Illinois Shines | IPA ILLINOIS POWER AGENCY

Stakeholder Feedback Deadline on Draft Program Guidebook and Consumer Protection Documents, Financing Opportunities Webinar, Expedited CDCS Review and Scoring Schedule

March 20, 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 20** – [Program Guidebook](#) and [Consumer Protection Documents](#) Feedback Deadline
  - **March 24** – Re-Batching Opens for AVs (for April 9, 2026, ICC Meeting)
  - **March 26** – Election Deadline - Project Re-Batch or Withdrawal (for April 9, 2026, ICC Meeting)
  - **March 25** – Part II Verification for March

Stakeholder Support

- **Program Administrator Office Hours** – March 25, 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. The schedule is available at the [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.

- **Certified Transcripts of Payroll -** Certified Transcripts of Payroll (CTPs) are required at the Part II application to demonstrate that [Prevailing Wage](#) was paid appropriately.

  - CTPs from the United States Department of Labor are **not** accepted unless the AV can prove the project is subject to the [Davis Bacon Act](#). No other documentation, including affidavits, are accepted for this requirement.

  - It is best practice to complete separate CTPs for each project, even if the projects are co-located, because the Program treats each project separately from a processing perspective, though they are considered co-located from a contracting perspective. Please ensure the address on the CTP reflects the actual project location and is consistent with the address listed in the application.

Program News

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

- New! Reminder: Stakeholder Feedback on Draft Program Guidebook and Consumer Protection Documents Due Today, March 20, 2026 – The Illinois Power Agency has released drafts of several key program documents for stakeholder feedback, including: the [Consumer Protection Handbook](#), [Illinois Shines Community Solar Contract Requirements](#), [Illinois Shines Distributed Generation Contract Requirements](#), [2026 REC Adder – Categories of Stranded Customers Update](#) document, the [draft 2026-27 Program Year Program Guidebook](#) and [redline comparison between current 2025-26 Program Guidebook and](#)

draft 2026-27 Program Guidebook. Clean versions of the drafts as well as redline comparison documents can be found on the Program website's Program Documents page.

- o Comments for the draft Program Guidebook and draft Consumer Protection documents are due **today, March 20, 2026**. Comments for the draft Program Guidebook and draft Consumer Protection documents should be emailed to IPA.Solar@Illinois.gov with the subject line "2026-27 Illinois Shines [CP Documents OR Program Guidebook] Feedback."

- • The Agency will release the final Program Guidebook and Consumer Protection documents for the 2026-27 Program Year on April 17, 2026, 45 days in advance of the start of the Program Year, to allow Program participants time to prepare for changes in the Program before the 2026-27 Program Year commences on June 1, 2026.

- • **New!** Expedited CDCS Application Review and Scoring Schedule for 45-Day Application Window – 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.

  To prioritize the selection of projects in the 2025-26 Program Year, the Program has expedited the schedule for review and cure periods. Approved Vendors should review the planned, updated timeline below and ensure a timely response to the Program Administrator. Failure to respond to the Program Administrator by the end of each cure period may result in project removal.

  - o **Application Review Period** – (March 2 – March 20) Applications undergo initial review by Program Administrator *(Approximately 3 weeks)*
  - o **Application Cure Period** (March 23 – March 27) – AVs cure deficiencies identified by Program Administrator *(Approximately 1 week)*
  - o **Application Scoring Period** (March 30 – April 3) – Program Administrator continues the scoring process for all relevant applications (those submitted without deficiencies and those that successfully cure deficiencies during the cure period) *(Approximately 1 week)*
  - o **Scoring Cure Period** (April 6 – April 10) – AVs are offered a chance to review initial score, dispute, and resolve any discrepancies *(Approximately 1 week)*
  - o **Scores published** (April 15) – AVs wishing to appeal their project score will have one week from the receipt of scores to submit an appeal to the Program Administrator (appeals due April 22, 2026)
  - o **Random selection event** (April 29) – If necessary, to ordinally rank projects with tied scores.
  - o **Final scores and project selection published** (May 1)

  The last eligible ICC Meeting for the 2025-26 Program Year is May 21, 2026. Projects not selected for capacity during the random selection event will remain on the waitlist until new capacity becomes available at the start of the 2026-27 Program Year and will be subject to all 2026-27 Program Year requirements and, if awarded capacity, will be placed on the 2026 REC Delivery Contract.

- • **New!** Financing Opportunities Webinar – April 9, 2026 – As previously announced the Program Administrator will host a webinar on Thursday, April 9, 2026, at 12:00p.m. CPT to provide information on financial resources and financing opportunities, including grant and loan programs, Illinois Shines vendors can pursue. Presenters include Illinois Shines partner organizations HACIA, NLR, CEJJF, and the Ameren Market Development Initiative. The event will be recorded, with presentation materials shared afterward. Please register here.

- • **New!** East St. Louis CEJA Community Day – CEJA grantees in East St. Louis are organizing a Community Day on Saturday April 4, 2026, from 11 a.m to 5 p.m. at Wyvetter H. Younge Higher Education Campus and are seeking employer participation. The event will connect residents, businesses, and community partners to

career opportunities, clean energy resources, and workforce education. Employer participation allows businesses to meet and recruit local talent, including Equity Eligible Persons, share information about industry pathways, and help strengthen the regional clean energy workforce ecosystem. Visit https://www.ucmetroeast.org/community-day or contact info@ucmetroeast.org for registration, event details and logistics.

- **New!** **New to the Program Website** – The following key additions to the Program website have been shared:
    - Solar for Schools page (Program Website)
    - Traditional Community Solar Case Study (About the Program page)

- **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.

- **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.

- **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.

- **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.

- **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)
3/24/2026	3/26/2026	4/9/2026
4/7/2026	4/9/2026	4/23/2026

- **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](#).

Development Focus	Details	Planned or Actual Delivery
	Enhancement	
Subscriber Management – Update Template	Update to the template under CS Subscription Management -> Subscriptions -> Update Subscriptions so that the correct template can be downloaded.	March 17, 2026
DG Disclosure Forms	Add language to Disclosure Form PDFs noting that the Value of Electricity Savings may not reflect electricity and net metering rates if the customer qualifies for a low income discount rate for Ameren, ComEd, and MidAmerican residential customers.	March 17, 2026
DG Disclosure Forms	On Lease, PPA, and Purchase Disclosure Forms, the wording of the question (English) "Is the [lessor/seller] providing a project guarantee?" / (Spanish) "¿El [arrendador/vendedor] proporciona una garantía del proyecto?" has been changed to (English) "Is the [lessor/seller] providing a production guarantee?" / (Spanish) "¿El [arrendador/vendedor] proporciona una garantía de producción?" to better match the intent of the question, which is to ask about production guarantees and not about insurance or warranties for the overall project. Note: This change applies to newly generated and regenerated DF PDFs going forward but is not automatically retroactively applied to previously generated DF PDFs.	March 17, 2026

Batch Fee Reporting – Add Batch Search Grid and Batch Fee Report to ICC Contract Management Page	Enables AVs to run the batch fee details report for one batch at a time from the batch details page, either when creating a new batch or viewing a submitted batch. The export will contain details about the applications that belonged to the given batch at the time the batch was paid. Can be particularly useful when viewing a batch with applications that were shuffled out of the batch and those applications no longer appear on the batch details page.	March 17, 2026 *Note: The full infrastructure for the batch fee reporting feature is being released to Production on the evening of March 17, 2026. Data for batches submitted on or prior to that date will not be available, so the report will contain data only for batches created or submitted on or after March 18, 2026.*
Batch Fee Reporting: Create Batch Fee Report and Run Report from AV Batch Search Page	AVs can now export a batch fee details report, enabling them to see the individual application fees that make up total batch fees paid and associate applications with their original paid batches. Provides transparency into and tracking of batch fees paid, and provides AVs a self-service method of generating their own report from the Portal.	
Batch Fee Reporting: Display Batch Fee Calculations on AV Batch Pages	This enhancement adds real-time batch fee calculations and inputs to the batch page for AV users. This enables AVs to see real-time changes to the batch fee as applications are added to or removed while creating a batch, and also provides a view of the calculations and inputs used in the batch fee when viewing a submitted batch.	

- **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.

  o **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.