

IPA Announces Joint Program Administrator, 2025-26 Mentorship Program Report Published, TCS Group A Soft Close Concluded

July 10, 2026

Coming up in Illinois Shines

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

- **Deadlines**
 - **July 14** – Re-Batching Opens for AVs (For July 30, 2026, ICC Meeting)
 - **July 15** – Annual Report Response Period Ends (For AVs That Have Not Signed the REC Contract Amendment)
 - **July 15** – MES Combined Compliance and Year-End Report Due and MES Waiver Requests Due
 - **July 16** – Election Deadline – Project Re-Batch or Withdrawal (For July 30, 2026, ICC Meetings)
 - **July 16** – Annual Report Cure Period Begins (For AVs That Have Not Signed the REC Contract Amendment)

Stakeholder Support

- **Program Administrator Office Hours** – July 15, 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 [Application Tips and Tricks](#) to help support stakeholders avoid Need Info requests that delay application review and approval. See this week's tip: "[Systems containing a battery require a battery schematic diagram which must be included with the project's Part II application as a stand-alone document at the time of submission.](#)"

Program News

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

- **New! IPA Announces Joint Program Administrator for Illinois Solar for All and Illinois Shines** – On July 2, 2026, the IPA announced its selection of Energy Solutions to serve as the Joint Program Administrator for both Illinois Solar for All (ILSFA) and Illinois Shines solar incentive programs. The selection follows a competitively bid consultant retention process, beginning with a [Request for Qualifications](#) published last fall, followed by a [Request for Proposals](#) issued to qualified respondents. Proposals were evaluated against RFP scoring criteria, and the IPA's Joint Program Administrator selection was approved by the Illinois Commerce Commission at its Regular Open Meeting on July 1, 2026. Energy Solutions currently administers Illinois Shines. No change in service is anticipated for Illinois Shines participants and vendors during this transition. ILSFA administration will begin to transition from Elevate to Energy Solutions in July 2026 with that transition expected to be completed by June 30, 2027. Please see the IPA's [full announcement](#) for additional details relating to the transition, and for historical project data and achievements for ILSFA, for which Elevate has served as the Program Administrator.
- **New! 2025-26 Mentorship Program Report Published** – On July 7, 2026, Illinois Shines released the [2025-26 Mentorship Program Final Report](#), which details the creation and delivery of the sessions, including feedback and future recommendations. The Mentorship Program is designed to help mentees successfully participate in Illinois Shines. In Program Year 2025-26, the Mentorship Program expanded to two cohorts to meet growing

market demand. Held in Fall 2025 and Winter 2026, 37 mentees participated in the two sessions, supported by 11 experienced mentors. The 2026-27 Mentorship Program will again include Fall and Winter cohorts, and information about mentee and mentor registration is forthcoming. For more information about the Mentorship Program, or questions about the Mentorship Program Final Report, please visit the Program's [Mentorship Program](#) page or email eec@illinoisshines.com.

- **New! New to the Program Website** – Key additions to the [Program website](#):
 - [Program Year 2025-26 Mentorship Program Final Report](#) ([Mentorship Program](#) page)
 - New Community- and Vendor-oriented Public Schools FAQs ([Solar for Schools](#) and [Vendor FAQs](#) pages)
- **Updated! TCS Group A Soft Close Concluded** – [As previously announced](#), the annual block of capacity for Traditional Community Solar (TCS) Group A has been filled. Section 1.G of the [Program Guidebook](#) provides for a soft close period which allows the block to remain open for seven calendar days or when the next project applications submitted to the block would exceed capacity by 10 megawatts. The soft close period began, July 2, 2026, and extended until July 9, 2026, at 11:59 p.m. CPT. All subsequently submitted applications will be subject to the TCS scoring mechanism outlined in Appendix E of the 2026-27 Program Guidebook. Only projects meeting the scoring threshold of 5 points may be considered for an eligible spot on the waitlist for the TCS category. At this time, new capacity for this category is planned for the 2027-28 Program Year and is expected to be available on June 1, 2027.
- **Updated! Community Solar Opt-In Batching** – Beginning June 29, 2026, CS projects are now able to opt-out of ICC submission for up to four ICC meetings. At the fifth ICC meeting, the AV must opt-in to ICC submission through their re-batching workbook, or the project will be automatically and permanently withdrawn. This process is further outlined in Section 5.A of the [2026-27 Program Guidebook](#). Projects that have already been withheld started fresh under the new process and will be allowed to opt-out of four ICC meetings before being required to opt-in or be permanently withdrawn. **AVs with CS projects will be able to see the number of times they have opted out of ICC submission in their re-batching workbooks. AVs will also receive email notifications each time they opt out of ICC submission with details on the number of meetings remaining until automatic withdrawal.** Please email admin@illinoisshines.com with any questions.
- **Update on Part I and Part II Application Processing** – [As previously announced](#), due to a simultaneous spike in Small DG Part I applications and Part II application submissions, including a high volume of applications with battery schematics, the turnaround time for Part I and Part II application reviews is currently far beyond its expected timeframe. Part I application review time is currently ten weeks and Part II application review time is currently eight weeks, far outside the Program's 10-day turnaround. To address the queues and resume meeting the two-week processing target, the Program Administrator is in the process of hiring additional application processors as well as developing portal upgrades. **The Program Administrator anticipates a return to the target two-week review time for Part I applications by mid-August and Part II by the end of September.** The Program Administrator continues to prioritize the review of applications based upon the submission date and is available to support AVs and Designees with application questions at admin@illinoisshines.com. The status of individual applications can be searched using the website's [Project Look Up Tool](#).
- **2025-26 Illinois Shines AV and Designee Program Satisfaction Survey Results Published** – The Program is pleased to share a summary of the Program Year 2025-26 Illinois Shines AV and Designee Program Satisfaction Survey results. The survey, which opened in February 2026, provides a high-level summary of Program satisfaction levels, identify areas for improvement, and gather ideas for potential changes. The Program Administrator will reissue the survey annually to track satisfaction overtime and gather feedback for improvements. The [survey results](#) can be found on the [About](#) page of the Program website. The Program Administrator thanks stakeholders for participating in the survey.
- **Annual Report Opened July 1, 2026** – On July 1, 2026, AVs with an active REC Contract were sent an email with a link to the Annual Report Response Form and a link to their SharePoint folder where Annual Report data will be housed. Reporting for the Annual Report will run through 11:59 PM CPT on July 15, 2026 (for those who

have not signed a REC Contract Amendment) or 11:59 PM CPT on August 3, 2026 (for those who have signed a REC Contract Amendment). 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 that puts both the AV and its contracted projects in jeopardy. Following the conclusion of the Annual Report cure period on October 30, 2026, the Program Administrator will calculate any potential Drawdowns for the annual REC performance and CS parameters evaluations. The calculation will include any finalized batch or contract assignments, REC delivery obligation reduction requests, or Force Majeure requests that are reported before October 30, 2026. Please review your portfolio to ensure that any contract status is correct and request any changes in a timely manner so the Drawdown calculations can be completed accurately. Please review the [2025-26 Approved Vendor Annual Report Guide](#) and additional AV resource materials under REC Contract and [Annual Report Help Guides](#) for more information.

- **Minimum Equity Standard (MES) Combined Compliance and Year-End Reports and Waiver Requests Due on July 15, 2026** – [As previously announced](#), the MES Combined Compliance and Year-End Report, which includes the 2026-27 MES Compliance Plan and the 2025-26 MES Year-End Report, is due on **July 15, 2026**. All registered AVs and Designees are required to submit this report, regardless of their participation status for the past Program Year. For organizations that did not participate in the Program in the 2025-26 Program Year, this can be reported at the beginning of the form. The Program emailed participants a link and credentials to the secure MES submission portal on May 26, 2026. If you do not see the email, please reach out to the Program Administrator at mes@illinoisshines.com. The Agency may grant a waiver from the MES requirement in situations where the applicant provides evidence of significant due diligence toward meeting the MES. Waiver templates and request forms can be found in Appendix J of the [Program Guidebook](#) or on the [MES](#) page of the Program website. Waivers are also due on **July 15, 2026**.
- **Reminder: Small Subscriber Requirement for Community Solar Projects Under 20-Year REC Contracts** – For CS projects under 20-Year REC Contracts, if the CS Subscription Mix (small subscriber percentage) is less than 50% as observed on both the first Business Day of June and the first Business Day of December of a Delivery Year, then the percent of Actual Nameplate Capacity that is Subscribed is deemed to be 0% and all the RECs delivered in the Delivery Year shall be returned from Buyer to Seller and Buyer shall not pay for such RECs. This process is reviewed by the Program Administration during the Subscriber Verification process and results are shared with AVs once final. The small subscriber definition is outlined on page 120 of the [Program Guidebook](#).
- **Subscriber Management Editing and History Reporting Enhancement** – The Program has released an enhancement to the Portal's Subscriber Management functionality that allows AVs and Designees to 1) edit individual subscriptions directly in the Portal and 2) report the history of a subscriber including subscription size changes, terminations, and re-activations that occurred prior to the latest subscription record. If necessary, AVs will have an opportunity to report any additional subscriber history during the Annual Report cure period of August 4, 2026 - October 30, 2026, and subsequently recalculate daily average subscription rates. The [Training Guide](#) has been updated with instructions on this new enhancement.
- **July REC Invoicing Opened July 1, 2026** – REC invoices and Quarterly Netting Statements were made available for download from AV SharePoint folders on July 1, 2026. Invoices must be submitted to the utility by July 10, 2026, to receive payment for the July invoice period. Any invoice amounts not submitted to the utility by July 10, 2026, will be carried forward and included in the October 2026 invoice period.

Reference and Reminders

- **Re-Batching for ICC Meetings** – AVs must indicate any requests to withdraw or withhold projects from ICC submission during a 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. 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)
7/14/2026	7/16/2026	7/30/2026
7/21/2026	7/23/2026	8/6/2026

Beginning with re-batching that opened on June 29, 2026, DG projects are now only permitted to be withheld twice before they must be submitted to the ICC for REC Contract approval or permanently withdrawn from the Program. Projects that have been withheld more than two times will be required to submit to the ICC or withdraw. See Section 5.A of the 2026-27 [Program Guidebook](#) for more detail.

- **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 [Portal Updates](#) page of the Program website. Upcoming portal enhancements include:

Development Focus	Details	Delivery
Project Totals will now refresh when subscriptions are edited individually to change size or status on Subscription or Latest Timeline	The CS Subscription Management Projects page will now update applicable Project Totals for the following fields when subscriptions are edited individually to change size or status: Subscribed (kW AC), Total Subscribed Percent, Total Subscribed Quantity, Small Subscriber Total Size (kW AC), Small Subscriber Percent, Small Subscriber Quantity, Local Subscriber Total Size (kW AC), Local Subscriber Percent, and Local Subscriber Quantity.	July 7, 2026
Updates to project export for admins	The "Export Project Data" has been updated to include the following new fields added for the 26-27 New Program Year Requirements: Project Notes - Internal, Stranded_Customer_REC_Adder_Part_1, Small_DG_Customer_Owned_Adder_Part_1, EEC_CS_Self_Perform_Adder_Part_1, Small_DG_Customer_Owned_Adder_Part_2, EEC_CS_Self_Perform_Adder_Part_2, and Battery_size_Part_2. The following fields were removed from the export: Install_Contract_Date_Part_1 and Meter_Make_Part_2.	July 7, 2026
Fixed Contract Version and Type being blank for Designee users in the CS Subscription Management Projects page	Designee Users will now be able to see Contract Version and Contract Type on Projects page in the CS Subscription Management menu for all projects delegated to them.	July 7, 2026
Capitalized "Low-Income" on DG Disclosure Form PDFs	Update language on DG Disclosure Form PDFs to correctly capitalize disclaimer for Low-Income Discount rates.	July 7, 2026
New Templates for Project Removal Notice for 2026 15-Year and 20-Year Contracts	Utility Users will now be able to generate Project Removal Notices for 2026 15 Year and 2026 20 Year ABP Contracts per the new 2026 New Plan Year contracts.	July 7, 2026
Fixed bug where AVs cannot submit batch which includes TCS applications	Corrected an issue in which AVs were unable to submit a batch that included TCS applications. AVs can now submit 20-Year CS batches even when capacity is not available.	July 7, 2026

- **Application Processing Tables and Updates** – Application processing tables are maintained [here](#). These tables are updated daily. 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](#) on the Program website. For questions about specific project applications, please contact the Program Administrator at admin@IllinoisShines.com. Please see the above item regarding the status of application processing including a link to an announcement the Program published on July 1, 2026.
- **Reminder: Phishing Attempts** – The Program reminds stakeholders to remain vigilant against email phishing attempts and avoid opening unexpected emails or clicking suspicious links that appear to be from the Illinois

Shines program, its Program Administrator, or the IPA. Official correspondence from these parties will only come from email addresses ending in @illinoisshines.com, @energy-solution.com, @illinoisabp.com, or @illinois.gov – please check our [Contact Us](#) page for more guidelines.

Other Opportunities

- **Focus Groups for the Clean Building Navigator Program** – The Workforce Policy Lab in partnership with the DCEO's Office of Energy & Business Utility, is gathering feedback through focus groups in Alton, Chicago, Danville, Decatur, Rockford, and Waukegan, for the implementation of the Clean Building Navigator Program launching next year. The Clean Building Navigator Program is a one-stop shop for homeowners and small business owners, connecting them to existing energy efficiency, weatherization, decarbonization, and renewable energy programs, incentives, and rebates across the state. Remaining dates and registration links include [mailto:July 15th - Alton](#) and [July 16th - Rockford](#). For more questions, reach out to Christine Flynn at cflynn5@niu.edu.

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