

Customer Satisfaction Survey Focus Groups Report, Registration for Mentorship Program Fall Cohort, IPA Launches Expanded Clean Energy Dashboard

August 14, 2026

Coming up in Illinois Shines

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

- **Key Dates**
 - **August 17** – Mentee and Mentor Registration Opens for the 2026-27 Mentorship Program Fall Cohort
 - **August 25** – Part II Verification Cut Off for August
 - **August 28** – Mentee and Mentor Registration for the 2026-27 Mentorship Program Fall Cohort Closes
- **Deadlines**
 - **August 18** – Re-Batching Opens for AVs (For September 3, 2026, ICC Meeting)
 - **August 20** – Election Deadline – Project Re-Batch or Withdrawal (For September 3, 2026, ICC Meeting)
 - **August 24** – Re-Batching Opens for AVs (For September 10, 2026, ICC Meeting)
 - **August 26** – Election Deadline – Project Re-Batch or Withdrawal (For September 10, 2026, ICC Meeting)
 - **August 31** – CDCS Application Deadline for Program Year 2026-27

Stakeholder Support

- **Program Administrator Office Hours** – August 26, 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: "[The Standardized Address tool should be used when completing an application's Part I Section 1's Project Location.](#)"

Program News

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

- **New!** Illinois Shines Publishes 2025 Customer Satisfaction Survey Focus Groups Report – [As previously announced](#), the Program published the [2025 Consumer Satisfaction Survey Focus Group Report](#). This report details participation, feedback, and analysis across nine focus group sessions held in October and November 2025 on three distinct topics: Leases, the Illinois Shines website, and Disclosure Forms. These focus groups provided additional insights from DG customers following the [2025 Customer Satisfaction Survey](#). Please find the full Report on the [Consumer Protection & Support](#) page.
- **New!** Registration for 2026-27 Mentorship Program Fall Cohort Opens August 17, 2026 – Mentee and mentor registration for the 2026-27 Mentorship Program Fall Cohort will open on August 17, 2026, at 10:00 a.m. CPT on the [Mentorship Program](#) page and will close on August 28, 2026, at 11:59 p.m. CPT. AVs and Designees certified as Equity Eligible Contractors (EECs), AVs designated as Small and Emerging Businesses, and/or businesses that are minority-owned, woman-owned, veteran-owned, or disability-owned are encouraged to register

as mentees. The Mentorship Program is also seeking mentor applications from experienced AVs and Designees, including those certified as EECs, willing to share insights into Program and solar industry-related topics with mentees. Space is limited, and both mentors and mentees will be selected on a first-come, first-served basis. Please see the [full announcement](#) for more information.

- **New! IPA Launches Significantly Expanded Clean Energy Dashboard** – [As previously announced](#), the IPA launched Phase II of the [Illinois Clean Energy Dashboard](#), a significant expansion of the online resource, featuring 23 interactive data dashboards that provide greater access to statewide clean energy data. Created and maintained by the IPA, the Illinois Clean Energy Dashboard is a public data resource that enables users to explore Illinois' renewable energy landscape and track the progress of the state's clean energy transition. Phase II introduces an enhanced user experience, including interactive dashboards, visualized datasets, searchable maps, and more. To learn more, users can view the [Phase II Release Notes](#) or the [How to Explore a Dashboard](#) web pages for tips on navigating the dashboards.
- **New! New to the Program Website:**
 - [August Illinois Shines Data Report](#) ([Illinois Shines Data Report](#) page)
 - Updated Lifetime CO2 Offsets of Energized Illinois Shines projects ([Success Spotlights](#) page)
 - ICC Supplier Diversity Reporting Requirements FAQs ([Vendor FAQs](#) page)
 - Updated [Become an EEC flyer](#) ([Become an EEC](#) page)
 - [2025 Consumer Satisfaction Survey Focus Group Report](#) ([Consumer Protection & Support](#) page)
- **Updated! Annual Report Response Deadlines and Cure Period** – The Annual Report response closed on July 15, 2026, for AVs that have not signed a REC Contract Amendment and on August 3, 2026, for AVs who have signed a REC Contract Amendment. The Annual Report Cure Period has begun for all AVs. During the Cure Period, the Program Administrator will review Annual Report responses and contact AVs to address any report discrepancies. The Annual Report Cure Period concludes on October 13, 2026, for AVs that have not signed a REC Contract Amendment and on October 30, 2026, for AVs who have signed a REC Contract Amendment. At this point, the Program Administrator will calculate any potential Drawdowns for the annual REC performance evaluations. 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. The Program Administrator created and posted on-demand resources to enable AVs to familiarize themselves with the requirements and understand how Annual Report data is utilized to assess REC performance in relation to contractual obligations. Please see the [REC Contract and Annual Report Help Guides](#) page for more information.
- **CDCS Application Deadline for Program Year 2026-27 is August 31, 2026** – [As previously announced](#), the application submission deadline for Program Year 2026-27 CDCS category is August 31, 2026, at 11:59 p.m. CPT. Applications will not be accepted after the close of the application window. Additional information about the review and scoring and CDCS project applications will be published following the close of the application window. For any questions or support in the CDCS category, please contact communitysolar@illinoisshines.com.
- **Reminder About Marketing Federal Credits** – Section I.C.1. of the [Consumer Protection Handbook](#) states that “any marketing to customers that mentions a federal investment tax credit (FITC) must be accurate based on current availability and limitations of any such credit and must not be misleading.” Although the residential tax credit has sunset, the commercial credit is still available and may be used by tax-exempt entities through Elective Pay. AVs and Designees generally should exercise caution when discussing tax credits with customers or projecting the amount the customer will receive. Please see [this announcement](#) for further details.
- **Update to Proof of Property Tax Exemption for Houses of Worship** – Previously, only a Non-Homestead Property Tax Exemption Certificate was acceptable proof of property tax exemption for projects up to 100 kW AC sited on Houses of Worship. If the AV cannot provide the Non-Homestead Property Tax Exemption Certificate, alternate means of proof of property tax exemption include:

- A letter from the county, on county letterhead, confirming the project address is in exempt status. It is best practice for the letter to detail the land and buildings that are exempt from taxation under the non-homestead exemption law.
- A screenshot from the county website showing a Zero Tax Bill or a parcel summary that shows the project address/parcel is exempt or doesn't have a taxable assessment/assessed value.
- **Contracting Utility Registry Accounts Matrix Updated** – [As previously announced](#), the [Contracting Utility Registry Accounts](#) matrix has been added to the [Program Documents](#) page and provides updated guidance on which GATS and M-RETS tracking registry accounts standing orders should be set to for projects under the 2026 REC Contract.
- **Renewal Process for Approved Vendors with Common Ownership** – In 2025, the Program modified the annual renewal process for AVs who share common ownership with one or more other AVs. In September and October, all AVs who share common ownership will be required to submit their annual renewals at one time in a single Excel file. Questions on the renewal form are not changing. Beginning in early August and into September, the Program will provide additional information, including links to where AVs can submit their renewals and company's specific due dates, to these AVs about the updated process.
- **Part II Verification Cut Off for August** – The last Part II Verification date for August is August 25, 2026. Applications that are Part II verified on or before August 25, 2026, will be included in the September invoicing period. Application processing will continue throughout the last week of the month and any applications that are reviewed between August 26 and August 31, 2026, will be invoiced in October 2026. Part II Verification Cut Off dates for each month have been added to the [Key Dates and Deadlines](#) page.
- **IPA Issues Illinois Shines Program Year 2025-26 End of Year Report** – On July 31, 2026, the Program released the [Program Year 2025-26 End of Year Report](#). The Report highlights data on some of the most significant and high-impact activities produced by the Program and its participating stakeholders. The full report is available on the [About](#) page.

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)
8/18/2026	8/20/2026	9/3/2026
8/24/2026	8/26/2026	9/10/2026

Beginning June 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. 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](#). For questions about specific project applications, please contact the Program Administrator at admin@IllinoisShines.com.
- **Update on Part I and Part II Application Processing Following Submission Spikes** – [As previously announced](#), Part I application review time is 14 weeks and Part II application review time is 10 weeks. The Program Administrator is expanding the Application Processing team and implementing automated review enhancements to improve efficiency and increase application review capacity. The Program Administrator anticipates a return to the target two-week review time for Part I applications by mid-October and Part II by the end of November. Part II projects with a battery or storage component undergo additional technical review which may extend the initial application review timeline. The Program has added 200+ hours per month for battery schematic review and anticipates moving battery schematic reviews to the Portal to reduce admin time and turnaround time for review. Please see [this announcement](#) for more details.

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