

Draft 2026-27 Program Guidebook Feedback Request, Solar Tax Credit Information Sessions, Portal Pause for Interim Capacity Reallocation

March 13, 2026

Coming up in Illinois Shines

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

- **Key Dates**
 - **March 30 - 31** – Program Pause and Partial Portal Availability – see [Program Calendar](#) for details
- **Deadlines**
 - **March 17** – Re-Batching Opens for AVs (for April 2, 2026, ICC Meeting)
 - **March 19** – Election Deadline - Project Re-Batch or Withdrawal (for April 2, 2026, ICC Meeting)
 - **March 20** – [Program Guidebook](#) and [Consumer Protection Documents](#) Feedback Deadline
 - **March 25** – Part II Verification for March

Stakeholder Support

- **Program Administrator Office Hours** – March 18, 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://energy-solution.zoom.us/j/91402926068>. In support of the **Subscriber Management Portal Feature launch**, **Office Hours will be held every Wednesday in March 2026**. 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.
 - **Distributed Generation Project Application Checklist** – To avoid common errors, inconsistencies, or omissions in Part I and Part II for Distributed Generation project applications, the Program provides a [DG Project Application Checklist](#) to assist stakeholders. Please see the current [Program Guidebook](#) for full application requirements. Stakeholders needing assistance or who have questions are encouraged to visit the [Program website](#) to access help guides and/or contact the Program Administrator.

Program News

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

- **New! IPA Releases Draft Program Guidebook for Stakeholder Feedback** – On March 9, 2026, the IPA released a [draft of the 2026-27 Program Guidebook](#). This draft Guidebook will undergo stakeholder feedback, the Agency will review comments submitted, and a final version of the Guidebook will be released on April 17, 2026, 45 days in advance of the start of the Program Year. This will allow stakeholders time to review, understand, and prepare to be in compliance with all changes in the Guidebook when the 2026-27 Program Year begins on June 1, 2026. High level changes to the Guidebook and sections where feedback is requested are summarized in [this announcement](#). **Stakeholders should email comments to IPA.Solar@illinois.gov by March 20, 2026, with the subject line “2026-27 Illinois Shines Program Guidebook Feedback.”**

- **New! IPA to Host Information Sessions, Offer Technical Assistance on Solar Tax Credit Opportunity for Tax Exempt Entities** – [As previously announced](#), local governments, public school districts, and other tax-exempt organizations can now receive tax credit reimbursements for 30% or more of the costs of their clean energy projects from the federal government, on top of the solar incentives available at the state level through IPA's two programs: Illinois Shines and Illinois Solar for All. [Sign up](#) for a series of information sessions hosted by the IPA to ensure that tax-exempt entities purchasing solar and other clean energy assets have the resources they need to make use of this new federal tool.
- **New! Portal Pause for Interim Capacity Reallocation** – [As previously announced](#), changes from the 2024 Long-Term Plan Re-opening included imposing an interim reallocation of 50% of remaining unused capacity on April 1, 2026, to distribute among waitlisted projects as the waitlist exists on April 1, 2026. **The Program will pause for two business days, from 12:00 a.m. on March 30, 2026, through March 31, 2026. The Portal is scheduled to reopen at 8:00 a.m. on April 1, 2026.** During the Portal closure, the Program will determine the amount of unused capacity and redistribute it in accordance with the prioritization for year-end reallocation set out in Section 7.3.4 of the 2024 Long-Term Plan, with the exception of the 25% rollover of unallocated Public Schools capacity. Developer caps currently in effect will continue to apply after capacity is added. Resulting project approvals and updated waitlists will follow.
- **New! 45-Day CDCS Window Application Review and Scoring** – [As previously announced](#), as a result of the Modified 2024 Long-Term Plan, the Program opened an additional 45-day CDCS application window from January 16, 2026, to March 2, 2026. Any project submitted during the 45-day window that qualifies for the waitlist will be placed behind projects submitted during the initial 90-day application window, regardless of score. A visual timeline was added to the [Community-Driven Community Solar](#) page of the Program website. Next steps include:
 - **Application Review Period** – Applications undergo initial review by Program Administrator (*Approximately 4 weeks*)
 - **Application Cure Period** – AVs cure deficiencies identified by Program Administrator (*Approximately 2 weeks*)
 - **Application Scoring Period** – Program Administrator begins scoring process for all relevant applications (those submitted without deficiencies and those that successfully cure deficiencies during the 2-week cure period) (*Approximately 3 weeks*)
 - **Scoring Cure Period** – AVs are offered a chance to review initial score, dispute, and resolve any discrepancies (*Approximately 2 weeks*)
 - **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 (*TBD*)
 - **Random selection event** to ordinally rank projects with tied scores (*TBD*)
 - **Final scores** and project selection published (*TBD*)
- **New! Illinois Shines Honors Graduating Mentees of 2025-26 Mentorship Program Winter Cohort** – [As previously announced](#), the Illinois Shines 2025-26 Mentorship Program Winter Cohort concluded March 5, 2026, with an in-person graduation event for 16 mentees at Hire360 in Chicago. The event capped an eight-week Mentorship Program, from January to March, during which mentees completed virtual training courses and participated in live, interactive sessions with experienced AV mentors and the Program Administrator's subject matter experts. A final report covering both the Fall and Winter cohorts will be issued in May 2026. For more information and resources, please visit the [Mentorship Program](#) page on the Program website.
- **New! Batch Fee Reporting Portal Feature Release** – On March 17, the Program will release Batch Fee Reporting Portal Feature which will allow AVs to see details about the fees applied to their batches. While batching, AVs will be able to see the application fee per kW, credit card fees, and total batch fees updated dynamically as projects are added to the batch. For each batch, AVs will be able to export a report with batch fee details, and a list of each project and project size originally included in the batch. AVs will also be able to export a batch fee report from the Batch dashboard that includes each filtered batch, the batch fees, and the

associated project applications. *Please Note: Batches submitted prior to 3/18/26 will not include batch fee data in the Portal or the report exports.*

- **New! New to the Program Website** – The following key additions to the [Program website](#) have been shared:
 - [March Illinois Shines Data Report](#) (Illinois Shines Data Report page)
 - [Draft 2026-27 Program Guidebook](#) and [Redline comparison between the current 2025-26 Program Guidebook and the draft 2026-27 Program Guidebook](#) (Program Documents page)
- **IPA Requests Stakeholder Feedback on Consumer Protection Documents** – [As previously announced](#), the Agency and Program Administrators are requesting stakeholder feedback on proposed changes to the Consumer Protection Handbook, Contract Requirements, and the Stranded Customer REC Adder documents. The Agency and Program Administrators request feedback on all aspects of the proposals. **Please provide comments via email attachment to IPA.Solar@illinois.gov with the subject “[Responder’s Name] – Stakeholder Feedback on CP Documents” by March 20, 2026.** All documents are available in the Consumer Protection section of the [Program Documents](#) and [Stakeholder Feedback](#) pages on the Program website.
- **IPA Files 2025 Consumer Complaints & Disciplinary Actions Annual Report** – On February 27, 2026, the IPA filed the [2025 Consumer Complaints & Disciplinary Actions Annual Report](#) to the ICC in [Docket No. 25-0945](#). Under the Long-Term Plan, the Agency is required to file this report annually with the ICC to document the frequency and nature of complaints related to both Illinois Shines and Illinois Solar for All. The report details the complaint and disciplinary action process and enforcement actions taken by the respective Program Administrators related to consumer complaints. The report also highlights trends in 2025 complaints and how these differ from trends in prior years, complaint examples, suspension summaries, and other consumer complaint data analysis.
- **Subscriber Management Portal Feature Launched March 4** – The CS Subscriber Management Feature for the Program Portal successfully launched March 4, 2026. The feature replaced the current manual workbook process in SharePoint and allows for improved subscriber data quality, the centralization of access, and gives AVs and Designees the ability to view and manage subscriptions, view unsubscribed Disclosure Forms, and import and export subscription data. AVs can also manage project permissions and assign Designees to view/manage CS projects. To support the transition, CS AVs are required to complete several action items, which are detailed in a new section of the [Portal Updates](#) page, alongside resources and a full timeline. On February 26, 2026, the Program held an educational webinar on the new feature. A [recording of the webinar](#), [presentation slides](#), [demo video](#), [Q&A](#), and a [Subscriber Management Portal Feature Training Guide](#) are available at the [Program Year Webinars](#) page.
- **New Solar for Schools Webpage** – Illinois Shines launched a new [webpage](#) designed to help public school administrators, facilities staff, and district leaders better understand how solar projects can reduce long-term energy costs, and support sustainability goals and student learning. The webpage outlines key considerations, sector-specific resources, and a step-by-step guide for exploring on-site solar or Community Solar subscriptions for public schools in Illinois. Schools interested in learning more can visit the new Solar for Schools page on the Program website.
- **TCS Case Study Now Available** – Through its case study series, the Program showcases successful projects participating in Illinois Shines that are achieving important financial and environmental benefits for their communities. The Program’s [newest case study](#) spotlights Walldog Solar, a Traditional Community Solar project in Pontiac, Illinois, that’s using agrivoltaics and a pollinator-friendly habitat to deliver clean solar power, while ensuring that the land can return to 100% agricultural production at the end of this project’s lifecycle. This Illinois Shines case study details the economic and equity opportunities that solar projects can deliver, including how the developer engaged EECs in project construction, which provided a significant economic boost to local laborers and the community. To read this and other case studies, please visit the [About](#) page on the Program website.

- Part II Verification Cut Off for March** – The last Part II Verification date for March will be March 25, 2026. Applications that were Part II verified on or before March 25, 2026, will be included in the April invoicing period. Application processing will continue throughout the last week of the month and any applications that are reviewed between March 26 and March 31, 2026, will be invoiced in May 2026. Part II Verification Cut Off dates for each month have been added to the [Key Dates and Deadlines](#) page on the Program website.

Reference and Reminders

- Request for 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 Release	Deadline for Comment	Results or Updates to Request
Consumer Protection Documents	3/19/2026	3/20/2026	
Draft 2026-27 Program Guidebook	3/19/2026	3/20/2026	

- 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)
3/17/2026	3/19/2026	4/2/2026
3/24/2026	3/26/2026	4/9/2026

- 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. [As previously announced](#), the Portal will be closed from 12:00 a.m. on March 30, 2026, through March 31, 2026. The Portal is scheduled to reopen at 8:00 a.m. on April 1, 2026. 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](#).
 - Small DG Application Processing Update** – Following a spike in submission of project applications, review of Small DG Part I and Part II 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.

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