

TCS Group A Soft Close Initiated, Update on Part I and Part II Application Processing, AV and Designee Program Satisfaction Survey Results Published

July 2, 2026

Coming up in Illinois Shines

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

- **Key Dates**
 - July 3 – Fourth of July Holiday (Observed), IPA and Call Center Closed
- **Deadlines**
 - July 14 – Re-Batching Opens for AVs (For July 30, 2026, ICC Meeting)
 - July 15 – Annual Report Cure 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 Meeting)

Stakeholder Support

- **Program Administrator Office Hours** – July 8, 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: "[When providing a photograph of a string inverter, only showing the Inverter Manufacturer/Make will cause Need Info delays.](#)"

Program News

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

- **New! TCS Group A Soft Close Initiated July 2** – [As previously announced](#), the annual block of capacity for the Traditional Community Solar (TCS) Group A block 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 will begin today, July 2, 2026, and extend until July 9, 2026, at 11:59 p.m. CPT or until 10 additional megawatts of capacity are batched and submitted to the Program. Once the soft close period has concluded, the Program Administrator will announce that the block is closed. 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.
- **New! 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 nine weeks and Part II application review time is currently seven 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 appreciates the patience of stakeholders. The Program Administrator 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](#).

- **New! 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, aims to assess Program satisfaction levels, identify areas for improvement, and gather ideas for potential changes. The survey summary is a high-level overview of the survey process and results; individual responses are not disclosed. 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.
- **New! New to the Program Website** – Key additions to the [Program website](#):
 - [2025-26 Illinois Shines Approved Vendor and Designee Program Satisfaction Survey](#) ([About](#) page)
 - Updated [Circumstances Requiring New Disclosure Form and Signature](#) ([Program Documents](#) page)
- **Updated! End of Adjustment Period for New Energization Extension Request Form** – [As previously announced](#), the new [Energization Extension Request form](#) is live and can be accessed on the [Project Extensions and Removals](#) page of the Illinois Shines website. As of Wednesday, July 1, 2026, the IPA will no longer accept Extension Request submissions via email and expects all requests be made through the Extension Request Form. The Program has additionally published a [Guide to Extension Requests](#) and [updated FAQs](#) on the subject and will offer dedicated support during office hours throughout the month of June. For any questions, please reach out to IPA.Solar@illinois.gov.
- **Updated! Annual Report Opened July 1** – 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 of continued participation in the Program. 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.
 - 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.
- **Updated! 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 opened for submissions on May 26, 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 Report is due on July 15, 2026. All Program participants should have received an email from the Program Administrator with a link to the secure MES submission portal. Please use the link and credentials within the email to complete and submit the MES

Report. 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.

- **Updated! IPA Lifted Pause on Two Withhold Limit for Distributed Generation** – 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 already will be required to submit to the ICC or withdraw. This process is further outlined in Section 5.A of the 2026-27 [Program Guidebook](#).
- **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 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 be allowed to opt-out of four ICC meetings before being required to opt-in or be permanently withdrawn.
- **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.
- **Enhanced Project Lookup Tool Now Available** – The IllinoisShines.com [Project Look Up Tool](#) allows customers or their AVs and Designees to view the status of project applications online, helping customers understand how close their AV is to receiving the incentive payment for the project. The Project Look Up Tool has been updated to provide additional detail about project applications, including sub-status information on submissions, batching and payments, *Need Info* requests, verifications, ICC approvals, and more.
- **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.
 - Updated CS and DG Purchase Disclosure Form Deep Dive resources ([Disclosure Forms](#) page)
 - Updated [Guide to Going Solar](#), [Distributed Generation brochure](#), and [Intro to Illinois Shines](#) brochure ([Program Brochures and Other Resources](#) page)
- **Community Solar Self-Performance REC Adder Guidelines** – [As previously announced](#), beginning with Program Year 2026-27, a new \$5/REC adder will be applied to the REC price for EEC CS projects where the EEC AV “self-performs” at least 50% of the engineering, procurement and construction (“EPC”) or development work, as determined by the IPA or Program Administrator. As established in the [2026 Long-Term Plan, and](#) specified in section 1.J of the [Program Guidebook](#). To facilitate this process, the Program Administrator developed a [CS Self-Performance Adder Evaluation Template](#) that quantifies each task and its related point value and can

be found on the [EEC Project Category Hub](#) on the Program website. As a part of their application, AVs must provide a written narrative describing all the pre-development activities performed prior to Part I Application and all the activities to be performed prior to Energization of the project. At Part I application, AVs requesting the EEC CS Self-Performance REC Adder must certify that the project work conforms with the "self-perform" definition in the Program Guidebook and submit a completed [CS Self-Performance Adder Evaluation Template](#) via the Portal.

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

- **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:
- **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.

Other Opportunities

- **New! 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:
 - [July 8th - Chicago \(South/Southwest Sides\)](#)
 - [July 9th - Waukegan](#)
 - [July 15th - Alton](#)
 - [July 16th - Rockford](#)

For more questions, reach out to Christine Flynn at cflynn5@niu.edu.

- **Commercial Property Assessed Clean Energy (C-PACE) Program** – C-PACE is a national program that offers low-cost, long-term financing for energy efficiency, renewable energy, water conservation and resiliency projects in commercial buildings. Commercial property owners can obtain up to 100% upfront financing from private capital



providers for qualified upgrades to their HVAC, lighting and solar photovoltaic systems, and many more amenities in both existing buildings and new construction projects. C-PACE is secured by a special assessment lien on the property and is repaid as a line item on the property tax bill. The program is administered at the local level in jurisdictions with C-PACE programs. For more information and to see if a project qualifies for this opportunity, please visit Illinois C-PACE administrators' websites, including [Illinois Energy Conservation Authority](#), [Illinois Finance Authority](#), and [Cook County C-PACE](#).

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