IPA once a determination is made. Additional information is available in the [Consumer Protection Handbook](#): Section X.C.4 Appeals or in the [Program Guidebook](#): Section 1.K. Appeal of Program Administrator Decisions.

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## Program News

All Program updates can be found on the [Program Updates webpage](#).

- **New! Updates Following 2025-26 Program Year Re-Opening** - Following the [Order on the 2024 Long-Term Plan Re-Opening](#), a brief Program pause occurred to undertake data and reporting updates, and to allocate capacity to waitlisted applications. The pause concluded on October 31, 2025, at 8:00 a.m. CPT. The [2025-26 Program Year Re-Opening announcement](#) provided stakeholders with key documents, initial

updates, and resources. Additional updated information was released Friday, November 7 and can be found in [this announcement](#).

- **New! Winter Mentorship Registration** - Mentee registration for AVs and Designees for the 2025-26 Mentorship Program Winter Cohort will open on December 1, 2025 at 10:00 a.m. CPT on the [Mentorship Program](#) page. Registration will close on December 12, 2025, at 11:59 p.m. CPT. The Mentorship Program provides virtual courses and trainings covering the Illinois Shines program processes and requirements and facilitates opportunities to network with other market stakeholders. Please note that space is limited. Both mentors and mentees will be selected on a first-come, first served basis. For more information visit the [Mentorship Program](#) page. For questions about the Mentorship Program, please contact [eec@illinoisshines.com](mailto:eec@illinoisshines.com).
- **New! Program Releases MES Year-End Report Implementation Report** - The [Minimum Equity Standard](#) (“MES”) is a key pillar of the Equity Accountability System. The Program has published an [MES Year-End Report Implementation Report](#) to share and summarize stakeholder compliance. As set forth in the Long-Term Plan and the Program Guidebook, in Program Year 2024-25, at least 10% of the project workforce for each AV and Designee participating in the Illinois Shines program must be composed of Equity Eligible Persons. The full report, including Program requirements, Program Year process improvements, and data analytics around Equity Eligible Persons and Contractors can be found on the Illinois Shines website.
- **New! Elective Pay** - The IPA has launched a new [website](#) regarding leveraging federal tax credits through Elective Pay. The Inflation Reduction Act created a mechanism called Elective Pay (sometimes referred to as “direct pay”), which is a way for tax-exempt entities to claim federal tax credits for their investments in clean energy. Eligible entities include municipal governments, public school districts, nonprofits, and faith-based organizations, which can, for the first time, get reimbursed for a portion of their project costs by submitting a federal tax return and claiming these credits. Elective Pay can be used for several types of projects including solar, geothermal, and battery storage, and these projects can receive 30% or more of their project costs back as a reimbursement. The IPA will be conducting outreach and providing education on Elective Pay, with more information to come.
- **New! 180-Day Prioritization Window for Public Schools Subcategories Closing** - 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, Environmental Justice Community location, or project size. The 180-day prioritization window will close on December 1, 2025, at 11:59pm.
- **New! New to the Program Website** - The following key additions to the [Program website](#) have been shared:
  - [MES Year-End Report Implementation Report](#) (on [About](#) and [Minimum Equity Standard](#) pages)
- **Minimum Equity Standard (MES) Mid-Year Report Submissions** - Mid-Year Reports, which show progress toward meeting the MES for Program Year 2025-26, are due December 31, 2025. Participating AVs and Designees should submit their Mid-Year Report for review by the Program Administrator through [this form](#). If your organization faces challenges fulfilling these obligations, the Program Administrator is available to provide additional resources and guidance tailored to your needs. Failure to submit a Mid-Year Report may negatively affect an organization’s request for an MES waiver. For more information, please visit the [Vendor FAQ](#) page or view the [2025-26 Mid-Year Report questions sample](#).
- **Designee Renewals** - [As previously announced](#), Designees registered prior to the start of the 2025-26 Program Year will be required to renew their status in the Program or indicate their withdrawal from the Program by December 1, 2025. Designees received an email with a link to the form, a list of required uploads, and a unique code and password to access their renewal form on October 17, 2025. EEC Designees and Subcontractors will have the ability to renew their status and will receive an updated EEC certificate following

renewal review. For more information, please reference the Designee Renewal section on the [Become an AV or Designee](#) page.

- **Community-Driven Community Solar Application Review and Scoring Schedule Updates** - As outlined in Section 5 of the Program Guidebook, the CDCS application window closes 90 days after the start of the Program Year. Since the application window closed, the Program has completed the Application Review, Cure, and Scoring periods. Preliminary Scores were shared with AVs on October 31, 2025. Please see scheduled next steps:
  - **Scoring Cure Period** – AVs are offered a chance to review initial score and dispute and resolve any discrepancies (*October 31 - November 14*).

Full details on the schedule for application review and scoring were shared in [this announcement](#). Additionally, as [previously announced](#), a second CDCS application window will open in January due to expanded capacity.

- **Updated Public School AV Roundtable Meeting Date** - The Fall 2025 Public Schools AV Roundtable has been rescheduled to December 8, 2025. A new invitation will be sent to AVs who previously expressed interest. Other AVs interested in attending are encouraged to contact [schools@illinoisshines.com](mailto:schools@illinoisshines.com).
- **November REC Invoicing Opens** - REC invoices and Quarterly Netting Statements were made available for download from AV SharePoint folders on November 1, 2025. Invoices must be submitted to the utility by November 10, 2025, to receive payment for the November invoice period. Any invoice amounts not submitted to the utility by November 10, 2025, will be carried forward and included in the February 2025 invoice period.
- **Annual Report Next Steps** - The Annual Report Cure Period concluded on October 30, 2025. No additional modifications to Annual Report data will be permitted. By December 2, 2025, the Program Administrator will calculate any potential Drawdowns for the annual REC Performance Evaluations and Community Solar Parameters Evaluations. AVs will receive draft notifications from the Program Administrator in advance of formal notice being provided by the contracting utility in early 2026.
- **IPA Racial Disparity and Availability Study Consultant to Host Informational Meeting** - The IPA has partnered with Griffin & Strong, P.C. to conduct a Racial Disparity and Availability Study to measure the presence and impact of discrimination on minority and women businesses and workers in Illinois' clean energy economy. On November 19, 2025, at 6 p.m. CPT, Griffin & Strong, P.C. will host an informational meeting via Zoom to further explain the Study's process, how to get involved, and answer any relevant questions. [Register today](#) or learn more about the Study on the [IPA website](#).

## Reference and Reminders

- **Re-Batching for ICC Meetings** - To avoid late requests to withhold projects from submission to the ICC, 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 its discretion and submit eligible projects to the ICC. **Please note that due to recent federal action, the Agency has temporarily paused enforcement of the two withhold limit from ICC meetings. This pause will be in effect until the Agency determines this pause is no longer necessary.** AVs that do not wish to take advantage of these additional withholdings may send projects to the ICC during the re-batching window. Upcoming windows for re-batching are as follows:

Re-Batching Opens for AVs	Election Deadline – 12:00 p.m. CPT (Re-batching closes for AVs)	Trade Date (ICC Meeting Date)
11/14/2025	11/18/2025	12/4/2025
12/2/2025	12/4/2025	12/18/2025

- **Portal Maintenance and Releases** - Scheduled system maintenance occurs 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. Users working in the Portal should save their work prior to the 8:00 p.m. CPT start of system maintenance window. Any unsaved information will be lost when the system is moved into maintenance mode. The latest Portal updates and enhancements, a Portal Development Roadmap, and Portal help guides can be found [here](#).

Development Focus	Details	Planned or Actual Delivery
Enhancement		
Fixed Enum parsing logic not working correctly on "Refund Type" field	Within the API to create CS Disclosure Forms, the refund_type key-value pair has been updated to accept the values "N/A - no payments until project is operating" and "N/A - project is already operational".	November 4, 2025
Fixed "Address Fields" not being editable by users with a Designee role, when the "Make a Copy of Form" function is used on Disclosure Forms	Designees can now view the details of their Designee registration, including Login accounts and Vendor Associations for Designees. Designee details can be accessed from the left hand navigation: Menu → Company & User Management → Designee.	November 11, 2025

- **Application Processing Tables and Update** - Application processing tables are maintained [here](#). These tables are updated daily. For questions about specific project applications, please contact the Program Administrator at [admin@IllinoisShines.com](mailto:admin@IllinoisShines.com). In addition to information available on the [Project Application Reports](#) page, the status of individual project applications can be checked with the [Project Look Up Tool](#).

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

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