



Community Solar Energy Sovereignty Grant Program

Technical Assistance Session #2
March 28, 2024



Illinois
Department of Commerce
& Economic Opportunity

JB Pritzker, Governor

Facilitators

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Center for Governmental Studies at Northern Illinois University

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DCEO, Office of Energy and Business Utility

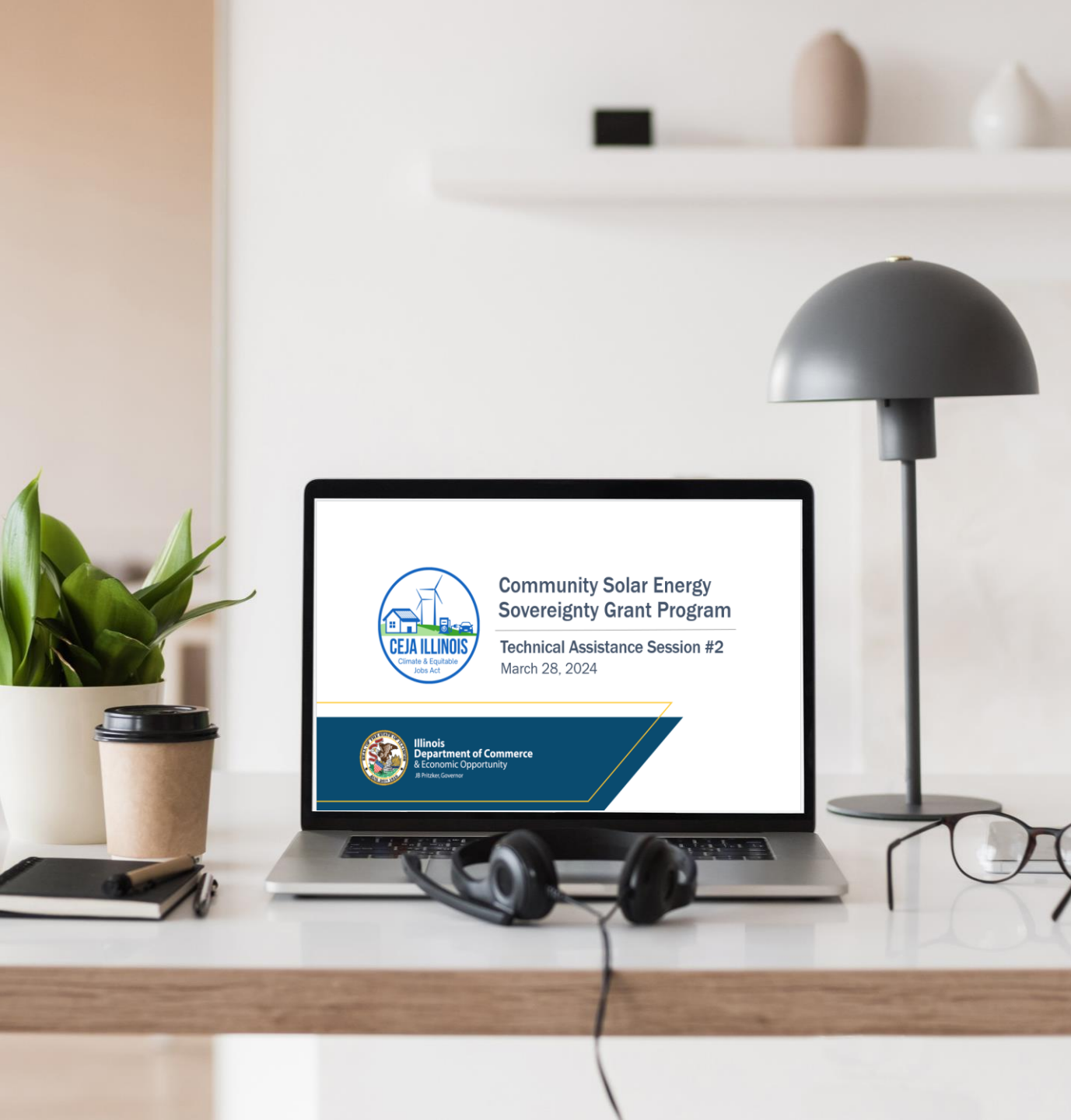
Support:

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Smart Energy Design Assistance, University of Illinois



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Session recording
will be posted to
the [NOFO website](#)



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Zoom Basics



- Mute/unmute
- Stop/start video
- Raise hand
- Emojis
- Chat





Poll Question

Did you attend the last TA session for this funding opportunity?



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Presentation Overview

- Climate & Equitable Jobs Act (CEJA) Overview
- Community Solar Energy Sovereignty Grant Program Overview
- Required Application Documents
- Tips for Submitting an Effective Application Package
- Merit Review Process
- Support & Resources



Climate & Equitable Jobs Act (CEJA) Overview



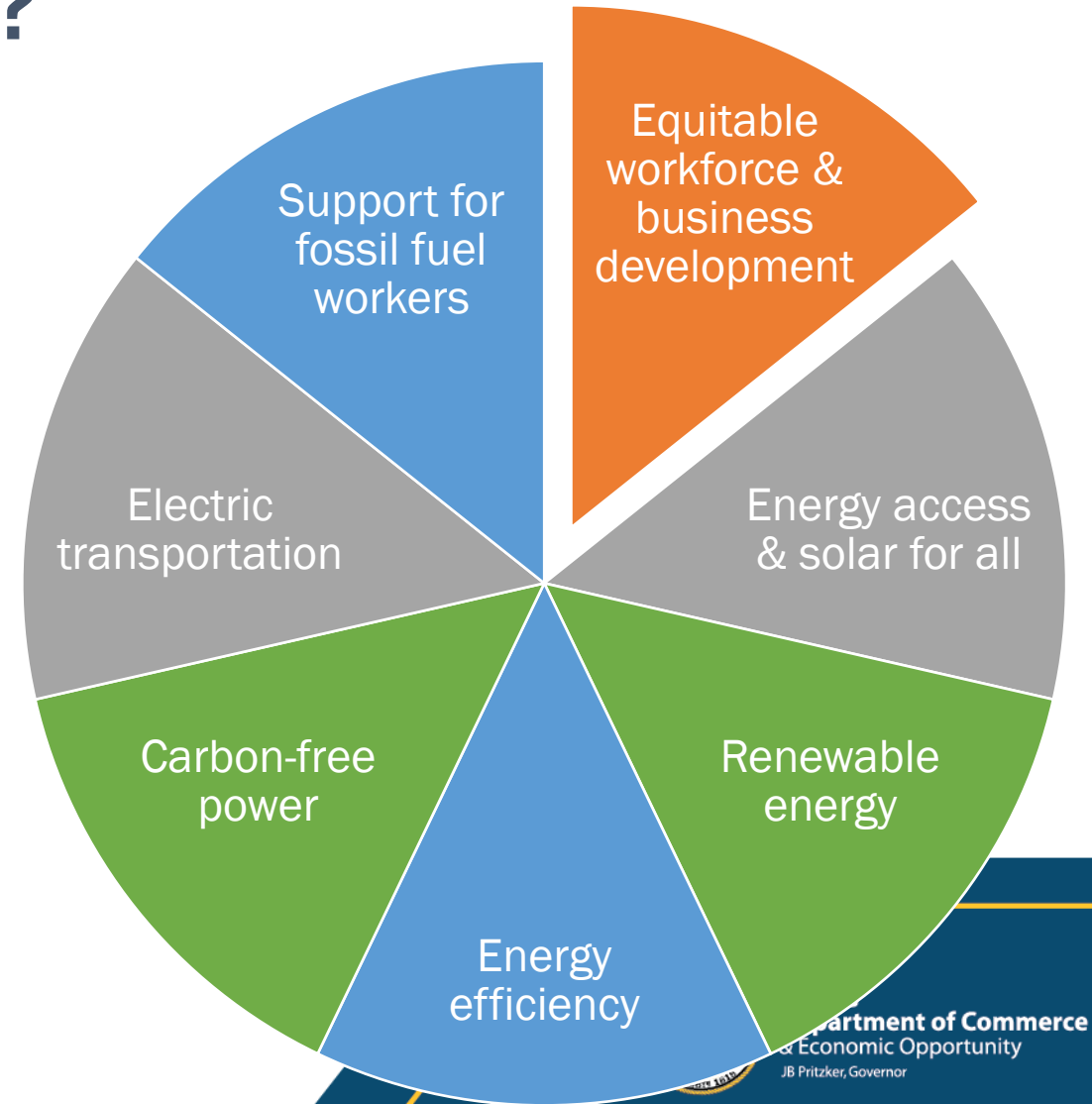
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What is the Climate and Equitable Jobs Act (CEJA)?

Comprehensive energy legislation that centers equity and puts Illinois on track to achieve 100 percent renewable energy by 2050.



DCEO CEJA Ecosystem

Contractor support programs



Contractor Incubator
\$21M/yr.



Contractor Primes Accelerator
\$9M/yr.

Workforce training programs



Clean Jobs Workforce Network
\$21M/yr.



Climate Works Pre-apprenticeship
\$9M/yr

Workforce support programs



Energy Transition Navigators
\$6M/yr.

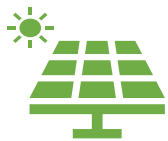


Energy Transition Barrier Reduction
\$15M/yr



Returning Resident Clean Jobs
\$6M/yr

Economic Development & Jobs & Environmental Justice Grant



Coal to Solar



Energy Transition Community Grant
\$40M/yr



Equitable Energy Future Grant
Up to \$34M/yr



Comm. Solar Energy Sovereignty Grant
Up to \$8.5M/yr

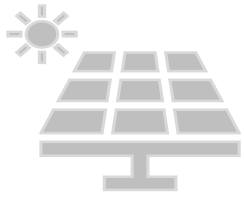
Commissions, Councils, & More

- Energy Transition Workforce Commission
- Energy Workforce Advisory Council
- Jobs & Justice Fund

Jobs & Environmental Justice Grant Program

Climate & Equitable Jobs Act Section 5-60

Economic Development & Jobs & Environmental Justice Grant



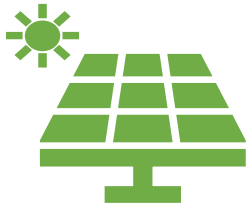
Coal to Solar



Energy Transition Community
Grant



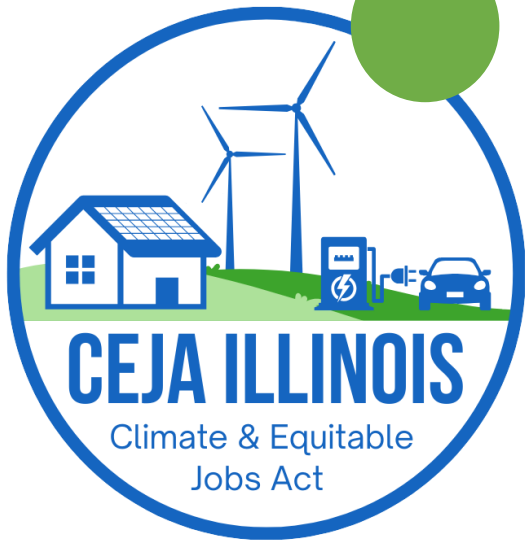
Equitable Energy Future Grant



Community Solar Energy
Sovereignty Grant

Administered by the Office
of Energy & Business Utility
(OEBU)

[Equitable Energy Future
Grant Program](#)



Questions?



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Community Solar Energy Sovereignty Grant Program Overview



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Community Solar Energy Sovereignty Grant

Climate & Equitable Jobs Act Section 5-60

What will the grant provide?

- Intended to provide grants to plan, develop, and execute community solar projects.
- Provides upfront capital to support the development of community solar projects and provides seed capital and pre-development funding to support community ownership of renewable energy project

Why?

- To remove barriers to project, community & business development caused by lack of capital.

Who will the grant benefit?

- Contractor businesses in historically disadvantaged communities
- Equity investment eligible communities
- Low-income households

Eligible Applicants

Community-based Organizations (CBO)

- The majority of the governing body and staff consists of local residents,
- The main operating offices are in the community,
- Priority issue areas are identified and defined by residents,
- Solutions to address priority issues are developed with residents, and
- Program design, implementation, and evaluation components have residents intimately involved, in leadership positions.

Public Entity

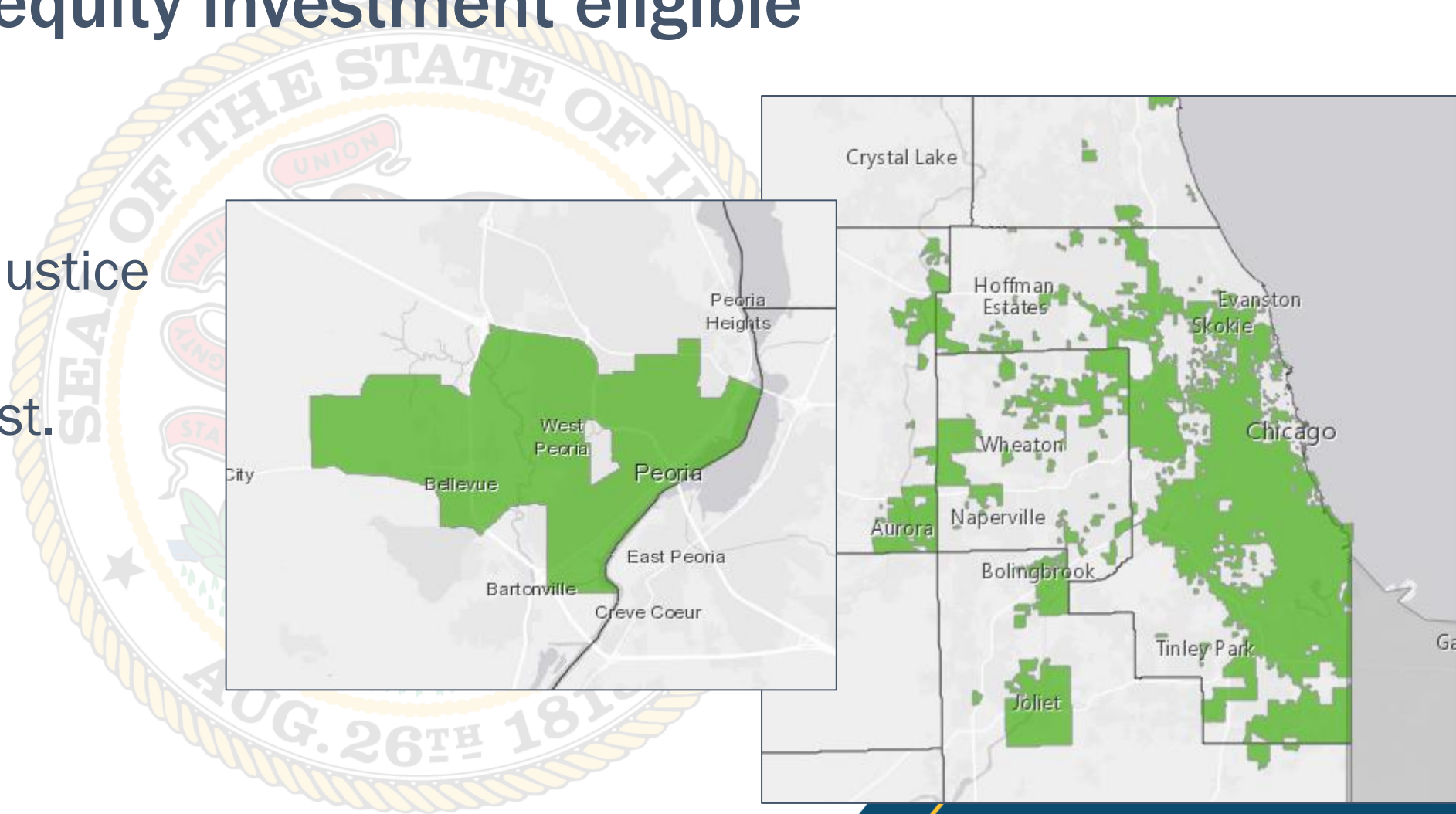
- The public entity must represent a municipality or county (or school district, park district, etc.) Priority given to proposed projects located in and supporting an equity investment eligible community or communities; and benefiting participating low-income households.
- The public entity must certify that no local community-based organizations exist that can fill this role.
- The public entity must provide the same showing of robust community engagement as a non-public entity would be required to show.

Technical Support Provider

- The entity must demonstrate robust community engagement and support.
- A technical service provider can be a solar supplier or installer or business involved in the field of solar energy.

Priority projects are those that are in or support an equity investment eligible community.

- Environmental Justice communities
- Restore. Reinvest. Renew (R3) communities



R3 Communities: <https://r3.illinois.gov/>

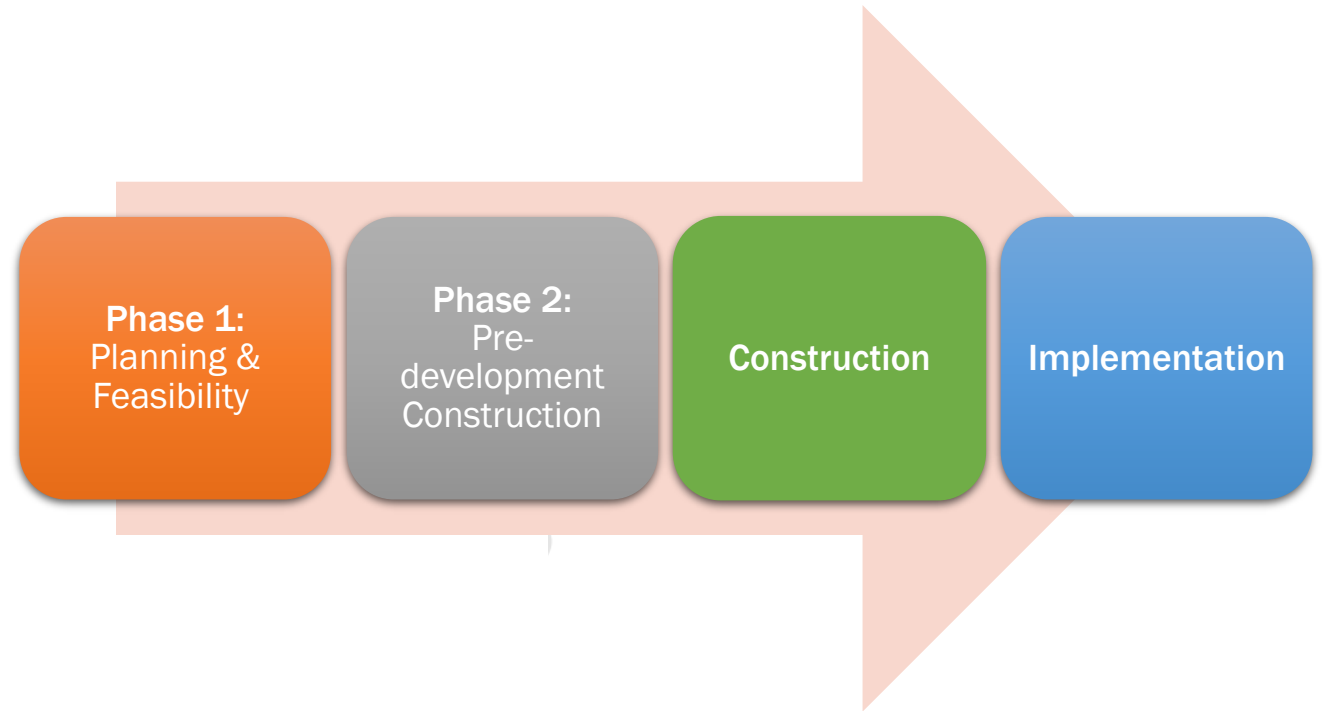
Equity Investment Eligible Community Map: <https://energyequity.illinois.gov/resources/equity-investment-eligible-community-map.html>



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Project Phases

- Community Solar Energy Sovereignty funds Phase 1 & Phase 2.
- Construction & Implementation costs are not allowable



Examples of activities for phases

Phase 1: Planning & Feasibility

- Early-Stage Project Planning
- Project Team Organization
- Site Identification
- Organizing a project business model
- Customer outreach
- Preliminary site assessments
- Development of cooperative or community ownership project models that allocate benefits to equity eligible communities

Phase 2: Pre-development Construction

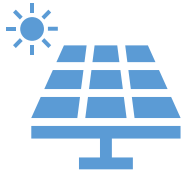
- Procurement and contracting
- Securing financing
- Site control
- Customer outreach and enrollment
- Permitting and zoning
- Interconnection application costs and fees, studies, and expenses
- Equipment and supplies
- Staff and operation expenses

What is a Community Solar Project?

“...any solar project or purchasing program, within a geographic area, in which the benefits of a solar project flow to multiple customers such as individuals, businesses, nonprofits, and other groups.”

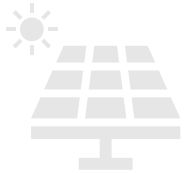


Types of Community Solar Projects



Traditional Community Solar Projects

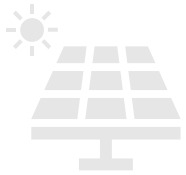
The solar project may not be located in or have connections with a subscriber's community



Community-Driven Community Solar Projects

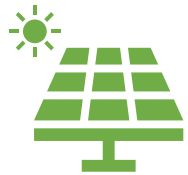


Types of Community Solar Projects



Traditional Community Solar Projects

Projects intended to provide **direct and tangible benefits** to, and involvement of, the local community. Features community ownership and wealth building.

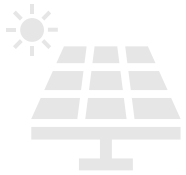


Community-Driven Community Solar (CSDS) Projects

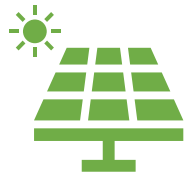
CSDS projects are the type of community solar projects that the Community Solar Energy Sovereignty grant is seeking to fund.



Direct Benefits



Traditional Community
Solar Projects



Community-Driven
Community Solar (CSDS)
Projects

Direct benefits for the owner(s) and subscribers may include:

- Bill savings
- Revenues from project ownership
- Tax credits
- The financial value of the project, as well as job creation, direct income, and increased economic activity in the defined geographic community
- Additional benefits for low-income households



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Community Ownership is...

“...an arrangement in which an electric generating facility is, or over time will be, in significant part, owned collectively by members of the community to which an electric generating facility provides benefits; members of that community participate in decisions regarding the governance, operation, maintenance, and upgrades of and to that facility; and members of that community benefit from regular use of that facility.”



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Demonstrating Community Benefits, Ownership & Wealth Building

- Provide a target percentage goal for ownership held by community members and/or non-profit organizations
- Outline direct benefits to community members
- Describe how community members, non-profits, public entities located in the community will participate in the project organization, development, operations, management
- Location of the project in an equity investment eligible community
- Engagement with CEJA/FEJA programs
- Partnership/employment of equity eligible contractors



How will the funding be provided?

Funding will be provided based on established project milestones.

Upfront funding for program activities is available.

Project milestones and upfront funding will be negotiated at the time of grant agreement.



Funding Phases

An applicant can apply for Phase 1 only, Phase 2 only, or Phase 1 & Phase 2 funding.

If a grantee receives an award for Phase 1 & Phase 2 the Department will review Phase 1 performance metrics to determine whether the grantee may receive funding for Phase 2 activities.

If grantee applies for Phase 2 only, they must provide appropriate Phase 1 metrics for the Merit Reviewers to evaluate.



Funding Stats

Total Funding

\$8.5 million per year

Award Range

\$50,000 - \$1,000,000 (per application)

Anticipated Number of Awards

Up to 40 awards

Performance Period

Up to 4 years

Total per Applicant Amount

\$3 million





Multiple Choice

Which of the following would be considered Phase 1 activities?

- a) Early-Stage Project Planning
- b) Preliminary site assessments
- c) Site Control



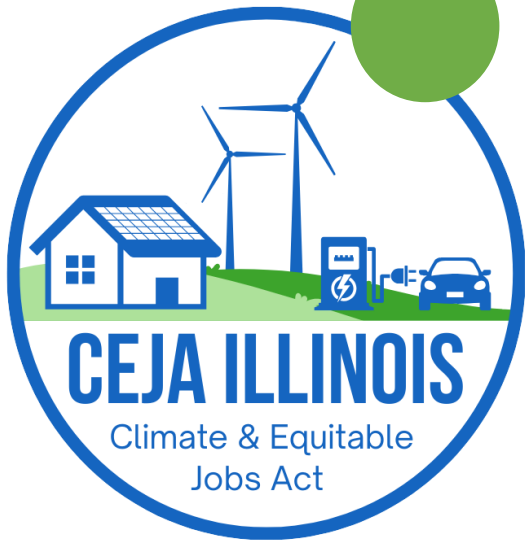


Multiple Choice

Which of the following activities would NOT be considered a Phase 2 activity?

- a) Permitting & Zoning
- b) Securing financing
- c) Construction





Questions?



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Required Application Documents



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Applicant Submission Documents

Find all NOFO Materials
and resources here:
[Community Solar Energy
Sovereignty Grant
Program \(illinois.gov\)](https://www.illinois.gov/CommunitySolarEnergySovereigntyGrantProgram)

Uniform Grant Application in fillable PDF format

Conflict of Interest Disclosure

Mandatory Disclosure

Public Entity Attestation (if applicable)


Uniform Budget utilizing template provided by DCEO

Community Solar Sovereignty Grant Application
Template



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Application Package Documents

**Illinois Department of Commerce & Economic Opportunity**
Uniform Application for State Grant Assistance

Agency Completed Section

1. Type of Submission:

Pre-Application
 Application
 Changed/Corrected Application

2. Type of Application:

New
 Continuation (i.e. Multiple Year Grant)
 Revision (Modification to Initial Application)

3. Date/Time Received By State (Completed by State Agency Upon Receipt of Application) _____

4. Name of Awarding Agency Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity

5. Catalog of State Financial Assistance (CSFA) Number _____

6. CSFA Title _____

Federal Assistance Listing Not Applicable (No Federal Funding)

7. Assistance Listing Number #1 _____

8. Assistance Listing Program Title #1 _____

9. Assistance Listing Number #2 _____

10. Assistance Listing Program Title #2 _____

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Conflict of Interest Disclosure

Award applicants and recipients of awards from the State of Illinois (collectively referred to herein as "Grantee") must disclose in writing to the awarding State agency any actual or potential conflict of interest that could affect the State award for which the Grantee has applied or has received. See 30 ILCS 708/35; 44 Ill. Admin Code § 7000.40(b)(3); 2 CFR § 200.112. A conflict of interest exists if an organization's officers, directors, agents, employees and/or their spouses or immediate family members use their position(s) for a purpose that is, or gives the appearance of, being motivated by a desire for a personal gain, financial or nonfinancial, whether direct or indirect, for themselves or others, particularly those with whom they have a family business or other close associations. In addition, the following conflict of interest standards apply to governmental and non-governmental entities.

Definitions:

Governmental Entity. If the Grantee is a governmental entity, no officer or employee of the Grantee, member of its governing body or any other public official of the locality in which the award objectives will be carried out shall participate in any decision relating to a State award which affects his/her personal interest or the interest of any corporation, partnership or association in which he/she is directly or indirectly interested, or which affects the personal interest of a spouse or immediate family member, or has any financial interest, direct or indirect, in the work to be performed under the State award.

Non-governmental Entity. If the Grantee is a non-governmental entity, no officer or employee of the Grantee shall participate in any decision relating to a State award which affects his/her personal interest or the interest of any corporation, partnership or association in which he/she is directly or indirectly interested, or which affects the personal interest of a spouse or immediate family member, or has any financial interest, direct or indirect, in the work to be performed under the State award.

The Grantee shall also establish safeguards, evidenced by policies, rules and/or bylaws, to prohibit employees or officers of Grantee from engaging in actions, which create or which appear to create a conflict of interest as described herein.

The Grantee has a continuing duty to immediately notify the Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (the "Department") in writing of any actual or potential conflict of interest, as well as any actions that create or which appear to create a conflict of interest.

Are there any current potential conflict(s) of interest, or any actions that create or which appear to create a conflict of interest, related to the State award for which your organization has applied?

No Yes

If there are any current potential conflict(s) of interest, or any actions that create or which appear to create a conflict of interest, related to the State award for which your organization has applied, please describe them all here:

Mandatory Disclosure

Award applicants and recipients of awards from the State of Illinois (collectively referred to herein as "Grantee") must disclose, in a timely manner and in writing to the State awarding agency, all violations of State or federal criminal law involving fraud, bribery, or gratuity violations potentially affecting the award. See 30 ILCS 708/40; 44 Ill. Admin. Code § 7000.40(b)(4); 2 CFR § 200.113. Failure to make the required disclosures may result in remedial action.

Are there any violations of State or federal criminal law involving fraud, bribery, or gratuity violations potentially affecting the awarding of a grant to your organization? No Yes

If there are any violations of State or federal criminal law involving fraud, bribery, or gratuity violations potentially affecting the awarding of a grant to your organization, please describe them all here:

Grantee has a continuing duty to disclose to the Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (the "Department") all violations of criminal law involving fraud, bribery or gratuity violations potentially affecting this grant award.

By signing this document, below, as the duly authorized representative of the Grantee, I hereby certify that:

- All of the statements in this Mandatory Disclosure form are true, complete and accurate to the best of my knowledge. I am aware that any false, fictitious, or fraudulent statements or claims may subject me to criminal, civil or administrative penalties. (U.S. Code, Title 18, Section 1001).
- There is no action, suit or proceeding at law or in equity pending, nor to the best of Grantee's knowledge, threatened, against or affecting the Grantee, before any court or before any governmental or administrative agency, which will have a material adverse effect on the performance required by the grant award.
- Grantee is not currently operating under or subject to any cease and desist order, or subject to any informal or formal regulatory action, and, to the best of the Grantee's knowledge, it is not currently the subject of any investigation by any state or federal regulatory, law enforcement or legal authority.
- If Grantee becomes the subject of an action, suit or proceeding at law or in equity that would have a material adverse effect on the performance required by an award, or an investigation by any state or federal regulatory, law enforcement or legal authority, Grantee shall promptly notify the Department in writing.

Grantee Organization (Company Name) _____

Signature of Authorized Representative _____ Date _____

Printed Name (Authorized Signator Name) _____

Printed Title (Authorized Signator Title) _____ CSFA Number _____

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CERTIFICATION OF PUBLIC ENTITY QUALIFICATION AS COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANIZATION

Name: _____ Date: ____/____/____

Organization/Entity: _____

This certification will be used to determine whether the above-listed organization or entity qualifies as a community-based organization under Section 5-60 of the Climate and Equitable Jobs Act (Public Act 102-0662).

A public entity may qualify as a community-based organization, but only if the public entity meets the following requirements:

- The public entity must represent a municipality or county (or school district, park district, etc.) Priority given to proposed projects located in and supporting an equity investment eligible community or communities; and benefiting participating low-income households.
- The public entity must certify that no local community-based organizations exist that are capable of filling this role.
- The public entity must provide the same showing of robust community engagement as a non-public entity would be required to show.

By signing below, you certify that the information provided is true and complete and that you understand that this document will be used for state government purposes.

Signature: _____ Date: ____/____/____

Printed Name: _____

Uniform Application
for State Grant
Assistance

Conflict of Interest
Disclosure

Mandatory
Disclosure

Public Entity
Attestation
(if applicable)

Uniform Budget Template

State of Illinois -- Uniform Budget Template -- General Instructions

This form is used to apply to individual State of Illinois discretionary grant programs. Applicants should submit budgets based upon the total estimated costs for the project including all funding sources. Pay attention to applicable program specific instructions, if attached. The applicant organization should refer to 2 CFR 200, "Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards" cited within these instructions.

You must consult with your Business Office prior to submitting this form for any award restrictions, limitations or requirements when filling out the narrative and Uniform Budget Template.

Section A – Budget Summary
STATE OF ILLINOIS FUNDS

All applicants must complete Section A and provide a break-down by the applicable budget categories shown in lines 1-17. **Please read all instructions before completing form.**

STATE OF ILLINOIS GRANT FUNDS

Provide a total requested State of Illinois Grant amount for each year in the Revenue portion of Section A. The amount entered in Line (a) will equal the total amount budgeted on Line 18 of Section A.

BUDGET SUMMARY – STATE OF ILLINOIS FUNDS

All applicants must complete Section A and provide a break-down by the applicable budget categories shown in lines 1-17.

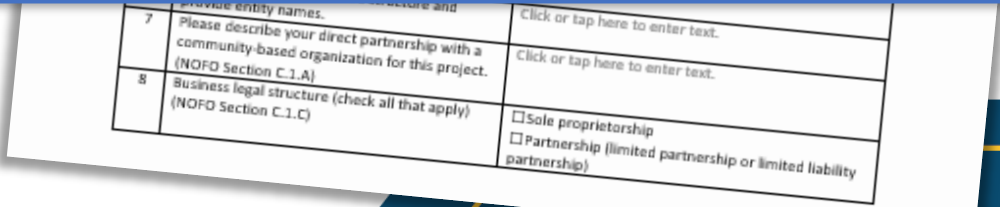
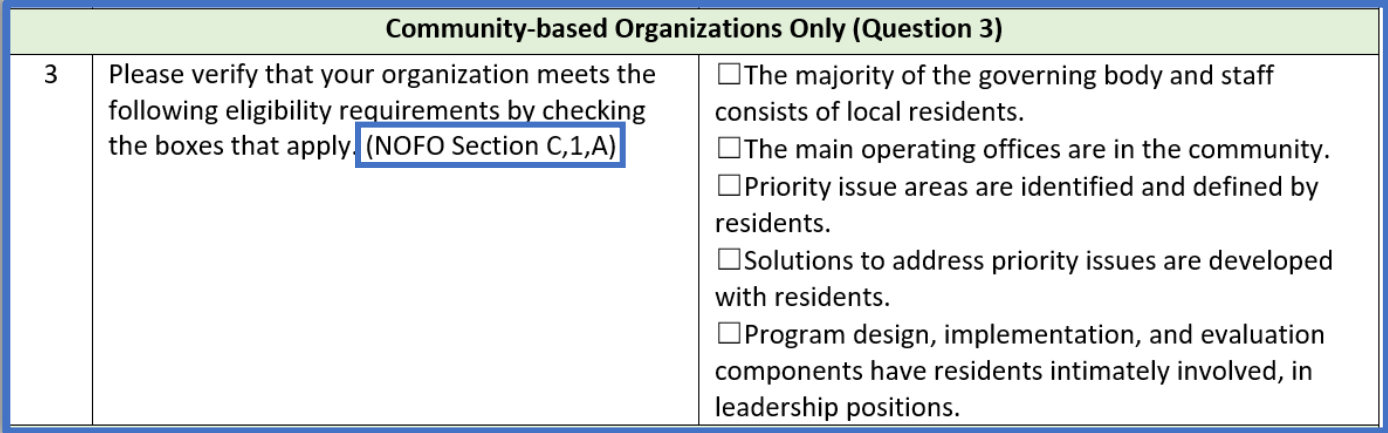
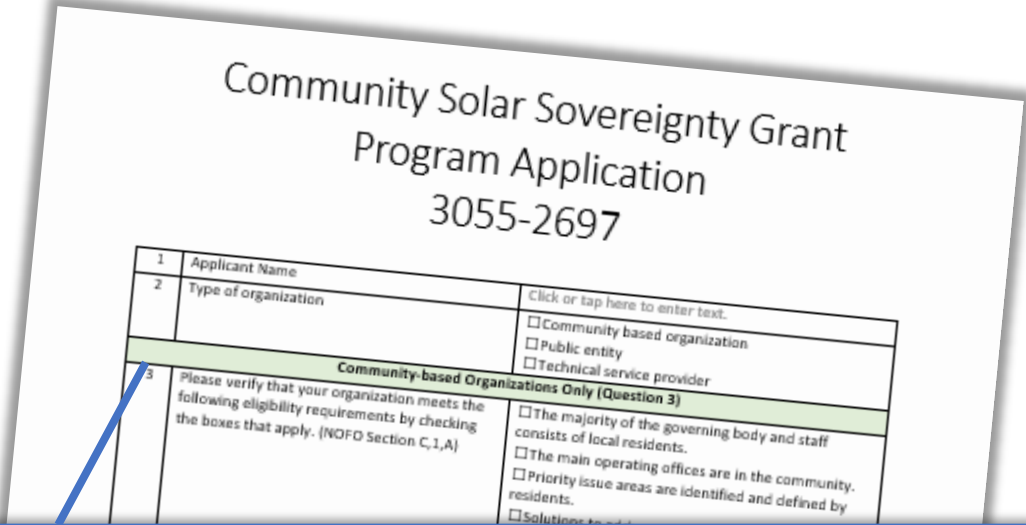
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General Instructions | Section A | ICI | Certification | Phase1Personnel | Phase2Personnel | Phase1FringeBenefits | Phase2FringeBenefits | Phase1Equipment | Phase2Equipment | Ph ...

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Community Solar Energy Sovereignty Application Template (Page 1)

- Applicant Name (Organization/Entity/Business Name)
- Type of Organization
- Organization/Entity/Business specific questions
- **Notice:** NOFO alignment per question



Community Solar Energy Sovereignty Application Template (Page 2)

- All applicant questions
- Narratives
 - Describe the community project
 - Historical or future partnerships
 - Site & scope of the community solar projects
 - Ownership model being pursued
 - Local community benefits accomplished by project

		<input type="checkbox"/> Limited Liability Company (LLC) <input type="checkbox"/> Cooperative <input type="checkbox"/> Corporation
All Applicants (Questions 10 – 27)		
9	Annual revenue	<input type="checkbox"/> 0-\$100,000 <input type="checkbox"/> \$100,001-\$500,000 <input type="checkbox"/> \$500,001-\$1,000,000 <input type="checkbox"/> \$1,000,001-\$10,000,000 <input type="checkbox"/> \$10,000,000+
10	List the address(es) where the proposed project will be located	Click or tap here to enter text.
11	Does the applicant own the project property/address(es)?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
12	If no, do you have permission from the property owner to locate the project on the property?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes (provide lease/contract) <input type="checkbox"/> No

13. Briefly describe the community(ies) this project will serve (including location) and the community needs this project will address and if the location is R3/EI (search by address here [CEJA Grantee Map \(arcgis.com\)](http://CEJA.GranteeMap.arcgis.com)) (up to 500 words) (see NOFO Section A, Program Description and Section D.2)

Click or tap here to enter text.

14. Briefly describe your organization's historical or future partnership with the community where the project will be located and the length of that partnership (up to 250 words). (See NOFO Section A, Program Description and description of letters of support in Section D.2)

Click or tap here to enter text.

15. Please describe the size and scope of the community solar project(s) you are proposing. If known, please estimate the installed capacity of the solar project (kW). (See NOFO Section C.1.C)

Click or tap here to enter text.

16. Describe the ownership model you are pursuing. How will the project support cooperative or community ownership of the project (including long-term governance, management and maintenance)? (up to 300 words). (See NOFO Section C.1.C and Section D.2 project quality)

Click or tap here to enter text.

17. Describe the other local community benefits that the project will accomplish, including wealth building via community renewable generation and additional benefits for low-income households. (See NOFO Section D.2 project description and Section E.1 project quality)

Click or tap here to enter text.



Community Solar Energy Sovereignty Application Template (Page 3)

- Phase 1 & Phase 2 activities
- Sale of energy production & details
- Leveraged funding
- Leveraged partnerships

Funding may be requested for one or both of the following project phases: Phase 1: planning and feasibility, and Phase 2: pre-development construction. (See NOFO Section A, Program Description: "Grant funds may be used..."; and Performance Goals and Measures)	
18	<p>Check the Phase 1 activities for which you are requesting funding. (Check all that apply)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Early-stage project planning <input type="checkbox"/> Project team organization <input type="checkbox"/> Site identification <input type="checkbox"/> Organizing a project business model <input type="checkbox"/> Customer outreach <input type="checkbox"/> Preliminary site assessments <input type="checkbox"/> Development of cooperative or community ownership model or project models that allocate benefits to equity investment eligible communities. <input type="checkbox"/> Other: Click or tap here to enter text.</p> <p>Check the Phase 2 activities for which you are requesting funding (Check all that apply).</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Procurement and contracting <input type="checkbox"/> Securing financing <input type="checkbox"/> Customer outreach and enrollment <input type="checkbox"/> Permitting and zoning <input type="checkbox"/> Interconnection application costs and fees, studies and expenses <input type="checkbox"/> Equipment and supplies <input type="checkbox"/> Staff and operations expenses <input type="checkbox"/> Other: Click or tap here to enter text.</p>
19	<p>Does the project include the sale of energy production?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Maybe/unsure</p>
20	<p>if yes, or maybe/unsure describe how the applicant will sell energy to customers and remain commercially viable upon project completion.</p> <p>Click or tap here to enter text.</p>
21	<p>Which of the following incentive or grant programs have you applied to or plan to apply to for this project, if any?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Illinois Solar for All (https://www.illinoisfa.com/) <input type="checkbox"/> Illinois Shines (Adjustable Block Program - https://illinoisshines.com/become-an-equity-eligible-contractor-ec-approved-vendor-or-designee/) <input type="checkbox"/> Illinois Climate Bank (Illinois Finance Authority - https://www.il-fa.com/programs/cb) <input type="checkbox"/> Community Development Block Grants (https://dceo.illinois.gov/communitydevelopment.html) <input type="checkbox"/> Community renewable generation projects through the Illinois Power Agency <input type="checkbox"/> Renewable energy procurements through the Illinois Power Agency. <input type="checkbox"/> Other: Click or tap here to enter text.</p>
22	<p>How will your organization leverage partnerships and/or the programs chosen in Question 21 to improve the cost effectiveness/return on investment on the project?</p> <p>Click or tap here to enter text.</p>

Community Solar Energy Sovereignty Application Template (Page 4)

- Estimated timeline for project
- Key staff bios/resumes/roles
- Clean energy workforce details
- Cost efficiency & effectiveness information
- Supplemental documentation

23	What is the estimated total number of months required to complete the project?	Phase 1 activities: Click or tap here to enter text. Phase 2 activities: Click or tap here to enter text.
----	--	--

24. Provide brief bios of the key staff who will be assigned to this project, their roles, and percentage time they will spend on the project. Indicate any anticipated new hires and include job descriptions of the anticipated positions and/or description of any business/organizations or contractor partnerships currently in place or plan to develop. (Up to 500 words) (see NOFO Section D.2, Staffing & Workforce Development and Letters of Support).
[Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

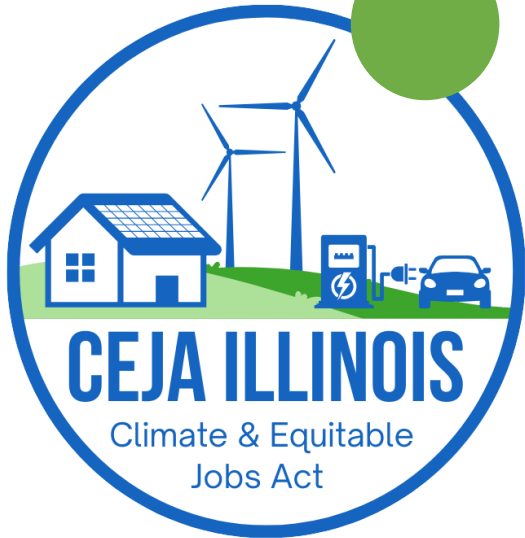
25. Provide details about how your project will support the growth of the clean energy workforce in Illinois and any connections you have to the CEJA or FEJA workforce programs (up to 500 words). (See NOFO Section D.2)
[Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

26. In order to describe the cost efficiency and effectiveness of the planned activities and projected outcomes, please describe how your organization developed the project budget and budget narrative to demonstrate cost efficiency and effectiveness measures (i.e. price comparisons of supplies/materials or lease/purchase of land, energy production research, or design/engineer selection, etc.) (up to 500 words) (see NOFO Section D.2)
[Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

Supplemental documentation (please check any attached)

- Property ownership document OR document demonstrating applicant's authority to make site improvements.
- Letter(s) of support from community leaders and stakeholders documenting their support for the project and the community needs it will address (optional but recommended)
- For Phase 2 projects: Design or construction documents that provide details of the project, if available. These may be provided after Phase 1 activities are complete if submitting application for Phase 1 and Phase 2. If only submitting Phase 2 application, documentation of the prior planning and feasibility must be provided as supporting documents in the initial application.
- Quotes used for budget estimates, if available (examples: preconstruction budget, proposals/estimates). These documents may be provided after Phase 1 activities are complete, if submitting application for Phase 1 and Phase 2. If only submitting Phase 2 application, documentation of quotes can be included if available to support your application.





Questions?



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Tips for Submitting an Effective Application Package



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Program Specific Application Tips

- If you make a claim, back it up with evidence
- Include anticipated outcomes and explain how those outcomes were determined. Be specific & use data.
- Use any space you can to provide as many details as you can about the project.
- Discuss community support & partnerships
- Don't make assumptions
- If you don't have all the details, outline how your organization plans to gather that information (especially for applications that go for Phase 1 & Phase 2 funding)
- Make your timeline clear



How can this statement be improved?

“This project will have tremendous benefit to the community!”



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How can this claim be improved?

“This project” is vague.

Are there certain aspects that will have an impact? Is this a solar, wind, hydropower project? Renovation, new build?

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Get into specifics - \$ saved, # of people/households impacted, energy produced or saved, jobs created etc.

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Get into specifics - \$ saved, # of people/households impacted, energy produced or saved, jobs created etc.

“This project will have tremendous benefit to the community!”

“The community” is a broad.

What groups or individuals will see the most benefit? (i.e. low-income households, equity investment eligible community(ies) etc.)



Program Specific Application Tips

Ensure that your application is answering **WHAT, HOW, WHY, WHEN:**

- **What** are the activities that will take place?
- **How** will this project benefit groups of people or communities?
- **Why** is this project important for the community?
- **When** will each of these activities take place?



Budget Template Categories

Personnel

Fringe
benefits

Equipment

Supplies

Contractual
Services &
Subawards

Consultant
(Professional
Services)

Phase 1
Feasibility

Phase 2 Site
Control

Phase 2
Permitting



Where should I put this?

- Wages for project manager, outreach staff
 - Personnel
- Benefits for project manager
 - Fringe benefits
- Subrecipient staff wages
 - Contractual Services
- Zoning or building permit costs
 - Phase 2 Permitting & interconnection costs
- Architect/energy auditor costs
 - Consultant (professional services)
- Site testing costs
 - Phase 1 Feasibility/Market Analysis
- Legal fees associated with financing, purchasing, or leasing land
 - Phase 2 Site Control



Budget Narrative Tips

Personnel Narrative (State):			

- Each budget tab asks for a brief budget narrative.
- Be specific and concise. Offer detail when helpful, but don't provide too much detail for smaller expenses.
- Cite calculations: show your math for both justifications of costs and accuracy.
- Collect quotes and invoices, if available.



Budget Narrative Examples

- **Personnel:** In describing costs, list personnel and their positions and briefly describe their contribution to the project.
- **Consultants or contractors:** Explain who is being subcontracted, their scope of work, and why you needed a person's expertise or services.
- **Equipment:** Identify pricing or quotes. Explain how the equipment will be used in the project and if it will be shared with other projects.

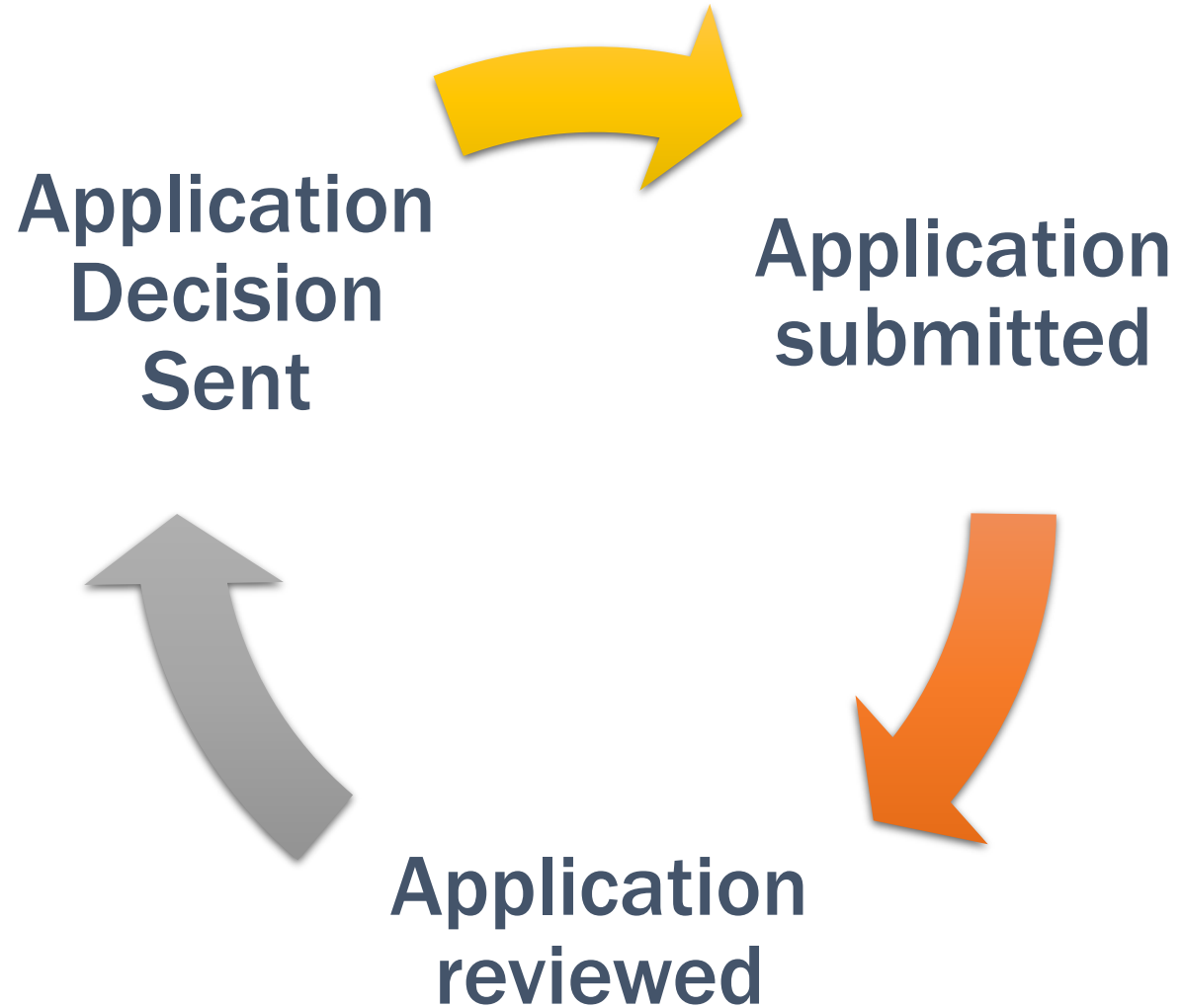


Before You Submit

- ✓ Have someone unrelated to the project read your application
- ✓ Seek technical assistance from a CEJA Program Coach
- ✓ Use the NOFO Criteria as a guide (NOFO p. 10)
- ✓ Double check all required documents are ready for submission
- ✓ Submit only through Smartsheet (Emails and links will not be accepted)

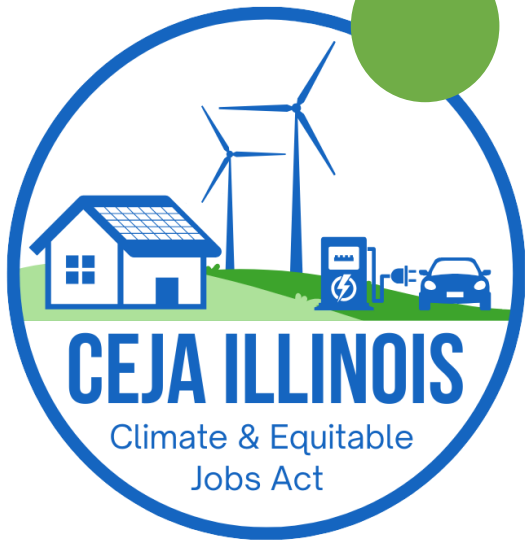


Round 1 Application



- Application Period:
March 5, 2024 - July 1, 2024
- Rolling Grant:
Applications are reviewed on a first come, first served basis
- Decision letters sent monthly
- If an application is denied, the applicant can seek technical assistance/support and resubmit





Questions?



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Merit Review Process



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What is a merit review team?

- GATA requires that all state award applications are scored by an independent team of reviewers
- Experienced individuals in related industry and/or grant management
- 3-4 individuals per team

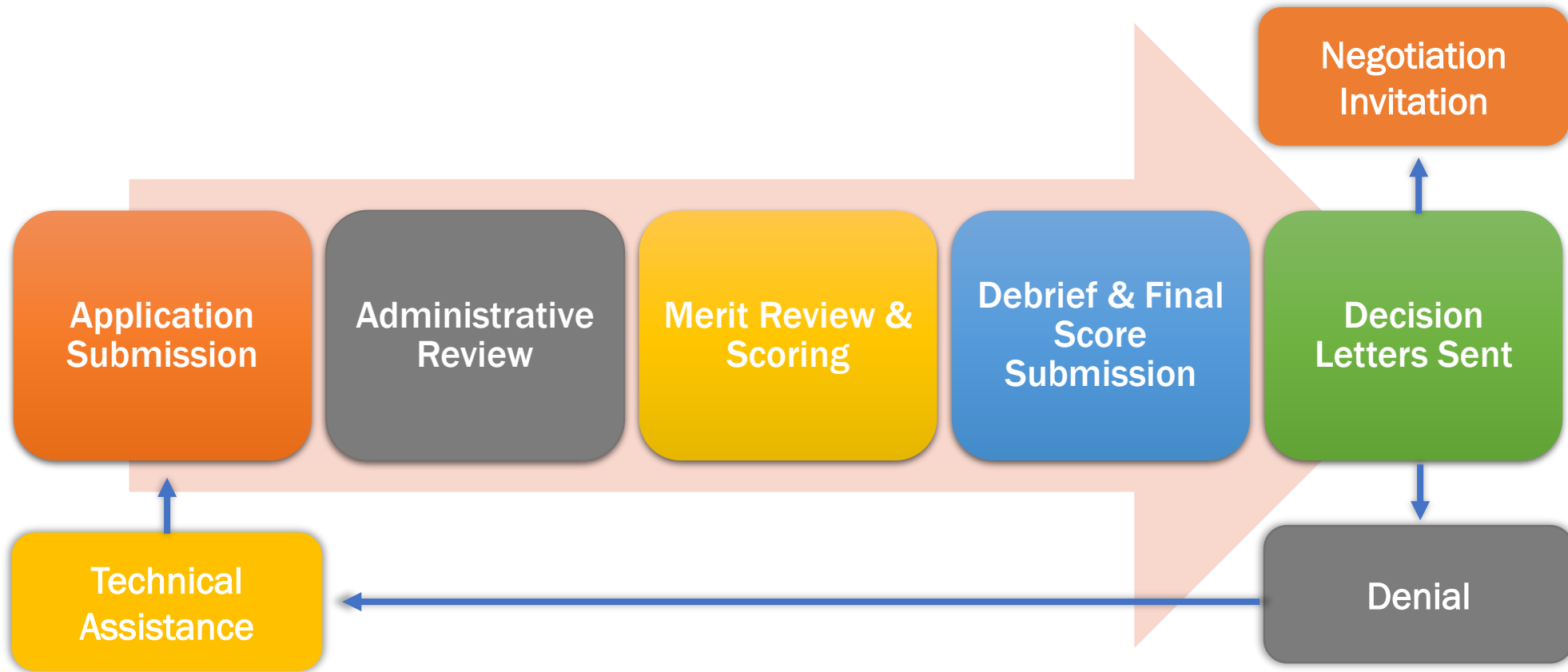


What is the role of a merit reviewer?

- Review all application and supplemental documents
- Provide a score based on the criteria provided in the NOFO
- Provide per question and overall comments
- Make funding recommendations

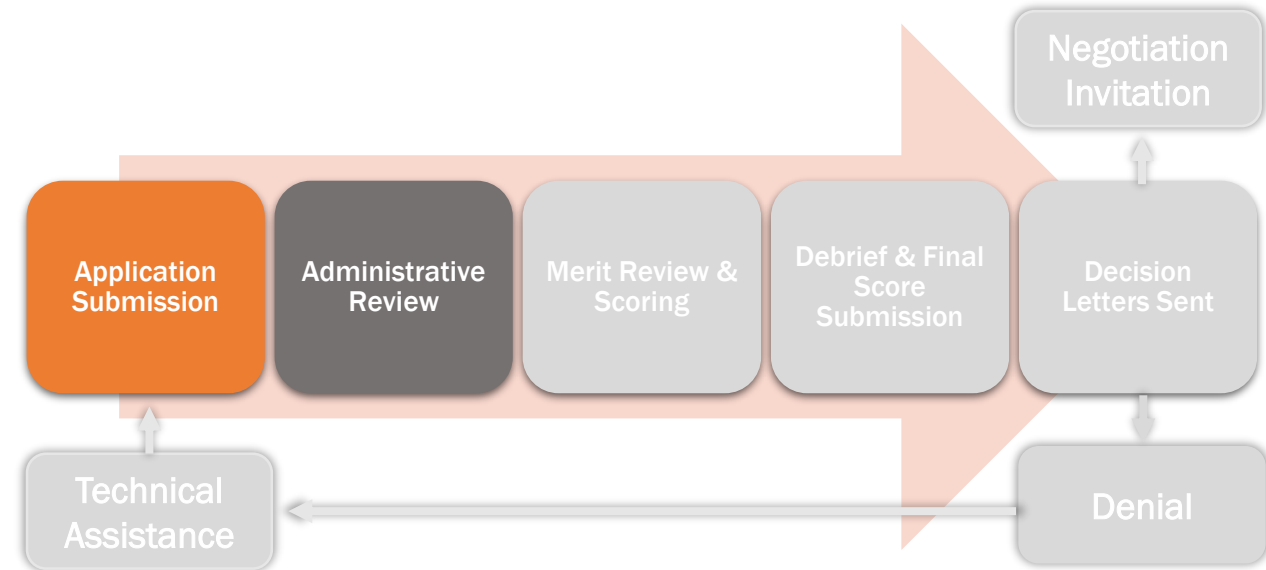


Merit Review Process



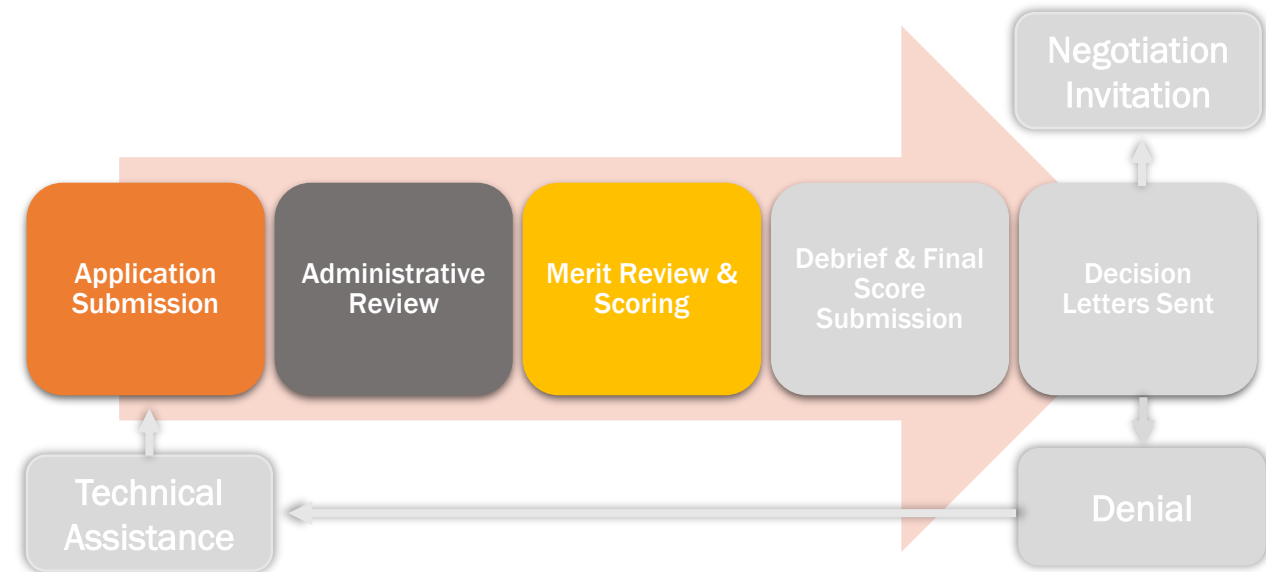
Administrative Review

- Internal review
- Verifies all required documents were submitted
- Confirms eligibility
- Not a quality or content review
- If documents are missing, applicant will receive denial letter and can resubmit for a later review

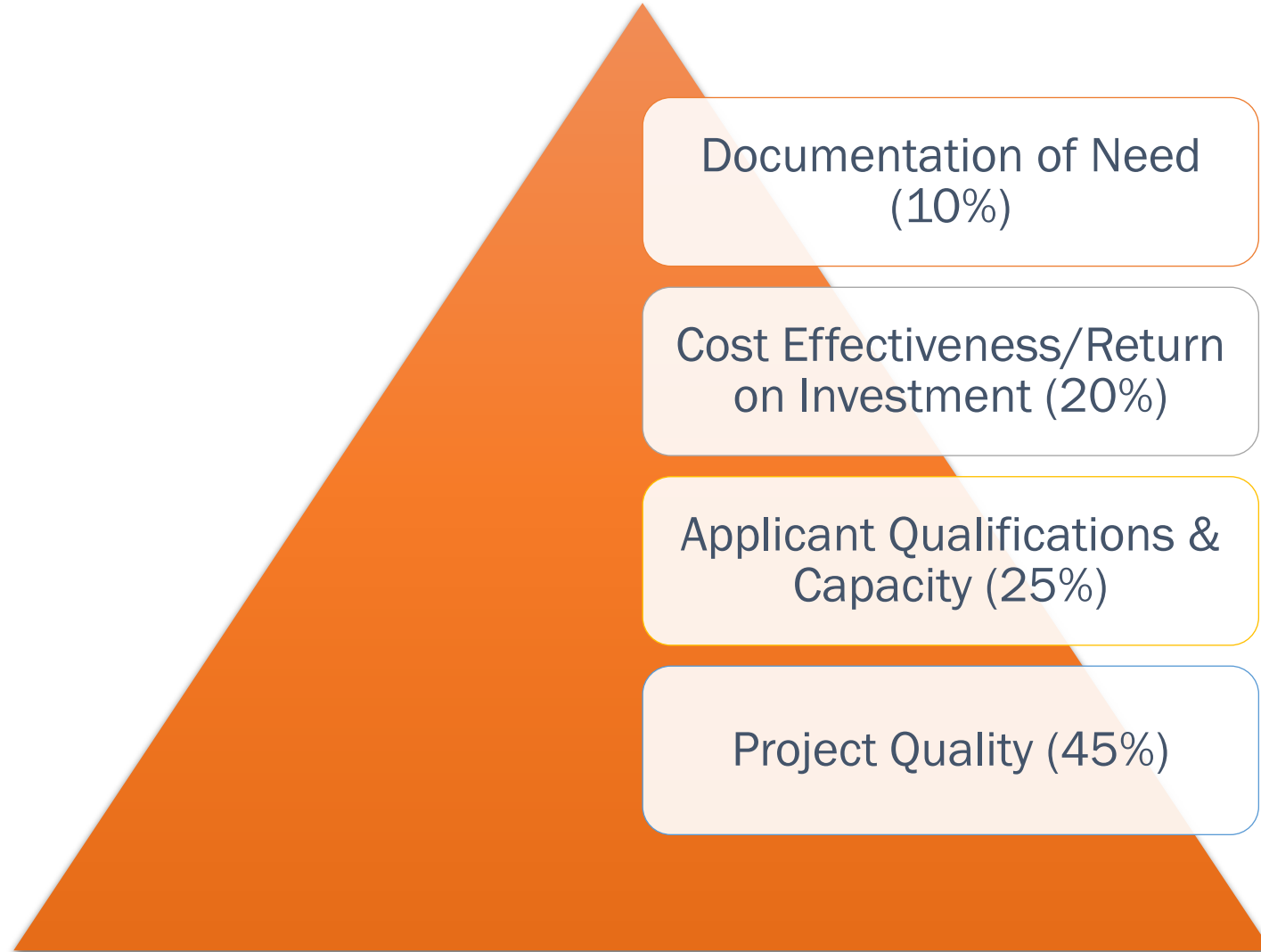


Merit Review & Scoring

- Merit reviewers receive all documents submitted by the applicant
- Applications are scored by each merit reviewer on a 100% scale using four criteria areas



Merit Review & Scoring



Review & Scoring Documentation of Need

Documentation of Need (10%)	
The project's location is within or serving equity investment eligible communities or underserved communities.	5%
Plan describes the community needs and how this project will address the needs.	5%
Applicant Qualifications and Capacity (25%)	
Applicant's capacity to execute the project and the qualifications of those assigned to the project and/or plan to hire or contract with other partners to execute the project.	15%
Applicant's historical or future long-term partnership with the community in which the project will be located or the community that will be served by the project.	10%

Documentation of Need (10%)	
The project's location is within or serving equity investment eligible communities or underserved communities.	5%
Plan describes the community needs and how this project will address the needs.	5%

Development by hiring equity eligible contractors, including CEJA or FEJA workforce program graduates and/or contractor participants to work on the project and/or offer on-the-job training opportunities to CEJA or FEJA participants.	10%
Cost Effectiveness/Return on Investment (20%)	
The cost efficiency and effectiveness of the planned activities and projected outcomes.	10%
Ability to leverage existing funding sources, incentives, services and partnerships to improve the cost effectiveness and return on investment of the project.	10%



Review & Scoring Cost Effectiveness/ Return on Investment

Documentation of Need (10%)	
The project's location is within or serving equity investment eligible communities or underserved communities.	5%
Plan describes the community needs and how this project will address the needs.	5%
Applicant Qualifications and Capacity (25%)	
Applicant's capacity to execute the project and the qualifications of those assigned to the project and/or plan to hire or contract with other partners to execute the project.	15%
Applicant's historical or future long-term partnership with the community in which the project will be located or the community that will be served by the project.	10%
Project Quality (45%)	
Quality of plan to generate employment	

Cost Effectiveness/Return on Investment (20%)	
The cost efficiency and effectiveness of the planned activities and projected outcomes.	10%
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Review & Scoring Applicant Qualifications & Capacity

Documentation of Need (10%)	
The project's location is within or serving equity investment eligible communities or underserved communities.	5%
Plan describes the community needs and how this project will address the needs.	5%
Applicant Qualifications and Capacity (25%)	
Applicant's capacity to execute the project and the qualifications of those assigned to the project and/or plan to hire or contract with other partners to execute the project.	15%
Applicant's historical or future long-term partnership with the community in which the project will be located or the community that will be served by the project.	10%

Applicant Qualifications and Capacity (25%)	
Applicant's capacity to execute the project and the qualifications of those assigned to the project and/or plan to hire or contract with other partners to execute the project.	15%
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Review & Scoring Project Quality

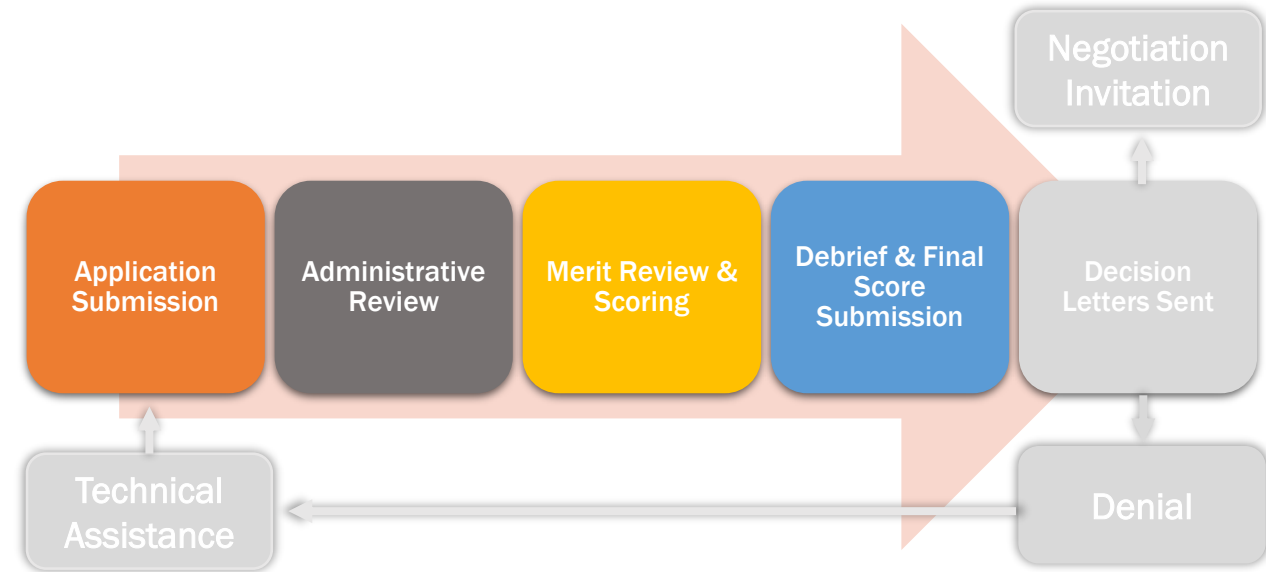
Documentation of Need (10%)	
The project's location is within or serving equity investment eligible communities or underserved communities.	5%
Plan describes the community needs and how this project will address the needs.	5%
Applicant Qualifications and Capacity (25%)	
Applicant's capacity to execute the project and the qualifications of those assigned to the project and/or plan to hire or contract with other partners to execute the project.	15%
Applicant's historical or future long-term partnership with the community in which the project will be located or the community that will be served by the project.	10%
Project Quality (45%)	
Quality of plan to generate energy and create community ownership through	10%
to project feasibility, and implementation.	5%
served, reduction in communities.	5%
benefit equity not-for-profit s, etc.	15%
actor CEJA or FEJA to work on the or FEJA	10%
Investment (20%)	
s and projected	10%
es and investment of the	10%

Project Quality (45%)	
Quality of plan to generate energy and create community ownership through community solar project.	10%
Quality of plan to execute project through activities related to project feasibility, project conception, project planning, project development, and implementation.	5%
Anticipated outcomes of the project in terms of households served, reduction in utility energy costs, and non-energy benefits for target communities.	5%
Quality of plan for how the energy and cost savings will benefit equity investment eligible communities, low-income households, not-for-profit organizations serving equity investment eligible communities, etc.	15%
Quality of plan to support clean energy workforce and contractor development by hiring equity eligible contractors, including CEJA or FEJA workforce program graduates and/or contractor participants to work on the project and/or offer on-the-job training opportunities to CEJA or FEJA participants.	10%



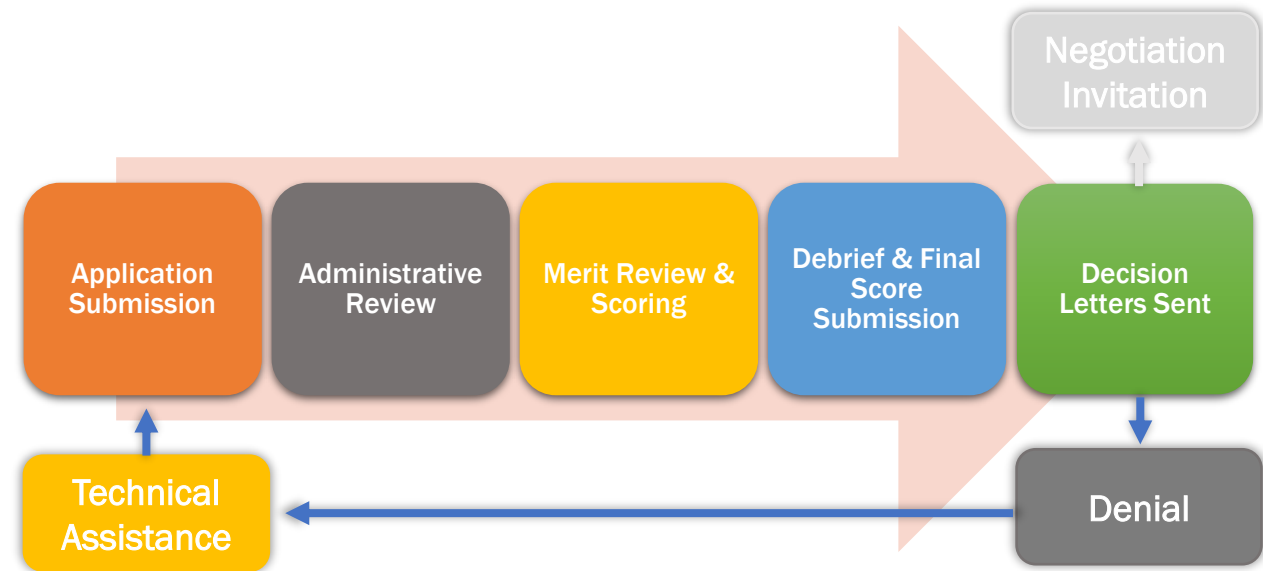
Debrief & Final Scores

- All merit reviewers submit their individual scores, and their scores are averaged
- Once all scores have been submitted, merit reviewers meet to discuss their feedback on the application.
- Average scores of 75 + will move to the negotiation stage



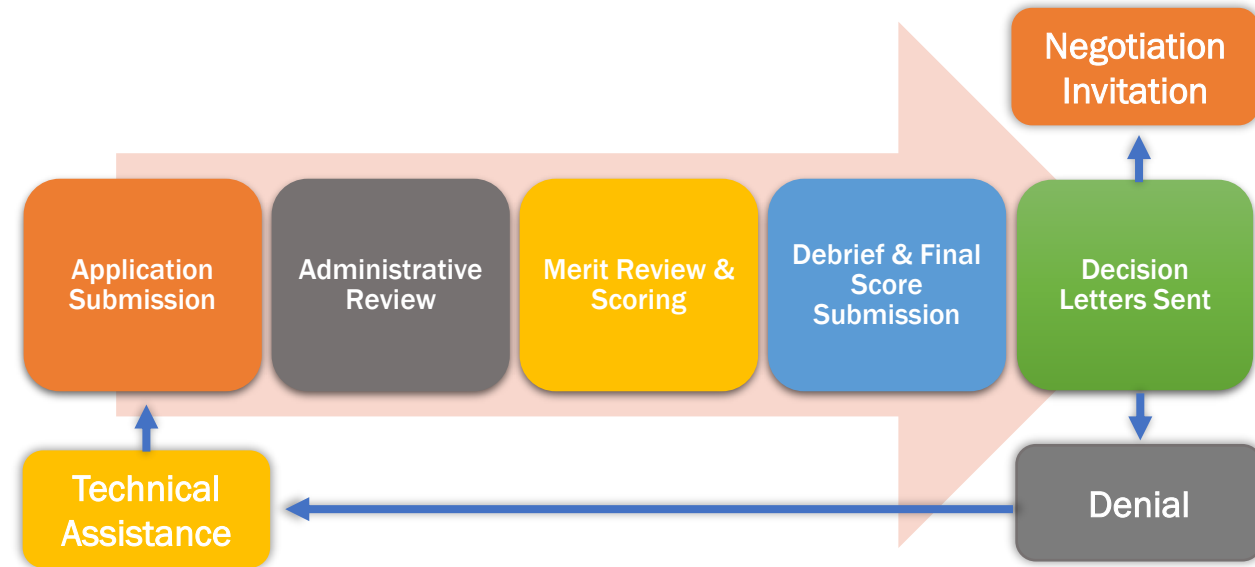
Decision Letters - Denial

- Applications that do not meet the 75% threshold
- Merit review comments used to develop the denial letter
- Applicant can use the comments in the denial letter to seek technical assistance and/or update and resubmit application



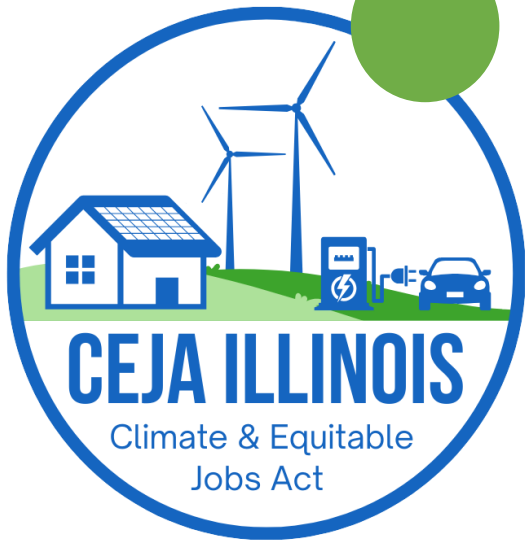
Decision Letters - Negotiation Invitation

- Applications that meet or exceed the 75% threshold
- OEBU will set up a negotiation meeting to discuss project & areas identified by merit reviewers are needing more information
- If negotiation is positive, the applicant will move forward in the application process



**Negotiation invitation is not a guarantee of a grant award*





Questions?



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Application Support & Resources



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Budget & Grant Resources

DCEO Grants Page [DCEO Grants \(illinois.gov\)](https://www.illinois.gov)

- Watch grant, budgeting, reporting training videos
- Attend DCEO grant training sessions
- Get help on grant related questions from the DCEO Help Desk

DCEO Grants



Apply for Funding

Search a current listing of DCEO grant opportunities including application links and information, as well as information on Capital Grants.



Upcoming Grant Trainings

Interested in learning more about the grant process? See the calendar listing of upcoming live training opportunities and sign-up for future grant trainings.



Video Training & Resource Library

A collection of training videos from all facets of the grant lifecycle. Enjoy short tutorials on how to navigate the grant process.



Contact DCEO Grant Help Desk

Need assistance with a grant-related question? Click here to contact the DCEO Grant Help Desk.



Partnership Resources

- List of EEC via the Illinois Shines program: [Find-an-Equity-Eligible-Contractor-as-of-1-18-2023.pdf](https://illinoisshines.com/Find-an-Equity-Eligible-Contractor-as-of-1-18-2023.pdf) (illinoisshines.com)
- Business Enterprise Program (BEP) Directory: [State of Illinois Commission on Equity and Inclusion](https://diversitysoftware.com/State-of-Illinois-Commission-on-Equity-and-Inclusion) (diversitysoftware.com)



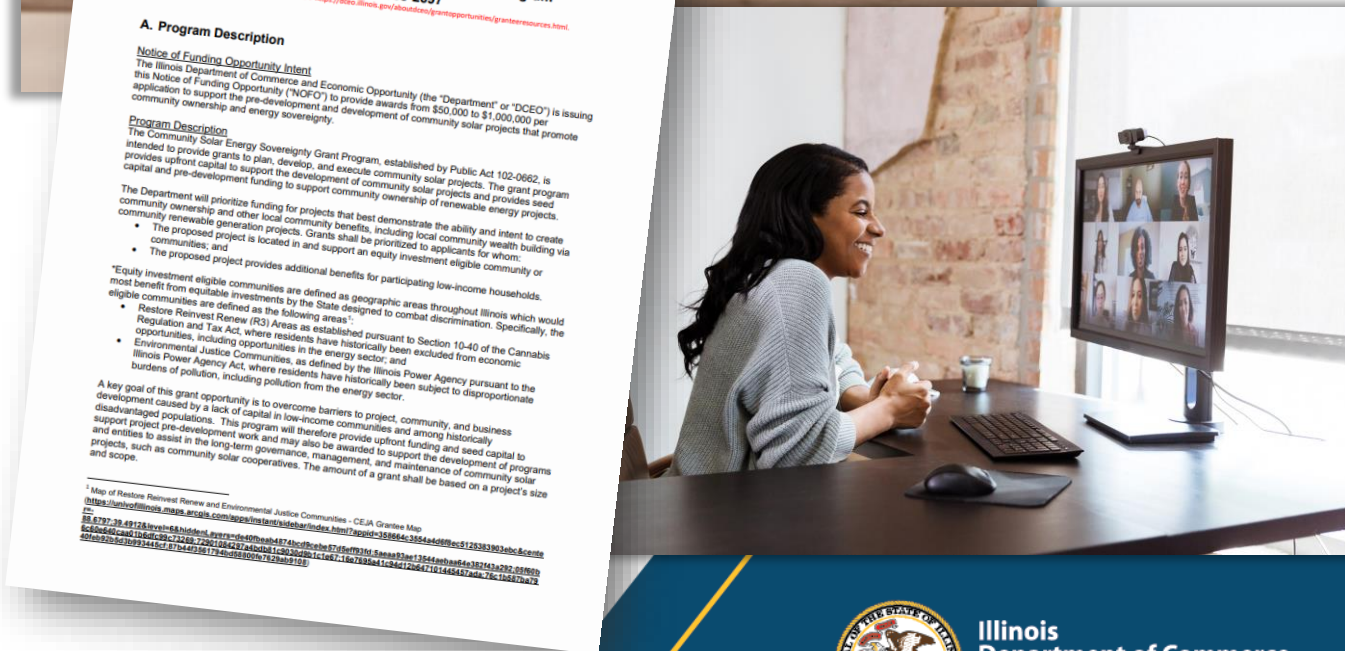
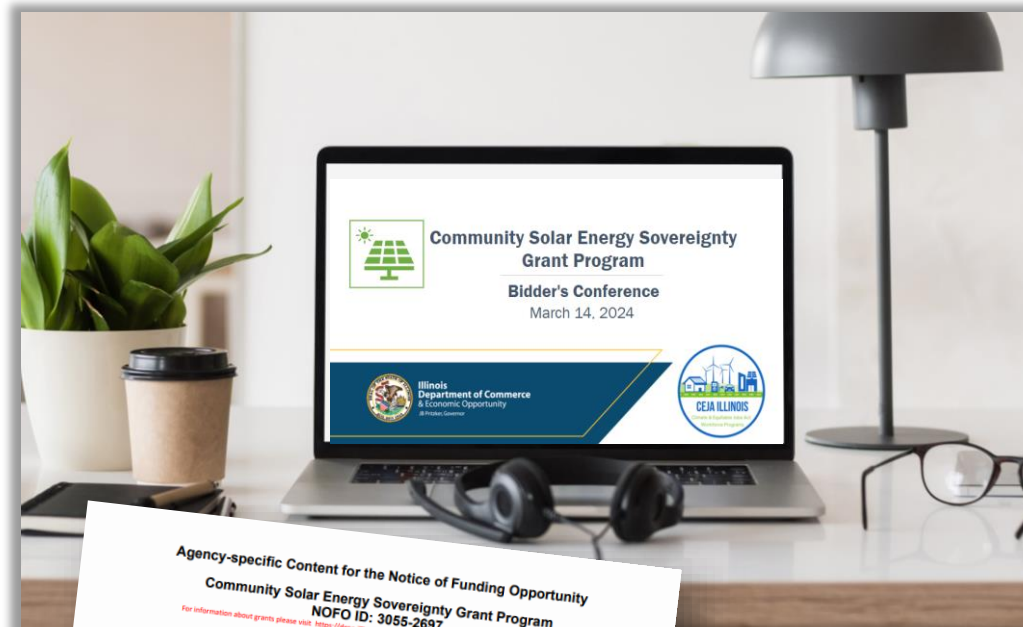
Community Solar Resources

- Explore Community Solar – Illinois Shines : [Exploring Community Solar – Illinois Shines](#)
- National Community Solar Partnership – U.S. Department of Energy: [Community Solar | Department of Energy](#)



Next Steps

- Watch the Bidder's Conference (3/14/2024)
 - [Recording](#)
 - [Slide Deck](#)
- [Read the CSES NOFO](#) & Complete Application
- Access additional TA support and resources on the [CSES NOFO Page](#)



Get Technical Assistance from a CEJA Program Coach

CEJA Program Coaches provide technical assistance on developing an effective grant application. Applicants may sign up for multiple TA sessions.

Use the QR code or link to sign up:

<https://forms.office.com/r/4qUkTdgCFY>

CEJA NOFO Applicant Technical
Assistance Sign Up



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