

**Illinois Power Agency
22-RFP-01 –Program Administrator, Adjustable Block Program**

**Responses to Offeror Questions
November 17, 2021**

1. What are the data retention requirements?
 - a. How much data needs to be readily available (i.e., rolling 18 months)?
 - b. How much data can be held in storage (i.e., retain for rolling 7 years)?
 - c. How many documents need to be readily available?
 - d. How many documents can be held in storage?

The Program Administrator, Approved Vendors, Designees, utilities, and the Agency should have ready access to all data related to active applications. Each project application will feature data in text format, key documents in either PDF, Word, or Excel format, and photographs of system installations. Applications received to date include approximately 500 gigabytes of data.

As systems have 15 or 20-year REC delivery obligations, data related to systems will need to be accessible over the life of those terms for use in monitoring ongoing REC deliveries. Once a system is energized, documents related to the project application could be archived. The Agency cannot estimate the number of documents, as that will depend on program volumes. Section 5.F of the [Program Guidebook](#) describes the data fields and required uploads for projects.

The Offeror as an extension of the Agency must retain all final electronic records until authorized and formally instructed otherwise via the Agency records retention application process and related protocols mandated by the State Records Commission, in accordance with State Records Act (5 ILCS 160) and Joint Committee on Administrative Rules: Administrative Code: TITLE 44: Government Contracts, Grantmaking, Procurement and Property Management: Subtitle C: Government Records: Chapter IV: State Records Commission: Part 4400 State Records Commission.

2. In Section 3.3, would you prefer that we submit hourly rates as an average of all staff rates or that we submit the hourly rate for each staff member?

In Section 3.3 an average hourly rate may be provided in the first table on pages 33-4. Hourly rates for each staff member should be included under hourly rates on page 35.

3. We understand the level of attention to detail required to transition a program to a new portal. What data format will be used to share the dataset? What is the underlying relational data base platform being used (MS/SQL Server, PostgreSQL, MySQL, Oracle, etc.)? Will a data dictionary be made available? What baseline security protocols will be required?

The current program database is MySQL and data can be downloaded from it in .csv format or as files stored in their native format. Files are stored with standardized naming protocols. A MySQL data directory will be provided to the selected Program Administrator.



If selected to be the Program Administrator, the Offeror (i.e., “service organization”) will be expected to provide a SOC-3 report to the Agency (i.e., “user entity”) that provides assurance that internal controls within the Offeror’s organization are designed and operating effectively to ensure the five trust services principals including security, availability, processing integrity, confidentiality, and privacy over the data and information technology services provided to the Agency and all data and information shared between the Agency and Offeror service organization. The SOC-3 report will be required for the 12-month fiscal year period that ends June 30th each year for which the Offeror service organization provides data and information technology services to the Agency.

4. What platforms are used for the IL ABP and Illinois Shines web sites? How does the current administrator share data with Illinois Shines?

The program websites are hosted in WordPress. The program portal is currently hosted using the LAMP stack: a Linux operating system, Apache server, MySQL database, and PHP application software.

The Illinois Shines website is maintained by the Program Administrator thus data on that website is sourced from the same database as the main Adjustable Block Program website.

The current Program Administrator shares data from the current portal with the Agency through .csv reports of data that is used regularly by the Agency. The Program Administrator will need to have the ability to develop customized data reports as needed by the Agency or utilities.

5. Does the current platform accommodate changes to Section 1-75(c), or will a major code re-write be necessary during the transition period?

Many changes to the current platform to accommodate the new categories created by Public Act 102-0662 will be implemented to accommodate block openings on December 14, 2021. There will be future additional changes required to accommodate ongoing implementation of the Act, including changes required by the Illinois Commerce Commission in approval of the Agency’s Long-Term Renewable Resources Procurement Plan. For example, the ability of Equity Eligible Contractors to request an advance on capital, and any resulting verifications, documentation, and calculations will not be implemented until after the approval of the next Long-Term Plan in July of 2022.

6. Will software code be shared or is it proprietary? What will be made available during the transition period? Will we need to license and use a proprietary software for incentive and invoice processing?

The software code used for the current portal is proprietary; however, all data will be available, and the portal developers will be made available during the transition to answer questions about the data. Offerors will not be required to license any software and are expected to have the capacity to implement solutions for incentive and invoice processing.



7. How is the current platform being hosted, locally or in a cloud? If it's hosted in a cloud, which provider is hosting it (e.g., AWS, Google, etc.)?

The website is cloud hosted on servers at Nexcess. The portal is cloud hosted on servers at LiquidWeb.

8. Does the system use any external APIs today? If so, how many endpoints? Are there any API-dependencies from third parties?

The portal uses three APIs from third parties, each with one endpoint. The portal also uses two .csv downloads from parties that do not use APIs, which are then parsed and used for system input. There are no dependencies beyond those normally in existence for APIs like SSL.

9. Does the system host APIs for others' use? If so, approximately how many?

See response to question 8 above.

10. Attachment CC - Illinois Department of Human Rights Public Contract Number references an "Offer opening date," before which we must have submitted an application for an IDHR Public Contract Number. Which date does this refer to?

Responses to the RFP are due on December 20, 2021. The opening date can be considered December 21, 2021.

11. It appears from Section 3.6 of the RFP that travel is the only possible Other Direct Cost (ODC) permitted in the budget. [Statement about Questioner's RFI submission redacted.] Please confirm that all program related costs can be included in the budget we submit.

Section 3.6 is intended only to specify that all travel expenses must be preapproved. This statement is not intended to disallow other expenses.

12. The budget template provided in Section 3.3 provides line items for labor only. Assuming ODCs are allowable, shall we add lines at the bottom of the labor line items to include all ODCs?

Yes.

13. Section 3 page 32 requires the Administrator to "resolve 80% of complaints within 30 days." How is "resolved" defined if the customer or offending party is not responsive or unsatisfactorily responsive within this timeframe? Since the Administrator is not a party to the customer's contract and has limited authority to require a response from the offending party or customer, is there a mechanism to allow for "resolved" complaints where the customer is not satisfied?

The Agency recognizes that complaints may vary in complexity and do require responses and feedback from the parties involved. The goal of this metric is to ensure that complaints that are not complex are efficiently and timely resolved. There are three different complaint classifications that effectively mean the complaint has been closed out, but still illustrate a differentiation regarding how and why

the complaint was closed out. Those three distinct classifications currently being used in the Program are listed below.

- **Resolved:** describes a complaint where we were able to help the customer reach a resolution with the company, where the customer is satisfied with the company's explanation, or where we are satisfied with the explanation given by the company.
- **Closed:** describes a complaint where after multiple attempts on our part to help resolve the customer's concerns those attempts were ultimately unsuccessful, or we and the customer were unable to receive a satisfactory explanation from the company regarding the customer's concerns.
- **Closed – Not Responsive:** describes a complaint where the customer did not provide all the information necessary for the Program Administrator to investigate the complaint, or where the customer did not respond to the Program Administrator's attempts to address their complaint. If the Program Administrator does not receive adequate documentation from the customer, the Program Administrator is unable to adequately work to resolve the complaint with the solar company.

Approved Vendors and Designees who are not responsive may risk losing their approved status in the program (and in fact this has been the basis for some prior suspensions). While the Agency is not a party to the REC delivery contract it does have significant leverage over Approved Vendors and Designees.

14. Under Section 1-75(c)(1)(M)(iii) of Public Act 102-0662, does the IPA expect the Program Administrator to develop and require Program participants to provide disclosures to customers beyond the Illinois Shines Disclosure Form? Or is this section merely referring to the current Illinois Shines DG and CS Disclosure Form requirement?

Disclosure forms are required to be presented to all distributed generation customers and all community solar subscribers that participate in the Program. This applies to all projects that operate in the Program regardless of the category the project is classified within under Public Act 102-0662 and does not represent a change in Program requirements. There are no planned edits to the Illinois Shines Standard Disclosure Form upon Program reopening on December 14, 2021, but there is a general plan to update Program disclosure forms as needed as Program requirements are solidified through the update to the Long-Term Renewable Resources Procurement Plan planned for 2022.