CEJA ILLINOIS
Clean Jobs Workforce Network Program

CEJA ILLINOIS
Energy Transition Navigator Program

Applicant Team Qualifications & Budget: Avoiding Pitfalls
January 12, 2024

Illinois Department of Commerce & Economic Opportunity
JB Pritzker, Governor

Today’s Focus: 2 CEJA Workforce Programs

Clean Jobs Workforce Network Program

Clean Jobs Workforce Network Program (“Workforce Hubs”)

- **Goal:** Provide training to prepare people for entry-level clean energy jobs.
- **Hub areas accepting applications:** Chicago South, Waukegan, Joliet, Aurora, Peoria, Danville, Carbondale, and East St. Louis
- Submit by February 23, 2024 to be included in the second round of reviews.

Energy Transition Navigator Program

Energy Transition Navigators Program

- **Goal:** Conduct outreach & education to raise awareness of CEJA programs, recruit participants, and build connections
- **Hub areas accepting applications:** Waukegan, Joliet, Aurora, Peoria, Danville, Champaign, Decatur, East St. Louis, Alton
- Submit by February 23, 2024 to be included in the second round of reviews.

Purpose: Help you Prepare a Successful Proposal

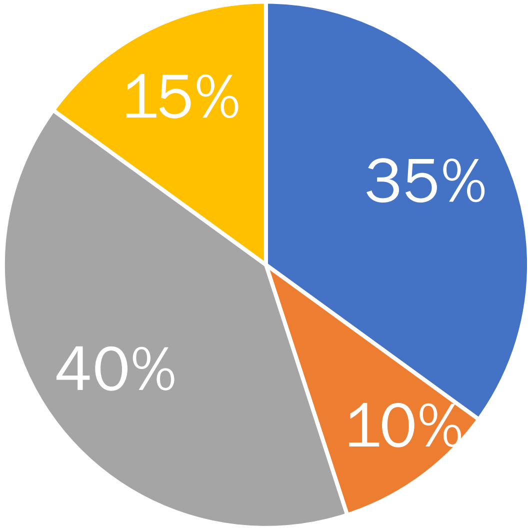
Applicant Review Criteria

Today → Applicant Team Qualifications & Capacity

Next week → Documentation of Need

Project Quality & Integration

Today → Cost Effectiveness



*Based on feedback from merit reviewers

Agenda

- Application team qualifications & capacity (35%)
  - What reviewers are looking for
  - Effective partnerships
  - Memorandums of understanding
  - **Q&As**
- Cost effectiveness & budget (15%)
  - What reviewers are looking for
  - Template and narrative tips
  - Q&A
- Resources and additional Technical Assistance

Team Qualifications: What reviewers are looking for

Applicant Team Qualifications and Capacity (35%)	
Applicant's qualifications and capacity to administer the Clean Jobs Network Program and meet the proposed program outcomes.	10%
Related experience and qualifications of the applicant team's staff to be assigned to recruit, enroll, train, and provide support services to equity eligible persons	10%
The quality of applicant's experience and ability to use an equity lens for program operations.	8%
Related experience and qualifications of the applicant team's staff to work with and connect participants to clean energy jobs or advanced training programs.	7%

Illinois Department of Commerce & Economic Opportunity
JB Pritzker, Governor

What are reviewers looking for?

Experience/qualifications

- Clear answers to questions about your team's overall experience related to:
  - Project administration
  - Training, job readiness, skill development
  - Partnerships with clean energy businesses
  - Delivering barrier reduction services
- Qualifications of key staff (resumes and bios)

Capacity/ability

- How complete is your staffing plan?
- For new hires, do you have a plan & timeline to hire?
- Do you have clear roles & responsibilities for your partner organizations?

Sections of the application package reviewers evaluate to assess qualifications & capacity

- Technical volume: Applicant Team Organization & Qualifications
- Staffing plan
- Resumes of KEY staff (job descriptions for new hires)
- Memorandums of Understanding

Do you have the capacity to collectively deliver all program elements? Do you have the experience and qualifications to deliver all program elements?

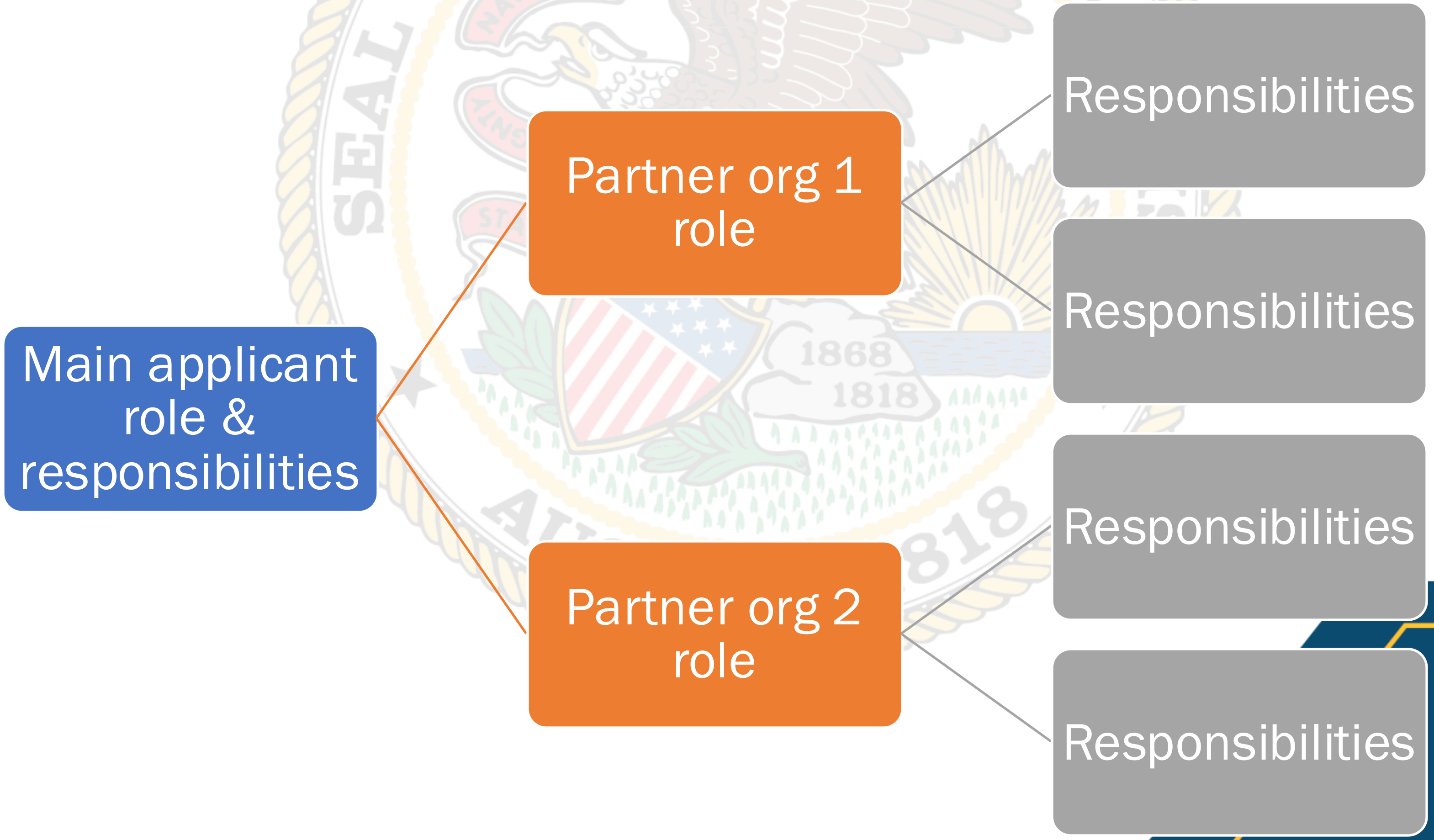
- Outreach & recruitment
- Application & intake
- Wrap around supports & stipends
- Student support services
- Delivery of employability skills
- Delivery of construction curriculum
- Work-based learning
- Data tracking & outcome measurement
- Transition and follow-up

Building your team: An example

	My organization's capacity	Potential partner
Outreach and recruitment	Need some help	Energy Transition Navigators, community-based organization
Application and intake	✓ Got it covered	
Barrier reduction services	Not able to provide	Community-based organization
Bridge program training	✓ Got it covered	
Job-specific training	Need some help	NABCEP Approved Training Provider
Work-based learning	Not able to provide	Clean energy employer partners
Follow-up, transition services	Need some help	Community-based organization
Data, outcome tracking	✓ Got it covered	

Building your staffing plan: some tips

- Think big picture first. What roles will the main applicant and partner organizations play in delivering the program elements? Can you create an org chart?



Illinois Department of Commerce & Economic Opportunity
JB Pritzker, Governor

Next, consider specific roles for people on your team.

What will your leadership team look like?

Do people on the leadership team have the experience & qualifications they need?

Staff Role	Name of personnel (or indicate if the position is to be filled by a new-hire)	Organizational affiliation
Program Administrator (sample)		
Outreach and Recruitment Coordinator (sample)		
Wrap-around Service Coordinator (sample)		
Student Support Service Coordinator (sample)		
Instructor (sample)		
Student Support Services Coordinator (sample)		
Employer Coordinator (sample)		
Transition Services Coordinator (sample)		
Data Entry Coordinator (sample)		

Red flag: Too many "new hires" with no plan for how you will hire them, job descriptions

Red flag: No resumes of key staff or lots of extra resumes to pad the application.

Memorandums of Understanding set the stage for effective partnerships

- Agreed-upon outcomes & goals
- **Agreed-upon tasks and responsibilities**
- Agreed-upon budget and payment method
- Agreed upon timeline for service delivery
- Plan for communicating concerns and issues
- Plan to ensure performance and reporting compliance
- Plan for training and professional development

Memorandums of Understanding help us assess your team's capacity.

A mutual statement of commitment among two or more parties.

- Project or program name
- Purpose and background
- Scope of work and responsibilities under the MOU
- Amount of funds requested for subrecipient
- Agreed upon mutual understandings
- Reporting requirements
- Signatures and date

https://uofi.box.com/v/MOUTemplateCEJA

Memorandum of Understanding Template

Memorandum of Understanding Between [Partner Organization] and [Main Applicant]

This Memorandum of Understanding sets forth the terms and understanding between [partner organization] and [main applicant] to provide [insert activities], as outlined in the proposal. The targeted start date is [insert date], and the end of this agreement is [insert date].

Background

[Explain the relationship of the partner and the main applicant and any history of working together in the past. Explain why partnership is important and what partner brings to the table.]

Purpose and intent

This MOU will [purpose/goals of partnership]. The intent of this Memorandum of Understanding is to specify the responsibilities that must be assumed by [partner] to satisfy [requirements/goals].

Scope of work and responsibilities

The above goals will be accomplished by the partner through the following activities:

[List and describe the activities that the partner will be responsible for.]

Key partner staff assigned to these activities include:

Reporting

[Record how progress and metrics will be monitored and how data will be shared. Explain how the effectiveness and adherence to the agreement will be evaluated and when evaluation will happen.]

Coordinating

[Explain how the partner will coordinate with the main grantee and any other team partners to deliver the activities agreed to and how data and information will be shared].

Funding

[Specify the amount of funding requested to undertake activities under the MOU and provide a breakdown of the budget items, describing why these items are necessary and reasonable for the project.]

Agreement

This MOU is at will and may be modified by mutual consent of authorized officials from [partner] and [main applicant]. This MOU shall become effective at the onset of the grant period and will remain in effect for the duration of the grant (twelve months, with two additional renewal periods of twelve months each), unless modified or terminated by [partner] and [main applicant] by mutual consent.

The undersigned do hereby commit to partner together to provide [activities] to satisfy [goals/outcomes].

https://uofi.box.com/v/MOUTemplateCEJA

Application Team Q&A

Illinois
Department of Commerce
& Economic Opportunity
JB Pritzker, Governor

How do I find partners?

- See our "partnering" contact list
- Identify the training providers and community-based organizations in your area.
  - Who offers construction training?
  - Who offers training in clean energy?
  - Who offers job readiness training?
  - Who offers GED/Adult education training?
  - Who offers support services?
- Identify the clean energy employers in your region
  - Who might help with work-based learning? Hiring your participants?

Do all the positions need to be filled or can they be hired afterwards?

- You can hire afterwards, but make sure the staffing plan and budget reflect the intended roles to be filled by new hires.
- Beware of too many “to be hired” positions
- Pro tip: Include job descriptions in your resumes of key staff and describe your plan and timeline for hiring new staff

Illinois
Department of Commerce
& Economic Opportunity
JB Pritzker, Governor

In the applicant team, who is held responsible for meeting requirements?

- The lead grantee is ultimately responsible for ensuring that the program is delivered as intended and that subgrantees meet their requirements.
- The lead grantee disperses funds to subgrantees.
- Pro-tip: Make sure the Memorandums of Understanding have clear roles, responsibilities, reporting requirements, and budgets.

Do the partners need to meet the same eligibility requirements as the lead applicant?

- No. Only the lead applicant needs to meet eligibility criteria.
  - Have at least one main operating office in hub region
  - Be GATA pre-qualified
  - Be a community-based organization or provider
  - Submit conflict of interest and mandatory disclosure forms
- However, the applicant team as a whole should have the **qualifications and experience** to deliver the grant.

Who should complete a Memorandum of Understanding?

- Any subgrantees/subrecipients
- Employers or organizations that agree to offer work-based learning elements to support your program and/or hire program graduates

Cost Effectiveness & Budget Tips

What merit reviewers are looking for: Cost effectiveness, 15%

Cost Effectiveness/Return on Investments (15%)	
The cost efficiency and effectiveness of the planned activities and projected outcomes	5%
The cost efficiency and effectiveness of the proposed supportive services (funded by the Energy Transition Barrier Reduction Fund) that will be offered to program participants.	5%
Ability to leverage existing programs, services and partnerships to improve cost effectiveness, return on investment, and long-term sustainability of program.	5%

What is “cost efficiency and effectiveness?”

- Do you provide enough detail on the cost items?
- Do you explain how costs were calculated?
- Do you explain why costs are reasonable and necessary for the project?
- Is there an analysis of the cost efficiency in relation to planned outcomes and activities?

Illinois Department of Commerce & Economic Opportunity
JB Pritzker, Governor

Sections we are looking at

- Budget template spreadsheet
  - Itemized budget numbers + narrative
- Technical volume: Budget narrative
  - Justification of main budget expense items.
  - Analysis of cost effectiveness (overall cost per participant)
  - Details of subcontractor or partner budgets
  - Programs, services, and partnerships that will be leveraged to improve cost effectiveness

A few things to know about the budget template

- It's a standard template, with a few sections that are specific to this program. Some sections may not apply to you.
- If you are selected, DCEO may negotiate the budget—things may change.
- Don't forget the budget narrative! The numbers only tell part of the story.

Budget starting point: Tasks, timing, and staff

- **Recruitment, application & intake**
  - 6 weeks for each cohort
  - Staff: Outreach and recruitment coordinator
- **Training**
  - 16 weeks for each cohort
  - Staff: Instructor and student support service coordinator
- **Transition services (transition services coordinator)**
  - 2+ months for each cohort
  - Staff: Transition services coordinator, student support service coordinator
- **Wrap-around services**
  - 6 months wrap around support for each cohort
  - Staff: Wrap-around services coordinator
- **Reporting and admin**
  - Throughout the year
  - Staff: Program administrator and data entry coordinator

Budget starting point: Number of participants, cohorts, and locations

How many participants will you serve?

How many student cohorts will you serve? (if using cohort model)

Where will the training be offered? How many cohorts per location?

What staff needs will be required to serve all participants at the different locations?

Budget starting point: Staffing plan

- Program administrator
- Outreach & recruitment staff
- Student support staff
- Instruction staff
- Transition services staff
- Data entry coordinator & staff

How many full time staff in general? At each location? Part-time staff? Partnerships with other organizations to build capacity?

The budget categories in the template

1A, 1B Personnel	Fringe benefits	Travel	Equipment	Supplies
Contractual Services	Consultant	Occupancy	Telecommunications	Training & education (for staff)
Direct administrative costs	Industry focused training	Supportive services	Miscellaneous costs	Indirect costs

Department of Commerce & Economic Opportunity
JB Pritzker, Governor

Budget narrative: Where is it?

- Narrative sections included in each tab of the spreadsheet
- Technical volume budget narrative
  - Combination of different narrative sections in the budget spreadsheet, summarized
  - Budget narratives for partner budgets
  - Overall justification of program costs by outcome & activities
    - About how much of the total program cost can be attributed to each task?

The Budget Narrative: What should it include?

- Written justification for all your main item costs.
- An opportunity to “show your work,” to explain how you got your numbers.
- An explanation of any assumptions you used to develop the budget.
- A detailed explanation of your more substantial costs.
- A description of partners’ budgets.

Budget Narrative Tips

- Be specific but 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.
- Have the narrative follow the same order as your budget spreadsheet.
- Make sure budget narrative numbers match the spreadsheet numbers.

Budget Narrative Examples

- **Personnel:** In describing costs, list personnel and their positions and how the costs are necessary and reasonable for the project. Explain how costs were calculated, when necessary.
- **Consultants or contractors:** Clearly 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.
- **Travel:** Indicate the basis of the costs and why the travel is relevant. Include how many people will travel, for how long, and the purpose of the travel.

Budget narrative: Show your work

Personnel	
Total cost	Enter text
Main items in this category	Enter text
How were costs calculated?	Enter text
Why are they necessary and reasonable for the project?	Enter text
Fringe benefits, etc.	
Total cost	Enter text
Main items in this category	Enter text
How were costs calculated?	Enter text
Why are they necessary and reasonable for the project?	Enter text

Develop partner budgets and include them in the narrative

Partner A Budget

Budget item	Budget category (personnel, supplies, equipment, travel, etc.)	Cost
Total cost		

A few budget and grant resources

https://dceo.illinois.gov/aboutdceo/grantopportunities/grant-basics.html

- Administration vs. Programmatic costs
- Indirect Cost and Indirect Cost Rate
- Requirements for Pass-Through Entities

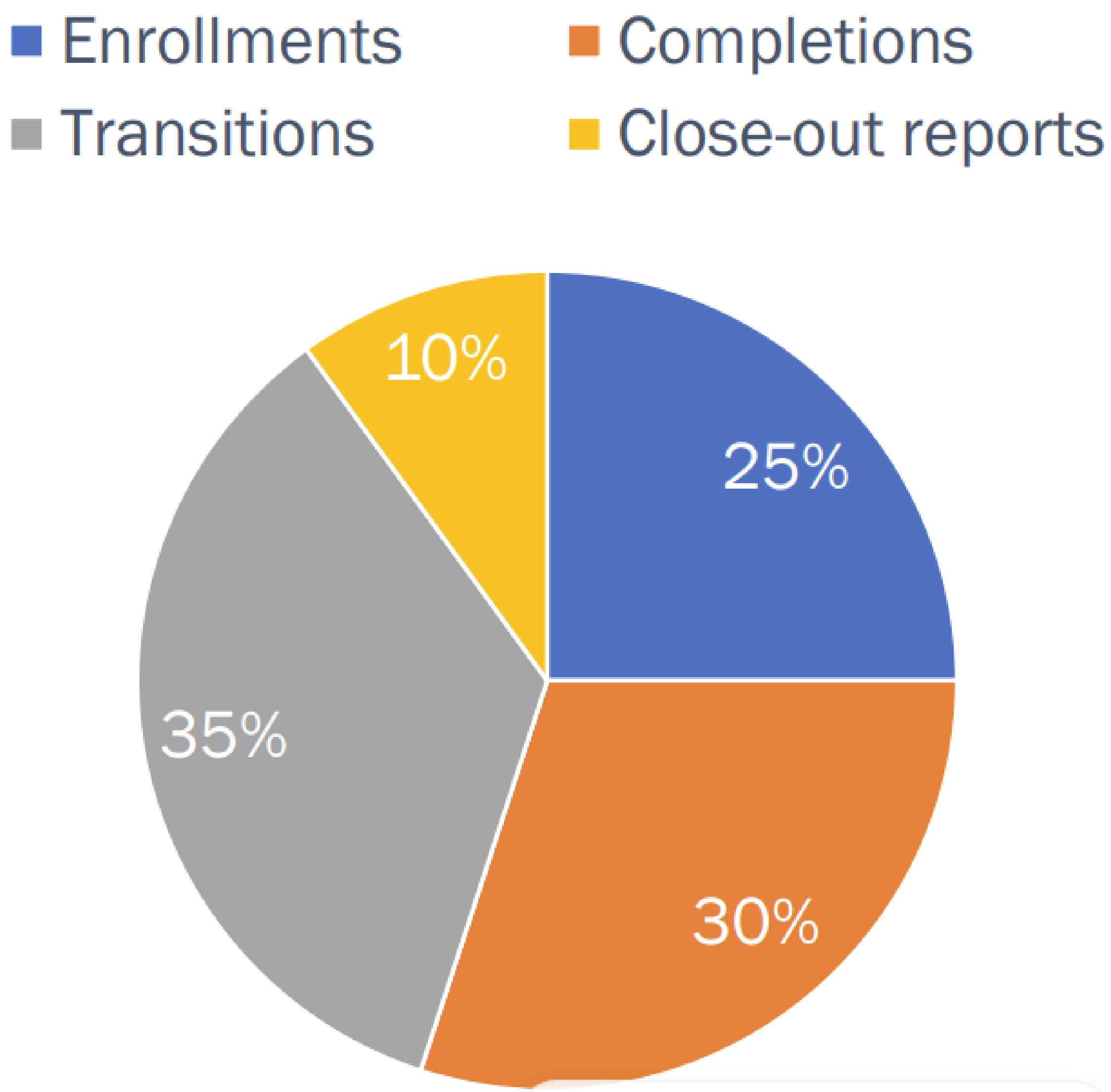
https://dceo.illinois.gov/aboutdceo/grantopportunities/learning-library.html

Budget questions and answers

Will the performance-based payment model be used for the Workforce hub program?

- Year 1: Benchmarking year, with payments allocated based on services rendered.
- Year 2-3: Performance-Based Payment implemented, with payments based on performance in achieving goals.

Performance-based Payment Model



*Only Clean Jobs Workforce Network Program

Real-time reporting, monthly disbursements.

Year 1: Benchmarking

Payments will be provided for services rendered.

Grantees work with Program/Grant Managers to establish reasonable Year 1 Work Plan Goals

- Start-up Goals, Milestones
- Enrollment Goals
- Completion Goals
- Transition Goals

Year 1 Performance in achieving goals will impact renewal for years 2 and 3

Year 2 and Beyond: Performance-Based Payment

- What is Performance-Based Payment?
  - Rooted in belief that funding should be based on an org's measurable impact
  - Grantees are reimbursed on a per-participant basis according to the reported progress – reimbursed as you meet outcomes and goals

Will the Energy Transition Navigator utilize a performance-based payment model?

No.

Can we request upfront funding to get the program started?

- Yes! Up to 20% of the total annual grant amount can be requested.

For workforce hubs, are all program costs subject to the performance-based payment model?

No—only "training program" costs. Barrier reduction services are not subject to the performance-based payment model.

Training program costs	Barrier reduction service costs
Training/support staff	Wrap-around support service staff
Equipment and supplies for training	Wrap-around support costs (bus passes, childcare expenses, etc.)
Stipends for training program	Transition services costs

Illinois
Department of Commerce
& Economic Opportunity
JB Pritzker, Governor

How are funds dispersed among partners?

The lead grantee is responsible for providing funds to any identified partners or subgrantees based on services provided and performance metrics.

Are these allowable costs?

Allowable	Not allowable
Construction materials and equipment associated with training & work-based learning opportunities	Large-ticket construction materials & equipment associated with work-based learning opportunities (e.g., construction costs of building a Habitat for Humanity Home)
Program-related tools, work wear, equipment, training materials	Large-ticket equipment items such as an electric vehicle
Train-the-trainer expenses	Capital expenses, such as building or renovating training facilities
Tuition expenses for program participants	
Traveling expenses for staff and participants	

Where should I put this?

- Stipends for participants
  - Supportive services
  - ★ Training & education
  - Industry focused training
- Solar panel equipment and tools
  - Equipment
  - Supplies
  - ★ Industry focused training
- Subrecipient staff salaries/wages
  - Personnel
  - ★ Contractual Services
- Bus and childcare vouchers
  - Travel
  - ★ Supportive services
- Rent and utilities for building
  - ★ Indirect costs
  - Occupancy costs
- Executive director salary
  - Personnel
  - Direct Administrative Costs
  - ★ Indirect Costs

More support for Applicants

Illinois
Department of Commerce
& Economic Opportunity
JB Pritzker, Governor

Sign up for one-on-one Technical Assistance

CEJA NOFO 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

Applied before?

- Get feedback from merit reviewers.
- Contact Char Flickinger to set up a meeting, get a summary of reviewer comments.
  - Charlotte.Flickinger@illinois.gov

Upcoming Technical Assistance Webinar

Rolling Back the Curtain: What CEJA Grant Reviewers are Looking For (Focus on project plan, project need)	January 19, 12 pm	Register here

Watch recordings of previous sessions on the NOFO Application pages.

Illinois
Department of Commerce
& Economic Opportunity
JB Pritzker, Governor

Upcoming CEJA Networking Events

- Aurora: January 16, 1-3 pm
- Alton: January 16, 1-3 pm
- Decatur: January 17, 1-3 pm
- Danville: January 22, 1-3 pm

Register for an event

Send questions to
ceo.ceja@illinois.gov
Review answers by looking at the Q&A on the NOFO pages

Illinois
Department of Commerce
& Economic Opportunity
JB Pritzker, Governor