

Clean and Reliable Grid Affordability Act, 45-Day CDCS Application Window Now Open, Call for Stakeholder Input for New IPA Resources

January 16, 2026

Coming up in Illinois Shines

2026 Program events and due dates can be found at the [Key Dates & Deadlines webpage](#).

- **Key Dates**
 - Today, January 16 - 45-Day CDCS Application Window Opens
 - February 3 – [First EAS Learning Series Webinar](#)
- **Deadlines**
 - January 20 - Re-Batching Opens for AVs (for February 5, 2026, ICC Meeting)
 - January 22 - Election Deadline - Project Re-Batch or Withdrawal (for February 5, 2026, ICC Meeting)
 - January 26 - Part II Verification for January
 - January 28 - Re-Batching Opens for AVs (for February 17, 2026, ICC Meeting)
 - January 30 - Election Deadline - Project Re-Batch or Withdrawal (for February 17, 2026, ICC Meeting)

Stakeholder Support

- **New! Program Holiday Hours** - In observance of Martin Luther King Jr. Day, the Program will have limited services and updates on Monday, January 19, 2026. 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** – January 21, 2026, 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 every two weeks, and the schedule is available on the Program website's [Key Dates and Deadlines](#) page.
- **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.
 - **Ensure the uploaded site map matches that described in Part I, Section 4 of the Part I application.** For example, a site map showing three arrays containing five, five, and 15 modules, respectively, versus Part I, Section 4 of the application indicating three arrays containing five, seven, and 13 modules, respectively, is an example of a discrepancy that would lead to a *Need Info* request and delay application approval. If the site map lists array details (tilt, azimuth, orientation, etc.) and inverter details (inverter model, system size, module wattages, number of modules, etc.) it will be checked against the application and satellite mapping. The information documentation must match what's submitted in the Part I application and imagery. The application would not move forward until the discrepancy is resolved. Additionally, plot diagrams and site maps must be an aerial view of the installation property and show the location of each individual solar module.

Program News

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

- **New! Clean and Reliable Grid Affordability Act** - On October 31st, 2025, the Illinois General Assembly passed the Clean and Reliable Grid Affordability Act (“CRGA”). The bill was signed into law as [Public Act 104-0458](#) by Governor J.B. Pritzker on January 8th, 2026, and is set to take effect on June 1, 2026. CRGA is a comprehensive energy bill addressing a wide range of energy issues facing the State. The Act has many provisions that directly affect Illinois Shines, including, but not limited to:
 - Changes to Community Solar provisions, including a project labor agreement requirement for applications over 3 MW
 - Change in REC Contract structure for Small Distributed Generation and Public Schools Distributed Generation projects
 - Minimum Equity Standard requirements for Equity Eligible Contractors
 - New co-location and consumer protection requirements

Additional information about CRGA implementation will be released in the coming months.

- **New! 45-Day CDCS Application Window Now Open** - [As previously announced](#), as a result of the Modified 2024 Long-Term Plan, the Program opened an additional 45-day Community-Driven Community Solar (“CDCS”) application window today, January 16, 2026. The application submission deadline for the CDCS 45-day window is March 2, 2026, at 11:59 p.m. CPT. Applications are not accepted after the close of the 45-day window. Any project that is submitted during the 45-day application window and qualifies for the waitlist will be placed behind projects submitted during the initial 90-day application window, regardless of score. For the 90-day CDCS application window, final scores and random selection event results can be found on the Program [website](#).
- **New! Call for Stakeholder Input for New IPA Resources** - The IPA seeks help to continue building its resource library. Illinois Shines recently published the Homeowner Handouts [Buying a Home That Has an Illinois Shines Solar Project](#) and [Selling Your Home That Has an Illinois Shines Solar Project](#) in both English and [Spanish](#). In continuation of this series, the Program hopes to publish handouts for real estate agents to ensure they are prepared to support current and potential solar customers. The Program is conducting brief surveys for [AVs](#) and [Designees](#) to support the buildout of these resources. Stakeholder expertise will directly inform the design of these resources, to ensure they respond effectively to real-world needs. All responses will remain anonymous; the IPA may share anonymized, summary-level insights with companies participating in Illinois Shines and the general public. **The surveys close February 6, 2026.** For any questions, please contact IPA.Solar@illinois.gov.
- **New! New EAS Learning Series** - Please join us in a new opportunity to equip vendors with resources and support to meet and exceed equity requirements within the Illinois Shines Program. The first webinar in the new The Illinois Shines Equity Accountability System (“EAS”) Learning Series will highlight effective strategies for Recruitment and Retention of EEPs. This is a great conversation for leaders who are looking to scale workforce to meet increasing MES requirements, and scale organizations to meet the needs of diverse workforce! *Advancing Equity Through Inclusive Recruitment and Retention of EEPs*, will take place on [Tuesday, February 3, 2026](#), at 12:00 p.m. CPT. Please register with this link. For questions, please contact the Program Administrator at admin@illinoisshines.com.
- **New! New to the Program Website** - The following key additions to the [Program website](#) have been shared:
 - [Portal Inputs - Current Retail and Supply Rates, and Price to Compare](#) ([Program Documents](#) page)

- **Part II Verification Cut Off for January** - The last Part II Verification date for January will be January 26, 2026. Applications that were Part II verified on or before January 26, 2026, will be included in the January invoicing period. Application processing will continue throughout the last week of the month and any applications that are reviewed between January 27 and January 31, 2026, will be invoiced in February 2026. Part II Verification Cut Off dates for each month have been added to the [Key Dates and Deadlines](#) page on the Program website.
- **Notice of Multi-Factor Authentication for SharePoint Users** - The Program Administrator will begin to require the use of a multi-factor authenticator (“MFA”) to access Illinois Shines SharePoint folders by all AVs and Designees, and other stakeholders, including utilities. Stakeholders will be notified when MFA access is applied to their folders, and the Program Administrator will be available to provide support. Please contact admin@illinoisshines.com with any questions about the MFA process.
- **Elective Pay Webinars’ Recordings Published** - [As previously announced](#), the IPA hosted webinars on Elective Pay on December 3, 2025, for municipalities, public school districts, nonprofits, and other tax-exempt organizations, and December 17, 2025, for AVs working with tax-exempt entities that have placed a clean energy project in service in the last year or so, or will soon do so. The recordings, along with more information on elective pay can be found 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)
1/20/2026	1/22/2026	2/5/2026
1/28/2026	1/30/2026	2/17/2026

- **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 at IllinoisShines.com/Portal-Updates.
- **Application Processing Tables and Updates** - 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. In addition to information available on the [Project Application Reports](#) page, the status of individual project applications can be checked using the [Project Look Up Tool](#).

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